

Woods School

Author: Lela Woods Fann

Date: Unknown

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Kemp M. Woods, Sr. was a progressive and public spirited man, and did much for the betterment and upbuilding of the community in the early days. He built a school house on his farm with the object of furnishing advantages to young women. Here music was taught as well as the other Arts and Sciences. This was before the Civil War. The name of the school was Woodland, and the time about 1855-60.

After the Civil War, it was decided by the parents in the community to build a District School. The school should be more centrally located so the children east of the "big road," now 169 Highway, might have educational advantages. The children often had to walk three miles to school and were privileged to attend until they were twenty-one years old. John F. Justus, father of F.K. Justus, Sr., was an early teacher; also, J.R. Scott and Miss Verda Bell of Missouri City, Missouri. The enrollment was large (forty or fifty in the one-room school). The school was of short duration, often only four or five months. Sometimes subscription schools would be held in the spring when the weather was mild. Parents paid tuition for their children to these schools. The plot of one acre of land was given by Kemp M. Woods, Sr. for the purpose of building this District School. The first building was a very primitive one room, with small windows and a blackboard along the north wall. The material was mostly from native timber, and the men and boys in the neighborhood volunteered their labor. When the District was organized, it was first named Oak Ridge, but the name was changed because of the location of the school on the Woods farm.

Some of the teachers who taught this school were: Mr. Henry Ellington, Miss Katherine Scott, Miss Myra Hon, Miss Inez Justus, Mrs. Nannie Hamner and Miss Delma Thomas. Many of the older citizens attended this school, but after years of use a new building was erected to replace the old outdated building. The new school was built about 1908 and Miss Wylie Ecton, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Ecton, was the first teacher. Mrs. Annie Spicer was the teacher in 1914 with thirty pupils. Other teachers following this were: Mrs. Alice Yates, Rachel Gabbert Hornbuckle, Miss Oneta McClary, Miss Maurine Farmer, Christine Clardy Reber, Frances Thompson Dillingham, Julian Groshong, Miss Emogene McComas, Mrs. Emma Lee Norton, and again Mrs. Annie Spicer, who was teaching at the time the building burned in 1949. The loss of the school building caused the District to disband and be voted into Smithville District. This misfortune brought to a close the long teaching career of Mrs. Annie Spicer in both Clay and Platte counties.