

Winchell Elementary

This school is named for Elisha Cotton Winchell who was the first Superintendent of the Fresno County Schools in 1860. He was a native of Massachusetts, but was educated at Paris College and its Law Department in the state of Missouri. He practiced law for a short period in Missouri, and then moved to Sacramento, California, where he again practiced law. In 1859 he moved to Millerton, then the county seat of Fresno County. In 1860, he was appointed superintendent of the Fresno County Schools, overseeing the two districts then existing in the county. They were approximately 40 miles apart. Because he was a trained lawyer, Winchell ran for and was elected Fresno County District Attorney. In 1863, he was elected county judge. He is credited with the naming of Blackstone Avenue for the great British jurist. He later opened the first law office in the new city of Fresno. He moved to San Francisco in 1896.

This school site is located at 3722 East Lowe. It serves elementary age children. The site was purchased in 1921 when the growth of Fresno was largely eastward. The main old two-story building was built in 1927-28, and first appeared in the district directory in 1921-22. The school did not grow as rapidly as anticipated, and only the first story was finished off and occupied for use as a school. The second story remained as a "shell" only until 1928-29 and was used until then as a district storage area for school furniture. It is claimed that this building was one of the first in the district of reinforced concrete construction. It has since been replaced by a modern structure.

Photos from Field Act Report of Buildings Constructed Prior to April 1933 (September 1965)

Entrance to Winchell



Rear of building



Site plan prior to demolition

