

OBITUARY : EARLY TEACHER OF CANBERRA

(Canberra Times, Saturday 18 December 1948)

The death of one of Canberra's first school teachers, Mr. Charles William Thompson, aged 81, occurred at Manly last week after a short illness.

Born at Sutton Forest, he accompanied his parents to Murray Flats, near Goulburn, and at 18, entered the Department of Education. His first appointment was to half-time schools at Gibraltar and Naas in the Tharwa district where he was the first teacher. Many of his 25 pupils were older than himself.

These school houses and furnishings were hewn from local timber, and erected by residents. Mr. Thompson had many tales of wallaby hunts with other district pioneers, and was an ardent admirer of William Farrar, the wheat magician.

He was later transferred to Clearmont and Yarra where he married Matilda Jane Wetherspoon, daughter of the late James and Jane Wetherspoon of 'Woodhouseslee.'

He returned to the A.C.T. in 1895, and taught at Ginninderra and Gungahlin. In 1911 he transferred to Hall, and continued teaching there until retirement in 1933.

He holds the distinction of being the first teacher appointed to the A.C.T. and missed only two days attendance in the long period at the Ginninderra school.

He acted as Secretary to the first agricultural show at Ginninderra, and later with Mr. G. Harcourt turned his talent to judging the cookery and preserve section at the Gundaroo Show. In 1933 he was feted by the Parents and Citizens' Association of Hall and presented with an illuminated address as a tribute to this service in the district. A plaque was placed in the school to his memory, and around the school will remain many trees he planted. His home at Manly is called "Ginninderra," after the district in which he laboured so long.

The Rev. J. Macdonald performed the last rites when he was buried in French's Forest cemetery on Saturday. He is survived by his widow and four children, Bertha (Mrs. M. Whelan, Galong), Doris (Mrs. E. J. Beaver, Queanbeyan), Kathleen (Mrs. L. Finlay, Kurra- jong) and Kevin of Canberra.