

# Did you know...

- There were only 48 stars on the American flag when Westport School was in use? Alaska and Hawaii were admitted into the union in 1959.
- Teachers in rural schools were usually young, single girls? Training started in high school and then most girls went on to Normal school to receive a teaching certificate. They received only about \$30 per month in salary. You can see teacher contracts from Westport No. 5 on display inside the schoolhouse.
- Rural schools usually had first- through eighth-grade students, with only two-three students per grade?
- Teachers were not allowed to marry during their teaching term?
- Iowa closed its last country school in 1967, but some states in the west still have country schools for rural populations?



# Westport Schoolhouse



Westport Schoolhouse  
2251 170th St.  
Okoboji, IA 51355  
712-336-6352

[www.dickinsoncountynaturecenter.com](http://www.dickinsoncountynaturecenter.com)

Step back in time to experience life in one of Dickinson County's original country schools.

Westport Schoolhouse is open 10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Tuesday-Saturday the second Tuesday in June  
through the first Friday in September.



# History



Westport No. 5 was one of nine rural schools in Westport Township in Dickinson County. The original building was constructed in 1895 for about \$1,000. A stage was constructed in 1920, making the school the largest in the county.

Pupils attended the school until 1952 when it was transitioned into a community center for the township.

In 1996, Iowa celebrated its sesquicentennial and state leaders requested that each county choose a historical project to celebrate the statehood anniversary. Dickinson County chose to move the last remaining rural schoolhouse, Westport No. 5, to Kenue Park in Okoboji to restore.

The building was moved 22 miles and placed on a permanent foundation and reroofed. It has been open to the public to tour each season since.

# Visit

Visit the restored Westport Schoolhouse to experience what attending a country school was like. Many of the items you will see are original to the school, including the upright piano, Edison record player and library table.



You will also see a coal and corn cob burning stove that heated the room as well as lunches, a recitation bench where the teacher would hear lessons from the students, a pail and dipper for water breaks, antique desks and a disciplinary paddle.

The schoolhouse has a bell tower that is not original to the building, but school bells were common among country schools. **Ask the volunteer on duty if you can ring the bell while you're there!**

# Outdoors



Head outside and check out the apple trees and outhouses, and then get together with your family and friends for a game of Red Rover or Fox and Geese.

Also in Kenue Park, you can find plenty of other fun offerings, including the:

- Okoboji Gold 18-hole Disc Golf Course
- Picnic area and restrooms
- Dickinson County Nature Center
- Pollinator Paradise
- Mowed trails
- Wetland with rehabilitated trumpeter swans
- Osprey viewing tower
- Geocaching



Would you be interested in volunteering at the Westport Schoolhouse? Just call 712-336-6352 for more information!