

First Family Lived in Wigwam When DeWitt Was Settled in 1833



DeWitt had its beginnings in 1833 when David Scott, a native of New York state and a captain in the war of 1812, brought his wife and two sons from Ann Arbor to the vicinity. Three families of Indians lived in wigwams on the banks of the Looking Glass river at that time, and Captain Scott obtained their consent for his family to occupy a wigwam, until he could build a log cabin.

The village is named for DeWitt Clinton, American steamboat builder, whose surname has been taken by Clinton county. DeWitt was the county seat until 1857. On one occasion it lacked only one vote in the state legislature on the question of its selection as the site for the state capitol instead of Lansing.

Fire destroyed most of the original business places of former years. A large hotel erected by Captain Scott in 1842—known for years as Scott's and later as the Clinton house—was burned October 21, 1930, and several store buildings and the postoffice were destroyed along with it. Another earlier fire burned the community's original schoolhouse.

In the accompanying aerial photo, the camera was pointed in a north-easterly direction. It shows the Looking Glass river in the lower right hand corner. Main street runs diagonally from the lower left, making a curve in the background as it makes its way to connect with US-27. Lansing's Turner street, continuing north from the capital city, crosses the river at a point just outside the right-hand border of this

picture and, as Bridge street, intersects with Main street to form the principal corner of the village.

DeWitt's 12-grade public school stands a block to the south and west of the main intersection, and may be seen at lower right.

Cook's store is in the white building at the center of the town. Slightly to the left in the photo and set back from Bridge street is the Masonic temple, with the Community church located in a frame building to the north. DeWitt Grange hall is the long white building across the street, with the Methodist church, a brick building, at its immediate right. The cemetery is on Bridge street at the extreme left.

The wooded area at the bend of the road east of the village marks

the Surratt estate, with the house situated well toward the rear of the property, surrounded by evergreen trees.

The Rosevale Packing company plant, and DeWitt's principal industry, is in the background between the two clumps of trees at far right. Other business establishments which serve the community include the Walker Lumber company, Balderson's grain Elevator, Michigan Associated Telephone company, Woodruff Brothers' bank, three general stores, four garages, a hardware store, a meat market, two barber shops, drug store, library, variety store and implement store. Arthur Newman is postmaster.

A large number of DeWitt residents are employed in Lansing, some eight miles away, and travel to

and from work in personal cars. The village of DeWitt has had no rail service since removal of the Lansing-DeWitt interurban railway several years ago. Three Greyhound buses run each way daily between Lansing and DeWitt Corners and two others make connections into the center of the village. (Journal photo from plane piloted by Tony Winter of Aero-Manor airport.)

Seniors Get Tested

RAPID CITY, S. D. (P)—Seniors in all South Dakota high schools are to get special aptitude tests each year. L. D. Palmerton, personnel director at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, says the tests are designed to help guide students in choosing occupations.

PERTINENT FACTS ON THE VILLAGE OF



DeWitt



Population—Approximately 750

Location—South-central part of Clinton county

Distance from Lansing—Eight miles

Village president—Jerome Vincent

Educational institution—DeWitt public school (12 grades).

Churches—Community church (formerly Baptist) and
Methodist church

Industries—Rosevale Packing company, Balderson's Grain
elevator, Walker Lumber company

Transportation—Greyhound bus.