

DeWitt-- Yesterday and Today ^{5/9/74}

By Faye Hanson

DeWitt has its own poet in the person of Mrs. Pheba Sweet of 217 Scott Street. Mrs. Sweet is 87 years young and has always written poetry. She has resided in DeWitt for 4 years, coming here from Delta Hills where she spent most of her married life on a farm. She is doubly sweet as she has been married twice and both times to men by the name of Sweet, although they were not brothers. Her daughter, Mrs. Naomi Tenney, lives on West Howe Road and her granddaughters, Mrs. Mary Woodruff and Mrs. Jean Blizzard live in DeWitt. She often babysits with her great grandchildren, lives alone and does her own housework. She still writes poetry, many times to commemorate a friend's birthday or for other special occasions. She has had two volumes published and the following poem is from a volume entitled "REMINISCENCES OF DAYS GONE BY."

AT THE AUCTION

Today we went to the auction
It's lots of fun you know
There were mobs and mobs of folks there
Though the wind was bitter cold.

I sat in the car and watched them
As they mulled around the place
Some hanging on to the youngsters
Others carrying them from place to place.

They laughed and seemed so happy
Though occasionally some raindrops fell
Why couldn't the world in general
Enjoy life quite so well?

Happy Mother's Day, Mrs. Sweet.

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Thursday, May 16, 1974

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THIS IS THE DEWITT HIGH SCHOOL ORCHESTRA IN 1928. At that time the school only went through the tenth grade. The last two grades were added in 1936. In the picture from left to right in the back row: Leader, Mrs. Booth, Francis Sibley, Francis Brainerd, John Reust, Francis Klaver, Clyde Cassidy, ----- Surratt, Max Ellwanger, Eleanor Smalley Brainerd. Front row: Donald Forward, Roy Shafley, Virginia Cutler Ackerman and Rhoda Reynolds Pierson.

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TWO VIEWS OF THE OLD DEWITT SCHOOL

The earliest school building was a log structure erected on Sec. 7, upon the farm of Alanson Goodrich and known as the "Goodrich School House". This school stood at the foot of what is now Schavey Road. Miss Betsey Gooch was the first teacher.

The second school was built in district 2 in the village of DeWitt in 1840 on the site of the Fuerstenau school. Both Dr. Seth P. Marvin and J. H. Adams are given as early teachers. This building was replaced by one of more extended proportions, in which the sessions of the court were held for a time, it having been at that time the most pretentious structure at the County seat.

In 1870 the brick school pictured here was built with Prof. Coriel as principal, Miss Edith Williams as assistant and Miss Josie Holmes as intermediate principal.

This school burned in 1936 just before the main part of the Fuerstenau building was ready for occupancy.

One picture was given to the library by the late Helen Dills Stampfly and the other by Joyce Carey Miller, now a teacher in Hastings.

Eleanor Smalley Brainerd, Front row; Donald Ford, Roy Shafley, Virginia Cutler Ackerman and Rhoda Reynolds Pierson.