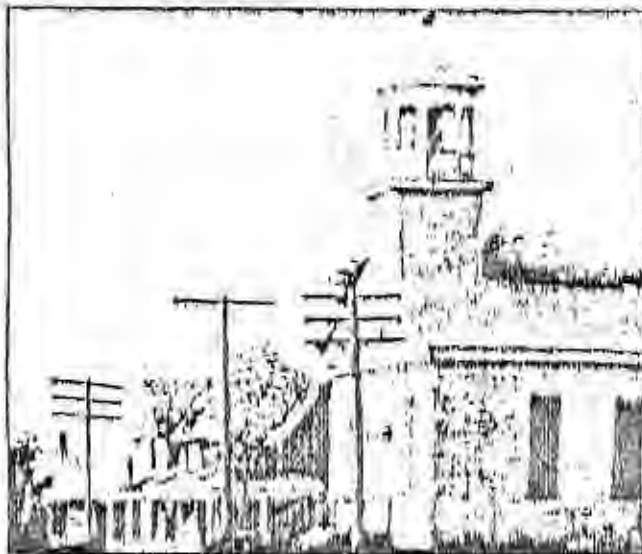


Opinion



The old DeWitt Baptist Church (now Mrs. Ely's Collectibles) as it appeared at the turn of the century.

Historic DeWitt

By Kenneth Coin

Old Baptist records

After 1929, when the Baptist Church congregation merged with members of the Methodist Church, the record books of the Baptist's came up missing. Throughout the following years, many rumors of their existence, or lack thereof, surfaced but none were either confirmed or dispelled.

The actual record books came to light, momentarily, in 1978 at the estate auction of the late Mabel Sibley. Prior to their actual sale, however, they again disappeared. Fortunately, in the 1930s, Mrs. Sibley had taken the time to copy, in abstract form, most of the pertinent information contained in the records including the numerous membership rolls and extractions from minutes of the church society and the building trustees.

The following excerpts are but a sampling of the information contained in the copy:

May 10, 1840 — The Baptist Brethren of DeWitt assembled at Rev. J.R. Pearsall's on Sabbath ... The following brethren were present: Isaac Hewitt, Barna Allen, Gilbert Cushman, Jonathan R. Pearsall, George Pearsall, Hannah Moore, Deborah Marvin, Polly Pearsall, Fanny Hewitt, Aurilla Pearson, and Thankful Cole.

Jan. 10, 1841 — Call Bro. Clark for pastor beginning November last.

March 1, 1851 — Met at schoolhouse near Mr. Hurd's. Sister Christiana Hall (alias Allen) received by letter.

Aug. 23, 1851 — Resolved that in our judgment it is proper to move forward to build a meeting house for that use of the Baptist Denomination in DeWitt. Resolved, that we proceed to organize a Baptist Society according to law. Resolved, that we meet the 20th of Sept. next for the purpose of organizing and choosing trustees. Appointed Rev. T.W. Merrill, Bro. J.B. Clark, J.R. Pearsall, a committee to draft a subscription and to enquire where we can obtain a site for the meeting house...

April 3, 1852 — Voted to purchase of David Sturgis, a certain piece of land on the north side of the Public Square in the village of DeWitt for the purpose of building a meeting house.

July 6, 1853 — At a meeting of the Trustees of the First Baptist Church & Society, held ... at the house of J.D. Edwards in DeWitt, voted that we hire \$100 to pay David Olin for building said house and that we mortgage the said house to secure the payment of the same.

Nov. 12, 1853 — Wife of J.R. Pearsall lies lifeless today in the home of J.R. Pearsall, Clerk of Church.

Dec. 10, 1853 — Met at the meeting house for first time. A good number present.

May 9, 1858 — Withdrew hand of fellowship from Br. Hewitt and wife. Resolved, that the bellry be finished with blinds.

June 30, 1865 — Br. Grinold & wife, Catherine Grinold received by letter from Holly.

Aug. 23, 1873 — Voted to repair meeting house and fence.

Oct. 24, 1885 — Insure church for \$1,000.

Dec. 14, 1889 — Committee appointed to secure a bell and prepare the steeple to a bell.

The abstracted copy of the Baptist record was purchased in a box-lot at Mrs. Sibley's estate auction by Dorothy Ely who subsequently donated it to the Archives of the Clinton County Historical Society. Last year the copy was edited, typed and indexed. Copies of this are now on file at both the Historical Society's archives at the DeWitt Township Hall and at the Faye Hanson Public Library.

Unfortunately, questionable spelling of names and confirmation of dates could not be checked against the original records as they are again unavailable but as it is, the abstract serves as an invaluable tool for genealogists and church and local historians. Perhaps someday the complete original record of DeWitt's pioneer church, as well as the records of other early churches, schools and organizations, will come to light and find their place in a local repository.



DeWitt Church Has Been House of Worship for 115 Years

After 115 Years of Worship, DeWitt Church Still Grows

By FAYE HANSON
State Journal Special Writer

DEWITT — The large white frame building at the corner of Jefferson and Bridge Streets, which gives DeWitt a touch of New England, has been a house of worship for 115 years.

Not only is the architecture of the DeWitt Community Church typical of the New England countryside, but in bygone years the rules of the congregation were almost as strict as those of the Puritans.

The church was built to serve the local Baptists, but in later years became interdenominational.

ing and dedication. The church prospered and grew to 100 members, and then went into a decline. On March 22, 1884, the church was reorganized under



the New Hampshire articles of faith.

The discipline would hardly be tolerated today. The early records tell of a committee whose purpose was to call on members once a month to inquire into their spiritual well being and to investigate any report of anyone doing anything unbecoming to a Christian.

There is a record of one couple being removed from the church rolls for the un-Christian act of quarreling.

REMODELED IN 1921

The building was remodeled and rededicated in 1921. A basement was added at that time. Complete records of the remodel-

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WYOMING sisters die swept through frame home in suburb.

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Not only is the architecture of the DeWitt Community Church typical of the New England countryside, but in bygone years the rules of the congregation were almost as strict as those of the Puritans.

The church was built to serve the local Baptists, but in later years became interdenominational.

The congregation was organized in 1840, but there were no funds in the new settlement to build a church. Meetings were held in homes or in the school. Then on Sept. 1, 1851, the congregation moved to build a church. Early records show the following action: "resolved that in our judgment it is time to move forward and build a meeting house."

SITE BOUGHT

On April 3, 1852, the present site on the north side of the public square was purchased from David Sturgis and \$500 was pledged for a building. The contract was let to David Olin and the edifice, 35 by 50 feet, was completed at a cost of \$13,000. The church was dedicated on Dec. 14, 1853.

The Rev. John Gundersman was the pastor during the build-

ing and dedication. The church prospered and grew to 160 members, and then went into a decline. On March 22, 1884, the church was reorganized under



Vestaburg Tax Meetings Set

VESTABURG — Local taxpayers may consult with the Richland Township Board of Review concerning 1966 tax assessments at two meetings at the library here next week.

Meeting hours will be 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday and 5-11 p.m. Tuesday. Senior citizens' and veterans' exemptions must be in by March 15.

Discuss Medicare

WACUJSTA — A representative of the Social Security Administration will speak on "Medicare" Wednesday at 1 p.m. at the Eagle Township Hall.

the New Hampshire articles of faith.

The discipline would hardly be tolerated today. The early records tell of a committee whose purpose was to call on members once a month to inquire into their spiritual well being and to investigate any report of anyone doing anything unbecoming to a Christian.

There is a record of one couple being removed from the church rolls for the un-Christian act of quarreling.

REMODELED IN 1921

The building was remodeled and rededicated in 1921. A basement was added at that time. Complete records of the remodeling were lost in the DeWitt fire of 1929. The Rev. G. S. Northrup was pastor at the time of the fire.

When the Methodist Church burned in the spring of 1928 their congregation was invited to worship in the church.

A federated church was formed, but lasted only a year. When the organization was dissolved a community church was incorporated on May 15, 1929.

In 1917 the church was moved back 25 feet, a new porch was added and the colonial touch given the lines. New Sunday school rooms, a dining room, kitchen and new heating plant added while the Rev. LaVern Bretz was pastor.

After 115 years serving the town, the church, now under the leadership of the Rev. Daniel Klein, continues to grow.

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Represent Township, lodges are voiced sir proposal.

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Eagle Tax

EAGLE Board of E day at 1 p. ship Hall assessments.

Property that most Clifton Co a result praised. T that this mean that however, rate may l

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MAYSON, Co. 7 Decatur, Ill. Eric, Paul, PHIL LARSA GRAND LEP- t. Gail, Irene John, Marc, nish, Lamsu

for ourselves and for our neighbors. This world is young. We are just beginning to learn how to enjoy many of the things God provided."

Speaking of the church, the institution which he has served so many years, the speaker noted the changed attitude again. "People do not look upon their church as they once did. They do not worship and serve through the church to the extent of olden times. The reason is that there are so many other organizations through which they do a good work and carry on the principles of religion. I am not sure that this is all wrong."

Rev. Northrup recited briefly some of the early history of St. Johns. The upper business block of Clinton avenue was not built when he first came here. He said that he was glad that he lived in St. Johns; that his work and experiences of the years had been happy ones.

Mrs. Northrup was present and spoke briefly, as did Lewis H. Hunt who had known the aged pastor since boyhood. At the conclusion of the program Mrs. Northrup was presented with a huge bouquet by R. G. Allison who had charge of the

program. Two vocal numbers were given by Miss Mabel Astell, granddaughter of Rev. and Mrs. Northrup, accompanied by Mrs. Thomas Cleaver. She sang, "Let Me Live in a Home by the Side of The Road" and "Jesus."

Sunday morning after services at the Bath Baptist church, where he has preached the past five years, Rev. Northrup was the guest of honor at a surprise anniversary observance. In addition to his Bath congregation a large number were present from other churches he has served. A pot-luck dinner was enjoyed in the church parlors after which talks were made by Rev. T. S. Cleaver of St. Johns, Rev. Curry of Okemos, Carl Northrup of Detroit, and several others. Miss Mabel Astell sang several numbers. The church was beautifully decorated with spring flowers.

Rev. G. S. Northrup Celebrates 50th Anniversary As Minister

May 26-1932



REV. G. S. NORTHRUP

St. Johns Rotary Club, Bath Church Pay Tribute To Esteemed Man

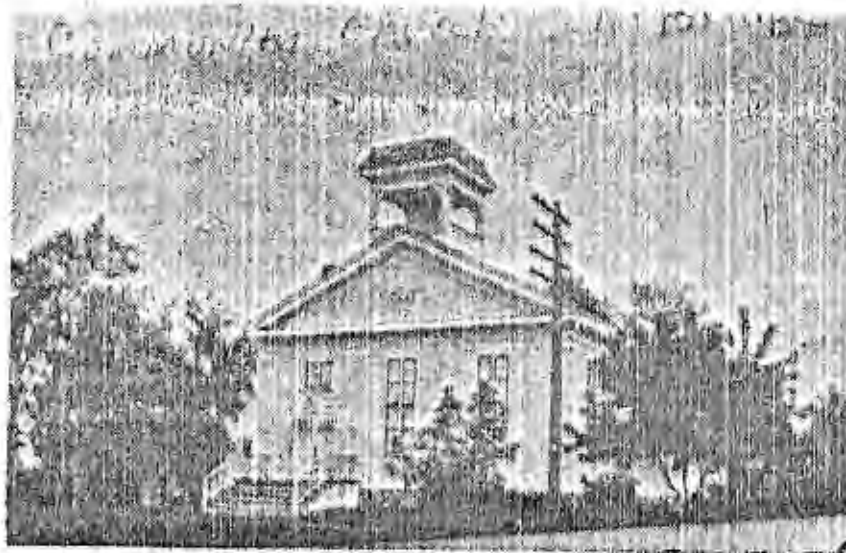
Fifty years ago yesterday, (Wednesday) Rev. G. S. Northrup of this city was ordained a minister at a little church in Schawa in Ionia county. Tuesday the St. Johns Rotary club devoted its program to the honor of the veteran minister and heard him interpret his philosophy of the "Changing Attitudes" of life, while on Sunday morning his congregation at Bath conducted a surprise anniversary observance of him.

"In the early days of my ministry," Rev. Northrup told the Rotarians Tuesday, "it was theologically correct to assume that the world belonged to the devil, and the sooner one could pass on to the Land of Eternal Day the better. People look at it differently nowadays and I'm glad of it."

"God gave us the world to enjoy. There is music, good fellowship, food, clothing, shelter and we are supposed

DeWitt-- Yesterday and Today

by Faye Hanson **THE ADVERTISER**
Thursday, October 17, 1974



THIS IS A PICTURE OF THE DEWITT COMMUNITY CHURCH taken before it was turned around and remodeled. The building faced Jefferson instead of ~~Webb~~ as it does now. In 1947 the building was moved back 25 feet, turned a quarter of the way around and the porch added, thus facing ~~Jefferson~~ ^{Webb} Street. The original building was dedicated on Dec. 14, 1853. The building is now for sale, the congregation having moved into a new and much larger building on Webb Road.

Donation Party.

There will be a Donation Party at the Baptist House of
Worship in Dewitt on

Friday Eve. Feb. 19, '75,

For the benefit of the Pastor

REV A. H. PARSONS.

A General Invitation is Extended to All.

LOCAL HISTORY
BOX COLLECTION
FILE

LANSING JOURNAL PRINTING HOUSE.

Compliments of

O. E. S.

For February 14, 1884.

LOCAL HISTORY
BOX COLLECTION
FILE

LOCAL HISTORY
COLLECTION
BOX FILE

*The Trustees of the
DeWitt Community Church
invite you to attend
the Dedication of the Parsonage
on Sunday, February the twelfth
Nineteen hundred and fifty-six
at the eleven o'clock worship service.
Following the service
a bohemian dinner will be served
in the church parlors.*

Open House at the Parsonage
11924 Franklin Street
three 'til nine o'clock

**SERVICE
of
RECOGNITION and WELCOME
for
REV. AVERILL M. CARSON**

Sunday, March 23, 1958

4:30 p. m.

DE WITT COMMUNITY CHURCH
DeWitt, Michigan

LOCAL HISTORY
COLLECTION
FOX



AVERILL MASON CARSON

Averill M. Carson was born in Ocean City, New Jersey, on May 12, 1928, and attended public schools there.

In 1952, he was graduated from Houghton College, Houghton, New York, from which he received his Bachelor of Arts degree.

During his senior year of college, he felt called to the Christian Ministry, which guided his desire to enter The Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from where he received his Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1955. Mr. Carson was ordained to the Ministry at The Baptist Temple of Philadelphia on September 9, 1954.

While attending seminary he served as youth director at the Trinity Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia and did some supply preaching in various churches.

Prior to accepting a pastorate with the DeWitt Community Church in DeWitt, Mr. Carson was assistant minister at the Jefferson Avenue Baptist Church of Detroit, Michigan and pastor of the First Baptist Church of Newton, New Jersey.

On May 11, 1957, Mr. Carson was married to Miss Dorothy Ann Tasche of Detroit, Michigan at the Westminster Presbyterian Church. The Carsons have one daughter, Kathryn Ann. They reside at the parsonage, 11924 Franklin Street in DeWitt.

PROGRAM

Organ Prelude

* Hymn - "The Church's One Foundation" . . . No. 140

* Invocation and Lord's Prayer

Rev. Douglas Beach, East DeWitt Bible Church

* Scripture Lesson - Ephesians 4:1-16

Rev. Richard W. Barker, DeWitt Methodist Church

Welcome on Behalf of the Community

Mr. Francis Brainerd

Welcome on Behalf of the State

Rev. Arthur L. Farrell, Executive Secretary
Michigan Baptist Convention

Welcome on Behalf of the Lansing Council of Churches

Rev. John F. W. Howell, Executive Director

Anthem - - - - - Senior Choir

Prayer

Rev. Ralph J. Karney, Director of Town & Country Work,
Michigan Baptist Convention

* Hymn - "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord" . . . No. 143

Charge to the Church

Rev. Arthur L. Farrell

Charge to the Pastor

Dr. Homer J. Armstrong
Jefferson Avenue Baptist Church, Detroit

Welcome by the Church

Mr. Frank MacDonald
Chairman of Board of Stewards

Response by Pastor

* Hymn - "Lead On, O King Eternal" . . . No. 311

* Benediction

Rev. Averill M. Carson

Organ Postlude

* Indicates congregation will stand.

*Reception for Mr. and Mrs. Carson in Fellowship
Room down stairs immediately following the service.
All are cordially invited.*

Organist Mrs. Wilma Reed
Choir Director Mrs. Karen Martin

To Greet New Pastors

THE STATE JOURNAL

Lansing, Michigan

Sat. - - Nov. 10, 1962 A-7

Two new ministers in the Lansing area will assume their duties Sunday.

Rev. Daniel A. Kelm, formerly of Berkeley, Calif., succeeds Rev. Averill M. Carson, as pastor of DeWitt Community Church, and Rev. Roy E. Shelpton, 26, formerly of Ravenna, has been called to the Lake Lansing Baptist Church.

An ordained minister of the American Baptist Convention, The Rev. Mr. Kelm, was born in St. Louis, Mo., in 1933, and received his high school education in Chicago. He was graduated from Kalamazoo College and Berkeley Divinity School of California. Mr. Kelm is married and has two children, Daniel and Debora May.

The Rev. Mr. Carson resigned from the DeWitt church to accept a call to the Calvary Church of Minneapolis, Minn.

The new Lake Lansing Baptist minister fills a vacancy created last May 13, when Rev. Lyle Hoag resigned to become pastor of Grace Baptist Church in River Rouge.

A native of Portsmouth, Ohio,

Mr. Shelpton was reared in Detroit. He attended Bob Jones University, Greenville, S. C., and was graduated with an A. B. degree from Cedarville College, Cedarville, Ohio. He received his B. D. degree from the Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary in 1961, and since that time has been continuing his studies at the University of Michigan.

The Rev. Mr. Shelpton has been in the ministry since, 1959, when he started the Ravenna Baptist Church. He is presently serving on the state board of directors for the Conservative Baptist Association of Michigan, with which the Lake Lansing Church is affiliated.

Featured primarily as a youth speaker, The Rev. Mr. Shelpton has appeared at summer camps and youth rallies throughout the state. He also taught remedial reading at the upper elementary level in public schools of Newhall and Ravenna, for one year.

The new pastor is married and has three children, Kitty, 5; Patrick, 4, and Cheri Lyn, 8 months old. The family will live at 1817 Towner st., R. 1, East Lansing.



REV. DANIEL A. KELIN



REV. ROY E. SHELPTON

DE WITT COMMUNITY CHURCH
November 25, 1962
3:00 p.m.

INSTALLATION OF REV. DANIEL A. KELIN

DANIEL A. KELIN

Daniel A. Kelin was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1933. When he was fifteen years old he moved with his family to Chicago, where he completed his high school education.

In 1959 he was graduated from Kalamazoo College with his Bachelor of Arts degree. He then entered the Berkeley Baptist Divinity School where he received his Bachelor of Divinity degree. Mr. Kelin became an ordained minister of the American Baptist Convention this past spring.

While attending Berkeley he was a member of the Drama Team. He, also, worked with the High Street Mission while in California. Mr. Kelin worked with youth groups in Lansing, Michigan and has done supply preaching.

In April of 1958 Mr. Kelin was married to Ruth Johnson. They have two children, Daniel and Debora May. The Kelins are now residing at the parsonage in DeWitt.

RECEPTION FOR MR. AND MRS. KELIN

A reception for Mr. and Mrs. Kelin will be held in the church dining room immediately after the Installation Service. Everyone is cordially invited.

Order of Service

Organ Prelude

*Hymn No. 301 "I Feel the Winds of God Today"

*Invocation and Lord's Prayer

Rev. Scott Irvine, Pastor First Baptist Church,
Lansing

Welcome on Behalf of the Churches of the Community
Rev. Dan Dallas, Pastor DeWitt Methodist Church

Welcome on Behalf of the DeWitt Community Church
Mr. Don Brainerd, Chairman of Board of Stewards

Scripture Lesson - Ephesians 4:1-16

Rev. Bruce Huffer, Assistant Pastor First Baptist
Church, Lansing

Vocal Solo - "O Master, let me walk with Thee"
Mr. Bill Stoller

Message

Rev. James Burgess, Director of Town & Country Work
Michigan Baptist Convention

Charge to the Pastor

Rev. Scott Irvine

Charge to the Church

Rev. Richard Miller, Pastor First Baptist Church,
Ovid and Chairman Clinton Co. Ministerial Assoc.

Response by the Pastor

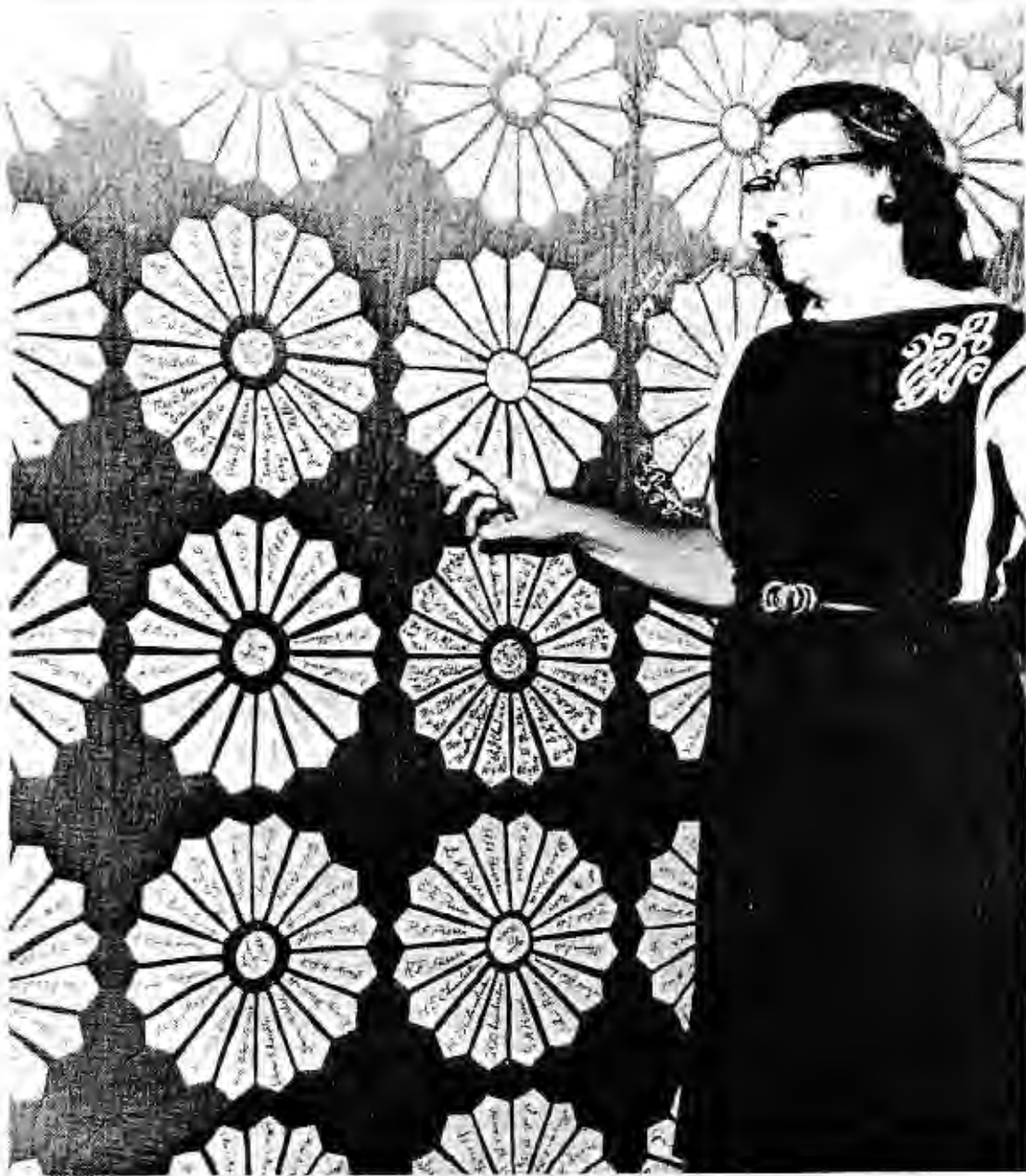
*Hymn No. 324 "Have Thine Own Way Lord"

*Benediction

Rev. Daniel Kelin

Organ Postlude

* Indicates the congregation will stand.



Mrs Earl Pierson now has quilt

This quilt of white and turkey red calico, was made in 1894 and quilted by members of the DeWitt Baptist Church. A charge of 10 cents was made for each name embroidered on the blocks. The proceeds were used to help finance the church. After its completion, the quilt was presented to the pastor, Rev Edward Way and his new bride, the former Bessie Armena Reynolds. The blocks were made by members of the different organizations in the community. Near the center of the quilt are noted names and years of service of the pastors of the DeWitt Baptist Church from the year 1841. This quilt is now in the possession of Mrs Earl Pierson, having been in the Reynolds family since its presentation to the Rev Mr and Mrs Way.

September 9, 1975

PUNTA GORDA MAYOR VISITS SISTER CITY DEWITT



Mayor Alejandro Vernon and his wife Iris of Punta Gorda, Belize, present Mayor Merl Eastman with a plaque made from genuine local woods at a reception in their honor Friday night.

Mayor Vernon spoke to a group gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ted Powell of their tropical home. Formerly known as British Honduras, the small county of Belize

where DeWitt's sister city is located, "is blessed with languages, climate and abundance," Mr. Vernon said. Although the annual per capita income is small, the country abounds in wild game and fish, so that natives may supplement their diet.

The Vernons were returning a visit paid by Mr. and Mrs. Eastman to their home earlier in the year.

5/23/74

Join Us for An Old Fashioned Day at the **NEW** DeWitt Community Church



**All friends and members are invited to meet
at the present DeWitt Community Church
on Sunday, June 2nd at 9:45 A.M.
and walk with us to the
NEW DeWitt Community Church
on Webb Road.**

There will be a Picnic at noon.

A DAY OF FUN AND THANKSGIVING