

DeWitt-- Yesterday and Today

by Faye Hanson



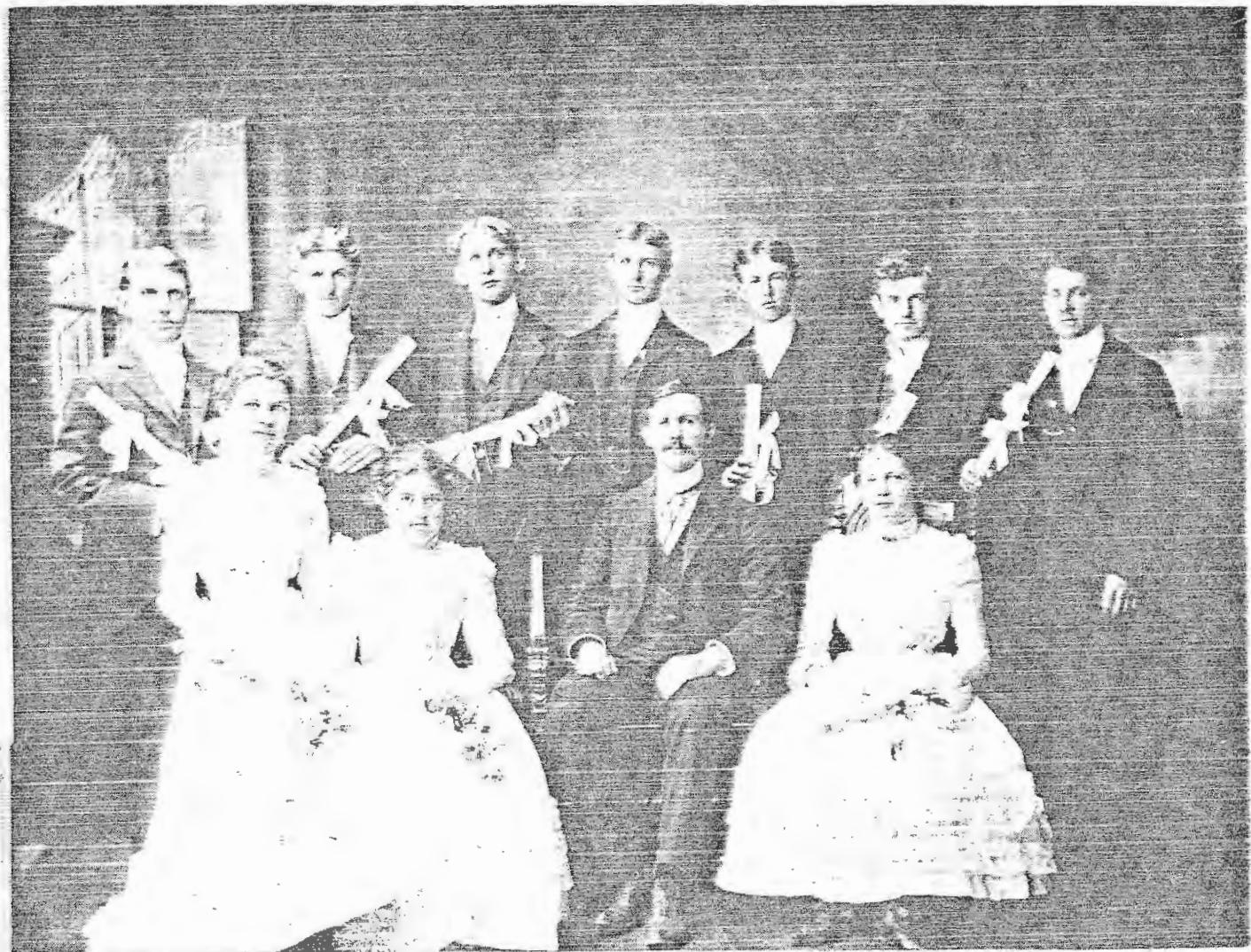
This is a snapshot of the SCHAVEY HOUSE taken about 1915 with Winfield Welton standing in front. The house was built in 1886 by Theodore W. Schoewe (angelized by later generations to Schavey.) The PORTRAIT AND BIOGRAPHICAL ALBUM OF CLINTON & SHIAWASSEE COUNTIES HAS THIS TO SAY: "Theodore W. Schoewe, a prominent and wealthy German-American citizen of DeWitt Township, Clinton County, has one of the finest brick farm residences in that county. It is beautifully situated on the south bank of the Looking Glass River about one mile west of the village of DeWitt. (Now within the city limits)

Mr. Schoewe came to this country in 1854 at the age of 11. He came to Michigan at the age of 25 and worked in Detroit at the Michigan Central Railway shops for 2 years at \$55.00 per month, then he returned to Ohio and bought 48 acres of land from his father, and later received the 27 acres which was his share of the estate. He farmed there until November of 1872, after which he bought 80 acres in DeWitt Township, about one mile south of his present residence. After about 3 years he exchanged that property for his present farm. He married Rebecca Heitmeyer Sept. 6, 1864. They had 10 children."

Picture loaned to the library by Thelma Foster

DeWitt Yesterday and Today

By Faye Henson



This is the graduating class of DeWitt High School, 1899. In the back row are: Harry Moon, Fred Tucker, Ed Schavey, Charles Reynolds, Floyd Williams, Elmo Hath, Fred Schavey; Front row; Merle McLouth Kraas Walker Burns, Celia Sipley Simmons, Hugh Gibbs (Teacher) Maude White Carl. Picture given to the library by Helen Kraas in memory of her mother, Merle Burns.

DeWitt-- Yesterday and Today

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ORDER: EASTERN STAR

WILL GIVE

A SOCIAL PARTY

Clinton Hall, DeWitt,

DeWitt,

Thursday, February 14th, 1884.

Yourselves and Ladies are Respectfully
Requested to Attend.

Room Managers.

E. PENNELL, M. T. WOODRUFF

Chairman

Miss S. J. G.

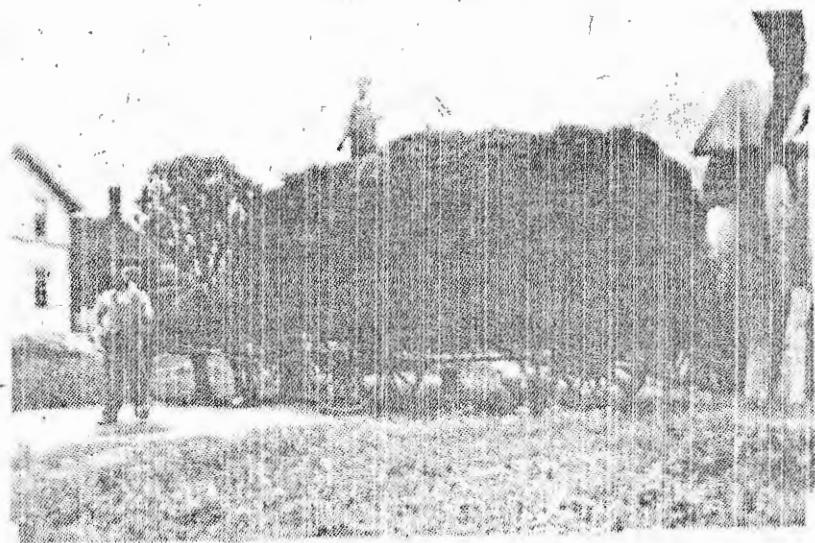
Old Standard Hotel, DeWitt

THIS IS AN INVITATION TO A DANCE SPONSORED BY THE DEWITT
ORDER OF EASTERN STAR FEBRUARY 14, 1884 AT THE OLD CLINTON
HOUSE. THE O.E.S. WAS ORGANIZED IN DEWITT IN 1881 AND STILL
HAS AN ACTIVE CHAPTER HERE.

Day, February 19, 1976

DeWitt- Yesterday and Today

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This is how hay was put up in the 1920's and 30's. This shows Fay Snyder in front of a load at his farm on Chadwick Rd. Picture taken at the Snyder home on Chadwick now owned by Melvin Gibson who loaned this picture.

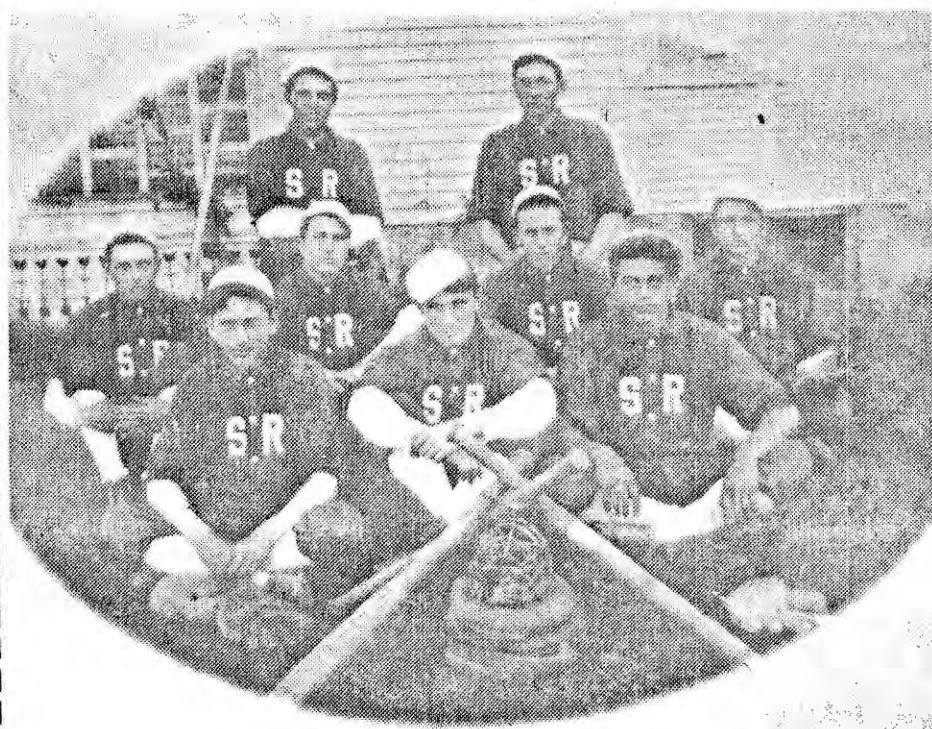
The Bicentennial Commission has a new supply of Bicentennial Flags for sale for \$10.00.

There are also a few Bennington Flags (Stars and Stripes with a 76) for the same price. May be bought at the Library.

By, February 26, 1976

DeWitt- Yesterday and Today

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This is the 1909 South Riley Baseball Team. They were seldom beaten. In the back row are: Eddie Ward and Earl Farrier; middle row: Glen Ward, Kenneth Cutler, Glenn Miller, and Bert Farrier; front row: Lee Bissell, Earl Wright, and Harry Smith. To the best of my knowledge the only player still living is Kenneth Cutler, who lives in the Upper Peninsula. This picture was loaned by his daughter, Virginia Ackerman.

Day, April 29, 1976

DeWitt- Yesterday and Today

By-Faye Hanson

We of the Bicentennial Commission wish to thank the Lion's Club and Fire Department for playing a Benefit basketball game, it brought in \$55.00 to add to our growing fund for activities on the week of the Fourth. We also extend a big THANK YOU to the chorus of the DeWitt Middle School and their director, Linda Eckland, for the fine Bicentennial music at half time. It was enjoyed by all.

The prizes for the essay contest are on display in the Middle & High Schools. It is through the generosity of the Lion's Club that these were made possible. These will be engraved with the winner's names and presented at Government Night on Monday, June 28th. All students entering will also be presented with a parchment certificate to commemorate their participation.

THE ADVERTISER, Thursday, May 13, 1976

Yesterday and Today

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THE COMING OF THE TELEPHONE TO DEWITT, probably between 1910 and 1915. This shows farmers bringing loads of poles into town.

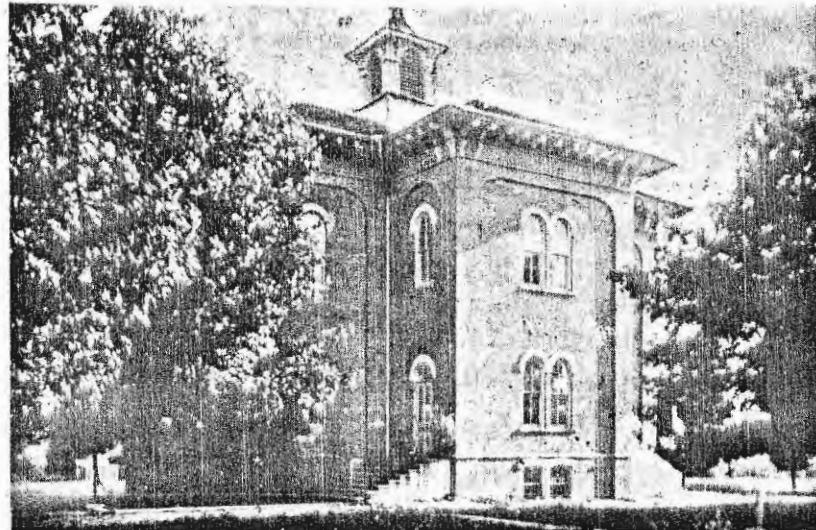
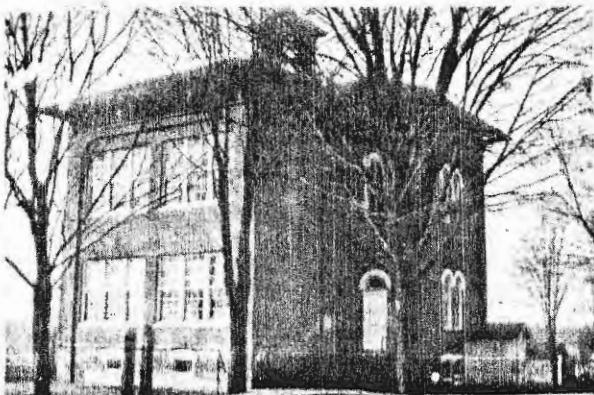
Picture taken on DeWitt's main corner looking north, showing G. A. Williams General Store which burned in the great fire of 1930. The Methodist Church which was erected in 1895 and burned from an overheated furnace in 1927. Next is the Grange Hall which was used by this farmers' fraternal organization from 1875 to 1966 and is now an upholsterer's shop.

Notice the unpaved streets.

Picture donated to the DeWitt Public Library by the late Mr. and Mrs. Robert Norris.

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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 Schavay 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.

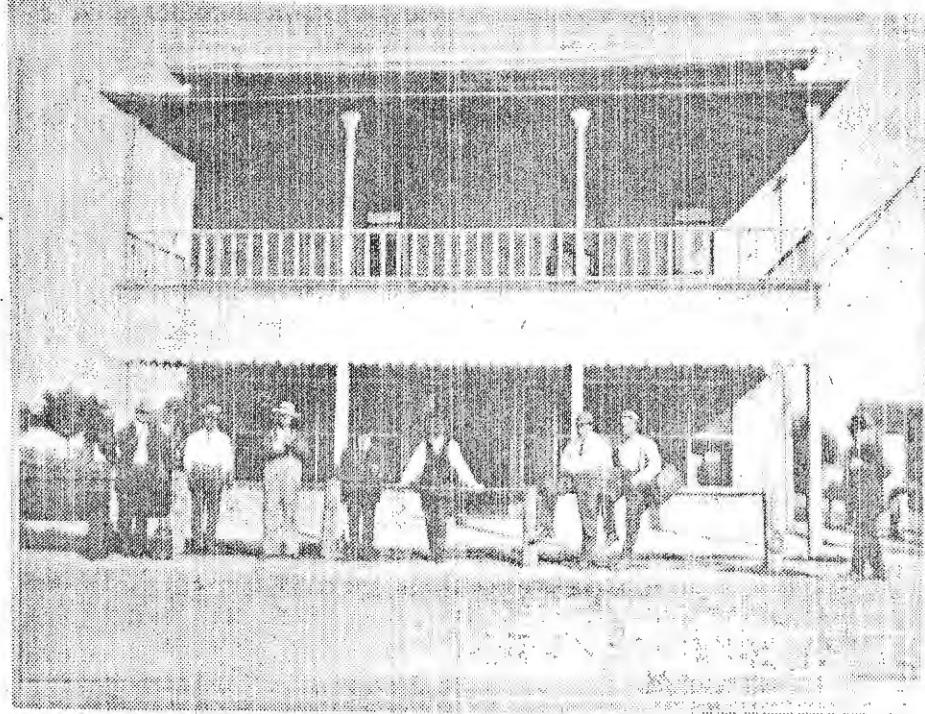
In 1870 the brick school pictured here was built with Prof. Coriel as principal, Miss Edith Williams as assistant and Miss Josie Holmes as intermediate principal.

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.

DeWitt-- Yesterday and Today

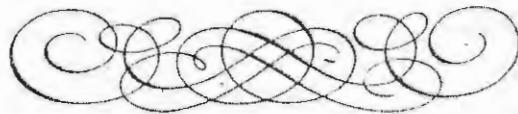
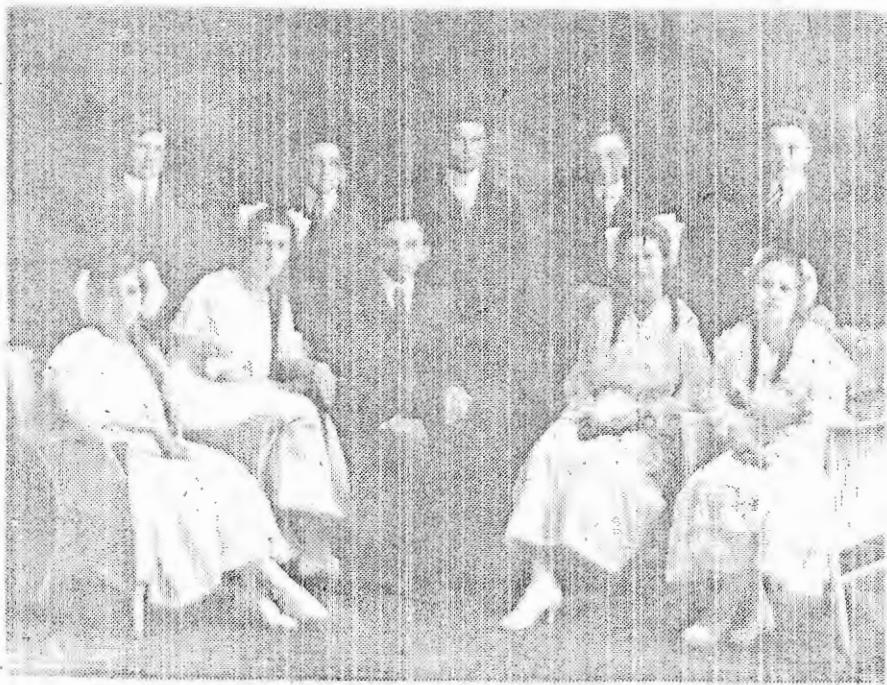
By Faye Hanson



This is a picture of Homer Braze's General Store now the Shingle Shack, taken in the early 1900's. Notice the hitching rail for horses that the men are leaning on. Homer Braze is second from the left, number 6 is Jack Durham, number 7 is Mark Norris and the end man is Ira Ward.

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GRADUATION CLASS DEWITT HIGH SCHOOL 1917

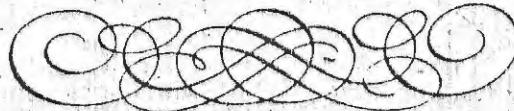
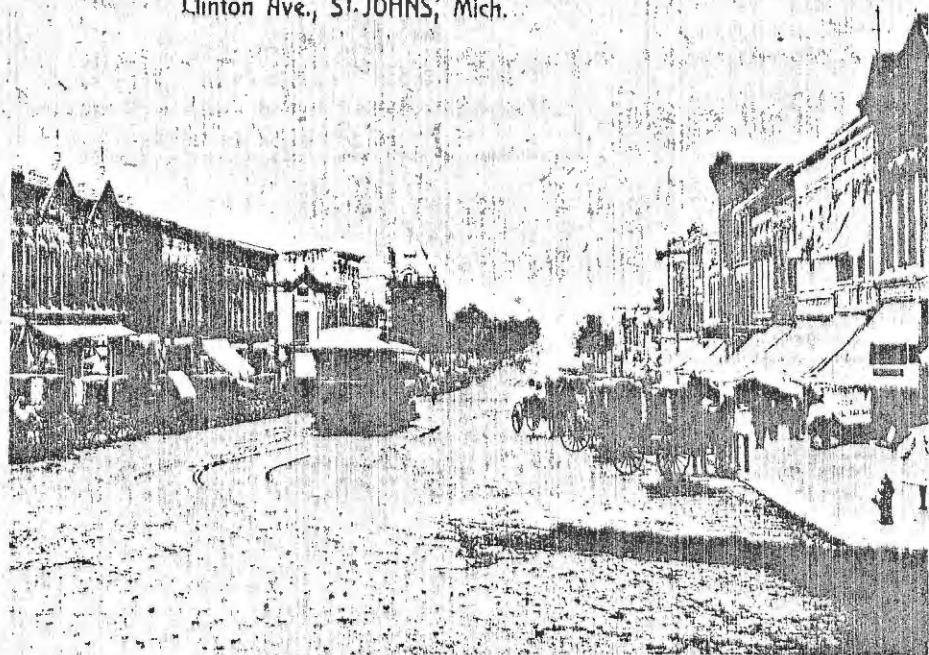
ARTHUR MAGSIG, GERALD HAMMOND, DON IRISH,
REUBEN WISEMILLER, GEORGE BUTLER, FLORENCE
(KLAVER) MAGSIG, LENA MOSES, NELLIE (CORTRIGHT)
PLACE, BERTHA (STAUB) LENNAMANN.

MILDRED TAYLOR - member of our class passed
away before graduation of scarlet fever.

DeWitt-- Yesterday and Today

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Clinton Ave., ST. JOHNS, Mich.



THIS IS A PICTURE OF THE INTERURBAN TRAIN that ran from St. Johns to Lansing via DeWitt. It shows Clinton Avenue, St. Johns, looking north from the court house. Notice the horse and buggies of shop-
pers tied up to the hitching rails. This picture was taken about 1903 and was loaned to the library by Mr. and Mrs. Burl Dieter.

DeWitt-- Yesterday and Today

By Faye Hanson

FRIDAY, CIVIC LEADERS marked the 141st anniversary of DeWitt's founding by dedicating the first phase of West River Park (6 blocks west of the traffic light, on Main Street) and receiving the first of several large hand-carved city limit signs welcoming people to "Historic DeWitt - Founded Oct. 4, 1833". These signs are hand-carved from redwood blanks by Lansing craftsman, Leon (Jake) Smeltzer.

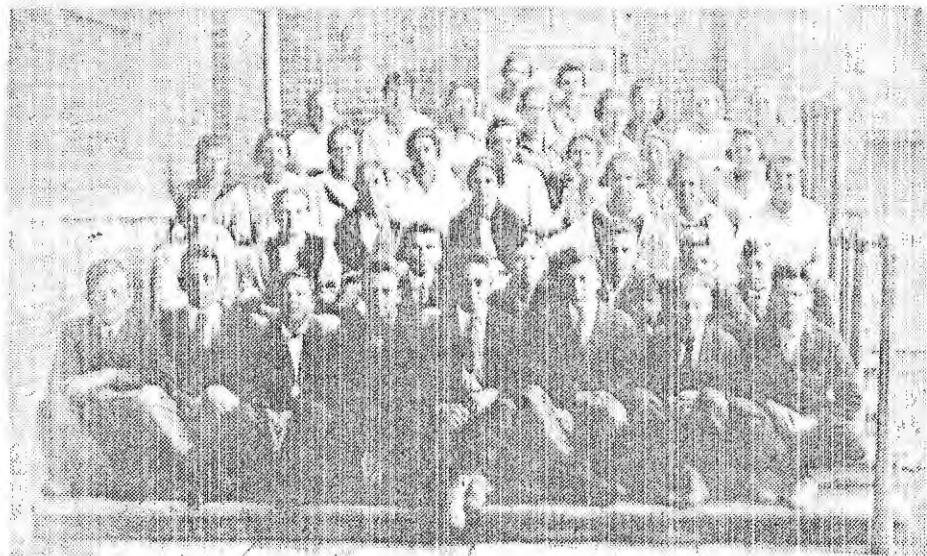
The signs are being hung at the three principal entrances to the city; the grounds of the Franciscan Retreat, the New England style Community Church and the new West River Park serving as wooded settings for the red, white and blue signs. They were given to the city by American Bank and Trust, Michigan Beef Co., and by Millbrook Meadows, Inc.

Founder's Day Ceremonies also kicked off DeWitt's Bi-Centennial plans which will culminate with a week long celebration the week of July the Fourth, 1976. Many plans are under way to restore historical sites in the area and to make people in DeWitt aware of their heritage. In 1976 we will be celebrating our 143rd birthday as well as our country's 200th birthday. Those on the Bi-Centennial Commission are Faye Hanson, Chairman; Eleanor McKinney, Secretary; Ralph Woodruff, Orla McGuire, Marilyn Coin, Larry Arbanus and Ted Powell, with Mayor Murl Eastman as ex-officio member.



DeWitt- Yesterday and Today

By Faye Hanson



This is the 1918-19 class (10th grade) of DeWitt School. Sadie Trumble was the teacher. In the Picture are Lila Gisenhaver Stampfly, Elizabeth Keck Richmond, Ella Baird Blizzard, Ruth Moses Draper, Letha Weismiller Parkhouse, Hazel Lealand, Helen Feightling, Lillie Lietzke Eddy, Lucille Brya Calder, Bertha Tibbits Klaver, Lois Webb Wellman, Edna Farrler DuBriell, Adelia Hammond Palmer, Mildred Weismiller, Merrita Newman, Lorna Clark Gibson, Wilhelmina Easton Reed, Norma Calder, Rilla Newman, Cutler, Neva Conway, Elsie Parks Jones, Daniel Klaver, Alvin Lorenz, Ralph Woodruff, Gordon Kuhnle, John Decker, Coleman Noble, Lawrence Feightling, Clarence Watt, Lauritz Dunham, Donovan Cutler, Albert Doty, and Charles Mankey. Picture loaned by Bertha Klaver.

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Looking east from the main four corners, picture taken sometime in the 30's. Building that is now the Shingle Shack is on the corner. The rest of the buildings on that side have been demolished with the exception of the building now used by O'Shaughnessy as a bump shop. On the opposite corner there is a barricade around where the Brook's Drug Store stood.

DeWitt- Yesterday and Today

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1929 DEWITT HONEYMOONERS, Mr. and Mrs. Hershel Parks. Mrs. Parks was the former Marguerite Rohrer. Loaned to the library by a friend of the Park's.

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THE LIBRARY WILL BE SPONSORING its Arts & Crafts Show Saturday, August 16. In connection with the Ox Roast. If you live in the DeWitt Area and would like to enter call the library 669-3156 or stop in to see us.

DeWitt-- Yesterday and Today

By Faye Hanson



This is the 1927 first grade class of DeWitt School. It includes Howard Courtland, Jean Newman, and Thelma Foster. How many others can you recognize?

In last weeks article, the information we received was incomplete. There were actually only 10 of the students pictured who were in the graduating class. They were: Ruth Moses Draper, Letha Weismiller Parkhouse, Hazel Lealand, Lillie Lietzke Eddy, Bertha Tibbits Klaver, Gordon Kuhnle, John Decker, Coleman Nobie, Clarence Watt, and Albert Doty.

DeWitt- Yesterday and Today

By Faye Hanson



This advertisement calendar was given to the library by Ken Coin. Can anyone tell us where the John D. Case Store was located? Evidently it was a Grocery & Bakery and was in business in DeWitt in the early 1900's.

By Faye Hanson

The first roads through this part of Michigan ran through DeWitt. The Grand River Trail followed the north side of the Looking Glass River from its junction with the Grand in Portland, Ionia County, through southern Clinton County, through DeWitt village to Laingsburg, and continued from there through Indian villages in Shiawassee, Genesee and Oakland Counties finally connecting Clinton County with Pontiac and Detroit. Another trail led through central Clinton from Maple Rapids to the present site of DeWitt city, then Scott's tavern, crossing the Grand River trail and the Looking Glass River and was lost in Ingham County. This was many years before Lansing came into existence. The Pontiac and Grand River road was one of the most prominent of these primitive highways. This route lay from Pontiac to Ionia and crossed Clinton County from its eastern to western line. Its course ran as follows: from Pontiac westward in Oakland County to Hillman's Tavern in Tyrone Township of Livingston County, on through Shiawassee County striking Byron, Fremont, Hartwellville and Laingsburg; into Clinton through DeWitt and Wacousta terminating by way of Portland in Lyons, Ionia County. Parts of this first road are incorporated in Round Lake Road. This is why it doesn't run in a straight line. When the road enters Shiawassee County it is called the Grand River Trail. The Grand River Turnpike (old U.S. 16 and Grand River through Lansing) was not opened through Clinton, Watertown and Eagle Townships until 1854.

Judge Samuel Dexter from New York State brought in pioneers to colonize the Dexter tract in Ionia County and they passed through DeWitt in May, 1833. They went westward from DeWitt village and traveled in a northwesterly direction through what is now Riley, Bengal and Dallas townships on to Lyons, is still called the Dexter Trail and may be taken from Pratt Road to Lyons if you would like to follow in the steps of early settlers of this area.

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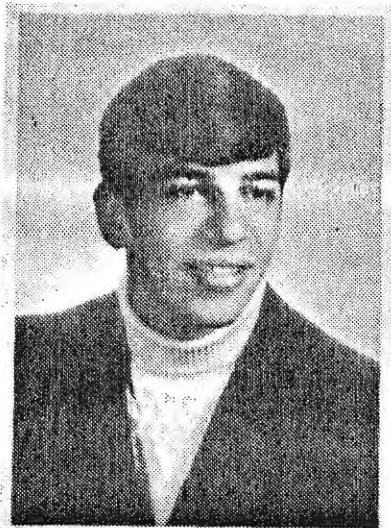
This is the north side of Main Street looking toward the light. The building on the left has been used as a residence, library, telephone office, and is at present the home of the Family Barbershop. The next building at various times has housed Wood's Undertaking Parlor, a restaurant and bakery, U.S. Post Office, library and a beauty shop. It was torn down in 1968.

The next was Harry Moon's Grocery, it burned with the next two buildings in 1930. Next to Moon's is Smiley's Variety Store and Lietzke's Grocery. Across the corner is M. E. Towne's Grocery and Dry Goods Store, the building now houses the Shingle Shack.

This photograph was taken early in this century and was given to the library by the late Helen Dills Stampfly, daughter of DeWitt pioneers.

DeWitt-- Yesterday and Today

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DR. ANDREW N. PAQUET

Andrew Norman Paquet, son of Mrs. Mary Paquet of 121 West Washington Street, received a Doctor of Philosophy degree in chemical engineering from Michigan State University last month.

Andy was valedictorian of his 1969 DeWitt High School graduation class where he was president of the Student Council and a member of the National Honor Society.

He was admitted to the M.S.U. Honors College as a Freshman. This college is open to students who attain a 3.5 (A minus) grade point average and are ranked in the top 5% of the M.S.U. student body. It gives Superior Undergraduates an opportunity to develop intellectually according to their own academic interests.

He completed the work for his doctorate in five years and has been engaged by Dow Chemical Company of Midland as an Experimental Engineer. He and his wife, Janet, will reside in Midland. All the best from your friends in DeWitt, Andy!

DeWitt- Yesterday and Today

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 Mills 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.

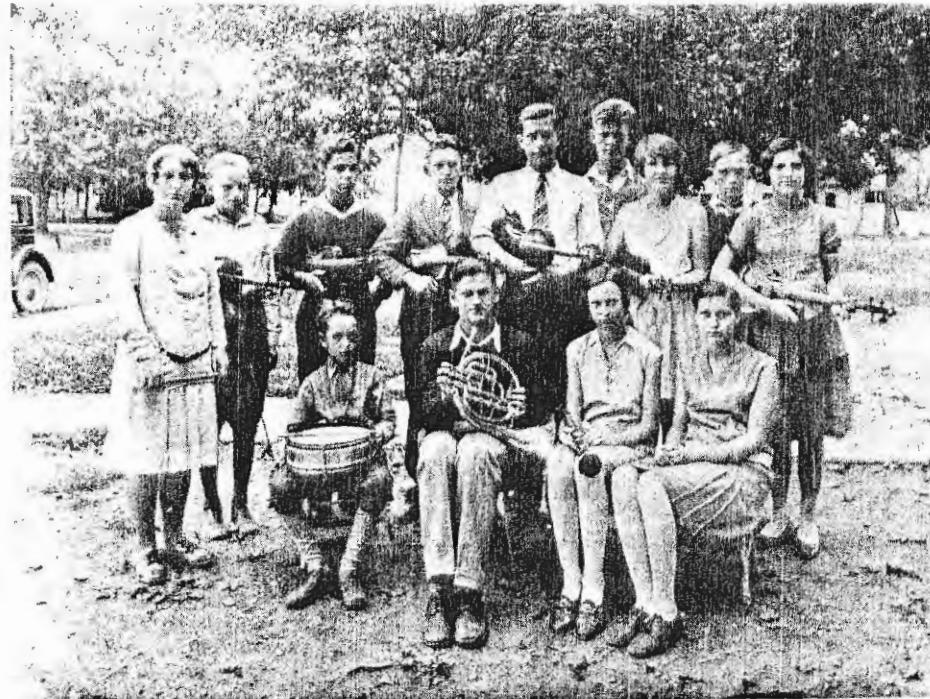
I sat in the car and watched them
As they mulled around the place
Some hanging on to the youngsters
Others carrying them from place to place.

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.

DeWitt-- Yesterday and Today

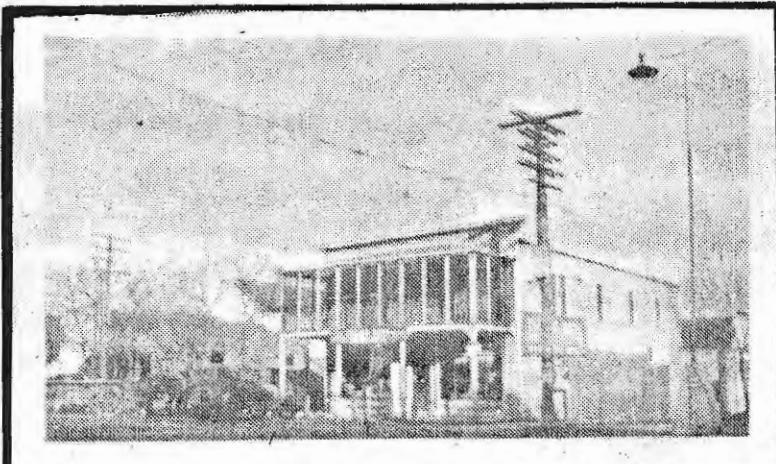
By Faye Hanson



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.

DeWitt-- Yesterday and Today

By Faye Hanson



THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF BRIDGE AND MAIN STREETS. This building did not burn in 1930 when most of the downtown area went up in flames. Homer Bra-
zee had a business in this building and later M. E. Towne had a drygoods and grocery store here. It now houses the Shingle Shack and has just been remodeled. Notice the hitching rail in front to tie horses to, also the street light with DeWitt painted on its base.

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Don't Miss It!

On Monday, May 10th at the DeWitt Middle School the DeWitt Lion's Club will play DeWitt City Fire Dept. in a Bicentennial basketball game, time: 7:30 P.M. Adults: \$1.00. Students: 50¢. The DeWitt Middle School chorus will sing at half time in the Bicentennial theme. Monies gained from the game will be used for our July celebration.

Monies from the Home Tour last fall are being used for 3 historic signs and the replacement of the bronze tablet put up in the city in 1913 by the Clinton County Pioneer Society proclaiming DeWitt as the 1st permanent white settlement in the county. These will be dedicated on Friday, June 11.

The Lion's Club has donated \$100.00 for prizes, for the essay contest in the middle and high schools on "What Heritage Means To Me".

On May 21 and 22 we will be selling wooden nickels printed with Bicentennial, DeWitt, Michigan 1976 on the back. We are offering \$100.00 prize for the best float in the parade on July 3rd, plus other parade prizes; we have hired the Wulutzer Band Wagon to be in the parade and to play on the street for the day and that is costing \$200.00. We are also offering prizes for the Sports Night activities. So when you are offered a wooden nickel on the 21st or 22nd please give generously. All activities offered the week of July Fourth in DeWitt will be free of charge. There will be a huge church service, Government Night, Sport's Night, Bicentennial Concert, Senior Citizens Night, a Bicentennial Ball on the tennis courts and a grand celebration on July 3rd.

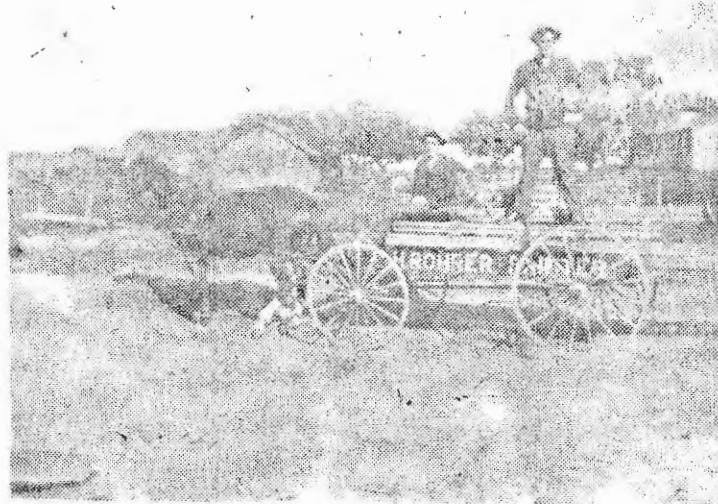
DeWitt-- Yesterday and Today

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This is East Main Street looking from the main corner toward U.S.27. The building with a belfry is the DeWitt Township Hall where all early government in the area was carried out. The desk from this building is now in the library. Next is Les Farrier's poolhall, then the Chevrolet Garage, then the tavern which burned several years ago; the building on the end is where Dr. Smith now has his office. This picture was loaned to the library by Don Reed.

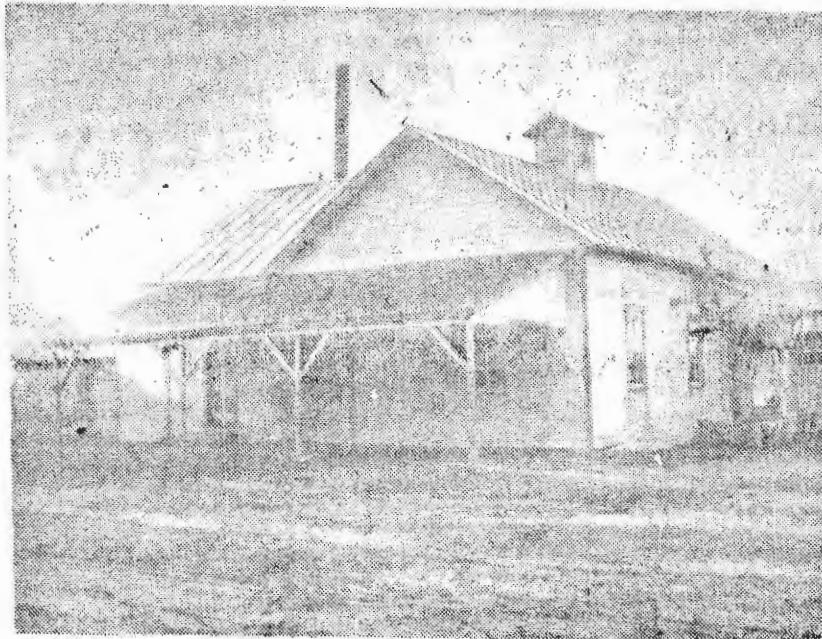
DeWitt- Yesterday and Today



THIS IS A PHOTO OF H. ROHRER AND HELPER taken early in this century. They were painters and decorators in the DeWitt area. Picture belongs to Mr. and Mrs. Burl Dieter.

DeWitt--Yesterday and Today

By Faye Hanson



THIS IS A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE OLD DEWITT CREAMERY that stood on the southwest corner of East Main and Market Streets. Florence Smith now has a home on that location. Picture loaned to the library by Zelma Green.

DeWitt-- Yesterday and Today

By Faye Hanson



THIS IS A PICTURE OF THE SIXTH GRADE at DeWitt School in 1913-14. Included in the picture are: Lois Webb, Lillie Lietzke, Dan Klaver, Kittie Caruss, Lulu Howe, Elsie Parks, Edna Farrier, Adelia Hammond, Agnes Caruss, Bertha Tebbits, Lilah Geisenhaver, Beulah Howe, Glenn Halterman, Alvin Lorenz, Lauritz Dunham, Doris Gall. The teacher was Blanche Lewis Cutler. Picture loaned to the library by Bertha Klaver.

DeWitt-- Yesterday and Today

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THE OLD DEWITT MOTHER'S CLUB was organized in 1913. They worked with mothers and children and sometimes sewed for needy mothers; at one time they made an entire layette. They also sponsored an annual teacher's reception, the first one held at the home of Mrs. C. C. Woodruff. They also presented a framed picture to the High School.

They sponsored a circulating library which was in the home of Caroline Smith for two years. (This was the forerunner of the present DeWitt Public Library which was established in 1934 by this club which was then called the DeWitt Civic Club).

They joined the Federated Women's Club of Clinton County and entertained them at the old Methodist Church.

The club was discontinued in April, 1917, because of the war. Members voted unanimously to disband and become members of the DeWitt Red Cross. They turned their treasury of \$14.00 over to the Red Cross. They had one more formal meeting when they decided to sponsor a teacher's reception at the home of Mrs. McLouth.

Near spring of 1919 several members met at the home of Mrs. Viola Thompson to talk about reorganizing the Club. In two weeks they met at the home of Mrs. Grace Coon where they reorganized and elected officers. After much discussion it was decided to call this Club the DeWitt Womaen's Club. It was later called the DeWitt Civic Club and went out of existence during World War Two.

In 1934 Mrs. Mildred Carris, with the help of this club, established the DeWitt Public Library. It had many homes, the only one surviving is the Family Barber Shop, until Mrs. Gerda Rogerson gave the land that the library now stands on to be used for a Public Library.

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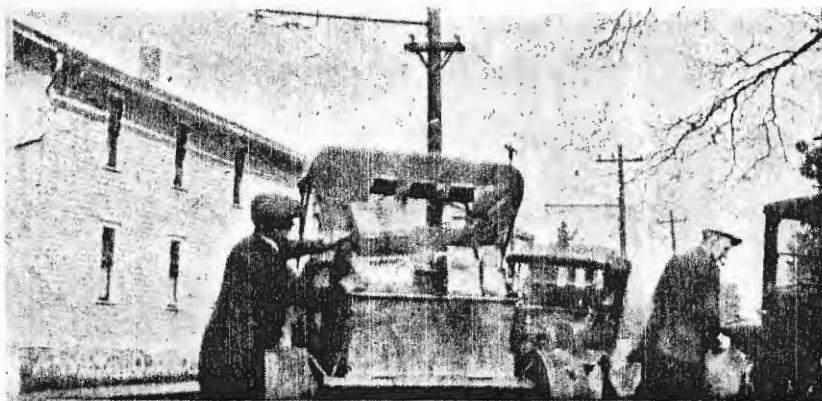
THIS IS THE RESIDENCE at 125 Scott Street. This card was sent to Mrs. S. A. Stewart, Little Falls, Minn., August 14, 1911 by Laura Williams who lived in the house. Notice the old Clinton House in the background and the windmill that provided water for it. This picture was loaned to the library by Eleanor McKinney.

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MAIL CARRIERS: LEW DRAKE, CHARLIE REYNOLDS, CARL VANFLEET, POSTMASTER F. HAZEL AND CARRIER LEVI S. SIBLEY



LEW DRAKE AND C. REYNOLDS LOADING THEIR MAIL TRUCK

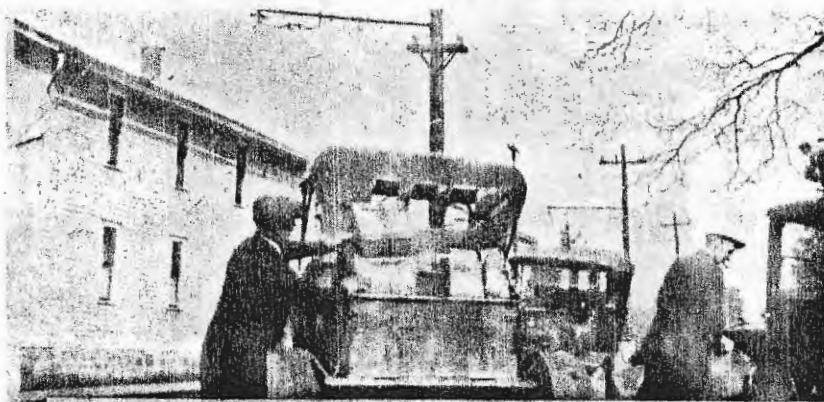


POSTMASTER FRED HAZEL AND WIFE BLANCHE IN FRONT OF POST OFFICE AND DEPOT

THIS IS HOW THE MAIL WAS CARRIED IN THE 1920's.
The depot on Franklin Street was also the Post Office for many years. Fred Hazel was the post-



MAIL CARRIERS: LEW DRAKE, CHARLIE REYNOLDS, CARL VANFLEET. POSTMASTER F. HAZEL AND CARRIER LEVI S. SIBLEY



LEW DRAKE AND C. REYNOLDS LOADING THEIR MAIL TRUCK



POSTMASTER FRED HAZEL AND WIFE BLANCHE IN FRONT OF POST OFFICE AND DEPOT

THIS IS HOW THE MAIL WAS CARRIED IN THE 1920's. The depot on Franklin Street was also the Post Office for many years. Fred Hazel was the postmaster assisted by his wife, Blanche. Their home was at 113 Wilson Street, now owned by their granddaughter, Virginia Ackerman.

Rural mail carriers were Lew Drake, Charlie Reynolds, Carl VanFleet and Levi Sibley. They gathered each morning at the depot to load up their Model T trucks and cars to carry mail into the countryside around DeWitt, often the roads were almost impossible.

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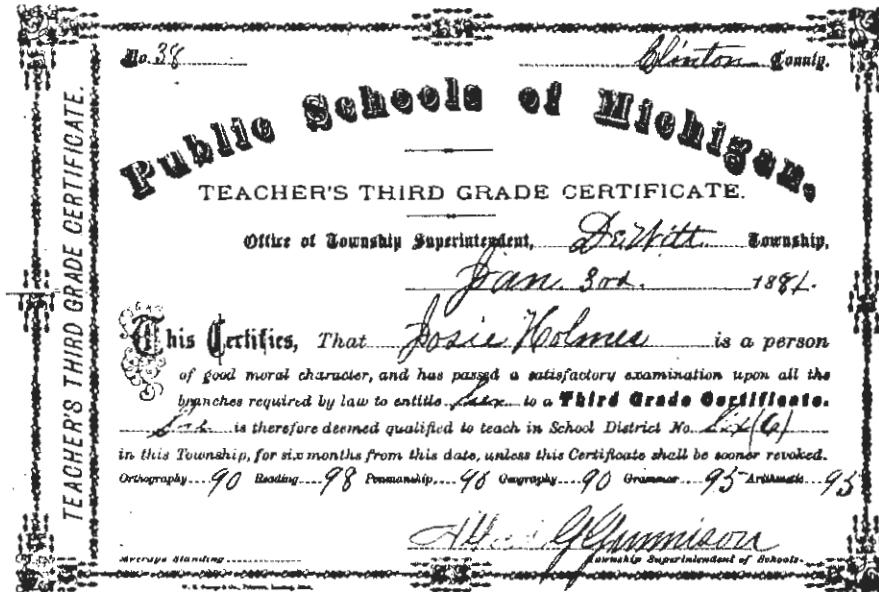
— by Faye Hanson —



CUB SCOUTS OF EIGHTEEN YEARS AGO at an outing at Alward Lake. From left to right: Gary Hanson, Bill Wedel, Mike Couzzens, Eugene Norris, Paul Phillips, Dick Overholt and Bob Bissell. Their Den Mother was Gerry Phillips.

DeWitt- Yesterday and Today

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THIS IS A TEACHING CERTIFICATE issued to Miss Josie Holmes in January, 1881. Miss Holmes was in charge of intermediate education for DeWitt School from 1870 until the turn of the century. Can you imagine teachers of today standing still for a phrase in their contract reading "of good moral character"?

In 1880 the DeWitt School District (all of DeWitt Township) was divided into one fractional and five whole districts (DeWitt, Hurd, Lott, Gladden, Gunnisonville and the sixth district escapes me) with the following board of directors: Robert McConkey, James Hath, A. A. Woodruff, Christian Kraus, A. S. Weste and Edgar Hurd. The value of school property in DeWitt Township at that time was \$11,900, embracing one brick and five frame buildings. Three male and eleven female teachers were employed, 326 scholars resided within the township.

The certificate was given to the library by Helen Kraas, daughter of the late Merle Walker Burns, daughter of early DeWitt pioneers.