

This piece is donated to the city of DeWitt by Millbrook Meadows, builders of custom homes in Historic DeWitt.



DeWitt yesterday

Three years before the founding of Lansing, David Scott, an officer in the War of 1812 and an Indian linguist, crossed the Looking Glass River and set up camp near the Indian Village of Wabwahnasupu. The Chippewa village welcomed him and his family, loaning them the use of a wigwam for the winter of 1833.

Captain Scott built a log cabin, soon started a trading post and named the new village after the popular governor of New York, DeWitt Clinton.

The site of the settlement was on the Indian Trail from Pontiac to the new village of Grand Rapids and as the western part of Michigan began to develop, DeWitt became an important way-station on the trail. Scott's trading post prospered and, twenty years before the Civil War, he built the largest hotel in Mid-Michigan. The hotel served as the Clinton County Court House, the Circuit Judge's Chambers, and a popular week-end gathering place for many socially prominent people from the new state capitol.

The popularity of Scott's Tavern waned with his death in 1851. The building eventually became "Joe's Tavern" and many local residents can still recall the night in October, 1930, that a cigar under the porch started a fire that destroyed the old hotel and nearly a third of the business district.





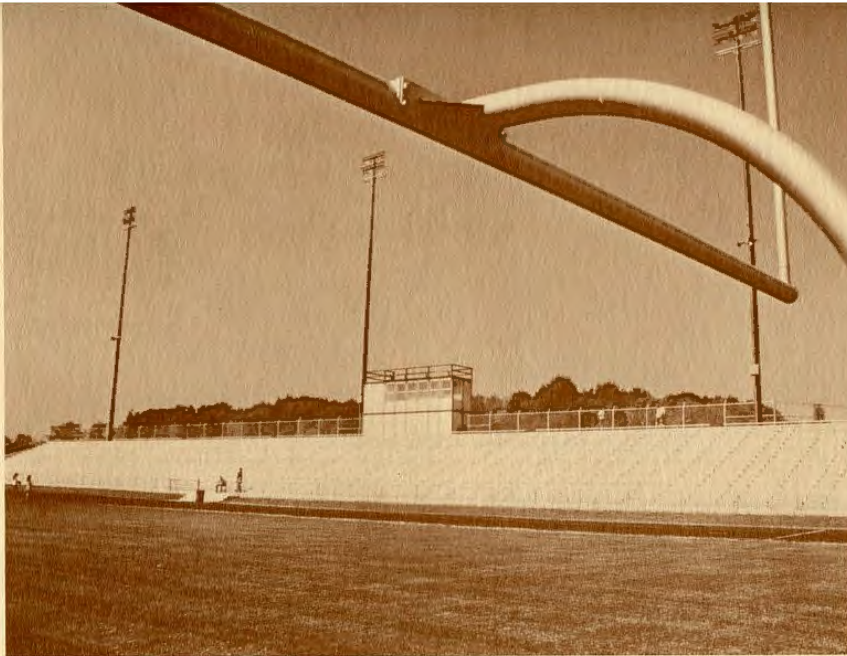
DeWitt today

A modern service station now occupies the site of Scott's Tavern, and the village of Wabwahnasupu, where Chief Okemos died, is now the home of Michigan Beef Company. Prairie Creek, where Scott built the first grist mill, still flows through McGuire's front yard. The gracious old home where Mrs. Schavey traded freshly baked bread to the Indians for venison, still stands, southeast of the Schavey Road Bridge.

Throughout the years DeWitt has maintained a peaceful quaintness. The giant old maple trees arching over West Main Street, Riverside Park and the picnic pavillion, the developing West River Park and tennis courts, the tranquil beauty of the Franciscan Retreat — all contrast sharply with the confused congestion of so many growing areas.

Businesses, schools, churches and public places all extend a friendly, small-town greeting to village residents and visitors alike.





DeWitt school system

DAVID SCOTT ELEMENTARY — Grades K thru 3 — 608 Wilson Street. 500 students, 18 teachers. Special programs include Art, Music, Phys. Ed, Special Ed.

FUERSTENAU ELEMENTARY — Grades 4 & 5 — 201 West Washington. 320 students, 12 teachers. Special programs include Art, Instrumental Music, Phys. Ed, Special Ed.

DEWITT MIDDLE SCHOOL — Grades 6 thru 8 — Schavey Road. 500 students, 24 teachers. Special Programs include — Foreign language, Art, Instrumental Music, Exploratory Courses. One of only seven Middle Schools in the State accredited by the North Central Association.

DEWITT HIGH SCHOOL — Grades 9 thru 12 — Herbison Road. 600 students, 28 teachers. Recent 2.6 million dollar addition includes the most modern high school stadium in Michigan, an indoor swimming pool, 2 gymnasiums, physics and chemistry labs, special facilities for electronics, plastics and automobile workshops. Highest accreditation by the North Central Association and the University of Michigan for college prep courses.

The DeWitt School System is recognized as one of the best school systems of its size in the State. Its students consistently place high in state-wide achievement tests. Progressive administration has expanded the system prior to actual need and presently owns 155 acres of land for future expansion of the system. There are presently 1900 students and 160 employees in the system.

