

Hester Black and Her Wedding at SDSD (1899)



Early view of the South Dakota School for the Deaf, late 19th Century



On May 23, 1899, a joyful moment took place on campus when Hester Black, one of the school's earliest pupils and a member of its first class of students, was married to John William Schemenauer, a deaf man from Nebraska. The ceremony was held at the school, making it one of the earliest recorded weddings of a former student connected to the South Dakota School for the Deaf.

As superintendent at the time, James Simpson was part of this important occasion, reflecting his close connection to the students and the school community. For Hester, who had been part of the school since its earliest days, the event marked a full circle - from student to adult life - while remaining closely tied to the campus.

The wedding also highlighted the strong sense of community among deaf individuals during this time, as well as the lasting role the school played in their lives beyond education.

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