

The Giddings News

March 5, 1953

Nearing Second Century

No doubt the following write-up will be of much interest to many around about our community since it concerns a venerable lady. That is, well-known in our circles of days gone by. She is Mrs. Henry Werner, now of Thorndale.

The Thorndale Champion reports "The oldest resident of Thorndale who has lived here for half a century is a woman who in five more years will have reached the second century of her life."

Mrs. Henry Werner, who was 95 on Jan. 12, lives only a few steps from the church of her choice where her late husband taught school for 24 years.

The mother of 12 children, 6 of whom are still living, Mrs. Werner was born in Buffalo, New York, Jan. 12, 1858. She became orphaned during the Civil War when her father, a Union soldier under General Rosencrans, was killed in the Battle of Bull Run. Her mother had died 2 years earlier.

At the age of 15, Mrs. Werner went to Europe to learn to speak German more fluently in order to return and teach in an orphanage erected for war orphans, a project in which her father was intensely interested. She studied in Germany for 3 years, majoring in home economics. Upon her return she became assistant matron of the orphanage which her father helped organize.

The former Miss Louise Goettelman met her husband at the orphanage in Buffalo. Werner, she recalls, was teaching at a boys' orphanage at Sulphur Springs, and mail for the boys' orphanage had to be picked up in Buffalo.

Later, Werner went to College in Illinois. Before accepting a teaching position in Giddings, where he was joined by Mrs. Werner. Married in 1883 at Immanuel Lutheran Church, they were the second couple to be married in that church.

The Werners lived in Giddings where he taught for 3 years and later moved to Serbin where he taught for 15 years.

Mr. and Mrs. Werner came to Thorndale where Mr. Werner taught for 24 years. The widow's living children include the Rev. L. J. Werner of Marlin; A. C. Werner of Houston; E. T. Werner of Van Nuys, Calif.; Carl Werner of Thorndale; Mrs. Emil Waiser of Houston; and Mrs. W. O. Doering of Kerrville.

Historical events recalled by Mrs. Werner include the time when President Grover Cleveland, then Mayor of Buffalo, came with a group of men to inspect their home.

She also relates the time when former President Garfield was making a campaign speech for Gen. Grant, who was then running for President. She remembers viewing President Lincoln's body when it lay in state in Buffalo. It was during Easter week, she says, and she was wearing her new Easter Bonnet, because of the jamming and pushing of the crowd, she lost her hat and never found it again.

A big scare in her life, she continued, came at the time of the Chicago fire. She had been attending church in Buffalo across the lake. When the services were over, she heard the news of the dreadful fire which had destroyed the homes of her friends.

Mrs. Werner is proud of a 100 year old walking stick which was brought her by a friend from Germany. An old

fashioned library cabinet holds a portion of her many books, many of them religious. Poetry is also on her list of favorites.

Flowers were placed on the altar on Jan. 11, honoring Mrs. Werner and the congregation sang a hymn in her honor.

No doubt many of the elderly people here will recall many a happy event also with the Werners here at Serbin, and will be wanting to extend to her a belated birthday wish.