



Erma DeWitt was born on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1907. Erma, the daughter of William and Mary Rogers Ross, spent her early childhood years in Moriches, Long Island. She eventually moved to New Paltz, NY, where she met her husband, Dr. Virgil DeWitt, an Ulster County native. She was a trained nurse and worked for many years beside her husband, in the DeWitt Medical Practice, also in New Paltz.

Mrs. DeWitt was a member of the Photographic Society of America, receiving several prestigious awards. She was the editor of their publication, *The Eastern Zone News*, writing articles on topics such as photographing children and travel. Her love of birds and wildlife brought her to remote regions of the world, including Africa, the Galapagos Islands and the Canadian Rockies.

She was the founder of the Little Wings Bird Sanctuary in Gardiner, NY, where she spent countless hours photographing the birds.

“I began photographing stone houses in Ulster County because I thought a record of them should be preserved. Some are left to fall apart. Some are modernized. When some owners modernize such a house they keep as much of the old house as possible. Others modernize for convenience, to make the house livable for which you can’t blame them.”

*-Erma DeWitt, November 7, 1954*

Although Mrs. DeWitt loved to photograph houses, children were her favorite subjects. During WWII, when her husband was serving in the military, she became a professional photographer. The majority of the pictures she took were of children. During that same time period, she helped out at the New Paltz High School and Normal School taking the photos needed for their yearbooks.

There are several photos in this collection taken of a small child dressed in costumes depicting Hans Christian Anderson’s, “The Little Match Girl” and Little Bo-Peep”. Mrs. DeWitt combined her love of children, photography, literature and history to create “her most unusual photos”.



Ms. Erma M. DeWitt died in her home, in New Paltz, NY on March 17, 1999 at the age of 91.

Erma expressed that her dream was that one day her photographs would be published. Due to a generous donation made by her son, Dirk, that dream has come true.