

Dexter Area Historical Society and Museum

News and Updates

February 2007

2007 Special Events at the Museum:

**-2007 Annual Meeting-
Sunday, February 4th
2 pm
at the Museum**

At this year's DAHSM Annual Meeting a 25-minute presentation, "Creating the New Old Barn" will be given by Ray Berg. The slide show presentation will focus on the construction of an authentic 19th century style barn near Manchester in 2005-2006. The design of the barn was based on barns constructed in the Manchester, Saline and Chelsea areas in the late 1880's and early 1900's. He will also compare the 2005 barn construction techniques with a barn raising done in 1949 north of Manchester. Please join us for this very interesting presentation.

Refreshments will be provided. All members, family friends and neighbors are invited to come.

Dexter Pioneer Arts Fair Saturday, March 17, 10 am to 4 pm at Creekside Middle School

Shake off the winter doldrums and celebrate St. Patrick's Day with a visit to the 34th Dexter Pioneer Arts Fair. Many of our favorite artists will be back, along with some new faces, new arts and new items for sale.

Among the new crafters will be Cindy Griffin who makes "Handmade Soaps and Other Delights", and Nancy Peterson who will demonstrate how she makes lampwork glass beads from Italian glass.

We will welcome back our weavers, spinners, felters, lacemakers, quilters, water color artists, a wood carver, a quiller, potters, a doll maker, laminated wooden eggs, leatherworks, and an array of cameras showing the history of photography. Several jewelers and our stained glass artist will return as well as the ever popular silhouette booth.

There will be a craft table for children, a storyteller, and a "General Store for the Young at Heart". Many will remember the

Rainbow Players, four siblings in the Eyester family, who will present another drama throughout the day. The Dexter Senior Center will also have an interactive craft for visitors of all ages, along with the loom which was a popular attraction last year. Please join us!

Happenings at Gordon Hall

The UMRC Gordon Hall project will break ground this spring. Construction will start with earthwork and a new entrance drive to Gordon Hall.



The Adult Learners Institute will conduct a course at Gordon Hall entitled, "Historic Western Washtenaw County: Chelsea, Dexter, and Gordon Hall." Classes will be Mondays from 1-3 pm on April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, May 7, 14. Register at Chelsea Senior Center at the Washington Street Education Center, 512 E. Washington in Chelsea. Information is also available at the ALI website: www.AdultLearnersInstitute.org

Events at Gordon Hall

Are you interested in holding a special event at Gordon Hall? Please contact Jennifer Colby at 660-4083 to discuss arrangements.

The museum is now closed until the first weekend in May.

Museum Hours

Friday 1-3pm
Saturday 1-3pm

Dexter Area Historical Society And Museum

3443 Inverness
Dexter, Michigan 48130
734.426.2519

www.hvcn.org/info/dextermuseum

Dexter Area Historical Society and Museum Board

Meets the first Thursday of the month at 7:30pm. This year's first regular meeting will be March 1st at the Museum. All members are welcomed to attend.



Spring Museum Tours

School tours for next spring are being arranged now by Bene Fusilier, Susan Walsh, and Sybil VanHouten. Please contact Bene at 426-8972.

Volunteer opportunities

Gordon Hall needs your help!

The DAHSM needs to prepare the outside of the home and grounds for events next spring and summer. A list of jobs to be done has been created to achieve this goal. Please contact Jennifer Colby at 660-4083 if you or your group could contribute just a few hours .



The Museum needs people who are interested in being Docents at Gordon Hall. Please call the Museum and leave your name and telephone number and you will be contacted. An informational class will be held for those interested in being a Docent and learning the history of Gordon Hall and its inhabitants.



Please contact the Museum if you interested in tracking down evidence of Gordon Hall as a station on the "Underground Railroad".

from the *Dexter Leader* Thursday, August 14, 1941

Founding of the Dexter Methodist Church

Prepared by Miss Cornelia Copeland

In the same year Dexter was founded, 1830, Methodist services were first held in one village by a regularly appointed circuit preacher. Afterwards every three weeks the circuit rider preached until the church was formerly organized.

The Rev. E.M. Pilcher, of the Ann Arbor circuit, preached in the east wing of Samuel W. Dexter's first home on Huron Street in November, 1831. At this time it was decided to organize a Methodist Church Society. The arrangements were made at the home of Dr. Samuel Nichols, Dexter's first physician. His home was located near the site of Robert's grocery store.

During the first decade, the newly organized church had no building of its own but Judge Dexter's large barn on the west side of the Mill pond was used as a meeting house. An early settler records that the preachers "made the woods ring when they prayed for the salvation of we needy sinners and poor Christians: and sang praises and glorious hymns."

In 1840 the Rev. Lorenzo Davis was sent to Dexter, the first resident Methodist minister. He remained two years and received a regular salary. When the first railroad came to Dexter, July 4th, 1841, an elaborate celebration was planned. The program included an address of welcome by Judge Dexter, but the orator of the day was the Methodist preacher Lorenzo Davis.

It was in 1841, just one hundred years ago, that the first Methodist Church building was erected. This was made possible through the generosity of Judge Dexter who donated the site. All the years the same site has been occupied by a Methodist Church building.

From the forests of the estate of Judge Dexter came the lumber of oak, hickory and walnut for
(continued on Page Three)

Corner Gift Shop

A few handmade bazaar items crafted by the women of the Heritage Guild are still available at the Museum. The Corner Gift Shop is open when the Museum is open, or for special requests, call 426-2519.

Recent Acquisitions

Football Jersey-

From the 1946-47 Dexter High School team. The team was unscored upon in all of its matches that season. Donated by Jess Coy of Dexter, MI.

Ceramic Vase and Clay Pipe-

Found by John C. Miller, carpenter at Gordon Hall in the 1950's during the University of Michigan's renovations. Donated by Robert Miller of Manchester, MI.

Available at the museum:

"Historical Washtenaw Area Attractions"

A beautiful color brochure describing historical sites in our area including, the Dexter Museum, the Huron Valley Railroad Museum and Webster Township Historical Society.

Dexter Garden Club

Meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 7pm at the Museum
September thru June

- Support -

The Museum receives generous support from the Dexter Area Historical Society, the Heritage Guild and from community and visitor donations. The DAHSM sponsors the Pioneer Art Fair each March and the DHG sponsors a Christmas Bazaar and annual Antique Appraisal Clinics. These events are important fundraisers for the museum.



Dexter Heritage Guild

Meets the 3rd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, 9am to noon at the Museum



Newsletter submissions

If you have information you would like in the DAHSM newsletter, please put it in the newsletter box in the museum office.

Located in the Village of Dexter, Michigan, the Dexter Area Historical Museum serves as western Washtenaw County's link with history. The museum is housed in the former St. Andrew's United Church of Christ, built in 1883. The museum contains a large display area, a genealogical library, a local history library, and the Corner Gift Shop.

The Katherine Dexter McCormick Room?

Plans are underway as we determine costs to convert a downstairs apartment into an event rental space. If you would like to be involved please contact Jennifer Colby at 660-4083.

Thank you to-

Lions Club and Stephanie Feldkamp of The Hair Loft, for donating the beautiful evergreen wreath that decorated the front door of Gordon Hall during the holiday season. Thanks also to the dozens of people who donated money to purchase the candle lights that glowed in the windows at night.

Founding of the Dexter Methodist Church

(continued from Page Two)

the framework of the structure. These timbers remained in a state of preservation until the destroying of the building by fire.

The church records give many interesting details of the erection of this first Dexter church. For example, brick was made by Thomas Holmes in Chauncey Goodrich's brick yard in the Township of Lima. The brick was drawn to the church in two-wheeled, wide-tire ox carts drawn by ox teams. Daniel Hoey, great-grandfather of John and Leo, took the job of drawing stone for the foundation. One of the workers was Calvin Fillmore, brother of Millard Fillmore, thirteenth President.

Unfortunately this first church was burned May 16, 1925, being struck by lightning. Though a pioneer building, it was in perfect condition. About two years later, July 21, 1927, the present structure was completed and dedicated by the Bishop Thomas Nicholson. Among other speakers for the dedication were Doctor M.S. Rice of Detroit and Senator Royal S. Copeland of Washington, D.C.

And so, the Methodist church and the other churches of the village go bravely forward hoping and praying that their efforts may avail for good in the life of the community.

(Editor's note: Judge Dexter's first home on Huron street was actually the second Dexter home he and his second wife Susan (died 1827) lived in. Attempts were made to preserve it, but it was torn down in 1939. Judge Dexter's barn was located on the west side of the Mill Pond near the present American Legion Post. All documentation from the Dexter Methodist Church was destroyed in a parsonage fire. The original and former Dexter Methodist Church buildings were located at the corner of Central street and Fourth Street. To find more history about the origin of the United Methodist Church please visit <http://www.umc.org> and click on "OUR CHURCH" and then "History".)

Description of the ALI course
(from Page One)

Historic Western Washtenaw County: Chelsea, Dexter, and Gordon Hall

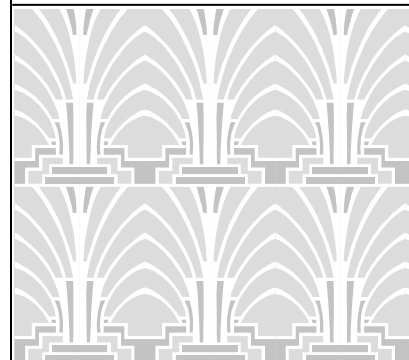
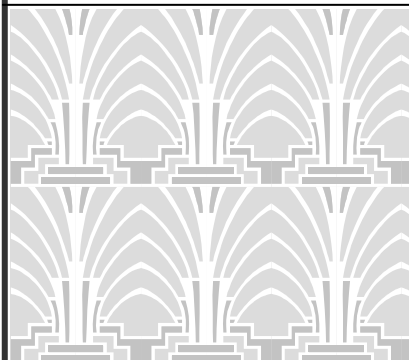
Instructor: Grace Shackman

To put Gordon Hall in context, the course will begin with a slide show about Samuel Dexter and the founding of Dexter village. You will learn how the Dexter Area Historical Society obtained Gordon Hall and take a tour of the upper floors of the house.

One session will focus on the Underground Railroad, including the Gordon Hall connection, with a tour of the basement. Descriptions of the domestic and commercial architecture of Chelsea and of Chelsea and Dexter history will be enhanced by walking tours of Chelsea and Dexter (weather permitting). Grace Shackman will be assisted in various sessions by Paul Cousins, Carol Mull, and John Frank.

State Historical Marker

The DAHSM is applying for an historical marker for Gordon Hall from the State Register of Historic Sites . One side will describe the history of Gordon Hall and its architectural significance and the other side will illustrate the vast contributions of Judge Samuel Dexter to the growth of the area. The marker, although privately financed at a cost of approximately \$3,000, will remain the property of the State of Michigan. Please call the museum if you would like to make a marker donation .





Dexter Area Historical Society & Museum

3443 Inverness Street

Dexter, Michigan 48130

Membership expiry date is located on your mailing label.



Postmaster,
please send to: