



Dexter Area Historical Society

Fall 2015 Edition



President's Message

By: Bev Hill

This has been an exciting year for the Dexter Area Historical Society. We are fortunate to own two beautiful buildings – the Dexter Museum and Gordon Hall. This past year we paid off the mortgage on Gordon Hall. After paying off the mortgage we were then fortunate to be awarded two grants to help with restoration of Gordon Hall.

- A SHPO grant was received from the State of Michigan for the renovation of the exterior of the building. This grant was for \$75,000 with the Historical Society contributing another \$50,000 as a required match. We have selected Hopkins Burns Architects to help with the exterior renovation which is scheduled to be completed by the fall of 2016.
- A second grant was received from the Jeffris Foundation for \$400,000 for complete renovation of the interior. For this grant, the Historical Society must contribute another \$800,000. There is a three year timeframe to complete the fund raising for this matching grant.

We are now working on our capital campaign to complete our matching grants requirements. Our board have been meeting and listening to presenters for guidance. As members we will keep you updated and hope to have all of you involved in this endeavor.

We are also excited that our museum has many new displays and artifacts. One of our new artifacts is a beautiful car-

riage that is featured on the first floor. Besides the regular visitors to the museum, we are now preparing for the second graders who will be visiting the museum and Gordon Hall as part of their local history curriculum.

To be more efficient, our Board has created a number of new committees who will be reporting to the Board at the monthly board meetings. Our Programs Committee is being chaired by Nina Rackham, our Fundraising/Finance Committee is chaired by Caryl Burke, and our Facilities/Governance Committee is chaired by Neil Adams. The board meetings will include short business updates and will include speakers from other groups and commissions who have successfully completed fundraising for similar grant programs.

This is an exciting time for all of us in the Historical Society. We feel that all members can contribute toward the meeting of our goals and we hope that you will be part of these endeavors and will also help in recruiting new members. We are fortunate to live in an area where the community loves to be involved and has great pride in our history. We will need everyone to help meet our challenge and as the new president I am more than positive that we will meet all of our goals. Please

feel free to contact me anytime or any of the Board members if you have questions or want to be a part of our plans.



Exciting times,
Beverly Hill
President of the Dexter Area Historical Society

NEW ACQUISITIONS:

- 1895 Doctor's buggy..... Norm Wetzel
- Clothing, farm items, silverware.....Jan Stagg
- Late 1800's linen skirt with bustle Gloria Brigham
- 1911 map of Washtenaw County..... Marie Coy
- 1940's dinnerware and stemware.....Katherine Keeble
- 1920's baby shoes and diaper cover..... Mary Ann Koran
- 1980 original pen ink drawing of Dexter Area Museum by Lorraine GovaereMargaret Steptoe
- Abstract deed Village of Dexter Julie Knight
- Hooked rug..... Merrill Crockett

Wanted

Antique and Vintage Toys
(1950's and before)
for Christmas at the Mansion.

All toys will be photographed, cataloged, string tagged and borrowed for one week. (December 1st - 7th) Remember the Hudson's display of toys? We plan to have two walls with shelves to the ceiling and full of toys!

Please contact Bev Hill (426-4767) if we can borrow your toys or for more information.

Coming Events

Fall Antique Appraisal Clinic

Saturday, October 10, 2015

9:30 to 3:30 PM

Cost: \$7.00 per item

What do Victorian pop-up Valentines, a 19th century Russian samovar, and two beloved teddy bears have in common? They were all evaluated at the Antiques Appraisal Day held at the Dexter Area Museum on May 2. Three licensed appraisers from Detroit's DuMouchelles Art Gallery, each with a different area of expertise, examined items brought in by nearly 60 people and gave verbal appraisals. While most attendees took notes and asked questions, some opted to turn over their items on the spot – for an upcoming DuMouchelles auction.



The Antiques Appraisal Day is a fund-raising event put on each spring by the Dexter Heritage Guild. DuMouchelles donates the appraisers' time and the Guild requests a \$7 donation for each verbal appraisal. Monies from Appraisal Day and the Guild's Holiday Bazaar in December are used to support the Dexter Area Museum.

Because of an overflow response to the spring event, the Guild has scheduled a **Fall Antiques Appraisal Day on Saturday, October 10, 2015 from 9:30 to 3:30, located at 3443 Inverness St. in Dexter, Michigan. Appointments are 15-minutes for 1-3 items, with verbal appraisals for a fee of \$7.00 per item appraised.** Pro-

ceeds and donations benefit the operation and preservation of the Dexter Area Museum.

To schedule an appointment or for questions, please call 734-424-9998. On the morning of Saturday, October 10th, please call the Museum at 734-426-2519. For further information check the Museum website: www.dextermuseum.org

Popular items for appraisal include crystal, silver, and pewter collectibles; fiber arts; jewelry; sports and wartime memorabilia, toys; paintings and drawings; and

small furniture items. Appointments are made in advance in order to match an item with an appraiser's expertise.



Message from Donna Fisher

While the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War has come to a close, the Board has voted to continue with Civil War Days at Gordon Hall. Donna Fisher has agreed to serve as liaison to the reenactors of the Fourth Michigan Infantry. This event will be held the weekend of June 10-12. The Society will need a few volunteers to head some of the established committees. More information will come in the spring. As always, many, many thanks to all who have been involved in the past five years!

Holiday Bazaar

Saturday, December 5

9:00 to 3:00 PM

Dear Historical Society members,

Are you ready for another holiday season? We are! We've been a busy group – crocheting over 500 scrubbies, knitting warm winter wear, 'upcycling' wreaths, and dipping pinecones – all to be ready for the annual Holiday Bazaar on Saturday, December 5. The Bazaar will be held from 9 to 3 at the Dexter Area Museum, 3443 Inverness.

To help you start your holiday season, we'll be packing the meeting room with handcrafted decorations, toys, apparel, and home goods plus loading the museum tables with enticing homemade edibles. We'll have lots of new items, too, including clever button bracelets that zip around your wrist, topsy-turvy 2-in-1 toys, and friendly hedgehog paperweights, as well as retro reindeer and winter scene ornaments.

When you shop at the Heritage Guild's Holiday Bazaar – whether you stock up on hostess gifts, find a handmade treasure, or just treat yourself to home-baked goodies – you'll be supporting the operation of the Dexter Area Museum. You'll also have a chance to enter a drawing to win a beautiful pieced quilt or a colorful 'Christmas Tree' Advent calendar.

We look forward to seeing you on Saturday, December 5th.

Now, let the holiday season begin!

The Ladies of the Heritage Guild

Christmas at the Museum Events

December 4, 5 & 6

Weekend Schedule:

- **Friday, December 4**

Christmas Treasures at Gordon Hall - \$50 per person - 6:30 pm

Spirits and Hearty Hors D'œuvres. Réservations and information contact Ina Germain at 734-395-4106

- **Saturday, December 5**

Vintage Toys and Magical Memories - 9 am to 5 pm

Vintage Toys on display on the main floor. Make Vintage Crafts on the second floor - they make great gifts

Suggested Donation: Adults \$5.00, Children 5-12 \$1.00

- **Sunday, December 6**

If Teapots Could Talk-\$25 per person- 1 pm AND 4 pm

Tea, a Light Lunch, a tour of the Vintage Toys and a tour of Gordon Hall.

Reservations and information call Ina Germain at 734-395-4106.

All events sponsored by The Dexter Area Historical Society, a 501 (c) 3 organization

Fires and the Dexter Area Fire Department

Like all villages, and especially old ones, Dexter has been startled many times by the dreaded cry of "Fire!" Thanks to an early resident, Mr. Dennis Warner, and his diary, we have a record of some of the early fires that occurred in Dexter. The first mentioned was a house in 1838 on Fifth Street belonging to George Beaman, followed by the house of Thos. Martin in 1840. A Hotel burned in February of 1844 and James Costello's store burned in 1848. That year the block known as the Ewing block burned as did the old flouring mill built by Judge Dexter. The Dexter Hotel and George W. Arnold's store were destroyed in January of 1859. On Dec. 25, 1866 an entire row of wooden stores was burned from the alley to Allports Exchange (the hotel building that now houses Dexter Picture Frame). These wooden buildings were rebuilt and called the Masonic Block, but they burned again on March 25, 1869. This same year, 1869, The Dexter Leader began publication and published a plea for a fire department, but nothing was done. Fires continued to plague the village and the Leader continued to publish pleas in 1873 and again in 1876 for a fire department!

In April 1877 a proposal was submitted to the village council for the proposed purchase of a windmill that was erected on Broad St. This was to be used in conjunction with cisterns erected in various places as a water source. About 90 residents proposed to council in May, 1877, "to purchase a fire engine hose cart and enough hose to protect the village in case of fire". In August of that year a hook and ladder truck, axes and pails were purchased. In the following month, W. W. Tozer was elected foreman of "Hook & Ladder Co. No. 1 of Dexter" and in December of that year, a new fire engine house was erected on Alpine Street. The fire-engine house was moved from Alpine St. in January 1907 to a new location near the electric light plant on Broad St., near the cemetery. In 1915, an addition was built on the "lock-up", the old village jail, located near For-



est and Broad Streets, behind the stores. Here the new chemical fire engine, purchased in July that year, would be housed. The building was destroyed by fire in January, 1926.

The first Dexter volunteer fire department was organized in 1915 with Frank Harris as chief. This new department held official drills once a month, and meetings and inspections as necessary. An old-time dance was held and proceeds were used to buy equipment. Also in 1915, the Village council appointed a committee of one to investigate installing a fire alarm. In the earlier days, the bell in the tower of the Methodist Church was used to notify residents when a fire was occurring, so it seemed wise to install a fire alarm.

The volunteer fire department was tested at the Methodist Church fire. The top of the steeple was struck by a bolt of lightning Saturday, May 16, 1925. The men hauled the fire equipment to the church, consisting of three pieces, a hand-operated pump on four wheels, a two-wheeled cart with the hose wound around a drum on the axle and a cart for the ladders. The pump had a suction hose to drop in a cistern or any source of water. The pump was operated as fast as possible, but no water came out of the nozzle! As the fire moved down the building, the firemen had to move the equipment away, and upon pulling the hose out of the cistern, it was discovered that the metal coils inside were missing for a foot or two near the end, causing the hose to collapse and shut off the water. The building burned to the ground.

Also in May, 1925, a new American LaFrance Chemical Truck mounted on a Model T chassis arrived. It was placed

in Gus Eck's building on Main St., the old blacksmith shop, located near what is a parking lot next to the Dairy Queen. This would be used as an engine house by the fire department until 1955. (pictured left)

The Village Council approved a new fire company in December, 1925 with 10 members and a new chief, Art Lovell. During 1926-27, the village installed an all-new water supply system with fire hydrants throughout the village. In November, 1926, a test well was sunk in Monument Park, and the pumping station was built there in 1927.

In 1946, a group of citizens met to discuss lack of proper fire fighting equipment, training and men. As a result of this meeting, the Dexter Fireman's Association was formed. At this time, at a cost of \$500 per township, fire-fighting service was extended to Scio, Webster, Lima and Dexter Townships up to a maximum of twelve miles from the village. A new hook and ladder truck was purchased in 1948 by the Dexter Firemen's Association and in 1951 a 100-gallon taker mounted on a two-ton chassis.

The present fire hall was erected in 1955 on the foundation put in in the 1920's by Henry Ford. Judge Dexter had built the original mill in 1824-5 and Henry Ford had saved it, but had erected a new foundation for it. The Old Mill was torn down and the new fire hall was built on that foundation.

The Dexter Fireman's Association has been an active group in the community. They perform many community projects and have also raised money for some of the new equipment through the years. It will take another article to cover the fires and progress of the Dexter Area Fire Department since the hall was built in 1955, and we hope to do that in our next Newsletter.

This article was put together by Nancy VanBlaricum using the files at the Dexter Area Museum which include articles published in the Dexter Leader and written by Norma McAllister and an article published in the Dexter Leader about 1885.

Business Reports

Gordon Hall Tours Report

The 2015 Gordon Hall Tours were held on Saturday, August 15, 2015. I want to again thank the great crew who made the whole day work. Thanks to Paul, Angel, Erin, Heidi, Pat, Ina, Alice, Terry, Richard, Isabelle, Sharon, Renee, Lynn, Nancy C., Sandy, Bene, Gil, and Jim all doing their part to tell the stories of Gordon Hall. Thanks also to Jan, Sharon and Jim for providing flowers for inside and having the grounds beautifully manicured. The few people who came were very appreciative of all our efforts, however we need to look into finding another time for the tours as there is too much going on on Saturday during Dexter Daze.

It has been suggested that we move the tours to June during Civil War Days. It would give many persons a chance to visit the Hall that are busy elsewhere during Dexter Daze. We will be looking into alternatives during the year.

Communications Committee

We have formed a Committee to oversee our communications. The aim will be to pass all information involving events or activities through the committee which will then put the information out for members and the public through our Website, Facebook, Newsletter, newspapers, radio and any other means of letting everyone know what is going on with the Dexter Area Historical Society.

Presently the members of the committee include Nina Rackham (Chairperson), Rachel Szymanski (Web-Master), Alice Ehn (Newsletter), Sue Schotts, Sue Behnke, Bev Hill, and Nancy Van Blaricum. This newsletter is our first project and the new website will contain the same information, although it will be updated more often as will the Facebook page. If you have any information for the group, please contact any person above. The email addresses are below. Or send the information to DexMuseum@aol.com.

A THANK YOU Note from Jan Stagg

Volunteer to Care for outside Plantings at Gordon Hall
"Most graciously, Jan Lyons and Gloria Shore have donated more than a dozen plants to Gordon Hall for the fall wedding season since some of our perennials are on the downside. Jan is ALWAYS so concerned about how GH looks, so she donated some plants and then enlisted her sister as well!! I guess it's a family affair!!!"

Summer Weddings at Gordon Hall by Bene Fusilier

This summer has been the scene of many weddings and related events at Gordon Hall. It started at the end of June with the wedding of a bride who spent her early childhood in an apartment at Gordon Hall. The bridal room was her bedroom. Although it was a rainy day, the bride looked beautiful and happy. They say, "rain on your wedding day brings good luck."

The next two held in July were beautiful summer days and evenings. The one reception had 300 people in attendance. The large tent was able to hold all of them.

The two weddings and receptions held at the end of August again turned out to be perfect summer evenings. The guests all commented on how lovely the grounds and flowers looked at Gordon Hall. Thanks to Jan Stagg, Bev Hill, Ina Germain, and Sharon Wheeler for keeping them watered and taken care of. Thanks also to Paul Bishop and Jim Wheeler for mowing the lawn and keeping the grounds looking great.

The wedding on September 12 saw a light mist during the ceremony but it still turned out lovely. We still have a wedding on September 26 and a reception on October 3. These should be beautiful fall events.

The word is out that Gordon Hall makes the perfect place to have a wedding or a reception. Please pass the word around and have them call Bene Fusilier (734 426-8972) to arrange for an event.

ATTENTION:

A new storage location is needed for the Museum owned Talley Ho. The dimensions are 99 inches tall by 149 inches long by 6 feet 2 inches wide hub to hub.

If you can provide a storage place for this prized artifact, please call the museum at 734-426-2519, if no answer, please leave a message.



Members Needed:

We are always looking for new members to join the Dexter Area Historical Society. There are opportunities for all at the Museum, Gordon Hall and the Guild. Please use contact information below to share your talents with us.

DEXTER AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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CONTACT INFORMATION:

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GORDON HALL SPECIAL EVENTS - Bene Fusilier - 734-426-8972
DEXTER HISTORICAL GUILD - Cindy Henes - cdhenes@gmail.com
RESEARCH - Nancy J. Van Blaricum - DexMuseum@aol.com

FACILITIES:

DEXTER AREA MUSEUM - 3443 Inverness, Dexter, MI 48130
GORDON HALL - 8341 Island Lake Rd., Dexter, MI 48130

Provided to you by the Dexter Area Historical Society

PHONE - 734 426-2519 WEBSITE: www.dextermuseum.org EMAIL: DexMuseum@aol.com

Museum Hours: May to November, Friday and Saturday, 1 to 3 pm