

THE DEXTER AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2021 SPRING NEWSLETTER



Happy Spring!

It is great to see the flowers blooming and trees budding. Both the Museum and Gordon Hall are also coming into a fruition - new improvements at Gordon Hall and new displays at the Museum. Many members have been working very hard at both buildings to welcome spring openings.

Our Historical Society has also been blooming - we will celebrate fifty years this year as a society. In case you didn't know, we were one of the first established historical societies in Michigan! We have had fifty years of strong support which has resulted in our owning two buildings. Pretty amazing!

Thank you to all of our members and the community for your tremendous support.

Thanks,
Beverly Hill
President of the Dexter Area Historical Society



DAHS GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

On July 29, 1971, the Dexter Area Historical Society held its organizational meeting. This year marks the 50th Anniversary of that event.



Tentative plans are underway to celebrate this momentous occasion at the Dexter Area Museum on Sunday, July 25, 2021 from 3-4 PM. Plans are to meet outside with masks and social distancing. All current and past members of the Historical Society are invited to join in the celebration. Our rain date is Sunday, August 1, 2021.

The Dexter Area Museum will be opening for the 2021 season on Friday, June 4th. We will then be open on Friday and Saturday from 1 to 3 through November.

Beginning May 7th, we will be open for donations or research from 1 to 3 each Friday and Saturday while we continue to work on the Museum Displays. We have completed kitchen displays downstairs and we have new cabinets on the main floor. Come and see them starting on June 4th.



Golden Anniversary Celebration **and**

Gordon Hall Days!

Save the date – September 10-12, 2021

The Dexter Area Historical Society is planning an event combining our traditional Gordon Hall Days with a golden anniversary celebration. The DAHS was formed in 1971 and we will honor that milestone with a Friday night event including music and dancing, presentations and more. Then we'll continue on Saturday and Sunday with Gordon Hall Days events such as craft displays, tours of Gordon Hall, a car show, and much more. Details will follow, but be sure to save the date!

Gordon Hall Improvements

We have been working on many areas of Gordon Hall. Following are a few pictures showing some of the work.



The new Bathrooms, Hall and new stairway are done in the Northwest corner.

We removed the carpets in the North first floor apartment and have repaired and refinished the original floorboards.



Since we lost the "Brides Room" to the new bathrooms, we redecorated the other bedroom into a new room for the Brides to use for weddings.



We have started work on replacing the flooring on the front porch.



2020 Special Holiday Bazaar

Dexter Heritage Guild

The Dexter Heritage Guild is happy to be planning a Holiday Bazaar for December 2021. Our meetings and/or workshops will begin in June, meeting the third and fourth Wednesdays of the month, 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon at the Museum. We will have assembled kits ready to be completed.

The Guild would appreciate craft donations to be used for various projects. Items needed at the present include: full skeins of acrylic yarns - all colors will be great; Christmas themed cotton fabric, cotton batting, and fleece fabric with animal prints. We have been working at home on things like these slippers and socks and our "scrubbies".

We look forward to having new members join us in June. If you are interested, please stop by and meet the group at the Museum at 3443 Inverness in Dexter. If you have any questions, please contact our president: Pat Pudduck at: 734-426-8952, or send an email to her at: patpudduck@gmail.com.



History of The Dexter Area Historical Society - Part 2 1977-1999

In five short years the Dexter Area Historical Society successfully formed (7/29/1971), began researching and making improvements to historic areas, discovered, refurbished and moved into a permanent home (6/27/1976), presented two major events (1974 & 1976) and became a very important part of the Dexter Community. This couldn't have happened without some extraordinary people who dedicated their lives to this project. It would be impossible to list all those who were instrumental in this endeavor, but we will list those who served on a few of the boards as well as those who were active supporters at that time. To save space, we have abbreviated the titles. Apologies to those not mentioned, but the records usually only mention persons holding office!

The first DAHS Board in 1971 included: Frank Wilhelme - Pres., Tom Morcom - Vice-Pres., Rose VanAken - Corres. Sec'y., Norma McAllister - Rec. Sec'y, Marie Lefstad - Treas., LaVerna Laubengayer and Joanne Hoeft as Directors.

In 1975, a Museum Board was set up to run the Museum and it would report to the DAHS board. The Museum Board officers were: Dir. - Richard Wheeler, Ass. Dir. - Sarah Frank, Sec'y - Maria Lefstad, Treas. - Marian Ehley and Curator - Nina Doletzky. At that time the DAHS officers were: Pres. - Norma McAllister, Vice-Pres. - Neil Frank, Sec'y - Rose VanAken, Treas. - Marian Ehley, and Trustees - Mary Cornils, Ora Clark, Joanne Hoeft, Emily Kitchen, Barbara Kurtz and Margaret Mynning. This is the year that the Dexter Heritage Guild was formed with officers: Pres. - Rosalie Brown, Vice-Pres. - Gloria Brigham, Sec'y - Mary Alice Mussio and Treas. - Rose VanAken.



Museum in about 1977

By October of 1976 they had set up the Museum Gift Shop with the following leaders, General Manager - Norma McAllister, Asst. Man. - Barbara Young, and Exe. Sec. - Marie Lefstad. The Museum board was Asst. Dir. - Sarah Frank, Curator - Nina Doletzky Rackham, Asst. Curators - June Niegum & Jan Schmidt, Sec'y - Bene Fusilier and Treas. - Marian Ehley. The 1976 DAHS Board was Pres. - Neil Frank, Vice Pres. - Earl Doletzky, Corres. Sec'y - Rose VanAken, Rec. Sec'y - Heloise Dunstan, Treas. - Marian Ehley, and representatives: - Kay Shotka - Dexter Twp., Wally Fusilier - Lima Twp., Fran Ernst - Scio Twp., Wana Baldus - Webster Twp., Doris Waggoner - Schools, and Marge Hanning - Dexter Village. Charles Derry was the official Photographer and the Program committee was Charles Derry, Pat Derry and Norma McAllister.

All seemed to be going very well when in July of 1977, Norma McAllister announced that she was leaving the Society. Once she was no longer affiliated with the society, she received many questions from the general public so she wrote a long "Letter to the Editor" that appeared in the June 8, 1978 Dexter Leader. Most of the letter told the history of the Dexter Area Historical Society and Museum and her reasons for founding it. She finished with the following:

"Since I am no longer active in the society and museum which I am responsible for originating and on which I spent six years of countless hours, people continually ask why and what happened. After complete devotion to this project, numerous false accusations, presumptions and falsehoods were spread in writing, instigated and furthered by ill informed persons at a most inopportune time, I felt I could not go on.

I hope I have been able to answer the most often asked questions, for I know I can answer truthfully, for I was there. Ironically most of those persons who caused the trouble were not involved in the formation, legal aspects, physical labor, collection of materials or worry over figures. Norma McAllister"

Though no longer connected with the museum, Norma plunged into even more "research". In many respects, it would seem that she was now "free" to do what she loved without the many responsibilities that the museum and historical society demanded. She continued researching the people, places and events for the Dexter Area using microfilmed copies of the Dexter Newspapers from 1869 to 1969. From the information she found in them and her own experience, she began writing a series of articles which were published in the Dexter Leader. In 1989, she published a genealogy titled, "Judge Samuel William Dexter" which we often use in our research. Norma was always willing to answer any questions we had through the years.

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Norma had set up the Historical Society and the Museum so well that things continued to run well. By 1979, Nancy VanBlaricum had joined the Museum team helping others work on their Genealogies. The



Heritage Guild continued to put on two events, the Christmas Bazaar in December and the Pioneer Arts Fair in March. Pictured is the cover from the 1992 event showing the Corn Husk Doll made by Mary Rush and used through the years as the Logo for this event. Many of our members were the first demonstrators for the Pioneer Arts Fair. Donna Palmer is shown in this picture Caning a chair as she demonstrated her craft. Some other local artisans included Frances Bosel - Stenciling, Suzanne Mahler - Rubbings, Gloria Brigham - Candle making, Bea Christopherson, Tatting, Suzanne VanNatter - Spinning and Betty Zabinski - Teddy Bears.



The Heritage Guild found other ways to help the Museum such as home tours, quilt shows, fashion shows and also added the DuMochelle Antique Appraisal Clinic to their yearly schedule. DAHS began having "Christmas Sings" in the late 1970s having different choral groups lead us in singing Christmas favorites and in 1981, "Fat Bob", the singing Plumber began leading us. Robert Taylor, who died in 1995, had become famous for his relationship with J. P. McCarthy on WJR radio and often shared his talents with local groups.

There were some very special volunteers in the 1980s and 1990s who helped with special events, the gift shop, organizing and cataloging donations, cleaning, painting, repairing, etc. within the various areas of the museum. A few of the Volunteers not mentioned elsewhere include: Lorraine Govaere, Hazel Kaufman, Mary Kimmel, James Parker, Neil Rackham, Chuck Steinbach, Bruce Waggoner, and Ginny Wilson.

In 1987, the Dexter Area Historical Society was asked to sponsor the Michigan Sesquicentennial Celebration for the Dexter area (Michigan received Statehood on January 26, 1837). Events planned included a potluck dinner with Frank Wilhelme giving a talk on early Dexter and Judge Dexter, an Apple Festival in October, a Fashion Show and a House Tour.



Maintenance has been an ongoing problem as is to be expected with an older building. The steeple has attracted birds and other animals whose burrowing has led to leakage in the ceiling, and we've also had flooding in the basement with heavy rains or runoff from snow melting. We insulated the building and painted the meeting room during this period. Internally there were many improvements including adding a kitchenette and ceiling tiles in the meeting room. The Heritage Guild added a copy machine, a microfilm machine, a computer, file cabinets, tables and chairs and many other items to the Reading Room using money earned from their events.

The DAHS board in 1999 included: Pres. - Fay Knapp, Vice-President - Gil Campbell, Immediate Past-President - Dilys Wiseley, Rec. Sec. - Annette Anderson, Corres. Sec'y - Bene Fusilier, Treas. - Nancy Walker with Board of Directors: Mary Kimmel - Dexter Village, Sybil Van Houten - Dexter Schools, Earl Doletsky - Dexter Twp.,, Larry Wiertella - Lima Twp.,, Ethel Samuelson - Scio Twp., and Jim Socks - Webster Twp.,. The Dexter Area Museum Board in 1999 included Nina Doletzky Rackham and Alice Pastalan as Co-Directors, Harold Samuelson as Sec'y, and Nancy Walker as Treas. We had settled in to a routine of events, repairs, displays, etc. and were ready for the new Millennium!

This is the second of three articles written in preparation of the celebration of 50 years of this special organization. We are proud to say that for 50 years we have been an all-volunteer organization and we are always open to new members and volunteers. Visit our website: DexterHistory.org and or go to our email address: DexMuseum@aol.com if you have any questions.

The Dexter Area Historical Society has come a long way, but our purpose remains:

"To preserve our history and inspire our community to connect the past with the future".

Business Members

The Dexter Area Historical Society has an ongoing campaign to bring local Dexter businesses into the membership of the Dexter Area Historical Society. Businesses are offered a lifetime, non-voting membership in the society and in return they will receive the newsletter, a membership emblem and recognition in the newsletter of those who have joined. We are happy to have the following as DAHS Business Members:

Beacon Dental - Dr. David Traynor
Chelsea Dexter Dental Group
Cindy Strang Insurance Agency
CMR Mechanical LLC
Dexter Family Dentistry - Brent Kolb
Dexter Oral Surgery and Implant Center
Dexter Riverside Cellar
Finn's JM&J Insurance Agency
Hackney Hardware

Hosmer-Muehlig Funeral Chapel
Huron Counseling Services
Main Street Optometry-Vision
Reed Barbering - Robin's
Spring Valley Trout Farm
St. Andrew's UCC Church
Village Animal Clinic of Dexter
Wallace & Wallace Properties
Whitetail Farm - Mary Baude

Membership Form

On the next page is our Membership Form! Please print it out and use it to join or renew your Membership in the Dexter Area Historical Society! We always need volunteers of all ages and diverse skill sets, but one of the areas missing from the form is a place for you to indicate how you would like to volunteer to help us. Please let us know what you love to do by putting a note somewhere on the page!

Membership fees are due January 1st each year. We have indicated in the note in your email or on your letter the status of your account according to our records. Please use the form on the next page to renew or begin a new membership. Mail the form and your check made out to DAHS to Dexter Area Historical Society, 3443 Inverness, Dexter, MI 48130.

Thank you.

DEXTER AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OFFICERS:

President:

Beverly Hill

Vice-President:

Caryl Burke

Secretary:

Sharon Wheeler

Treasurer:

Carol Jones

DIRECTORS:

Neil Adams

Sue Behnke

Ina Germain

Shawn Pierrel

Ceci Riecker

Nancy Van Blaricum

Gary Vander Haagan

Jan Weaver

CONTACT INFORMATION:

NEWSLETTER - Nancy J. Van Blaricum DexMuseum@aol.com

WEBMASTER - Jan Weaver weaver74@charter.net

GORDONHALLSPECIALEVENTS - Bene Fusilier: 734-426-8972

HERITAGE GUILD - Pat Pudduck: patpudduck@gmail.com

MUSEUM DIRECTOR - Nina Rackham: NDRackham@aol.com

FACILITIES:

DEXTER AREA MUSEUM - 3443 Inverness, Dexter, MI 48130

GORDON HALL - 8311 Island Lake Rd., Dexter, MI 48130

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

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



Membership Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

(home)

(cell)

Email: _____

Membership Type* New member Renewal

\$_____ Individual \$15 yearly

\$_____ Family \$25 yearly

\$_____ Student \$2 yearly

\$_____ Business \$50

\$_____ Life \$200

Please indicate residence location:

City of Dexter

Township: _____

Other: _____

\$_____ Extra gift for Museum

\$_____ Extra gift for Gordon Hall

\$_____ **TOTAL**

-----Make checks payable to: **Dexter Area History Society (DAHS)**-----

Mail to:

Dexter Area Historical Society
3443 Inverness Street
Dexter, MI 48130

Contact:

Phone: 734.426.2519
Email: dexmuseum@aol.com
Website: dexterhistory.org
Find us on Facebook @dexterhistory
Dexter Area Historical Society

*All memberships except Life and Business are renewed each January.