

President's Letter

Welcome to 2021!

We have seen some very cold months to start the new year but the Historical Society has great plans to keep busy and warm at both of our buildings. We have such dedicated members that are always at the Museum and Gordon Hall.

We are very fortunate also for the community support. The Museum was repaired and painted by donations. Phase One of the interior improvements at Gordon Hall has been completed with our fundraisers and donations and we even had a challenge grant that exceeded our expectations. Thank you, thank you!

**Holiday
Campaign in
Support of
Gordon Hall**

**GOAL 1/8/21 \$25,000
FINAL 2/1/21 \$28,782**

THANK YOU!!!



2/1/21 \$28,782 WOOD FLOOR!!!	\$30,000	
1/1 \$34,197 + match 15/1/2021	\$25,000	
12/26 \$2965 + match	\$20,000	
	\$15,000	
12/18 \$8708 + match	\$10,000	
12/5 \$1,908 + match	\$5,000	

The Historical Society with its strong membership and with our great community support has been able to maintain both of our buildings through difficult times. We owe this to our community and members who share our love for preserving and maintaining the history of Dexter.

We are hoping for a great year and hopefully we will be able to open both of our buildings to show off all of our improvements.

Looking forward to a great year,
Beverly Hill

President of the Dexter Area Historical Society

Gordon Hall Update

The first phase of the interior improvements at Gordon Hall has been completed with three new bathrooms and a conference room. As you can see from the pictures we have come a long way from the original eight-hole outhouse to the one bathroom that needed constant repairs to a beautiful addition with three modern restrooms.



New Bathroom

We also finished the wood flooring on the



Back of Gordon Hall

back porch to bring it back to the look of the original porch. A new back door is also a new addition that actually will close when you shut it!!

All of this was completed as a result of our many fundraisers and donations.

As with our own houses, once we complete one project another always comes up. At Gordon Hall we have already moved to the next room, the original North Parlor, and removed the carpet to expose the original wood floor and have begun to scrape the paint off the walls. Now we will be refinishing the wood floors and painting the walls so when we are finally able to open our doors to our supportive community, you will get a glimpse of what the future holds.



Northeast floor

Dexter Area Museum

The past few months have been busy ones at the Dexter Area Museum. We have been working on the displays downstairs in the hallway and should be finished soon. The displays include a wide variety of items: kitchen items, shoes from the past, information on the old Mast road bridge, schools of Dexter and much more. Many thanks



to our volunteers: Sue Schotts, Nina Rackham, Jamison Palmer, Cindy Henes, Rhea Berry and Sue Behnke.

Work is continuing on the main display room upstairs where we are refurbishing our new large display cases. When done, new lighting will be installed and then some of our artifacts will be placed in them. We then will be able to rearrange our existing cabinets and items for an appealing display.



The "McAllister Reading Room & Office" is being reorganized, items sorted out and then placed in well marked boxes for easier retrieval. Progress is coming along nicely.

Thank you to all that have helped with all our projects.

Heritage Guild

Last year the Heritage Guild and the Dexter Museum celebrated the Holiday Season by holding a Museum Gift Shop and Guild Holiday Sale together on December 5. Throughout the day a



small but dedicated and cheerful group of volunteers kept the Museum open to shoppers for a much-needed Winter break - masked and socially distanced, of course.

Tables were filled with gifts made by guild members, items donated by Historical Society, and home-canned pickled beets, peach jam, strawberry rhubarb jam and apple butter. There are still some guild items for



sale in the gift shop including several lovely shawls. The holiday sale brought in \$1218! But more important, three new Guild members were recruited.

All members are welcome to an in-person gathering as soon as we can get back together. If you would like further information about the Guild, please contact Pat Pudduck at 734-417-0772 or patpudduck@gmail.com

Updated Information

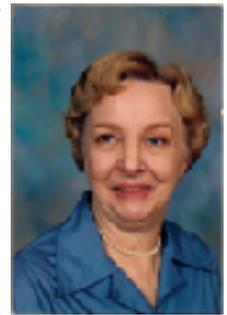
The Dexter Area Historical Society was formed in July of 1971 and we will be celebrating our 50th Anniversary this July! Although we would like to have a special event to commemorate our beginning, we will have to wait and see if we will be able to do so. If we know by May, we will have an article in the May Newsletter to let you know of any plans.

In July of 1974 the Village of Dexter and the surrounding Townships celebrated 150 years, or the Sesquicentennial of Dexter with a grand celebration! In 2024 we will be celebrating another special anniversary, our Bicentennial. We are working with other groups in the City to find ways to acknowledge this milestone!

The article below is the first of three giving you the history of DAHS. We will be publishing the next two articles in our May and August Newsletters. They will also be printed in The Sun Times as well as on the Sun Times Facebook page. Look for other articles put together by various Historical Societies on the history of the area in The Sun Times under the "Then and Now" title.

History of The Dexter Area Historical Society - Part 1

One of the first local societies of its kind to organize in the State of Michigan, the Dexter Area Historical Society was formed in 1971 led by Norma McAllister and Frank Wilhelme. Norma (Kolander) McAllister, born in 1919 and raised in a home on Huron Street in Dexter, is considered the founder of the Society. By the time she graduated from Dexter High School in 1937, there were few people in town she didn't know. Over the years, she created files on events in Dexter History including details on the places and people involved. Frank Wilhelme had taught history at Dexter High School and was our first DAHS President. He went on to serve the Michigan Historical Society as well in many roles including as President.



Norma McAllister

The first meeting was an attempt to get a group together interested in the idea of forming a Historical Society. Held at the home of Bob and Joanne Hoeft, the group agreed that the Village of Dexter and the four surrounding townships of Dexter, Lima, Scio and Webster should be included.

In 1971, a second meeting was held in the Library on Baker Street with the hopes of involving some business people, however, only one attended. Various ideas about what the Society could do were discussed and it was decided then to hold a public meeting in July of that year.



Baker Street Library

The third meeting was held on July 29, 1971 with an open invitation to all. Frank Wilhelme took charge of the July meeting and explained ideas discussed previously and there was unanimous approval to establish a historical society to be called the Dexter Area Historical Society. The Honorable Judge Ross Campbell of Ann Arbor was there that evening and showed slides of the Dexter Area. Norma's sister, Marian Ehley, was kept busy signing up members and by the end of the meeting, about seventy-

five had joined and paid dues and within a short period of time well over one-hundred had joined the society.

The first board of the society consisted of a president, vice-president, secretary and a treasurer, plus one person to represent each of the four townships and one from the village. The Dexter Area Historical Society filed for and received 501(c)(03) Federal status so monies and donated items to the museum or society could be deducted from the donor's Federal taxes according to its value.

From the beginning, discussions were held with regard to ideas on how to raise money. Joanna Hoeft approached Norma and asked if the Historical Society would consider sponsoring a craft show. Norma presented the idea to the board for an arts and craft show whereby a small entrance fee would be charged and those craft people contacted to sell their items would also demonstrate their particular craft. A group of women interested in crafts and wanting to help the Museum formed and held the first Holiday Bazaar in December of 1971. They printed a recipe book in 1972 and organized as The Heritage Guild in 1974. The first Arts and Crafts show, known as the Pioneer Crafts Show, was held in March of 1975.

Soon after the society organized, they heard that St. Andrews Church was planning to build a new church building on the site of their original church which had been built in 1883. The board members met with the church consistory to discuss the possibility of acquiring the old building for a museum. The church membership was consulted and they agreed to allow the Society to move the building across Fourth Street to a part of their parking lot. A seventy-five year lease on the portion of the parking lot was granted by the church for \$1



St Andrews

and on January 25, 1974, the building was on a new basement at the new site. After the relocation, a new roof was put on, plumbing and wiring was installed, sidewalks put in, eaves installed, memorial trees and shrubs were planted and the building's exterior was painted. Two furnaces were added, a new wooden stairwell to the basement was put in and the nine stain glass windows were covered with a plastic, unbreakable, bulletproof sheeting. Other work inside went on included painting and re-plastering. Fran Bosel of Dexter and Dorothy Abbott of Ann Arbor stenciled patterns on the eight window shades in the meeting room. All of the work was done by volunteers and most of the materials were donated by individuals, local organizations and businesses.



Moving the Church

In the meantime the Dexter Library gave the society historical collections which had been donated to them over the years. Norma McAllister also worked on a committee with the Great Lakes Bank to collect old photographs of Dexter to have copies made for a book of photos the bank was to offer its first customers. These photos are now a permanent part of the museum collection.



Time Capsule

The Dexter Sesquicentennial was held in 1974 celebrating the village founding in 1824 and Norma McAllister worked on a number of projects for this event including a Play depicting the history of the village, a book on the history of the area, obtaining a "roving photographer" to take photos of events, etc. With the help of David and Mary Hosmer, Norma organized the filling of a casket with various items which was placed at the front west corner of the museum. A marble marker, donated by Arnet's Memorials on Jackson Avenue, was placed at the site with the inscribed date when it was to be opened in fifty years which will be in June 2024. Some of the profits from the Sesquicentennial events went to the Dexter Area Historical Society. With these profits, along with some personal loans from members and help from a Kiwanis sale, they were able to pay all debts!

More than 450 persons attended the Open House and Dedication Ceremony of the Dexter Area Historical Museum on Sunday, June 27, 1976. Three years of planning and hard work had gone into the establishment of the Dexter Museum which is a source of pride in the Dexter community. Upon the opening of the Museum, Norma McAllister who was instrumental in the entire process said, "It took a long time to do this, but I'm glad it's finally over. It's real nice to have your own museum and a place of our own."



Dexter Area Museum

The week following the dedication, we celebrated the Bicentennial of the United States along with the rest of the nation! We once again formed our "Brothers of the Brigade and Celebration Bell groups and although not as large as our 1974 Sesquicentennial event, a good time was had by all. A booklet was published by the Western Washtenaw Bicentennial Commission which included Chelsea, Dexter and Manchester Villages as well as the surrounding Townships. This gave us a chance to share pictures from the Sesquicentennial.

This is the first 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 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"

GORDON HALL DAYS?

Once again we are canceling the June Gordon Hall Days Event! We have set tentative dates for Gordon Hall Days for 2021 which is completely dependent on the Covid Pandemic. Check on our Website or later Newsletters for further information.

The tentative dates are:

SEPTEMBER 11th and 12th, 2021

We offer Businesses a lifetime, non-voting membership in the society and in return they receive the newsletter, a membership emblem and recognition in the newsletter. If you are interested in adding your business, please fill out the form below. 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.