

Impressions

NEWSLETTER

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The Doll house that Connects Four Generations



Katherine Hodges and her daughter Abigail in front of the doll house. Photo by Sally Hodges

Dollhouses have long been seen as a form of art, miniature architecture and history. In 1990 the WCHS received a gift of a nineteenth century style, three sectioned doll-house, hand-made by Lewis and Vhelma Hodges. The house came complete with all of the furnishings, and everything a household needs, custom-built and hand made in miniature form. It was donated by their son Robert and his

wife Sally, who had not seen it for 33 years. This summer Sally brought her daughter, Katherine Hodges, granddaughter Abigail Ewasiuk who live in Canada and Robert's cousin's wife Helen Hodges from Milan, to the Museum on Main Street. This visit was to see the dollhouse once more and also share the experience of young Abigail seeing it for the first time.

(Continued on page 5)

Farming Full Circle is Open Until November 2

The current exhibit at the Museum on Main Street has attracted a wide variety of visitors – from groups of all ages, to summer campers, schools and families of all sizes. People have been able to get an up-close look at some of the tools and appliances of the early farming days in Michigan.

From spinning wheels to a miniature windmill near the farm house in the table top farm, there is something for everyone to see. *(Continued on page 4)*

Inside...

Features

- 1 A Family Treasure Re-Visited
- 9 Gordon Hall Has a Bright Future

Highlights

- 2 Letter from the President
WCHS Volunteers
- 4 Interurban Tracks at MOMs
- 6 The Argus Corner

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Impressions

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FALL MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As presented elsewhere (The Argus Corner) the annual Argus Collectors Group (ACG) Fall Conference will be held in October here in Ann Arbor. It is an opportunity for all Society members to participate but especially an opportunity for our Board members to meet participants and also to collectively search out ways in which the ACG can advise Washtenaw County Historical Society on administration of the Argus Collections.

The ACG certainly represents the most knowable group of individuals who understand the history and details of the Collections. Their input can enhance current and future displays, public access, uses, presentations, financial support and preservation of the artifacts. This could include an advisory committee or possibly even a representative on the Society's Board of Directors.

At last month's Board meeting an informal committee on development was expanded to a larger formal committee to create a process for long-term funding of the Argus Collections and Museum as well as other long-term Society funding needs.

Leslie Loomans, President

WCHS

*Our mission is to educate and
inspire our community to
engage in the preservation and
presentation of area history*

WCHS Volunteers are Pretty Incredible

Since last spring, Emily Paul, a student in U of M's Museum Studies Program, has been helping us index past issues of *Impressions*. In August, she finished making a comprehensive list of subjects and authors from 2003-2013. With the help of WCHS's technology guru Jan Tripp, the index is now available on our website. The index makes it much easier for everyone to find what they are looking for in past issues.

In the collections and exhibit department, Alicia Juillet and Megan Boczar, both from UM's Museum Studies Program, assisted in curating last Fall's exhibit on Michigan Football and have researched content for several of our Facebook posts. Shailesh Saigal has also been helping our curator, Judy Chrisman, inventory our collections. Judy and Shailesh have been going through the lists in the computer and filling in missing details and adding items previously not included in our database. Next he will be researching some of our items to find their connection to the Society so we can add more detailed information to our records. Carol Dickerman did some really great primary source research for us that was included in the farming exhibit.

At the Argus Museum, long-time volunteer Rose Majeran, has been helping curator, Cheryl Chidester, with preparation for special events. Jessica Lacerte, an Anthropology student from Washtenaw Community College, is the museum's newest intern and is assisting with many aspects of daily work at the museum.

A hearty THANK YOU to all our volunteers! We couldn't do it without you.

Interested in volunteer opportunities?

Visit www.WashtenawHistory.org for details about projects.

WCHS Fall Educational Programs



Over 30 people attended the first program of the Fall series at Gordon Hall in Dexter, hosted by the Dexter Area Historical Society and presented by Gil Campbell. We started on the front porch and continued inside for a brief talk about the history of the house, the family that built it. The tour that followed took us from the basement to the attic. Read more about that wonderful afternoon on pages 9-11.

This Fall there are some new dates, times and locations on the calendar. We invite you to come out, try something new and bring along a friend or two. Our programs are free and open to the public.

Friday, October 17 – 4:00-5:00 PM

Barry LaRue presents "The History of Hill Auditorium"
Use the west entrance of Hill Auditorium

Sunday, November 16 – 2:00-4:00 PM

Brian Dunnigan presents "Early Agriculture
in Michigan", Dexter Public Library

Sunday, December 7 – 2:00-4:00 PM

Cindy Johnson presents "The Village Church:
The History of St. Joseph Parish"
3430 Dover Street, Dexter

Save these Dates for the Spring 2015 Programs!

The series begins on **Sunday March 15** with a book talk and virtual walk around the "Architecture of Ann Arbor", with Susan Wineberg and Patrick McCauley. On **Sunday, May 10th**, Fred Mayer will talk about the Central Campus Architecture and **Friday, May 15th** we'll take a tour of the Schembechler Museum and "The Big House".

Members will receive the program series postcard with details beginning in late February. Call 734-662-9092.

Tour of Hill Auditorium on October 17th

Hill Auditorium was named in honor of Arthur Hill (1847-1909), who served as a regent of the university from 1901 to 1909. He bequeathed \$200,000 to the university for the construction of a venue for lectures, musical performances, and more. Opened in 1913, the auditorium was designed by Albert Kahn and Associates. Hill Auditorium underwent a major renovation by Albert Kahn Associates with Quinn Evans Architects. and closed for a period of 18 months, reopening in January of 2004. The October program is a an opportunity to learn the history and architecture of Hill Auditorium from Barry LaRue. He is the Senior Performance Hall Operations Manager of the University of Michigan and is responsible for the backstage activities at Hill Auditorium, Power Center, Rackham Auditorium or Mendelssohn Theatre.



UMS box office at Hill Auditorium, 1948

Photo: University Musical Society

The Museum on Main Street



Open
Saturdays & Sundays
12 Noon-4pm

And by appointment,
Groups are welcome.
Call 734-662-9092 or
Email: wchs-500@ameritech.net

The Current Exhibit
"Farming - Full Circle"
Open through November 2

500 N. Main Street (at Beakes & E. Kingsley) Ann Arbor, MI 48104-1027

WashtenawHistory.org [facebook.com/washtenawhistory](https://www.facebook.com/washtenawhistory)

The Washtenaw County Historical Society
P.O. Box 3336 • Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336



Farming Comes Full Circle with Visitors to the Exhibit

On Wednesday, August 13 Ann Arbor Public Schools, Community Education and Recreation Green Adventures Campers visited the museum. A total of about 60 children ages 6 to 12 and 15 chaperones visited. They were on a field trip to the Farmers Market and Zingerman's as part of the Green Adventures summer camp field trip. They came in 5 different groups throughout the afternoon.

One of the displays in the third room features the Green Adventures camp experience. The camp is held at Raynor Farm, (once a popular U-pick berry farm in the 1960s and 1970s) located in Washtenaw County at Frains Lake in Ypsilanti, Michigan.



This unique summer camp experience provided science and environmental education field trips and inquiry-based science programs for kids. Throughout the summer, campers enjoyed cooking, farming, raising chickens, tending hives and spinning honey. Campers plant, weed and harvest vegetables, as well as learn how to cook and preserve foods. They also learn about conservation, ecology and what it means to “grow food and be green.” *Photos by Judy Chrisman*

We welcome visiting groups to see this exhibit. It is easily self-guided and a docent can be provided on request. There is free parking in the lot next to the Museum on Main Street and additional metered parking is nearby. Our parking lot and building are fully accessible, there is a ramp in the back. Be sure to visit between now and November 2. Regular hours are Saturday and Sunday, 12 Noon-4pm. Weekdays by appointment, call 734-662-9092 or email wchs-500@ameritech.net

What's Next? Find out on Thanksgiving Weekend

For the county's frontier farmers the Family Bible was a most treasured object. Nearly every family owned a Bible for education and devotion. Bibles, ranging from simple to elaborate, were put on display in the home as pieces of art. And many Bibles contain the county's earliest civic and genealogical records, offering elements of family history for those who settled Washtenaw County.

“The Family Bible:

Art • History • Function”

opens on Sunday November 30th.

Please join us for an opening reception from 12 noon to 4 pm.



Continued from page 1

Written by Sally Hodges

My in-laws, Lewis (1905-1991) and Vhelma Hodges (1907-1989), had many years of wonderful handcraft projects before they began to make the doll-house. Vhelma and Lewis suddenly 'got the bug' to make an authentic Victorian dollhouse when they turned 70, in the mid 1970s. Perhaps it was the arrival of three grandchildren during that time that caused this sudden surge of enthusiasm. Lewis built the basic structure, including the hinged front and traditionally styled front door and bay windows. He did wiring and lighting for the house. He cut each roof shingle by hand and tapped it on, creating the perfect roof. And then they became totally absorbed. Lewis was making the wood furniture, cabinetry, stairs and floors, and Vhelma was decorating their new 'home' - curtains, rugs, linoleum, wallpaper, linens,



Lewis Hodges in his workshop and the doll house

doll clothes, pictures and mirrors on the walls, upholstering for the chairs and couches.

In hours off they drove to possible places in search of authentic period kitchen equipment and accessories like lamps, vases and toys for other rooms - all the correct miniature size. They were so engrossed that they lost track of time every day, staying up until midnight sometimes. Neighbors watched the progress. The dollhouse brought

delight to everyone who was invited down to the basement to see the progress. Two years passed.

At last, each floor, and two extra wings were complete. They had decided along the way to have the dollhouse capable of showing both a summer season, mostly though the doll family's clothing, and Christmas time. Clearly, Christmas time is the favorite for both the creators of the dollhouse. Vhelma and Lewis searched all the miniature stores they could find, looking for the appropriate accessories looking for ice-skates, toboggans and a tiny tree. (No internet to ease their searching!) At last they found the very best possible addition for any doll house: a miniature Christmas tree with multi-coloured lights that light. This latter item will truly stop any viewer in their tracks! The family who live in the doll house now had all the pre-requisites for the perfect Victorian Christmas. Vhelma and Lewis were exhausted but very happy with their creation. Lewis proceeded to write two books about making the house and furniture and Vhelma took a well-earned rest.

Besides being able to decorate cakes to a professional level, Vhelma was the neatest sewer, knitter and crocheter I have ever seen. She made dolls of various sizes in this way and outfitted them with bonnets, dresses, sweaters in intricate patterns, undershirts, panties, and booties. She tackled other projects with equal fervor such as knitted ducks, cloth dolls, Peter Rabbit and other furry creatures, a felt Irish family, some jewelry and even pottery. She made scores of Christmas cards every year for friends using fabric and crochet to depict the scenes on the front. They looked forward to her card and collected them. Christmas was a very special time of year for Vhelma, partly because her passion for tiny things could hold sway then.



One of the dressers and one of the dolls

Their home and tree were filled with tiny, delightful items, many hand-made. If you are imagining her to be a very kind, generous person with a great love for the innocence and play of childhood, you would be right.

Lewis was a respected high school math, science and vocational teacher in several towns, lastly Grand Haven, before coming to U of M to become Associate Professor and Chair of the department of Vocational Education and Practical Arts, School of Education. He wrote 8 books on woodworking projects, including music stands, fancy shelving and one on making 42 wooden toys. With his large hands (he was 6'1") his skill with a miniature lathe and miniature tools was astonishing. Some of the eight woodworking books he wrote can still sometimes be found on Amazon. In the preface to *How to Build Your Own Fine Doll House and Furnishings* he says 'Here's to more power for the little ones. THINK SMALL!'. Was this a reflection of his to-be 68 years of happy marriage to Vhelma who never did reach 5 feet tall?



(L-R) Katherine Hodges holding her daughter Abigail, her mother Sally Hodges and Pauline Waters, WCHS Corresponding Secretary

The Argus Corner

By Cheryl A. Chidester

Argus Museum Curator/WCHS

As usual, we've been busy at the Argus Museum. The Wayne State University students and alumni of the Experimental Photography Class opened this year's annual show on August 7th. The event was very well-attended and the artwork was well-received. The crowd enjoyed appetizers and beverages while mingling with the artists. This year's show was entitled: A Matter of Light and Memory- an analog and alternative photographic process exhibit. Under the direction of their professor, Deborah R. Kingery, educator, respected photographer and historian, the student created remarkable work.



Among the recent visitors of the Argus Museum, was Elwyn Dersham. Durham was employed by Argus 1953-1963. He first worked in Government Quality Control calibrating the T-149 and the T-150 military sighting devices. He was then assigned to Quality Control with movie cameras, movie projectors and slide projectors.

The Argus Museum's biggest yearly event is the Argus Collectors Group (ACG) Ann Arbor Fall Conference; this year it is being held October 16-19. A photography exhibition, presentations, demonstrations, field trips, enjoyable meals and the camaraderie of attendees are ingredients for a great conference.

A photography contest begins before the official start of the conference! Attendees are encouraged to use an Argus camera to document "My Journey to Ann Arbor". Contestants will turn in one roll of film on Friday evening. Developed pictures will be returned on Saturday at dinner and participants will pick one of their images for the contest. The photographs are numbered and displayed; winners will be decided by dinner attendees. We will reveal the winners in the next issue of *Impressions*.

The conference officially kicks-off Thursday evening with the opening of Mark O'Brien's photography exhibition: Recent Monochrome work. Mark F. O'Brien is an eclectic photographer who is compelled to photograph just about every day. One of the founders of the Ann Arbor Area Crappy Camera Club, O'Brien has photographed extensively with "toy cameras" and has exhibited in several local venues. At the other end of the spectrum, his macro-photography and landscapes have also been published and exhibited. He is an avid user and advocate of film-based photography.



"Musical Images" was taken with an Argus Camera



Elwyn Dersham

O'Brien has taught a number of adult education photography classes at Matthaei Botanical Gardens and given presentations on toy cameras, the history of 35mm cameras and macro-photography to local groups. An Ann Arbor resident since 1981, Mark is trained as an entomologist and is the Insect Division collection manager at the UM Museum of Zoology.

The Washtenaw County Historical Society (WCHS) will host a Friday afternoon private reception on October 17 at the Museum on Main Street from 2-5 pm for ACG/Argus Museum members, conference attendees and Washtenaw County Historical Society Members.

Dinner will be served in the lobby of the Argus I Building. Dinner will be followed by a presentation given by Susan Wineberg and Patrick McCauley, local historians and authors, who will discuss their book, *Historic Ann Arbor: an Architectural Guide*. Wineberg possesses advanced degrees in Near Eastern Studies, Anthropology and a Masters of Science in Historic Preservation. She has served as President of the Washtenaw County Historical Society, on the Historic District Commission and numerous history/architecture-related committees. A life-long Ann Arbor resident, McCauley earned a Bachelor's

Continued on page 7

degree in history from the University of Michigan and has worked on many local historic properties with his family's restoration business. Both have a deep appreciation for architecture. Mark O'Brien will then present, *The Print Still Matters – Showing your work in a digital world.*

On Saturday Les Loomans, President of WCHS Board, will speak and Museum updates will be given by Cheryl Chidester, Argus Museum Curator, who will highlight the Gambino Collection. Zingerman's Delicatessen has generously donated the conference lunch that will be shared with former Argus employees and their families. The luncheon has turned into an annual event; featuring exchanges of information, memories and stories are enjoyed by all!

Next stop is the Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary in Pleasant Lake Michigan to witness the Sandhill Crane Migration. A talk is scheduled for 4 pm. (The observation site is ADA accessible.) Saturday's dinner will be held at the Sandhill Crane Vineyards. The photography contest will take place after dinner; awards will be given, followed by an auction. Items will include cameras and equipment, artwork featuring cameras and other interesting objects. All proceeds are donated to the Argus Museum Special Projects Fund.

On Sunday, attendees attend the Michigan Photographic Historical Society (MiPHS) Photographica Show & Sale in Royal Oak. (There is a small admittance fee.) After the show, those remaining in the area often meet for dinner and final good-byes (until next year!) It's not too early to sign up for 2015.

For more information call Cheryl Chidester at 734-769-0770 or email cchidester@onealconstruction.com

The Essential Guide to Historic Ann Arbor

This new book is available in the Gift Shop at the Museum on Main Street and online at

annarborhistoricalfoundation.org

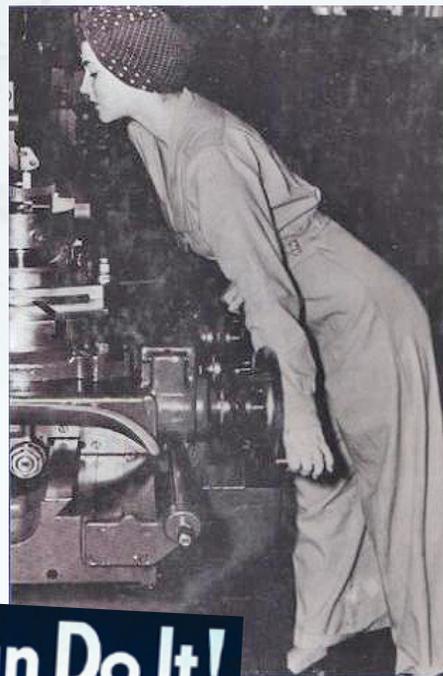
Rosie the Riveter Graduated from Ann Arbor High in 1942

Throughout the decades since World War II, the beautiful brunette in the red and white polka-dot bandanna was Rosie the Riveter. Rosie's rolled-up sleeves and flexed right arm came to represent the newfound strength of the 18 million women who worked during the war.

However the woman in the patriotic poster was never named Rosie, nor was she a riveter. She was Geraldine Hoff, a graduate of Ann Arbor High School, class of 1942. But for four decades, Geraldine had no idea she was the woman who inspired the poster. After graduating from high school, Geraldine wanted to do

her part to aid in the war effort. She found work as a metal presser in the American Broach & Machine Co. of Ann Arbor. She worked there for two short weeks. A cellist, she was horrified to learn that a previous worker at the factory had badly injured her hands working at the machines. She found safer employment at a soda fountain and bookshop in Ann Arbor, where she met and married a young dental school student named Leo Doyle.

During that brief time she worked there, a United Press photographer came to her factory and captured Geraldine leaning over a piece of



machinery and wearing a red and white polka-dot bandanna over her hair. That image became the basis for the poster J. Howard Miller created during a Westinghouse anti-absenteeism and anti-strike campaign. The "We Can Do It" poster was revived during

the women's liberation period in the 1960s and 1970s.

Several women claimed to be the "real" Rosie the Riveter. But in 1984, Mrs. Doyle and her family came across an article in *Modern Maturity* magazine, a former AARP publication, that connected her UPI photo with Miller's wartime poster. The artist did take some liberties with her physique, her family said. "She didn't have those big muscles, she was busy playing cello." Geraldine Hoff Doyle died on December 26, 2010, aged 86.

Photo of Geraldine Hoff: U.S. National Archives

A Piece of the Interurban Rail Finds a New Home at the Museum on Main Street



Ann Arbor Street Railway Company, 1912 Bentley Historical Library



Interurban rail under the street at Huron and Ashley, Photo by Heather Douglass



Railroad ties by the bench in the garden at the Museum on Main Street

WCHS Board member, Anita Toews, has been working on a project to have a piece of the interurban rail installed in the garden at the Museum on Main Street. She was recently contacted by O'Neal Construction. They had uncovered a portion of the interurban railroad track at their new project at the NE corner of Huron and Ashley. They knew that she had been working with MDOT to recover some of the rail in the reconstruction of Jackson Road. The piece of track was immediately available as they needed to dispose of it.

Toews had the track picked up and taken to Latvala Brothers shop in Ypsilanti. Currently, the track is being cleaned and sealed to keep it from rusting further. The track will be cut into 2 - six foot pieces. We plan to place it in the garden outside the museum on some railroad ties provided by Tom Freeman. We are extremely thankful to Jan Latvala for his donation of time, talent and resources in this project and Tom for providing the ties.

The garden will be extended out a bit and the rails will be put there so mowing is not a problem. Board members, Joe Cialdella and Emma Hawker are working on a plaque that tells the story of this outdoor display. If you would like to make a donation to help with the costs of this outdoor exhibit and installation please email Anita at toews@aim.com or call 734-662-9092.

Michigan Interurbans

Michigan's first interurban, the Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor, began operating in 1890. Pulled by a steam engine, the cars went east on Packard Road to the Ann Arbor city limits. Because of the low fares (10 cents one way) and frequent service (cars leaving every 90 minutes) the line was soon carrying over 600 passengers daily. Electric power was added in 1896. The Ypsi-Ann became part of a Detroit to Jackson road that carried 5300 passengers a day in 1902. It became possible to go from Detroit to Kalamazoo, or from Bay City to Cincinnati on connecting lines. But the automobile, bus and truck put the interurbans out of business in Michigan in the 1920s. The last interurban from Ypsilanti ran in 1929.

www.michmarkers.com

The View From the Hilltop – Gordon Hall Talk & Tour



Gordon Hall - Photo by Ted J Ligibel, PhD, Director, Historic Preservation Program, Eastern Michigan University

The first WCHS Fall educational program began right on the steps, porch and walkway of this 1840's Greek Revival home on Sunday, September 21. Jim Davis, Washtenaw County Historical Society Vice President, thanked the group of more than 30 people for coming and introduced Bene Fusilier, president of the Dexter Area Historical Society and Museum. She then shared some exciting news. In September 2014 the DAHSM paid off the mortgage on Gordon Hall. They have now successfully completed the first phase of the plan: acquisition and debt retirement of Gordon Hall.

The presenter was Gilbert Campbell, past president of the Dexter Area Historical Society.

Who Was Samuel William Dexter?

Most people know him for his role in founding and building the village of Dexter into a Michigan town that, during his lifetime, was as large as Ann Arbor. Dexter was a pioneer settler of Washtenaw County. He was also an abolitionist who was active on the Underground Railroad and a railroad enthusiast.

Samuel William Dexter was born in 1792 in Boston, Massachusetts to Samuel and Catherine Gordon Dexter. His father, Samuel Dexter, was a lawyer, US Representative and Senator from Massachusetts. He had been Secretary of War and Secretary of the Treasury under the administrations of presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Both Dexters received their law degrees from Harvard.

In 1824, 13 years before Michigan became a state, land speculator Samuel W. Dexter purchased a large tract of land in Washtenaw County. By 1830, Dexter platted a village on the land surrounding his house; he named it "Dexter" to honor his father. Samuel Dexter was the first mail carrier and postmaster in Washtenaw County.



Historic American Buildings Survey March 16, 1937. Front (north) and east elevation. Judge Samuel W. Dexter House, West Huron Street, Dexter, Washtenaw County, MI

In 1827, Governor Lewis Cass appointed Samuel William Dexter the first Chief Justice of the Washtenaw County Court.

He married three times and two were marked by tragedy. His first wife Amelia and his 2nd son, Augustine died in 1822. Judge Dexter married his 2nd wife, Susan Dunham and built his second house that was located near where the Cider Mill is now. The picture below was taken in 1937, two years before it was torn down. There was an attempt by local women's groups to save it.

Susan died in August of 1827 after giving birth to his 3rd child who died a month later. Susan and her infant are the first known burials in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Dexter, Michigan.

In 1828, Judge Dexter married his 3rd wife, Millicent Bond, and they had eight children. In 1829, Judge Dexter, in collaboration with John Allen, the co-founder of Ann Arbor, started printing the first newspaper in Washtenaw County called "The Western Emigrant".

The Emigrant ran an article, which was probably written by the judge in 1832, which suggested the possibility of a transcontinental railroad. It appears that this was the first article in the United

(Continued on page 10)

September's Educational Program - Gordon Hall Talk & Tour

(Continued from page 9)

States mentioning the idea of such a railroad system. Judge Dexter donated a good deal of land for the railroad, which guaranteed it would come through Dexter. In 1841, when the railroad came to Dexter, the tracks went through his orchards, and a little too close to his house on Huron Street. He decided to build a new home.

Gordon Hall

The project began in 1841 and finished by 1843. They picked a site overlooking the the west side of the village. In 1844, construction of Gordon Hall was completed. His home was built in a period when the so called -"Greek Revival" was at its highest. It had 22 rooms, each with a fireplace. As he named his Village after his father, Judge Dexter named Gordon Hall after his mother's family.

Judge Dexter chose Calvin Fillmore as the designer of his house. Calvin was a brother of Millard Fillmore who later became the 13th President of the United States. One of the reasons for the 2 year construction period was the difficulty of getting lumber as fast as it could be used, and although some of it was probably harvested on the grounds of the estate, much also had to be obtained from Flint by ox-team, and from Detroit by railroad.

Since it was built 173 years ago, Gordon Hall has had 6 owners: Samuel and Millicent Dexter, Thomas Birkett, Dr. Charles Crumrine, Katherine Dexter McCormick, the University of Michigan and the Dexter Area Historical Society and Museum, the current owners. The outside of Gordon Hall looks much like it did in 1863 when Judge Dexter died, but there were some notable changes. One was a tower that was added in about 1875. Presumably she wanted each of her daughters to have a bedroom with a view.

The granddaughter of Judge Dexter, Katherine McCormick purchased Gordon Hall in 1939 and hired Emil Lorch to renovate it. His immediate goal was



The Tower that was put in about 1875 was supposed to have given each daughter a room, but the daughters were already married and most moved away by that time. (Bentley Historical Library)

to prepare the house for the Centennial of the Railroad to be held in July 1941. In his book on Gordon Hall, James B. Parker details the extensive renovations made by Lorch that included reinforcing the entire house with steel beams, taking off the top stories of the tower, removing the large pillars on the front porch and replacing them on pedestals.

The Dexter Area Historical Society does not know of any original architectural drawings for Gordon Hall, but it is very thankful that Emil Lorch got involved during the 1930s and 40s.

Lorch was the founder and dean of the College of Architecture at the University of Michigan. He was the Michigan Representative of the Historic Architectural Buildings Survey and he nominated Gordon Hall for a survey in 1933.

The complete set of the HABS drawings and pictures gives us a detailed account of what the house looked like in 1934. Professor Lorch's extensive research and work on the restoration beginning in 1939 saved Gordon Hall from the same fate as the 2nd Dexter Home mentioned earlier. These drawings and photos are available at www.loc.gov and search Judge Samuel Dexter Country House.

Katherine was born in Gordon Hall in 1875. She graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1904 – the first woman to graduate from there in any Science. In 1905, she married Stanley McCormick, son of Cyrus McCormick, the inventor of the reaper. However, within a year of their marriage in Switzerland, Stanley was diagnosed as a Schizophrenic and was to spend the rest of his life in a private estate in California. Katherine dedicated her time and money seeking a cure to Stanley's illness. She is also known for her work in women's suffrage and her financial backing for the development of the Birth Control pill.

After the death of her husband, Stanley in 1947, Katherine inherited the McCormick fortune and the inheritance taxes that go along with it. On the advice of her lawyers, she signed papers donating Gordon Hall to the University of Michigan.

In 1951 the University began converting the home into apartments for the use of University Staff and students. Emil Lorch tried to stop the process, but Katherine had signed the papers and the opinions of many architects and other interested parties changed nothing.

According to the *Michigan Daily* (April 27, 1951) McCormick wanted the building to be self-sustaining and saw these apartments as a means to do so. One of the first occupants was Alexander Grant Ruthven, who moved into Gordon Hall after stepping down from the presidency of the University in 1951. While McCormick asked for the opportunity to review and approve any plans for the property if changes were made during her lifetime, she also told the University she had no objections to the sale of the property. She died in 1967.

The University rented out the apartments until 2000 when they decided to sell the property. The University did obtain Historic designation for the house through the Washtenaw Historic Commission. Gordon Hall and about 67 acres were designated as "The Gordon Hall Historic District" in 2001.

The gutting of the building for the apartments was a blow to all those who were experts in the field, and it is a major challenge to the Dexter Area Historical Society as it works to bring Gordon Hall back to its glory.

After the talk by Gilbert Campbell in the front room, we took a tour of the house from the basement to the attic. Although the roof covering and some rafters were replaced in the 1940s, the attic still features most of the original framing. The front beams hold the house together. One can see the pegs holding the beams together. The highest side beams, each 50 feet long, run the length of the house.

Under the attic windows, one can see both the lathe and the plaster. And the windowpanes with the wavy effect are the original glass. This can be found in other windows throughout the house.

There were many questions asked and answers given throughout the presentation and tour. We enjoyed refreshments provided by the DAHS.



Mix and Mingle after the Talk

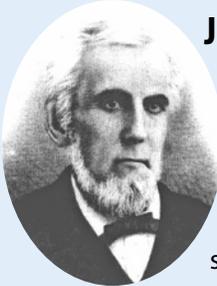
Photo by Ted J. Ligibel

James Baldwin Parker author of *Voices of the Past: Gordon Hall*, was present for a book signing. The book is available at the Museum on Main Street Gift Shop.

The Washtenaw County Historical Society expresses appreciation to Bene Fusilier, Nancy J. Van Blaricum, Gilbert Campbell and all members and volunteers of the Dexter Area Historical Society for making it such a wonderful afternoon. And for your help in putting the article together for our readers.

The WCHS recently received a phone call from one of our members, Connie Osler, the youngest daughter of Emil Lorch. She wanted to tell the persons responsible for saving and restoring Gordon Hall thank you and how pleased she is that it is being done. She is sure her father would also be very happy.

For more information contact The Dexter Area Historical Society at 734-426-2519 or email dexmuseum@aol.com. The website is www.dextermuseum.org



Judge Dexter and the Underground Railroad

Judge Samuel Dexter was a staunch and well-known abolitionist, and there is substantial evidence that Gordon Hall was used as a stop, or "station," on the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was basically a network of stations through Ohio and Indiana and into Michigan that sheltered people seeking freedom from enslavement in the southern states. In 1850, the Fugitive Slave Law was passed, requiring that people who had escaped enslavement be returned to their owners and those who had helped them to be punished.

There was a trap door on the south porch, which lead to a small room that had become the basement of the tower. Emil Lorch was responsible for opening up the basement areas by cutting openings through the thick walls that appear on the HABS drawings. This allowed access to the small room mentioned above. The Researchers believe there may have been a tunnel system that started from the back of the small room and going out to where there may have been barns or other structures.

The WCHS is always interested in your feedback Whether you receive your issues of *Impressions* by e-mail or home delivery we would love to hear from you. Please share any ideas and thoughts that you believe will enhance this quarterly publication. If you have suggestions for subjects you would like to read about, tell us. Call 734-662-9092 or email wchs-1000@ameritech.net.



Drawing by Michael Klement

Fall at the Kempf House



Kempf House Museum

312 S. Division Street, Ann Arbor
\$1 Members & \$2 Non-Members
www.kempfhousmuseum.org

The German Influence in Early Ann Arbor

Wednesday, October 29, 2014
12 Noon to 1:00 PM

Grace Shackman, Author and Historian, will document, through photos and stories, the influence of the German immigrants who comprised at least half of Ann Arbor's population from its early days up to the 20th century.

Washtenaw County's Unique Land Preservation Programs

Wednesday, November 5, 2014
12 Noon to 1:00 PM

Barry Lonik, President of Treemore Ecology & Land Services presents the history and successes of efforts to protect the county's natural and agricultural landscapes. Barry is a veteran land preservation activist.

"Michigan Indian History"

Wednesday, October 22, 2014 - 7:30 pm

Salem Area Historical Society - Jarvis Stone School (7991 N. Territorial Road)

After the Salem Area Historical Society Business Meeting, Regina Zapinski will make a presentation on Michigan Indian History. Regina retired with 31 years as a Program Director of Indian Education with Clintondale and Warren Consolidated Public School Districts. Her lecture with questions and answers will include a display of handmade ash baskets, leather beaded and quilled items, dolls, clothing, tools and weapons, etc. Free for SAHS Members - \$2 for Non-Members)

"Women of the West"

Sunday, November 9, 2014, 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Saline Historical Society Third Education Program

Saline District Library, Brecon Room, 555 N. Maple Rd., Saline, MI

We think of the far west as a male dominated experience. While demographics support that, there were quite a few fascinating women who made their mark. Beginning with pioneers in the early 1800's and including explorers, professional women and reformers, this program will open an entirely new perception of the western experience stretching from New Mexico to Alaska. This program is presented by Susan L.Nenadic. **For more information call 734-944-0442 or email: salinehistory@frontier.com**

Building a Culture of Sport on Campus

Exhibit at Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan

1150 Beal Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2113, 734-764-3482

www.bentley.umich.edu

By 1860 – ten years before women were admitted, there were 500 young men on campus, with all the potential energy that implied. They brought with them a variety of sporting traditions, from the rough-and-tumble wrestling matches and foot races of frontier communities to the newer games being introduced at Harvard, Yale and Princeton. By the mid-1880s, men's intramural and intercollegiate athletics had become an important part of student life. By the first decade of the next century, women students would develop their own culture of sport as well. The exhibit uses images, text, and artifacts to explore the beginnings of student organized sport on campus. Hours M-F 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Saturday 9:00 AM-1:00 PM. Exhibit runs through December 30, 2014.