



## Gordon Hall

Dexter, Michigan  
circa 1841

In 1841, Judge Dexter started construction on his third home on a low hill on his farm west of the village. The new home, Gordon Hall, was named after his mother's family. Calvin Fillmore, brother of President Millard Fillmore, was one of the designers and builders of Gordon Hall.

This beautiful, stately 9000 square foot Greek revival home has six massive porch columns made of carefully fitted strips of pine. The house had 22 rooms with nine fireplaces. It was built with timbers of hand-hewn white oak. In the attic there is one piece of timber 50 feet long without a knot. The floors are of wide yellow poplar boards. A hallway extended from the front door to the back door, with a walnut staircase reaching to the second floor in an unbroken flight. The servants' quarters were on the northwest side of the house. A number of servants were employed to care for the home, its farmland and gardens.

Judge Dexter died in 1863. Mrs. Dexter continued to live in the mansion until her death in 1899, after which the house was sold and then rented for a number of years, falling into a state of great disrepair.

In 1934 the United States Department of the Interior reported that Gordon Hall was one of the oldest and most historic Greek Revival homes in Michigan. Detailed drawings and photographs of the home were deposited in the Library of Congress at that time.

In 1939, Judge Dexter's granddaughter, Katherine Dexter McCormick, purchased the estate. In the 1940's, the mansion was being restored under the able direction of Professor Emeritus Emil Lorch of the University of Michigan, School of Architecture. However, in 1951, Mrs. McCormick donated the property to the University of Michigan, whereupon most of the interior of the house was removed, including the staircase and five of the fireplaces in order to create four apartments.

In 1972 the mansion was officially entered on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2001, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners designated the house and land as a Historic Site. The Dexter Area Historical Society and Museum purchased the home and the remaining 67 acres in 2005 with the intent to protect and preserve this unique part of Dexter's heritage.