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on the Hundredth Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town.
1816-1916**

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BRIEF
History of Dexter




~~~~~ BRIEF ~~~~~

# HISTORY OF DEXTER

Prepared by Members of the

CLASS OF 1916

DEXTER HIGH SCHOOL

As a Part of Their Graduation Exercises on the

One Hundred<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

of the

Incorporation of the Town

1816---1916

# HISTORY OF DEXTER

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# HISTORY of DEXTER

**A**LL citizens of Maine are proud of their state and they would be more proud if they knew more of its history, for Maine has the most enviable one of any state in the Union. In studying its history we find that it's motto, "I lead" is well chosen and typical of Maine's past history and career.

The first permanent settlement in New England was made, not at Plymouth in 1620 but at Castine in 1613 or 14. In 1622 the starving people of Plymouth obtained a shipload of provisions and supplies from Pemaquid and other places in Maine. Castine claims the distinction of having been held by five different nationalities, the Indians, the French, the Dutch, the English, and the Americans.

The first city in America was in Maine. It was called Georgiana and was founded by Ferdinando Gorges. He secured a grant of 24,000 acres, on both sides of York river, and established a colony there. Gorges' long thwart-

ed ambition demanded a great success for his colony. He inaugurated a miniature old world city, with all its formal civil government and its many officials. But the city was not destined to live long. Sir Ferdinando Gorges died and while his son, Thomas, was abroad in Europe the city was sacrificed to the ambition of the Massachusetts Bay Company. It was then sold to another company and when Thomas Gorges returned its civic splendor had all departed. It remained a town, however, and it exists today under the name of York.

The first seed sown and the first crop raised north of Florida was in Maine in the year 1605.

The first English ship to be built in America was built in Maine in 1607, the same year that the first settlement was made in Virginia.

The first bill of exchange which was also a conveyance of real estate, was given in Maine in 1623 and the first deed of real estate was drawn up in Maine in 1625.

The only New England men of early times ever knighted, were two Maine men, Sir William Pepperell and Sir William Phipps. Sir Hiram Maxim is also a Maine man.

In patriotic acts and impulses Maine has ever been a leader. It was Colonel William Pepperell, a Maine man, with 4,000 sons of the Pine Tree State, who captured Louisberg, the Gibraltar of America. In that expedition was Capt. William Swanton of Bath, Maine, great grandfather of five of the early settlers of Dexter; heads of large families.

On the same night that news was received of the battle of Lexington, Maine men started for Massachusetts. They fought at Bunker Hill and Dorchester Heights. The same drums that beat at Louisburg beat at Bunker Hill thirty years after, and the officers who had charge of the intrenchments at Louisburg laid out the defences of Bunker Hill.

The first naval battle of the Revolutionary war was fought in Machias Harbor, Maine. One morning in June a British vessel, the *Margaretta* came into Machias Harbor. The commander of the *Margaretta* ordered that a liberty pole which the people had erected should be taken down or he would fire upon the town.

The men held a meeting in the woods to discuss the situation. Benjamin Foster stepped across a small brook calling on all who were in favor of seizing the ship to follow him. In a short time every man had crossed over.

The *Margaretta* learned of her danger and dropped down the river. Thomas O'Brien took possession of a sloop called the *Unity* and mustered a volunteer crew of about 40. Foster

went to East River and secured a schooner and crew there but it ran aground and was unable to participate in the fight.

The *Unity* pursued the *Margaretta*; shots were exchanged and a man on the *Unity* was killed. Finally Captain O'Brien ran the bowsprit of the *Unity* through the mainsail of the *Margaretta* and 20 of his men armed only with pitchforks, rushed upon her deck. The commander and several men were killed and then the ship surrendered. John O'Brien estimated the British loss at 10 killed and 10 wounded. Of the 20 men one was killed and two wounded. The *Margaretta* was refitted and named the *Machias Liberty*.

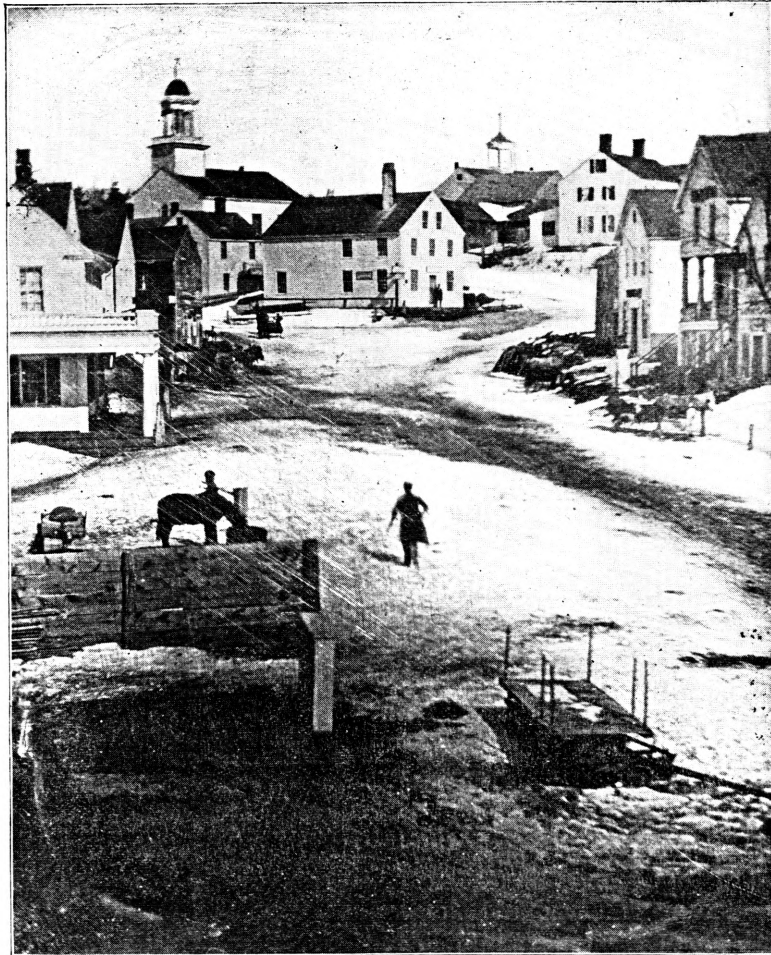
During the terrible winter at Valley Forge 1,008 of the 10,000 men there were from Maine and Maine was the first state after Pennsylvania, in which Valley Forge is located, to erect a monument there.

The first Secretary of War of the United States, was a Maine man, General Henry Knox.

Maine was not in sympathy with the war of 1812, but more soldiers came from Maine according to its population, than from any other state and the Commander-in-Chief, General Dearborn, was a Maine man.

Commodore Preble, who commanded the expeditions against the Barbary States was a Maine man. He was the first officer to receive a vote of thanks from Congress after the adoption of the Constitution.

The first to respond to Lincoln's call for troops was a Maine company and the man who had the honor to receive the surrender of General Lee's army,



MAIN STREET, DEXTER, 1849

was a Maine man, General Joshua L. Chamberlain.

Maine was the only state that did not lose a battle flag during the Civil war and Maine captured more battle flags than any other state. Maine also furnished more soldiers according to her population than any other state. The vice president of the United States at this time Hannibal Hamlin, was a Maine man. He was a close friend of Lincoln. Later he was minister to Spain.

We, as citizens of Maine, should be extremely proud of its history and should take pride in helping to make it live up to its motto "I lead." But let us not forget in our love for our native state and our pride in her history that our first duty and our greatest love is due to that of which Maine is only a part, the United States of America.

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## CHAPTER TWO



SIX score years ago the site of our present thriving town of Dexter was a trackless forest. Wild animals roamed over its hills and valleys. Indians built their wigwams and planted their corn on the shores of Lake Wassokeag. The early settlers' only means of transportation was the pack horse in summer and the hand sled in winter, as the wilderness was broken only by trails or footpaths. Today the citizens are happy and prosperous in their homes, rearing their children in plenty and peace, and enjoying all modern pleasures and conveniences. This great change is

due to the sturdy courage and persistent vigor of the first white settlers.

After the Revolutionary war, Massachusetts had no money to pay her war debt, but she did have plenty of wild land, so she granted to every man who had served three years in the war, the choice of twenty dollars in money, or two hundred acres of land in Maine, which was then a province of Massachusetts.

By the year 1785, although many grants had been made to deserving individuals and land had been sold to soldiers for one dollar per acre, only twelve towns had been laid out east of the Penobscot river. To promote other settlements and to raise money for her treasury Massachusetts in 1786 contrived a land lottery; 2,720 tickets were issued at £60 each, entitling each holder to a prize consisting of tracts of land lying between the Penobscot and St. Croix rivers and varying in extent from one-half mile to six miles square. A large number of tickets remained unsold after the drawing and these were bought by William Bingham of Philadelphia, who in a short time owned above two million acres of land in Maine, which had cost him on an average of twelve and one-half cents per acre.

These results being unsatisfactory to Massachusetts she had the land surveyed and laid out into twenty-one townships among which was the present township of Dexter. These townships were put into the hands of the committee for the sale of Eastern lands, for the purpose of selling them and increasing their population.

In March 1794 James Bridge of Augusta purchased from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts the present township of Dexter. He soon sold it to Charles Vaughn, who was acting for a company in Massachusetts. Vaughn was unable to meet the conditions involved in the purchase of this land and Dexter passed through several hands before Andrew Cragie of Cambridge, Massachusetts, purchased, and induced settlements upon it. During the year 1800, Cragie sent Samuel Elkins from Cornville to locate a suitable site for a mill. Mr. Elkins chose the outlet of the body of water which was later named Lake Wassookeag and began at once to hew timber for the structure. The mill proved an attraction, for the same year Ebenezer Small and John Tucker came here to secure locations for future homes. Mr. Small made a clearing, put up a log cabin, and raised a crop of corn; the next spring he returned to New Hampshire for his wife. There was no road further than Harmony so, with their necessary household goods loaded on a hand sled and with Mrs. Small seated on top, they continued their journey. There was not even a foot path to guide them through the forest and it was with great difficulty that they found their way, by means of spotted trees and at last reached their destination.

In the year 1802 a saw- and gristmill was completed; soon after it was sold to Jonathan Snow, who in 1804, built the first frame house, on the present site of the late Mrs. Horton's residence.

These early settlers were greatly inconvenienced by the difficulties of transportation. The story of the advent

of the first mill crank is a good illustration of these difficulties. There was a road from Corinth to Bangor and a winter road to Garland, but only a footpath connected Dexter with these towns and it was over this footpath that the crank was brought, on horseback; two men balanced the crank and a third man led the horse. They lost their way and in their wanderings camped two nights in the forest; about noon of the third day they reached the home of the Small's, the only family in town, where they were cordially welcomed and given a hearty meal of the best the town afforded—pounded corn boiled in milk. After dinner they went back to rescue the horse and mill-crank which had been left in the woods; at dark they had not returned and Mrs. Small, fearing that they were lost again, took the dinner horn and going to the top of Bryant's hill blew blasts which guided the men to the opening.

The hardships endured by these early immigrants seem almost incredible. At one time food was so scarce that people traveled forty miles to Norridgewock on horseback and bought corn for two dollars per bushel, and a certain young man went to Athens to work in a hay-field for a peck of corn per day.

It was some time during these early years, while her husband was away one day working for a neighbor, that Mrs. Small upon going to the bear trap near the south shore of the lake, found a half-grown cub securely caught. She killed it, dragged it home, dressed it, and cooked some of the tenderest portions for Mr. Small's supper.

About the year 1807 the settlers laid out a road from Garland to Dexter and

## HISTORY OF DEXTER BEFORE



RUINS ON MAIN STREET AFTER FIRE OF 1907

also built a schoolhouse which served as townhouse, church and schoolhouse combined.

The affairs of Elkinsville as the township was called before its incorporation, soon began to prosper. The settlers worked together with a cordial spirit of cooperation, they had quiltings, although there were not enough women to sit around a quilt, and barn raisings were common even though they had to invite men from Garland to complete the necessary number.

The war of 1812 affected the settlers of Dexter very little until the news came that the British fleet was ascending the Penobscot river toward Bangor. Then fifteen men volunteered to go to Hampden where the militia was to meet; on their way to Hampden they met the American army in full retreat, so joined their forces and retreated with them.

The population and prosperity of the township rapidly increased, roads had been laid out and bridges constructed when in the year 1816 the town was incorporated under the name of Dexter.

To these pioneers of the back woods much praise is due. With persistent, unfailing courage they cleared the forest, tilled the soil and established homes. They gave their entire lives in labor to whose results we owe our present beautiful, prosperous town of Dexter.

### CHAPTER THREE

**I**n the fifteen years after the first settler had cleared his land and built his home in Dexter, (then known as Township number four, fifth range north of the Waldo patent) the little settlement had barely struggled along until,

## AFTER



NEW BLOCKS ON SITE OF FIRE, 1908

in the year 1816, it had reached a population of about forty families.

In this short time it had suffered many hardships for since it was not a town, the commonwealth gave it no money for the support of its schools, or its roads. For this reason in the year 1816 Samuel Copeland, of this Township, drew up a petition, signed by forty-two men of the community, to the Senate and House of Representatives of Massachusetts; for it will be remembered that Maine had not yet become a state but was still a part of Massachusetts. This petition begged that Township number four, fifth range, be incorporated into a town by the name of Dexter. The choice of this name was the result of a vote taken on three names; Alton the home town of Mrs. Small, wife of the first settler; Gower, in honor of the federal governor of Massachusetts, and

Dexter, in honor of Samuel Dexter, the Republican candidate for governor. Previous to this time the settlement had been known both as Elkinstown and Bridgestown. This interesting petition reads as follows:

#### Petition of Samuel Copeland

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in General Court assembled (A. D. 1816.)

The petition of the Inhabitants of township number four, in the fifth range of Townships north of the Waldo patent and in the county of Hancock [the counties in those days were not as well defined as now and confusion often resulted] humbly shews that now are actually residing in said township upwards of forty families which find by experience that they are under many

inconveniences by reason of bad roads, and for a regular way of supporting the gospel, and the establishment of schools etc.

Therefore that the inconvenience may be remedied, we the undersigned, Inhabitants of said Township pray that said Township may be incorporated, with all the privileges of the new towns in this Commonwealth, by the name of Dexter or any other name that you in your wisdom may think proper to be desired and as in duty bound will ever pray.

|                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Samuel Copeland     | James Jumper       |
| Seba French         | John Safford       |
| James Hill          | Stephen Sprague    |
| ——— Dennings        | Cornelius Cooledge |
| Briggs Curtis       | John Smith         |
| Jesse Smith         | ———                |
| Samuel Copeland Jr. | William Smith      |
| Samuel Brown        | Samuel Tucker      |
| Jonathan Cooly      | Richard Herrick    |
| James Fields        | Samuel Wheeler     |
| Andrew Morse        | Stephen Leighton   |
| Elig. W. Sprague    | Isiah Lincoln      |
| John Bates          | Parker Copeland    |
| ———                 | Simeon Safford     |
| John Tucker         | Luther Copeland    |
| James Sprague       | Calvin Copeland    |
| Edward Jumper       |                    |
| Ebenezer Small      | John Jumper        |
| David Jones         | George Covelin     |
| ———                 | Isaac Smith        |
| Dan. Webben         |                    |

On June 17, 1816 a bill for the incorporation of the town was passed by both houses of the Massachusetts legislature. Thus it was that Township number four became the town of Dexter.

#### **Bill for the Incorporation of the Town of Dexter**

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in

the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and sixteen:

An act to establish the town of Dexter.

Sect. 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in the General Court assembled and by the authority of the Law—that the Township number four, fifth range north of the Waldo patent in the county of Penobscot as considered by the following boundaries be and hereby is established as a town by the name of Dexter. Viz: East by the town of Garland, south by the Township numbered four in the fourth range, west by the township numbered five in the fifth range and North by the town of Sangerville, and the said town of Dexter is hereby vested with all the powers and privileges and shall also be subject to all duties and requisitions of other corporate towns according to the Constitution and Laws of this Commonwealth.

Sect. 2. Be it further enacted that the Justice of the Peace for the county of Penobscot is hereby authorized on application thereof to issue a Warrant to a freehold inhabitant of said Town of Dexter requiring him to notify and warn the inhabitants thereof qualified to vote in town affairs to meet at such convenient time of law within the said Town as shall be appointed in said Warrant for the choice of such officers as towns are by Law imposed and required to choose and appoint at their assembled Town meeting.

House of Representatives, June 15, 1816

This bill having had three several readings passed to be enacted.

Timothy Bigelow.

In Senate, June 17, 1816.

This bill having had two several readings passed to be enacted.

John Phillips, Pres.

June 17, 1816, Approved.

J. Brooks (Gov. of Mass.)

True copy attest.

Allan Bradford, Sec. of Commonwealth.

It is interesting to note that Garland was incorporated before Dexter, but Dexter with its abundant water power has far surpassed Garland, which had to depend wholly upon agriculture. Dexter owes much to its water power.

In accordance with the law, Isaac Wheeler of Garland, Justice of the Peace, issued the following warrant, the thirteenth day of August of that same year, this being the warrant of Dexter's first town meeting.

Penobscot County,

To Capt. Samuel Copeland, one of the inhabitants of the Township number four in the fifth range north of the Waldo patent and by the late act of the General Court incorporated by the name of Dexter and being in said county of Penobscot.

#### GREETINGS:

Whereas Seba French and said Samuel Copeland have made application to me, the subscribed one of the Justices of the Peace for the said county, to call a meeting of the inhabitants of said town qualified by law to vote in town affairs to assemble at the schoolhouse in said town, Thursday, the twenty-third day of August inst. at two o'clock in the afternoon to act on the following articles vis:

1st. To choose a moderator to govern said meeting.

2nd. To choose a town clerk.

3rd. To choose three or more selectmen.

4th. To choose three or more assessors and all other necessary town

officers that Incorporate Towns are authorized to choose in similar cases at their annual Town Meetings.

Given under my hand  
and seal at Garland  
this thirteenth day  
of Aug., in the year  
1816.

Isaac Wheeler.

Justice of the Peace.

The schoolhouse referred to as the meeting place for the first town meeting was the Batchelder school-house, which stood on what is now the old Whitcomb place.

As a result of this Town Meeting Andrew Morse was chosen moderator; John Bates, town clerk and treasurer; Cornelius Cooledge, Andrew Morse and Seba French, selectmen; among the other town officers were tithingmen, and hog reaves. This meeting was adjourned until Monday, September 2, at one o'clock when a more complete warrant was voted upon.

So it was that in the year 1816, Dexter began the prosperous and industrious course of the first century of its history.

## CHAPTER FOUR

**T**HAT period in Dexter's history from the incorporation of the town to the time of the Civil War, is one of remarkable growth and prosperity. During this period Dexter easily outdistanced all of the surrounding towns, many of which were settled and incorporated at a much earlier date. The population increased from 461 in the

year 1820, to nearly 2,400 at the outbreak of the Civil War, an increase of over 500% in 40 years. The number of polls increased from 95 to over 400 and the property valuation from \$27,000 to about \$500,000, on a two-thirds basis, or three quarters of a million; a record surpassed by few towns in this part of the country.

At the beginning of this period the center of population of the town was not the village, but a point some distance to the east, where the first school-house was built, the village proper consisting of only four roughly constructed dwellings and seven other buildings.

The early inhabitants of the town labored under great difficulties for all goods must be brought from Bangor, the nearest market, on horseback, over roughly constructed roads which were hardly more than trails. There was no regular mail service and there were no stage lines.

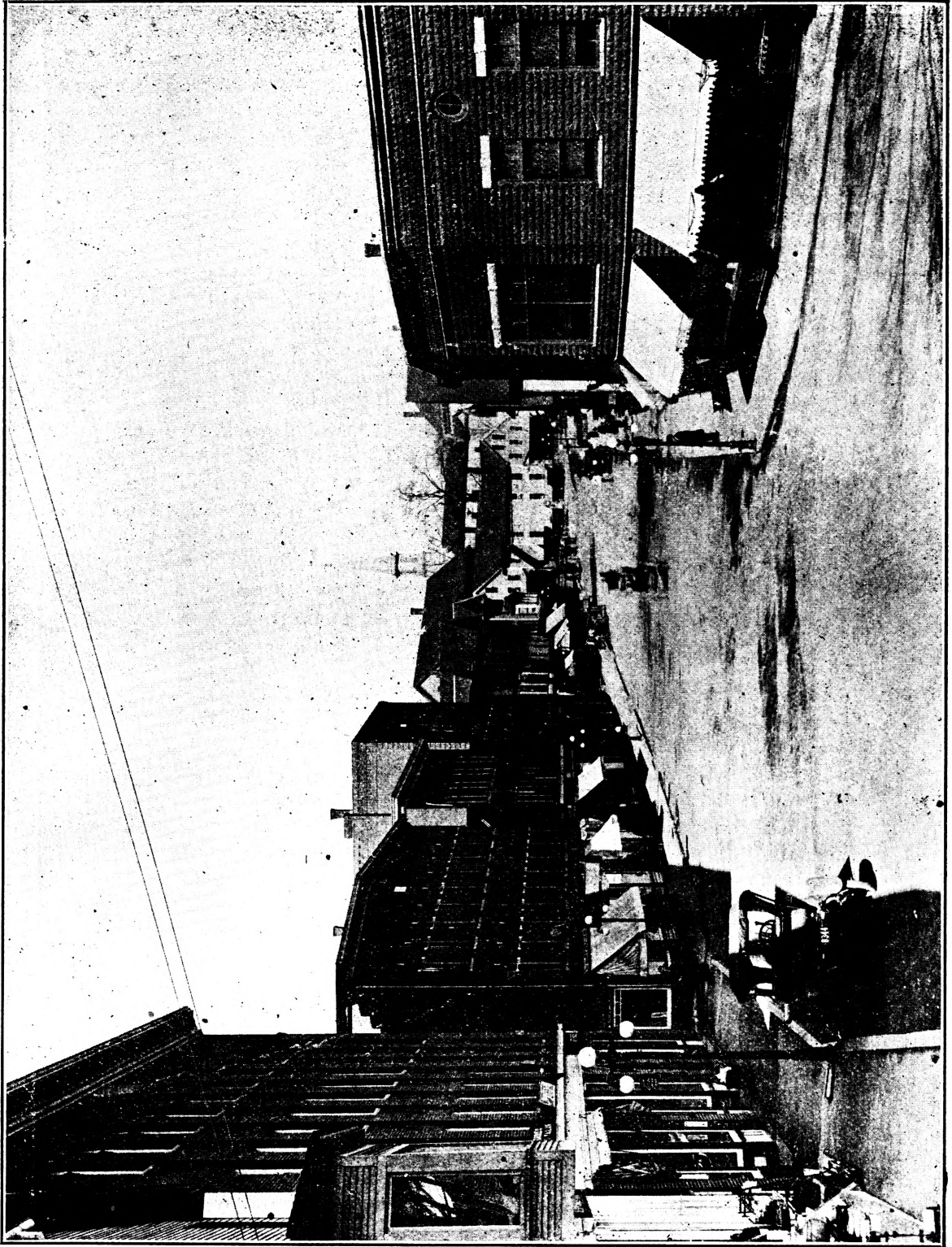
A year after the incorporation of the town, Jonathan Farrar came here from Bloomfield, now Skowhegan. Mr. Farrar, being young, active, and even wealthy for that time, soon became the most important character in the early history of the town, and to him, more than to any other, is due the period of prosperity which followed. He commenced a system of permanent improvements, dug the canal, and built the gristmill dam. He built a new gristmill, which, greatly enlarged, is now operated by S. L. Small. He purchased the Morse saw- and carding-mill and the carding-mill of James C. Hill; the latter was several times remodeled and finally converted into a planing-mill which became the property of the El-dridge Bros., the present owners. Mr.

Farrar also opened a store in the lower story of his dwelling, which is now known as the Flynt house. In 1818, when the first mail route was established between Bangor and Harmony, through Dexter, he was appointed post-master.

In 1820, Jeremiah and Amos Abbott came here from Andover, Mass. They purchased the Morse carding- and saw-mill from Mr. Farrar and by subsequent enlargement and remodelling converted it into a mill for the manufacture of woolen cloth. This was one of the first woolen mills in the state and sent the first woolen goods from Maine to the Boston market.

Another pioneer industry was established in 1828, when Mr. Farrar constructed a tannery on what is now Centre street. This was gradually enlarged and later under the Shaws, became one of Dexter's most important industries.

This same year Lysander Cutler came here from Royalston, Mass. He formed a partnership with Mr. Farrar and took a very prominent part in the affairs of the town. In 1835 Farrar & Cutler purchased the gristmill, previously constructed on the present site of the White mills by Jeremiah and Amos Abbott, and enlarged and remodeled it into a woolen mill now owned by the Morrison Woolen Co. At about this time Farrar & Cutler erected a large and complete woolen mill on the site of the present Dumbarton mill. This was totally destroyed by fire in 1844, but Farrar & Cutler, not discouraged, built upon the same site a large stone mill two stories high. This forms the two lower stories of the present mill, hence often called the stone mill.



MAIN STREET, DEXTER, 1916

Another woolen mill was built in 1847 by Calvin Copeland on the present site of the Fay & Scott machine shops. This was destroyed by fire in 1868.

The next year in 1848, the firm of Foss, Conant Co. erected a brick mill in the lower part of the village, now known as the Wassookeag Mill. They operated this until 1855, when they sold out to Farrar & Cutler, who thus became the owners of three woolen mills, besides other smaller interests. During the National financial crisis of 1856 the financial strain became too great for the firm and it was obliged to suspend. The mills passed into the hands of the creditors and, in 1863 were organized as the Dexter Woolen Mills, and continued under this name for the next twenty-five years.

In addition to these more important industries, there were many of less importance, of which may be mentioned the foundry and machine shop of Nathaniel Dustin; a box-mill opposite the brick mill; a carding-mill in the building which now serves as the office of the Morrison Woolen Co., a wood-working mill near the tannery; and several mills outside the village limits.

The village school system has always been the pride of the townspeople. This had its beginning in 1822, when a substantial school building was erected near the site of the Crosby Law office. This building also served for many years as a town hall. In 1834, on account of the rapid growth of the town, larger school accommodations became necessary and a two-story building was erected on the site now occupied by the present town hall. The lower floor consisted of two schoolrooms,

while the second floor was used as a town hall. This served until 1856, when, during the town meeting of that year, the floor gave way and over 300 people were precipitated into the basement. Strangely enough, no one was killed and but one or two seriously injured. The building was then moved away and now serves as the mill-office and storehouse of the Amos Abbott Co. Our present Town hall was then built, the lower floor serving for a long time as schoolrooms for the primary and intermediate grades. At the same time a new building was erected on School street for the grammar grades and the High school. The present grading system was introduced into the schools during the fourth decade of the century, chiefly through the efforts of Mr. Lysander Cutler, who was deeply interested in the schools.

Four of Dexter's nine churches were built during this period. The Universalists in 1828, erected a small meeting house on Church street, which has since been greatly enlarged. Six years later the Methodists and the Baptists erected a union church upon the present site of the Methodist church. This served for both societies until 1839 when the Baptists withdrew and built their present church. Seven years later the Congregationalists built a small meeting house which now serves as a vestry for their present church.

Thus we have briefly traced the rapid growth of the town, industrially, educationally and religiously and have seen the village grow from a small country cross-roads to a manufacturing town of considerable importance.

## CHAPTER FIVE



OMING now to the outbreak of the Civil War, we find that Dexter's record in this memorable struggle is a most honorable one; 283 of her patriotic sons offered their services to the Federal government and of this number, which represented over one-half of the men available for war duty, and about one-sixth of the total male population of the town, many paid the highest tribute of loyalty that a soldier can pay—they gave their lives that the Union might be saved and that our national honor might be unstained.

Not only did these men of Dexter do all in their power to aid in putting down the rebellion, but the municipality itself played its part by carrying out to the letter the orders relating to the payment of bounties to enlisting men. In all \$40,238 was paid, at rates varying from \$53 to \$300 per man. The town also gave liberally to the support of the families of the men who went to the front.

Although the rosters of nearly all Maine regiments held the names of Dexter men, by far the greater number were in the 2nd, the 6th, and the 20th. These famous regiments participated in every important engagement of the army of the Potomac, including Antietam, Fredricksburg, Rappahannock Station, the Wilderness Campaign and Gettysburg.

Innumerable acts of heroism were performed on the fields of battle by Maine men, in recognition of which thirty-nine medals were awarded during the war and many more in the two

years immediately following. We should be especially proud of the fact that one of these thirty-nine was presented to a Dexter boy, Otis O. Roberts, then a sergeant of Co. H., 6th Maine Vols.

In telling the story of how he won this honor, Mr. Roberts says:—

“Twas late on the afternoon of November 7, '63, while the battle of Rappahannock Station was at its height. My regiment, having been ordered to capture a line of rebel rifle-pits, formed for the charge and swept forward toward the rifle flashes which marked the enemy's line. Half-way across the field we came to a sunken road, where we stopped to get our breath. Hearing the order to charge again, I repeated it to my company, then started on the run for the enemy's trench. Reaching it, I paused, and looking back found that not one of my company had followed me.

Realizing that I could not stay where I was and not wishing again to risk my life on that bullet-swept field, I leaped over the trench into the midst of the rebels, who, when they found that I was only a lone Yankee, and not a percussion shell, politely invited me to surrender. As I sat there in the shelter of the trench suddenly the air around me was filled with flying arms and legs which resolved themselves into a squad of five blue-clad infantrymen, whom I joyfully recognized as belonging to my own company. Snatching up my rifle, I joined them in a headlong rush down the line of the trench toward where other companies of our own regiment had succeeded in breaking through. The rebels in our path, deceived by our boldness and



DEXTER HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING

shouting, believed that the entire Yankee army was upon them, and throwing down their arms, hastened toward the Union lines, where they were placed under guard. We nearly reached our friends when we came upon the enemy's color company, who attempted to put up a fight to save their flag. There was no stopping our wild charge, however, for they dared not fire upon us for fear of hitting their own men, and we struck them like a whirlwind, and scattered them like chaff. I wrested the flag from the hands of the color-bearer, after a lively fist-fight, and as the arrival of reinforcements now turned the tide of battle in our favor, the six of us returned to our company with the captured flag and several prisoners."

In addition to the medal of honor which Sergt. Roberts received, he was chosen to carry the flag, which he had captured, to the headquarters of the

field staff of the Union army, and was escorted by his entire company, who served him as a guard of honor.

Another exhibition of personal daring was the saving of a Union cannon at the battle of Cedar Mountain by a Dexter man, Sergt. H. A. Johnson, 6th Maine Battery, with five men of his detachment he held an entire company of rebels at bay until other Union soldiers came to his aid.

Among those who were commended for their gallantry on the field of battle was Sergt. William H. Coan, Co. H. 6th Maine, likewise of this town, obliged to take command of his company at the battle of Rappahannock Station, after his captain and lieutenants had fallen, he proved himself such an able leader that he was soon promoted to adjutant.

Other Dexter men gave good service in such famous organizations as the

1st. Maine Cavalry, which boasts of having fought in more battles than any other single regiment of the army of the Potomac and of having lost more men killed and wounded than any other cavalry regiment in the United States service.

Represented by men in the 16th Me., Dexter will never forget the part played by this regiment at Gettysburg. Being ordered to hold the rebels in check while the Union men got into position on Cemetery Ridge, the brave 16th was practically annihilated, only four officers and thirty-six men surviving to surrender themselves to the combined forces of three regiments of Confederates. Before laying down their arms the forty men tore their battle flags into small pieces, thus saving them from the ignominy of capture.

Other volunteers from Dexter distinguished themselves by conspicuous bravery on the battlefields, as did also many veterans now belonging to the local G. A. R. Post, who enlisted from other towns of Maine. In fact every man who left his home, his parents, or his wife and children, to defend his country during her hour of peril, did his full duty; and to those who returned, and to the memory of those who did not return, we of this later generation should give our sincerest love and our deepest respect.

## CHAPTER SIX



THE period following the Civil War has been one of growth and development for Dexter. With the coming of the railroad from Newport to Dexter in 1868, the town began to boom. The railroad was built at a cost

of \$300,000 of which Dexter furnished \$225,000. After completion it was leased to the Maine Central R. R. for a term of 30 years and at the end of that time the Maine Central purchased it, assuming the debt. By the opening of the railroad Dexter was connected with the commercial world and new and ready markets were opened to her manufacturers. Her business men were also given new opportunities to get in touch with the world.

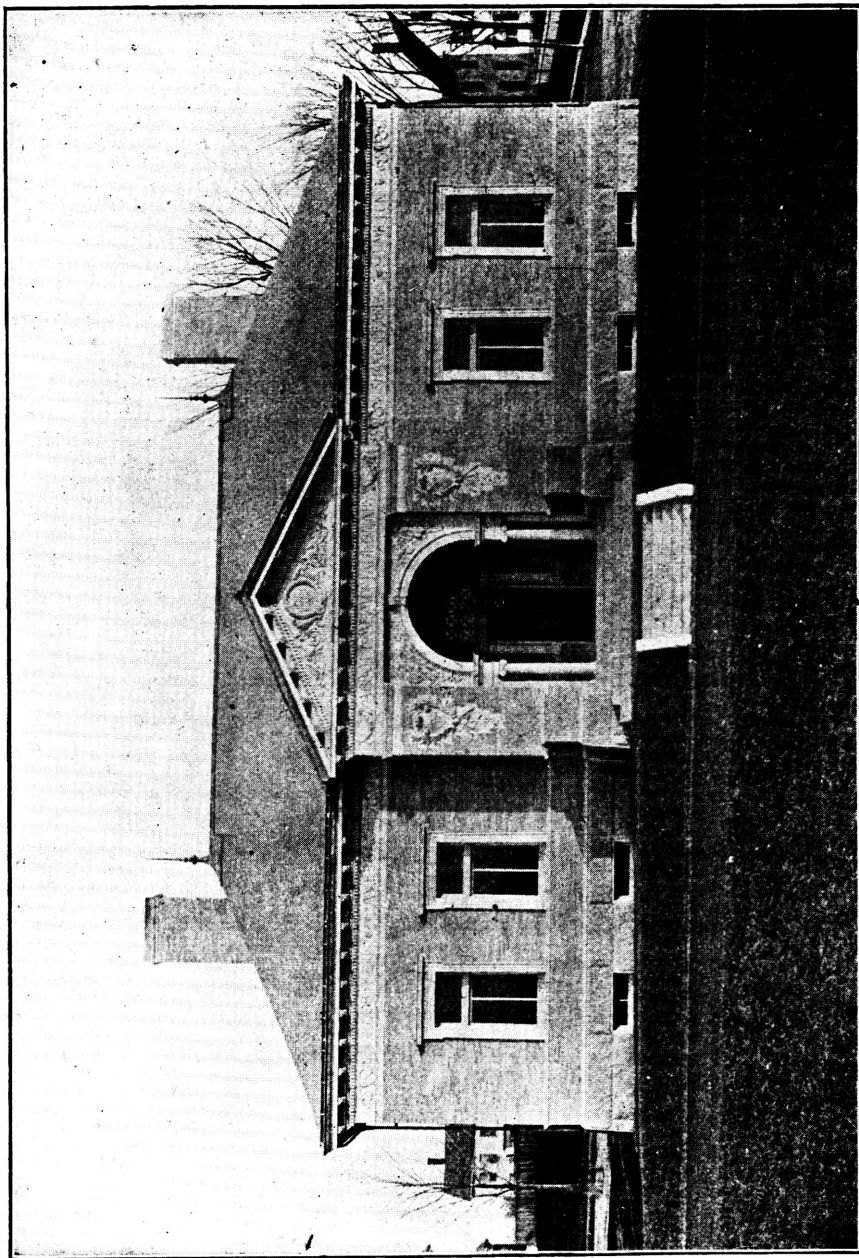
A little previous to this time Loring Hayes had built the Exchange hotel and this has been improved and enlarged until it is one of the best hotels in Maine.

The Dexter Gazette was first published in 1853 by J. F. Witherell, who in 1869 sold it to Robbins & Gallison. In 1882 Dr. Orin Fitzgerald started the Eastern State and in the early nineties these two papers were consolidated under the name of the Eastern Gazette. The paper is still known under this name and it has become an up-to-date local newspaper.

In 1867 the Dexter Savings Bank was organized, followed in 1875 by the First National Bank and in 1898 by a branch of the Waterville Trust Company. For various reasons all these banks have gone out of business and have been replaced by the Eastern Trust and the Dexter Trust, both banks in the best standing.

The G. A. R. post was organized Oct. 16, 1874 under the name of the H. F. Safford Post No. 8, with H. L. Wood, commander. At one time it numbered 180 members.

In this same year, 1874, the school system underwent an important change. Up to this time the town had



ABBOTT MEMORIAL LIBRARY

been divided into school districts, each acting as an independent organization. Now these were discontinued and by the new arrangement the smallest school was given the same length of term as the largest and every pupil could avail himself of the privilege of at least six months schooling a year. The village schools were graded. Three years later the town voted to supply the pupils with books. The High School building was destroyed by fire and in 1888 the present building was erected. At that time the school buildings were sufficient to accommodate the number of pupils, but now the schools are overcrowded and a new High School building is much needed. At the last town meeting it was voted to introduce manual training and domestic science into the schools next year. This will go far toward putting the school system of Dexter upon an equality with the best in the state.

In 1880 a town library was established when the Mercantile Library association donated its library to the town, provided it was made free to the inhabitants and supported by the town. In 1894 George Abbott offered to furnish the necessary funds for a library building if the town would raise \$1,000 by subscription; this was promptly done and the Abbott Memorial Library was erected in the center of the town at a cost of \$30,000. This library contains at the present time over 12,000 volumes and through the efficiency and helpfulness of the librarians is of great benefit to the townspeople in general and to the schools in particular.

In 1880 Dexter installed electric lights and in 1904 an excellent system of waterworks was established under

the direction of a special town committee chosen for the purpose. Last summer an improvement in the lighting system in the business section was made, the old poles being removed and ornamental ones substituted.

A fire which caused a great loss at the time but which has resulted in a great improvement for Dexter, occurred in the winter of 1907, when a large portion of the business blocks on the south side of Main street were swept away. These buildings, which were of wood, have been replaced by fine-looking, substantial brick structures which greatly improve the appearance of the business section as does also the cement pavement which was laid last summer.

In the summer of 1912 Haines & Wyman erected a large, up-to-date motion-picture house on Main street. They show the best class of pictures procurable and their theatre is one of the best in Maine.

In 1914 Mr. Call moved from his studio on Grove street to his present studio which comprises the entire top floor of the Eastern Trust Block on Main street. His studio ranks first in Eastern Maine and is one of the finest in the New England states.

At the present time the creameries, garages, mills and the Fay & Scott machine shop are all doing an increasingly active business and Dexter is one of the most thriving of Maine towns.

The persistent effort, thrift, and loyalty, which characterized the earlier periods of Dexter's history combine with the business ability, so evident in the present condition of the town, to assure for it a most prosperous future.

# STATISTICS

## Of the Town of Dexter 1916

|                                        |                |                                           |        |
|----------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------|--------|
| Population in 1916 (estimated),        | 4,250          | Number entered during year from some      |        |
| Number of polls,                       | 1,254          | other town,                               | 79     |
| Value of real estate,                  | \$1,356,580.00 | Average attendance for year,              | 639    |
| Value of personal property,            | \$289,220.00   | Number of volumes in Public Library,      |        |
| Number of polls taxed \$3 each,        | 1193           |                                           | 12,539 |
| Amount of State tax,                   | \$8,730.68     | Circulation for year 1915-16,             | 27,983 |
| Amount of county tax,                  | \$2,267.19     | Public buildings: town hall, library,     |        |
| Town appropriations for 1916,          |                | two hotels, two theatres, eight churches, |        |
|                                        | \$35,364.00    | thirteen school buildings.                |        |
| Overlay for 1916,                      | \$1,541.42     | Number of occupations, about 150;         |        |
| Total tax assessed,                    | \$47,903.29    | they include the woolen business with     |        |
| Rate of taxation,                      | .0265          | about 450 employees, machine shop, 420;   |        |
| Net town debt,                         | \$23,439.32    | farming, 300; mercantile business, 150;   |        |
| School census: boys, 542; girls, 585;  |                | sash and blind factory, 25; and many      |        |
|                                        | Total, 1,127   | others.                                   |        |
| Number of different pupils registered, |                | There are 3 dentists, 5 lawyers, 6        |        |
|                                        | 819            | clergymen, 9 doctors and 25 teachers.     |        |





PRESS OF EASTERN GAZETTE  
DEXTER, MAINE  
1916