

Early History of The First Baptist Church of Iowa.

by Mrs L. P. Brock. 1930.

The first religious organization in Iowa County was effected in Iowa, by the Baptists. Since then the church has maintained a continuous active existence. The original church records noted that at Washington Center (the first name applied to the settlement by Hon. Samuel Dexter its founder) on the 24th of June, 1834, Elder E. Loomis, agent of the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, and Elder L. Slater, missionary at the Thomas Missionary Station (Grand Rapids) met and joined at religious services at the house of Erastus Yeomans. (The first log house of he who afterwards became Judge Yeomans. This house was on the north side of Main St. - near what is now (1930) Yeomans St.) after the service, six persons united in conference. Samuel Dexter and Anna (Fargo) Dexter, his wife - Alfred Cornell and Nancy, his wife (parent of Thomas, Alanson and Rev. Alfred Cornell), - Erastus Yeomans and Phoebe (Arnold) Yeomans, his wife.

Aug. 23, 1834, Elder E. Loomis and Caleb Eldred, a member of the church in Coustock, Kalamezoo Co., visited the village. After prayer and conference, Benjamin G. Barber was received by letter, by the conference and W. B. Lincoln was received as a candidate - for baptism.

Aug. 24, 1834 Elder E. Loomis preached from the 2nd chapter of Acts, part of the 41st verse. At intermission, the congregation proceeded to Grand River, where the solemn rite of baptism was performed upon W. B. Lincoln. After the ceremony at the river was concluded, the congregation returned to the house of Erastus Yeomans, where services were resumed.

For a period of ^{nearly} three years, the church had no pastor, and after that maintained services at uncertain times. On Feb. 18, 1837, the "Baptist Church

2/ of "Doria" met in the school house in District No. I.
(This was the first school house built in Doria, about
where N. J. Spaulding's house now stands.) At that, and
previous meetings, members were received, as follows:-
George W. and Abigail Dexter, his wife - Stephen Dexter
and Berilla (Heort) Dexter, his wife, (These men were
younger brothers of Hon. Samuel Dexter) - William and
Sally Ann Wood - Jeremiah Eaton - Cadance Dexter
(mother of Samuel - George, and Stephen Dexter - she
coming to Doria with the Dexter Colony) - Justice
Barber ~~and~~ Mercy Smith - Jane Smith - and Deliah
Clapsaddle.

In May 1838, Rev. A. C. Saugster of Pike Co. N. Y.
came to the village in search of a location and
May 20th. he preached in the church, and
administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
He was engaged as pastor, and remained until
1840. His successor was Rev. Henry D. Buttolph, who
preached from 1840 to 1845. In 1845 Rev. Alfred
Cornell became pastor, and remained until 1863.
During his pastorate a house of worship was built, in
1845. In 1865 and 1866 Rev. Alfred Cornell was again
pastor of this church. After him, the pastors were Rev.
J. H. Morrison - 1863 - 1865) - Rev. Levi Parmely 1867 - 1872.
Rev. John Rowley 1872 - 1873. - Rev. E. O. Taylor 1874 - 1877 -
Rev. John Donnelly 1877 -

In 1870 the old frame church that had been the
place of meetings since 1845, was replaced by the
present brick edifice that cost upwards of \$20,000⁰⁰

Samuel Dexter donated the land on which the
present church stands.

Hon. Samuel Dexter was descended from Roger Williams,
founder, founder of Providence, R. I., through his
mother Cadance Winsor - (wife of Samuel
Dexter, Sr.) who came to Doria May 28, 1833, as one

member of the colony of her son, she lived at the home of her son in Souia, for 13 years, dying in Nov. 1846 - and is buried next north of Hon. Samuel Dexter, in the Dexter plot in original section of Oak Hill Cemetery.

All knowledge that she came here - had been lost sight of to her descendants and citizens of Souia, for years - until I worked out a celebration of Souia's 80th birthday, May 1913 - and six of the grand-children of Hon. and Mrs. Samuel Dexter, were in Souia from other points - and from a chance remark between two of them, about their "little old grand-mother" overheard by me, caused me to inquire who they meant, - and further inquiry brought out much from them, regarding her coming. Feeling she must have come here to live, and so must have died and been buried in its vicinity, as there was no way to carry her remains back and bury them by the side of her husband in Herkimer Co., N. Y., I searched for and found her grave.

Hon. Samuel Dexter was the seventh child of the family of 12 children. Her fifth child was a son, Harius Dexter, who settled in Pike Co., Ill. and was the grand father of Mrs. William Jennings Bryan - Mrs. Ruth Bryan Owen has visited the grave of her great grand-mother in Oak Hill.

(From Chambers Library of Universal Knowledge) -

"In 1642. Roger Williams crossed the Atlantic to England, to procure from the King, a charter for his colony of his adherents, at what he named Providence, in R. I., where he had already established the first Baptist Church to be built in America. (A picture of this church is in the historical room at Souia Public Library.) On his long trip across to England, Roger Williams wrote most of the data for his famous and very

4- "rare book" "Key to the Indian Languages of America",
and went to the London printing house of
Gregory Dexter, who printed and published
the book - (one copy of this book is among the
very rare books in the Library of Congress,
Washington, D.C. - and another copy is in its
special case in the Public Library of Providence,
R. I. - and they are scarcely ever allowed to be
handled.)

Roger Williams and (Sir?) Gregory Dexter became
fast friends and Williams succeeded in
getting Dexter to later settle in Providence, R.I. -
where, after Dexter became the second preacher to
preach in the Baptist church in Providence, - the
first built in N. America. "

Roger Williams daughter Mercy, married Samuel
Windsor - son of Jacob Windsor - one of Roger
Williams adherents, who joined in the charter -
connected with the famous old Windsor family
of England - one of whom gave Windsor Castle
and lands to the king - Jacob Windsor dropped
the d from his name. During the World War -
the English people so disliking the German
family name of their Royal family (the German
name which came to royalty at the marriage
of Queen Victoria to a German Prince) was
dropped and the old English name of Windsor
chosen - which since then has been the
surname of the Royal family of England.

Candace Win(d)sor Dexter - oldest Baptist to
come to live in Grand River Valley - mother of
Hon. Samuel Dexter - founder of Dorset, was -
through her father - Rev. Esch Win(d)sor, directly

descended from Roger Williams because of the marriage of Roger Williams daughter Mercy, to Samuel Winder - Hon. Samuel Dexter was directly descended from Sir? Gregory Dexter, through his father - so Hon. Samuel Dexter - founder of Iowa and one of the first six members of the church organization in Iowa - is directly descended through his mother, Candace Winder Dexter - from Roger Williams, founder of the First Baptist church in N. America - and the writer of the famous book - "Key to the Indian Languages of America"

and

is also descended through his father from (Sir?) Gregory Dexter, publisher in London, Eng., of the famous book - and second pastor of the First Baptist church in Providence, R.I.