

The Dixon family, coming from Cockfield in County Durham, are a very important family. These are the Dixons of the Mason-Dixon line, the Dixons who brought Cleopatra's Needle to London, the Dixon who built the Yarm railway viaduct, the Dixon who pioneered gas lighting, and so on.

### **Ralph Dixon (1785-1854)**

George Dixon, first superintendent of the Friends' School, was the son of Ralph Dixon of Staindrop. In *The Diaries of Edward Pease* (Headley Brothers, London 1907) there is an entry for Thursday 21 March 1850:

"Went with W Matthews to Staindrop meeting where he had good service, dining at Ralph Dixon's. It was interesting to be with W.M. and R.D., two Friends who from being soldiers with carnal weapons had laid these down and become clad with the armour of Christ and with weapons not carnal but mighty to the pulling down of strongholds of Satan."

There is a footnote about Ralph Dixon:

There is little doubt that this Ralph Dixon of Staindrop is one of the Dixons of that place and Raby, and therefore related to the ancestors of the very numerous Quaker family of this name, from which sprung the Engineer Dixons, and Sir Raylton's and his brother Mr Wayman Dixon's families. The Ralph Dixon alluded to by Edward Pease had an extraordinary career: not a highly moral character in his native village, he enlisted at a period in his life when "the war with France was very hot," as he says himself. He volunteered into the 31st regiment of foot for active service. At the battle of Talavera he was shot through the shoulder, another bullet through his hand, his cap shot off, and another bullet through his haversack. He was, after an extraordinary recovery from a mortified shoulder in Lisbon Hospital, invalided home and discharged as an out-pensioner of Chelsea Hospital, and returned with his wife and son (presumably George senior) to his native village to suffer from repeated hemorrhage (sic) from his lungs. He joined the Methodists, but disliked the ostentatious display of religious experiences in class meetings, and he turned to the Society of Friends, and said, "This people shall be my people, and their God my God." He could not, he felt, swear to his pension half-yearly before a Justice of the Peace. The first time he affirmed, but the pension burdened his mind. "Friends were very tender over me, seldom mentioning it." Appearing before an Exciseman with his hat on as a Quaker, the Exciseman was about to take the hat off, when another officer said, "Let him alone; he is a Quaker." The Exciseman said, "If he is, what business has he with a pension" and this rebuke he felt keenly, and soon some words from Jonathan and Hannah Chapman Backhouse, at a meeting he attended, made him feel his inconsistency, so he wrote in 1830 to the Duke of Wellington: "To the Duke of Wellington, Respected Friend," recounted his service and wounds, and then proceeded, "But having been long convinced that all war is anti-Christian, I have felt at times uneasy under the persuasion that the receiving of a pension wax inconsistent with that belief, besides being a burden to the public in these times of distress." He then returns thanks for it, and goes on, "Next to the Divine Providence, my thanks are due to thee, O Duke, for the great care that was taken of the sick and wounded in the Peninsula, otherwise my life could not have been preserved; a grateful remembrance of which, with the foregoing reason, is the cause of my taking the great liberty of troubling thee with this letter. Desiring thy present and everlasting welfare, "I remain, "Thy friend, "RALPH DIXON."Staindrop, "6th mo. 27th, 1830."

To which he got a reply saying that so long as he thought proper to discontinue transmitting the usual affidavits, no pension could be issued, but in consideration of his wife and family, their lordships (Lords Commissioners of the Hospital) desired, in the event of an application at a future period, the same was to be paid as heretofore. His life

after this was not without troubles, but in peace of mind, and in good service to the Society, he lived out his days and was among Friends numbered as one of those “who had come out of much tribulation and had their robes washed and made white.”

This Ralph Dixon, born 1785, died 1854, was the son of George Dixon, a Quaker (but disowned for marrying out), of Staindrop, and his wife Mary, daughter of Ralph Bowron. His (R D's) son, George Dixon, of Great Ayton (born 1812, died 1904) was a great Temperance advocate, and this George Dixon was the father of Ralph Dixon (living 1907), who was for thirty years the Superintendent of Ayton Friends' School.

### **George Dixon (1812 to 1904)**

There seem to have been two Dixon families living in Great Ayton. George Dixon and his family who moved to the new Friend's School in 1841, and the Dixons who ran a grocery business on Bridge Street in the latter part of the 19th century. The grocery Dixons were, as far as I know, unconnected with the Quaker Dixons. The only census record of a Dixon in the village before the arrival of George Dixon is that of a 30 year-old farm servant at Windy Hill, Sarah Dixon.

Quakers were required to marry Quakers. This rule had helped to increase the wealth and influence of the great North East Quaker families. But to others it made finding a prospective partner very difficult. Not only was the search restricted to the local Quaker community, but there were complex rules governing inter-marriage. So not surprisingly the rule was sometimes broken, and mixed marriages happened. At first marriage to a non-Quaker resulted in being cast out from the Quaker community, but when this practice came near to extinguishing the Society of Friends, a more enlightened attitude began to prevail.

Thus it was that Jonathan and Hannah Chapman Backhouse proposed the idea of a school for the children of mixed marriages, modelled on a similar school that they had seen in Ireland. Their idea became reality through the generosity of Thomas Richardson, who put up most of the money for purchasing land and building. In the way of the astute North East Quaker establishment the money was kept within his family. His cousin Philip Hesleton sold 74 acres of land and some buildings, including his handsome Georgian house facing onto the High Green. Additional buildings were put up, and the new school opened.

George Dixon was born at Staindrop, County Durham on 10 February 1812. He was educated at the day schools of Staindrop. When 17 he suffered a serious attack of typhus fever, but recovered and served a three-year apprenticeship in farming, which his parents thought would be good for his health. He then worked as a day labourer and studied in his leisure time, nurturing the ambition to become a teacher. His father, Ralph Dixon, mentioned this to Joseph Pease and a John Coates, and they arranged for George to learn the Lancasterian system of teaching that was being used in the Skinnergate School in Darlington. After 3 months at the school George was able to conduct the school of more than 200 pupils with the assistance of monitors. He returned to Staindrop where John Pease obtained him a position at John Dean's school in Bishop Auckland. John Dean was a widower with two small daughters, and George lodged in their house. The daughters' aunt, Alice Swinburn, was a frequent visitor, sharing her affections with the two girls and with George. When the master of the school at Old Shildon left to work with Timothy Hackworth on his steam locomotives, George was appointed to replace him. Soon after he married Alice Swinburn on 11 February 1834. He was then 22 and she was 29. In his History of Great Ayton School, written in his late 70s, George's memory fails him and he recalls that they were married during the harvest holidays. The couple moved to into their house in Bishop Auckland in 1935, after the birth of their first son John. George says they were

nearly six years at Bishop Auckland before they moved to Ayton in May 1841. Whilst at Bishop Auckland Alice gave birth to three more children, Ralph, Catherine (who died in infancy) and Alice.

In 1839 George was to meet Jonathan and Hannah Chapman Backhouse, who recognised that George, with his training in farming and teaching, would be the ideal person to take charge of their proposed school. They sent him over to Ireland to see the Brookfield School, and thence to Lancashire to see the Penketh School (run by William Thistlethwaite) and the Rawdon School. All three establishments sought to combine practical farm training with an elementary education.

George Dixon reported on his visits to a Quaker Conference in October 1840, and Quakers in the Northern regions were asked to consider the establishment of the new school. The idea found favour, and several sites were suggested in County Durham. Then an anonymous donor offered £5000 towards the school, on condition that he could specify the location. The donor was Thomas Richardson and his site was Great Ayton, a 74 acre estate with a handsome Georgian house facing the High Green, owned by Thomas Richardson's cousin Philip Hesleton. By now John Pease (another cousin of Thomas Richardson) had apparently taken over direction of the project from Jonathan Backhouse, who was in ill health. Not surprisingly Thomas Richardson's offer was immediately accepted.

In 1841 George Dixon visited Ayton for the first time to inspect the site. He was delighted with the village and the surrounding hills. He recalls that John Pease had later remarked to him "George, if people are not happy here, it is in them that ails them." George and Alice Dixon formally applied for the positions at the North of England Agricultural School. George emphasised his qualifications in farming and teaching through the monitorial system. He also explained how, at the age of 21, he had started a temperance group in Staindrop. Initially this had just involved abstaining from spirits, but it soon moved on to ban all alcohol. This impressed the selection committee, who insisted that the school superintendent should be a total abstainer. On 7 April 1841 George and Alice Dixon were appointed Master and Mistress, with salaries of £40 and £20 per annum respectively. They moved from Bishop Auckland to Ayton on 13 May 1841, with their children John, Ralph and little Alice with her nursemaid, and all their furniture. It had been arranged that a carriage and van would meet them at Middlesbrough Station, and thus they travelled on to Great Ayton. Arriving late in the day they were so tired that they slept on the floor after reading a Psalm and asking the Heavenly Father's blessing on their new home. Next morning, with the sun shining and the River Leven gurgling outside, they explored their new home in Philip Hesleton's grand house. Surely they must have been overcome by its size and spaciousness (the house is at the left hand end of the large building on the south side of High Green, now all converted into apartments). The front door was up a flight of stone steps; the portico was built later. Downstairs there was a sitting room, a dining room, the kitchen and an office. Upstairs there were five bedrooms, and above the bedrooms two servants lodging rooms and a large room used for storing grain. There were even two wine cellars, well racked for storing wine according to George, which may seem unusual as Philip Hesleton was a Quaker, and most visitors would have been Quakers.

The office of the superintendent, held by George Dixon, involved the following duties.

"To teach the boys in and out of doors, and to give literary instruction to the girls. To keep all the accounts, regulate the bill of fare, and the quantity and quality of food, as fixed by the committee, and to have a general oversight of the whole institution."

Alice Dixon, as female superintendent, had her duties described in considerably greater detail.

“To take charge of making and repairing all the girls’ clothes and boys’ linen, knit and darn stockings, make and mark the linen, teach the girls in the school from half-past one till half-past four. Take charge of the girls generally, and especially during religious reading and at meetings, and, without feeling the entire responsibility of the housekeeper’s duties, to see and inspect the house daily, and should occasion require, confer with the superintendent or women’s committee and give such directions as they may commend.”

It is not appropriate to enter into a full history of the school here, but the school opened in the summer of 1841 and by the end of that year it had 16 boys and 16 girls. By the end of 1845 there were 61 scholars, the official capacity of the school at that time being 72. The idea was that scholars would develop practical farming skills working outside on the school estate and receive a basic education in the classrooms. Classes were arranged according to proficiency. George Dixon taught the top class, and monitors taken from the best scholars taught the lower classes. The management of the farming activities proved troublesome, and so, as George had farming experience, he took over this role in addition to the teaching.

During their time at the school George and Alice had two more children, Sarah Ann and George junior.

### **George Dixon’s children**

The Dixon children attended their father’s school. From census returns it seems that scholars generally attended between the ages of 10 to 14, although some started as young as 9 and some stayed on as late as 16. However John and Ralph started at school almost immediately, being numbers 14 and 15 on the boys’ roll-call. John was only 6 when the family moved to Ayton, and brother Ralph one year younger. One can imagine that the older scholars took it upon themselves to look after the young brothers, not least because of their parents’ position.

#### Year of Birth

calculated from age at census Time at Friends’ School Approx age while at Friends’ School

John Dixon Between Dec 1834 and end March 1835 1841 to 1844 age 6 to 9

Ralph Dixon 1835 or early 1836 1841 to 1845 age 5 to 9

Catherine Dixon Died in infancy

Alice Dixon 1839 or early 1840 1848 to 1852 age 8 to 12

Sarah Ann Dixon 1845 or early 1846 1855 to 1857 age 9 to 11

George Dixon 1846 or early 1847 ? up to age 14

Alice and Sarah Ann attended the school at a more normal age. Mysteriously, George junior does not appear on the old scholars list in his father’s book on the history of the school, yet the 1861 census definitely records him as a boarder at the school. The old scholars are meticulously numbered from 1 to 818, so this is unlikely to be incorrect, and yet George senior was the census enumerator, so this is unlikely to be incorrect either. George junior was to become a very successful surveyor and land agent, living in one of the best houses in the village. Is it possible that later in life he did not wish to be seen as having been in classes along with children destined to become labourers, servants, or tradesmen, and had his name removed from the roll? There is a further suggestion that George junior did attend the school in that surveying had been added to the curriculum, explaining why the young George became interested in the subject.

One can also speculate about John and Ralph. Whilst Ralph went on to become a teacher and succeeded George as superintendent, John seems to have dabbled at woodwork, farming, corn milling, sawing timber and making equipment for bee-keeping.

John Dixon married Louisa Wilson in 1859. Louisa came from Melksham in Wiltshire according to school records, and from Bristol in Somersetshire according to the 1861 census. Since George Dixon himself was the author of both documents the confusion is slightly odd. What is certain is that Louisa came to work as a teacher at the school and fell for John. Marrying the superintendent's eldest son must have seemed an attractive proposition. However the reality, at least judging from the census records and Directory entries, may have been a disappointment. John goes through a succession of different jobs, and their fortunes seem to rise and fall. In the 1851 census he is a cabinet maker, clearly impossible given the long apprenticeship needed for this, the most exacting of all wood-working trades, when John was only 16. At 26 John is a miller at Low Mill, a water mill on the Leven to the west of Ayton. Low Mill was owned by the Richardson family, Quakers, and friends of the Dixons. It was renamed Grange Mill in 1895 and is now a private house. At 36 John was described as a farmer of 79 acres, but it seems likely that this refers to the school's own estate which was about this size. In ten year's time John is back milling and also sawing timber, and ten years later, when age 56, he is only sawing wood and making bee-keeping equipment, probably bee hives. By 1901 he has a miscellany of jobs, commission agent, clerk to the Burial Board & Parish Council & assistant overseer.

In 1861 John and Louisa were living in George Street (now Newton Road) at "Woodville". They were to have several children, Louisa Ann, Henrietta, Alfred S, Alice M, and Caroline.

Henrietta and Caroline took up teaching but remained unmarried, Henrietta opening her own private school for ladies in the village. Alfred started working in the sawmill, married and moved on to become a marine engineer. In 1871 John and Louisa had a servant, but by 1881 they were managing on their own. In addition it seems that their daughter Alice was working as a servant at younger brother George's residence at White House.

George and Alice continued running the school, although Alice's health began to deteriorate and she had to give up her work as Female Superintendent.

He retired at the age of 53, just after the death of his wife Alice on 25 March 1865, and went to America. There he was to marry Eunice Congdon, returning to England 18 years later in 1883. He died on 16 May 1904.

In yet another example of Quaker nepotism, his son Ralph took over the headship of the Friends' School, as it was usually known, in 1865.

### **George Dixon (land agent)**

Whilst Ralph Dixon, as the second head of the Friends' School, is the best-known of George and Alice's children, there is no doubt that George lived in the grandest style. George married Martha Ann Newton from Todmorden on 5 May 1875, just after he had taken possession of the tenancy of White House, Great Ayton on the May Day. George and Martha were to have eight children whilst they lived at White House, Great Ayton.

Their first daughter was Ethel Mary Dixon, born 16 December 1875 at White House, Great Ayton. Unless Ethel was at least 7 weeks premature, she must have been conceived before the marriage!

Alice Swinburn Dixon was born 27 September 1877 at White House, Great Ayton but died in infancy on 31 March 1880. The name Swinburn was Alice Dixon's maiden name. Although she died relatively young at 60 years of age, her grand daughter named after her died at only 2½ years of age.

George Norman Dixon was born 7 January 1880 at White House.

Ellen Muriel Dixon was born 10 December 1881 at White House

Edith Swinburn Dixon was born 12 September 1893 at White House. George had another attempt to commemorate his mother's name here. Ellen died on 24 February 1974, age 80.

Sara Grace Dixon was born 12 May 1885 at White House. The census spells her name incorrectly as Sarah.

Henry Einar Dixon was born at White House 29 January 1887. During the First World War Henry fought in the 3rd Battalion of the 1st Canadian Division and was killed in the Battle of the Somme on 19 September 1916. He was interred in the War Graves Cemetery at Contay 7½ miles west of Albert.

Hugh Raven Dixon was born on 27 January 1891 at White House.

The family photograph must have been taken in 1891 or 1892, judging from Hugh (born January 1891) who is on his mother's knee.

Winifred Dixon in the photograph died age 2. Her mother was Edith Dixon.

Martha Dixon was a kindly lady who was loved by everyone. There is no doubt that she ruled the family at home.

About 1904 the George and Martha Dixon moved to the Lake District, presumably after the death of George Dixon senior in May 1904. Later George moved again and died about 1920.

Rowland Miall married Sara Grace Dixon. They had two children, Nancy and William. William married and visited the Arkleys. Nan is married to Tom Scott.

### **Appendix: Summary of sources and references**

There are no Dixons living in Great Ayton recorded in either of the Directories by E Baines (1823) or Wm White (1840). The 1841 census, as far as can be made out from the sometimes faint writing, only lists one Dixon. She is Sarah Dixon, age 30, and working as a farm servant in the Windy Hill area of the village. This Sarah appears to have been recorded as having been born in "Scotland, Ireland or Foreign Parts", but the mark on the form looks to have been added afterwards and so this must be doubtful.

1851 Census for Great Ayton (30 March 1851)

Name Relation to Family Head Age Occupation Where born

The Dixon family are recorded as living in the North of England Agricultural College.

George Dixon Head 39 Superintendent of North of England Agricultural College Durham, Staindrop

Alice Dixon Wife 46 Superintendent's wife Durham, Sunderland

John Dixon Son 16 Cabinet Maker Durham, Old Shildon

Ralph Dixon Son 15 Teacher Durham, Bishop Auckland

Alice Dixon Daughter 11 Scholar Durham, Bishop Auckland

Sarah Ann Dixon Daughter 6 Scholar Yorkshire, Great Ayton

George Dixon Son 4 At home Yorkshire, Great Ayton

1861 Census for Great Ayton (7 April 1861)

George Dixon himself was the enumerator for this part of the village.

Name Relation to Family Head Age Occupation Where born

The Dixon family are recorded as living on High Green in part of the North of England Agricultural College.

George Dixon Head 49 Superintendent of North of England Agricultural College Durham, Staindrop

Alice Dixon Wife 56 Superintendent's wife Durham, Sunderland

Alice Dixon junior Daughter 21 Teacher Durham, Bishop Auckland

Sarah Ann Dixon Daughter 16 Teacher Yorkshire, Great Ayton

Hannah Longstaff Servant 18 Housemaid Yorkshire, Mickleton

Youngest son George was recorded as a boarder in the school:

George Dixon junior Boarder 14 Boarder in the Institution Yorkshire, Great Ayton

John Dixon had married Louisa Wilson in 1859. In contradiction to the details recorded on the census (for which George Dixon was the enumerator), the list of teachers in George Dixon's book History of Great Ayton School states that she was born at Melksham in Wiltshire. John and Louisa were living in George Street (now Newton Road) at "Woodville". He had taken up working as a miller at Low Mill (renamed Grange Mill in 1895, on the River Leven to the west of The Grange). Low Mill was owned by the Richardson family.

John Dixon Head 26 Miller (Low Mill) Durham, Old Shildon

Louisa Dixon Wife 26 Was Louisa Wilson, a governess at the Friends' School. Somersetshire, Bristol

Louisa Ann Dixon Daughter 10 mo Yorkshire, Great Ayton

Ralph Dixon had now married and was living in School Cottage.

Ralph Dixon Head 25 Teacher Durham, Bishop Auckland

Elizabeth Dixon Wife 26 Was Elizabeth Fox who came to Ayton in 1851 as an apprentice teacher. Yorkshire, Dewsbury

Katharine Dixon Daughter 1 Yorkshire, Great Ayton

Mary Ellis Servant 19 House Servant Yorkshire, Dewsbury

1871 Census for Great Ayton (2 April 1871)

Name Relation to Family Head Age Occupation Where born

George Dixon senior had now emigrated to the United States following the death of his wife Alice. Their 2 older boys, John and Ralph, are married and living in the village. Their daughters, Alice (now age 31) and Sarah Ann (now age 26) Youngest son George is away from home, possibly training as a surveyor. Could this have been in Todmorden, Lancashire? His future wife Martha Newton comes from here, and her brother Samuel also trained as a surveyor. Samuel later moves to Great Ayton, living with George and Martha for a while before moving into lodgings.

John Dixon had now apparently given up milling and become a farmer (this could have been on the Friends' School farm). He and his wife Louise had 5 children at the time of this census.

John Dixon Head 36 Farmer of 79 acres of Land Durham, Shildon  
Louise Dixon Wife 36 Bristol  
Louisa A Dixon Daughter 10 Scholar Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Henrietta Dixon Daughter 8 Scholar Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Alfred S Dixon Son 6 Scholar Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Alice M Dixon Daughter 3 Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Caroline Dixon Daughter 1 Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Mary Ann Walker Servant 19 General Servant Yorkshire, North Cowton

Ralph Dixon and family are living in the North of England Agricultural College. So far they have had 6 children. Note daughter Ellen S Dixon, who would have been 6, is away from home on this day.

Ralph Dixon Head 35 Principal of the North of England Agricultural School Durham, Bishop Auckland  
Elizabeth Dixon Wife 36 Yorkshire, Dewsbury  
Katharine Dixon Daughter 11 Scholar Yorkshire Great Ayton  
Arthur E Dixon Son 10 Scholar Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Alice Dixon Daughter 8 Scholar Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Emily Dixon Daughter 3 Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Edith M Dixon Daughter 1 Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Hannah Moses Servant 21 Domestic Servant Durham, Witton Park

1881 Census for Great Ayton (3 April 1881)

Name Relation to Family Head Age Occupation Where born

John and Louisa Dixon were now living in the new district of California in Great Ayton. He seems to have given up farming and reverted to milling and has added a sawmill. His only son Alfred is helping in the sawmill. Daughter Alice could well be the Alice working as a servant for brother George at the White House (although there is an inconsistency in the recorded birth places). The family does not now have a servant. There is no trace of the youngest daughter Caroline, who would have been 11 in 1881. She is not recorded as a boarder at the School, but by 1891 she is a teacher.

John Dixon Head 47 Miller & sawmill Durham, Shildon  
Louise Dixon Wife 47 Bristol  
Louisa A Dixon Daughter 20 Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Henrietta Dixon Daughter 18 Teaching at House Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Alfred S Dixon Son 16 Sawmill Yorkshire, Great Ayton

Ralph Dixon and family are no longer living actually on the School premises, but somewhere near. They have now had 8 children.

Ralph Dixon Head 45 Principal Agricultural School and Minister Society Friends Durham, Bishop Auckland  
Elizabeth Dixon Wife 46 Yorkshire, Dewsbury  
Ellen S Dixon Daughter 16 Scholar Yorkshire Great Ayton  
Guililema M Dixon Daughter 7 Scholar Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Charles F Dixon Son 5 Scholar Yorkshire, Great Ayton



George and Alice Dixon's younger daughter Sarah is unmarried and living in the village. She has apparently given up teaching. Her annuity provides for her and a servant. We do not know where the elder daughter Alice was living at this time.

Sarah A Dixon Head 35 Annuitant Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Ann Robinson Servant 15 Domestic Servant Yorkshire, Kildale

George Dixon had returned to Great Ayton, and had married Martha Ann Newton. They were living at the White House, which they rented from the Cleveland Lodge Estate. They had two servants, one of whom may have been one of his nieces.

George Dixon Head 34 Land Agent Framer of 177 acres employing 2 men Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Martha A Dixon Wife 30 Lancashire, Todmorden  
Ethel M Dixon Daughter 5 Yorkshire Great Ayton  
George M Dixon Son 1 Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Charles F Dixon Son 5 Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Samuel Newton Bro in Law 32 Surveyor Lancashire, Todmorden  
Alice M Dixon Servant 14 Domestic Servant Yorkshire, Guisboro

Is this brother John's daughter Alice M Dixon? Her age is correct but there is an apparent inconsistency over the birth place – Ayton or Guisboro.

Sarah Shome Servant 14 Domestic Servant Yorkshire, Guisboro

1891 Census for Great Ayton (5 April 1881)

Name Relation to Family Head Age Occupation Where born

George Dixon senior had now returned from his stay in America, and was living in the Friends' School buildings with his new wife Eunice.

George Dixon Head 79 Retired Schoolmaster Durham, Staindrop  
Eunice C Dixon Wife 70 United States, unknown

John Dixon's son has ceased to work in the sawmill and has become a Marine Engineer. He is now married to Elizabeth and living somewhere near the Friends' School.

Alfred S Dixon Head 26 Marine Engineer Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Eliz M Dixon Wife 24 Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Percy J Dixon Son 11 mo Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Mary S Elland Servant 19 Servant Yorkshire, Middlesbrough

Ralph Dixon and family are no longer living actually on the School premises, but somewhere near.

Ralph Dixon Head 55 School Superintendent Durham, Bishop Auckland  
Elizabeth Dixon Wife 56 Yorkshire, Dewsbury

Gertie M Dixon Daughter 17 Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Betsy Sanderson Servant 27 Servant Yorkshire, Danby

John and Louisa Dixon have their two unmarried daughters, both school mistresses, living with them.

John Dixon Head 56 Saw miller Durham, Shildon  
Louise Dixon Wife 56 Somersetshire, Bristol  
Henrietta Dixon Daughter 28 School Mistress Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Caroline Dixon Daughter 21 School Mistress Yorkshire, Great Ayton

George and Martha Dixon are still living at the White House. Ethel (age 15) and Charles (age 15) have both apparently left home. By now George and Martha have had 8 children.

George Dixon Head 44 Land Agent Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Martha A Dixon Wife 40 Lancashire, Todmorden  
George M Dixon Son 11 Scholar Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Edith M Dixon Daughter 9 Scholar Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Ellen S Dixon Daughter 7 Scholar Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Sarah G Dixon Daughter 5 Scholar Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Henry E Dixon Son 4 Scholar Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Hugh R Dixon Son 2 mo Yorkshire, Great Ayton  
Elizabeth Burrus Servant 22 Servant Scotland, Gorebridge  
Emma Simpson Servant 14 Servant Durham, Darlington

George Dixon's brother-in-law, Samuel Newton, is still living in the village. He is unmarried and lodging with a 40 year old widow (Rachel Tilsey from Cheshire), who is living on her own means with her 7 year old daughter Fredrica who had been born in Lancashire.

Samuel Newton Lodger 40 Surveyor Yorkshire, Todmorden

## **Directories**

Bulmer's Directory (1890)

Dixon Arthur E., seed merchant

There is nobody of this name in George and Alice Dixon's family.

Dixon Geo., land agent, surveyor, and licensed valuer, White house

This is in George and Alice Dixon's youngest son.

Dixon Mr George, High green

This is George Dixon senior, returned from America.

Dixon Miss Henrietta, private school

This is John and Louisa Dixon's second daughter.

Dixon John, maker of bee appliances

This is in George and Alice Dixon's eldest son. The census returns have him working the sawmill.

Dixon Ralph, superintendent of friends' Agricultural School, Chestnut house

This is in George and Alice Dixon's second son.

Dixon William, general dealer

There is nobody of this name in George and Alice Dixon's family.

### **Kelly's Directory (1901)**

#### **PRIVATE RESIDENTS**

Dixon Mr George, High green

This is George Dixon senior, returned from America.

Dixon George, White house

This is in George and Alice Dixon's youngest son.

Dixon Harald Raylton, Holmlea

#### **COMMERCIAL**

Dixon Bros. Grocers.china & glass dlrs

Not sure who these brothers are.

Dixon George, land agent,White house

George's second entry

Dixon Henrietta (Miss), ladies' school

This is John and Louisa Dixon's second daughter.

Dixon John, commission agent, clerk to the burial board & Parish Council & assistant overseer

This is in George and Alice Dixon's eldest son.

Dixon Ralph, market gardener, School gardens

This is in George and Alice Dixon's second son.

### **Insights into the Dixon family from History of Great Ayton School published in 1891**

Hannah Chapman Backhouse

Daughter of Joseph Gurney of Norwich

First cousin of Joseph John Gurney and of Elizabeth Fry (she must have been a Gurney before marriage)

Married Jonathan Backhouse

Jonathan Backhouse

Married Hannah Chapman Gurney

Cousin of John Pease

The Mason Dixon Line

[www.thisisthenortheast.co.uk](http://www.thisisthenortheast.co.uk)

The Calvert family, owners of Maryland, and the Penn family, owners of Pennsylvania, asked Mason and Dixon to settle their border dispute. Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon carried out this survey from 1763 to 1767, defining the east/west border between Pennsylvania and Maryland, and the north/south border between Maryland and Delaware. Afterwards their borders became famous as the boundary between the two sides in the American Civil War, the Mason-Dixon line. It is even suggested the term Dixie is derived from Dixon, but there are other more likely explanations.

Jeremiah Dixon was a Quaker, and described as an engineer, surveyor, and astronomer. He died in 1777. Richard Dixon-Teasdale of Durham says he comes from the family line of one of Jeremiah's brothers. His grandmother was M H Dixon of Cockfield. His e-mail address is [rteasdale@willisscott.co.uk](mailto:rteasdale@willisscott.co.uk)

Charles Mason was born at Sapperton in the Cotswolds in 1728, and died in 1787.

There is a novel about the story of the Mason and Dixon Line (Mason & Dixon by Thomas Pynchon, Jonathan Cape, London, 1997. ISBN 0-224-05001-X). It is not a useful source of information and it is unclear how much is based on fact. There is no introduction or mention of references. All it does say is

Jeremiah's father was George Dixon, and his grandfather was Ralph Dixon.

They were all Quakers from Staindrop.

Jeremiah married Mary Hunter. When Mary was nearly 18 her mother died, and her father Thomas Hunter remarried. This second wife died and he remarried a third time.

Then Thomas Hunter died, and his widow Elizabeth married Ralph Dixon, Jeremiah's grandfather. Jeremiah had an older sister Hannah who married a Yorkshireman.

The Dixons and George Stephenson

George and Robert Stephenson, the Railway Revolution LTC Rolt, Pelican Books Ltd, 1978

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Prior to the advent of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, there had been various schemes to build canals from the south Durham coalfields to the River Tees, but all came to nothing. In 1768 George Dixon assisted James Brindley's son-in-law in a survey for a canal from Stockton to Winston Bridge near Barnard Castle.

George Dixon's grandson, John Dixon, was born at Cockfield in 1796. When Edward Pease asked George Stephenson to re-survey the route of the proposed Stockton and Darlington Railway, Stevenson asked Pease to "send a suitable person along with me who knows the different Gentlemen's grounds thro' which we should pass". John Dixon was to be this person, and was later appointed as one of the resident engineers for the construction of the railway. Later he worked on the notorious Chat Moss section of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, and was present at the Rainhill Trials from where he sent a detailed account to his brother James at Darlington.

Information from Directories:

Parson and White 1828 lists under Cockfield

Geo Dixon senior, coal owner

Geo Dixon junior, coal owner

Wm Dixon, coal owner

Dixon and Coates, brewers and maltsters

It says that Cockfield was famous for the two brothers Jeremiah Dixon the surveyor and George Dixon of railway fame.

Pigot's Directory of 1834 lists

Goerge Dixon and Co, New Etherley Collieries, West Auckland

Dixon, George and William, Cockfield Colliery

Richardson family marriages

Extracts from Records of a Quaker Family, The Richardsons of Cleveland Anne Ogden Boyce West, Newman and Co, London 1889.

- James Richardson, Leather Manufacturer, born Newcastle 26 September 1831, son of John Richardson and his wife Sarah Balkwill, married on 17 June 1857 Augusta Ann Dixon, daughter of Jeremiah Dixon.

This Jeremiah Dixon possibly was a grandson of the Jeremiah Dixon of Mason Dixon Line fame, who died in 1777.

- John Richardson, born Sunderland 16 March 1795, eldest son of John Richardson and his wife Hannah Wilson, married on 27 September 1821 at Staindrop Sarah Dixon, daughter of George and Rachel Dixon of Cockfield. This George Dixon isn't the George Dixon who was born in 1759 since he married Mary Bowron. It could just possibly be their first son, logically carrying his father's name, and an elder brother to Ralph Dixon (1785-1854).

- Thomas Richardson, born Stockton 7 December 1775, son of Aaron Richardson and his wife Deborah Proctor, married on 14 June 1842 at Selby Elizabeth Jones, daughter of Jacob and Hannah Jones.

Possible connection with William Jones, although he was born at Ruthin in Wales, who married Ann at Cawood, Selby.

- Arthur Pumphrey, born Newcastle 1862, son of George Richardson Pumphrey and his wife Hannah Maria Sewell, married in 1889 Helen Swinburne Dixon of Ayton.

Alice Swinburne was the maiden name of the wife of George Dixon (first superintendent of the Friends' School). She died in 1865. After her death George Dixon junior (Land agent of White House) gave Swinburne as the second name for two of his daughters, Alice Swinburne (1877-1880) who died when only 2½, and later Edith Swinburn Dixon (1893-1974).

One of Ralph Dixon's daughters is shown in the 1881 census as Ellen S Dixon, who was 16 at that time. This is probably the Helen Swinburne Dixon above – she would have been 24 at the time of the above marriage.