

John Taylor Dixon Diaries

Overview of the Collection

Repository: South County History Center 2636 Kingstown Road Kingstown, Rhode Island 02881 Tel: 401.783.1328, website: southcountyhistorycenter.org

Title: John Taylor Dixon Diaries

Dates: 1859-1891

Media: Digital Images

Quantity: 4,680 .JPG Files, 18.11 GB

Identification: 2022.001

Language: English

Biographical Note

John Taylor Dixon (1820-1891) was born in Newport, Rhode Island, on January 3, 1820, the son of James and Sarah (née Peckham) Dixon. When he was about ten years old the family moved to South Kingstown.

On May 5, 1839, Dixon married Sarah Ann Curtis (1819-1910). The couple had six children together, including Nicholas Taylor Dixon, Irena F. Dixon, Sarah Peckham Dixon, and John Taylor Dixon Jr. They resided in the area of South Kingstown known as Rocky Brook.

Dixon became an active member of the Wakefield Baptist Church at an early age and served as the superintendent of the Sabbath school and a teacher of a class for adults. He also supported the organization of a Sunday school in Rocky Brook. Dixon was active in the local temperance movement and was a member of the national fraternal society "Sons of Temperance." Federal census records in 1850, 1860 and 1870 list him as an overseer, cloth finisher, and clergyman respectively.

In 1851 Dixon and eight others withdrew from the Wakefield Baptist Church to establish the Rocky Brook Advent Christian Church. Services were conducted in the Rocky Brook school house until Isaac P. Hazard gifted the congregation land on what is now Sweet Fern Lane in Peace Dale. The congregation continues to worship in the 1852 Rocky Brook Advent Church today.

At the beginning of the Civil War Dixon was offered a chaplaincy. He declined, choosing instead to serve in an unofficial capacity. In 1864 Dixon traveled to Virginia to care for the sick and wounded. He returned to South Kingstown with George Rodman, who had been injured in battle.

Following the Civil War, Dixon traveled often, delivering sermons in many New England towns and cities. He frequently visited Concord, Boston, and Lawrence in Massachusetts and Bristol and Morris in Connecticut. Dixon stopped touring sometime after 1873, possibly due to declining health. In 1881 Dixon began occasionally ministering at the South Kingstown Town Farm.

In later life Dixon suffered from rheumatism and heart palpitations, as well as other ailments. Sarah Ann Dixon's health also began to decline in 1886, and she was described as an "invalid" in 1891.

Dixon died on the morning of Saturday, February 14th, 1891. He was buried in the Oak Dell Cemetery in Peace Dale. After Dixon's passing, Sarah Ann Dixon became a patient of Butler Hospital in Providence, where she resided until her death in 1910.

Scope and Content

This is a digital collection created from photographs taken of the original John Taylor Dixon diaries. The diaries span a period of thirty-two years, beginning in 1859 and ending with Dixon's death in early 1892. There are 27 diaries total. Each diary covers one full calendar year, with pre-dated pages for each day and sections at the end of each volume for accounts, memoranda, addresses, and other miscellanea. There are no diaries for 1860, 1861, 1862, 1863, 1880, and 1889. The diaries from 1859 and 1864-1866 also contain information from other years. Some diaries have missing or blank pages. A list of missing pages can be found in Appendix A. Miscellaneous news clippings and other materials that were in the diaries have been photographed and included with the diary in which they were found.

In his diary entries Dixon often noted the births, marriages, and deaths of residents of South Kingstown, which at that time included present-day Narragansett. Lists of these events can sometimes be found in the memoranda and accounting sections at the end of the diaries. Dixon also regularly recorded his annual expenses and income. Between 1866 and 1873 Dixon traveled often and many of the entries from this period describe his visits with other members of the Adventist clergy and the sermons he delivered. After 1873, he continued to preach locally at the Rocky Brook Advent Christian Church and, beginning in 1881, at the South Kingstown Town Farm. In 1888, Dixon began to note his wife's health on a nearly daily basis, as she suffered from an unknown mental illness. Diary 1 (1859) contains a list of men killed or injured in the Civil War. Diary 2 (1864-1866) contains recipes for ointments, salves, and soap. Diary 25 (1888) contains a list of individuals who died at the Town Farm between 1881 and 1888 as well as a list of individuals who lived there in 1888. Dixon also recorded the weather in nearly every diary entry.

The collection also contains two scanned photographs of John Taylor Dixon and a scanned copy of his obituary, which was printed in the *Narragansett Times* on February 20th, 1891.

Administrative Information

Access: Any qualified person doing personal or scholarly research is permitted to utilize materials in the South County History Center collections.

Preferred Citation: Diary Number and Year, John Taylor Dixon Diaries Collection, South County History Center

Provenance: The diaries were passed down through the family of John Taylor Dixon and are still currently owned by his descendants. Temporary custody of the diaries was given to the Center for digitization purposes in early 2022.

Processed by: Caleb Goodhouse

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Subject Terms

Adventists--History--19th century; Dixon, John Taylor, 1820-1891; South Kingstown (R.I.: Town) – History -- 19th Century); Town Farm (South Kingstown); United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865

People

Dixon frequently mentioned members of the Arnold, Champlin, Hazard, Rodman, Sherman, and Whaley families in his diaries.

Related Materials

Researchers interested in this collection may also wish to consult the following sources in the South County History Center holdings:

Archival Collections – Photograph Collection

Archival Collections – Local Churches (uncatalogued as of May, 2022)

Archival Collections – Patrick Lyons Collection

Archival Collections – South Kingstown Town Records

Reference Library – Civil War Resources

Reference Library – Genealogy Resources

Contents Listing

- Diary 1 1859
- Diary 2 1864-1866
- Diary 3 1866
- Diary 4 1867
- Diary 5 1868
- Diary 6 1869
- Diary 7 1870
- Diary 8 1871
- Diary 9 1872
- Diary 10 1873
- Diary 11 1874
- Diary 12 1875
- Diary 13 1876
- Diary 14 1877
- Diary 15 1878
- Diary 16 1879
- Diary 17 1881
- Diary 18 1882
- Diary 19 1883
- Diary 20 1884
- Diary 21 1885
- Diary 22 1886
- Diary 23 1887
- Diary 24 1888
- Diary 25 1888
- Diary 26 1890
- Diary 27 1891
- Scans of Related Materials Appendix A: Missing Sections

John Taylor Dixon Diaries
Appendix A
Pages Missing from Original Diaries

Diary #	Dates
4	8/3/1867 - 8/6/1867
5	5/7/1868 - 5/8/1868
7	1/13/1870 – 1/14/1870
7	8/7/1870 – 8/8/1870
7	12/13/1870 – 12/16/1870
7	12/21/1870 – 12/22/1870
8	1/17/1871 – 1/28/1871
8	3/2/1871 – 3/3/1871
8	5/20/1871 – 5/21/1871
8	9/4/1871 – 9/7/1871
9	1/17/1872 – 1/18/1872
9	1/21/1872 – 1/22/1872
9	2/8/1872 – 2/9/1872
9	3/1/1872 – 3/2/1872
9	5/10/1872 – 5/11/1872
9	5/14/1872 – 5/15/1872
9	6/9/1872 – 6/10/1872
9	6/15/1872 – 6/16/1872
9	6/21/1872 – 6/22/1872
9	6/25/1872 – 6/26/1872
9	7/17/1872 – 7/20/1872
9	7/23/1872 – 7/26/1872
9	7/31/1872 – 8/3/1872
9	8/8/1872 – 8/11/1872
9	9/5/1872 – 9/10/1872
9	9/27/1872 – 9/30/1872
9	10/27/1872 – 10/28/1872
9	10/31/1872 – 11/1/1872
9	11/4/1872 – 11/5/1872
9	11/28/1872 – 11/29/1872
9	12/16/1872 – 12/17/1872
10	1/27/1873 – 1/30/1873
10	2/12/1873 – 2/13/1873
10	2/18/1873 – 2/19/1873
10	3/20/1873 – 3/21/1873
10	4/1/1873 – 4/2/1873
10	4/17/1873 – 4/20/1873
10	5/31/1873 – 6/11/1873
10	6/16/1873 – 6/21/1873
10	6/24/1873 -7/3/1873

10	7/14/1873 – 7/17/1873
10	7/30/1873 – 8/2/1873
10	8/11/1873 – 8/16/1873
10	8/25/1873 – 9/3/1873
10	9/16/1873 – 11/14/1873
10	11/27/1873 – 12/30/1873
11	1/31/1874 – 12/31/1874
15	1/1/1875 – 1/2/1875
15	6/9/1875 – 6/10/1875
16	1/20/1879 – 1/21/1879
16	8/7/1879 – 8/8/1879
16	10/16/1879 – 10/17/1879
17	9/18/1881 – 9/19/1881
17	10/20/1881 – 10/21/1881
17	11/15/1881 – 11/16/1881
17	12/7/1881 – 12/8/1881
18	8/9/1882 – 8/10/1882
18	8/13/1882 – 8/14/1882
18	8/17/1882 – 8/24/1882
18	8/29/1882 – 8/30/1882
18	9/4/1882 – 9/7/1882
18	9/12/1882 – 9/13/1882
18	9/28/1882 – 9/29/1882
18	10/4/1882 – 10/5/1882
18	10/10/1882 – 10/13/1882
18	10/18/1882 – 10/21/1882
18	10/24/1882 – 10/25/1882
18	10/30/1882 – 11/4/1882
19	2/26/1883 – 2/27/1883
19	3/26/1883 – 3/31/1883
19	4/13/1883 – 4/14/1883
19	5/1/1883 – 5/4/1883
19	5/31/1883 – 6/1/1883
19	6/6/1883 – 6/7/1883
19	6/20/1883 – 6/21/1883
19	6/26/1883 – 6/29/1883
19	7/8/1883 – 7/15/1883
19	7/18/1883 – 7/19/1883
19	8/3/1883 – 8/8/1883
19	8/23/1883 – 8/24/1883
19	9/2/1883 – 9/3/1883
19	9/26/1883 – 9/29/1883
19	10/16/1883 – 10/19/1883
19	10/22/1883 – 10/23/1883
20	9/15/1884 – 9/16/1884

23	8/20/1887 – 11/17/1887 (blank in original)
24	5/21/1888 – 12/31/1888
27	2/9/1891 – 12/31/1891 (blank in original)