

October 8, 2002

Ms. Valerie M. Parry
Director of the Library
Gardner-Webb University
Boiling Springs, N.C. 28017

Dear Ms. Parry:

Back in the summer of 1998, you may recall that we had some correspondence in regard to a book I was planning on Thomas Dixon. You very kindly provided me with an inventory of his library.

I have been sidetracked by a number of other projects, including SILENT PLAYERS, just published by the University Press of Kentucky, but I am now pleased to report that I am returning to Mr. Dixon and that Kentucky will be publishing my book.

My focus has changed somewhat in that I no longer plan to produce a biographical study. The book is now titled THOMAS DIXON, SOUTHERN FILMMAKER, and through an examination of Dixon's many films, I will provide a critical study of his novels and other writings. From a modern perspective, Thomas Dixon can be regarded as a genuine auteur of the cinema, unlike few of his contemporaries, and it is quite amazing how many of his ideas and beliefs he was able to bring to the motion picture. In fact, the motion picture probably provided a far wider audience than he was able to obtain through his writings.

The inventory of the library has proven most helpful. There are a number of titles here that Dixon obviously utilized for research purposes. There is no real need for me to see the books themselves; most, if not all, of interest I can locate closer to home. However, I do have a few questions that I hope you will find the time to answer.

In your letter, you mention James Zebulon Wright's THOMAS DIXON: THE MIND OF A SOUTHERN APOLOGIST. As far as I can ascertain, this is not a published work. Is it a dissertation?

Because I believe it is both interesting and entertaining, I do plan to discuss Mrs. Dixon's involvement with the very sleazy Raymond Rohauer, to whom she "sold" the rights to her husband's works. Rohauer is long dead, and the Raymond Rohauer Collection is owned by a gentleman who happens to be a colleague of mine. I understand that Gardner-Webb's copy of the SOUTHERN HORIZONS manuscript was taken back by Mrs. Dixon and given to Rohauer. Do you have any anecdote in connection therewith -- I realize it must have been before your tenure.

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Finally, the one group of materials in the Library that do intrigue me are the nine volumes of clippings cataloged as RECORD OF PLAYS. Is there any possibility that I could hire a student there to look through these volumes and copy specific items? I am interested if there are reviews of any of his motion pictures, and also would welcome reviews of the premiere stage presentations of THE ONE WOMAN and THE SINS OF THE FATHER.

Thank you again for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A-7 Slide.

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