

Dixon Bio Published

WINSTON-SALEM - Thomas Dixon, one of North Carolina's most famous native sons, is the subject of a biography which will be published November 30 by John F. Blair, Publisher, of Winston-Salem.

The book, entitled "Fire from the Flint: The Amazing Careers of Thomas Dixon", is the first comprehensive biography of Dixon. Its author is Dr. Raymond A. Cook, who is chairman of the Department of English and of the Division of Humanities at Valdosta State College, Valdosta, Ga.

Dixon was born near Shelby during the last throes of the Civil War and had only two years of formal schooling before entering Wake Forest College in September, 1879 at the age of 15. He graduated in 1883 with both bachelor's and master's degrees and the highest academic honors ever achieved by a student at the college in its 45-year history up to that time. It was as a debater for the Euzelian Society at Wake Forest that Dixon mastered a skill at oratory which he used

Dixon became known throughout this country and much of the rest of the world for his fiery zeal as preacher and Chautauqua lecturer, for his inflammatory writing in such book as "The Leopard's Spots" and "The Clansman", and for his role in bringing the greatest of the early motion pictures to the screen.

Five million people heard him lecture; millions more bought his books; countless millions more paid an unheard-of two dollars a ticket to see "The Birth of a Nation." Dixon has been called a genius of unparalleled brilliance and labeled the man who did more than any other to promote racial strife in America.

Dixon was also a politician, a lawyer and an actor. But it was as a writer that he achieved his greatest fame. Dixon drew on vivid memories of the Reconstruction period when he wrote "The Clansman", the best known of his many books, as an answer to Harriet Beecher Stowe and "Uncle Tom's Cabin". From this book glorifying the Ku Klux Klan he adapted a long-running play and from the book he wrote also the screenplay for "The Birth of a Nation," which he interested an unknown named D. W. Griffith in directing. For these activities Dixon was highly praised in many quarters, roundly condemned in others - a condition that prevailed through much of his lifetime.

Dixon died in Raleigh in 1946 at the age of 83.