

# Dixon daughters blazed a trail

It goes without saying that women have played an important role in every aspect of human history. Often in the background without full recognition of their accomplishments, they have continued to assert themselves to the betterment of not only themselves, but the human race. When the early pioneers came to the new world, it was the woman who made the wilderness into a home. When war broke out, it was the woman who nursed the sick and injured back to health.

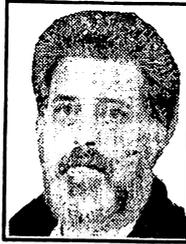
However, for many years of this nation's history, women could not vote, could not hold political positions or could not enjoy the many freedoms equated to men.

In 1920, all of that changed. Women were given the right to vote by the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution. That year, they voted for the first time in American history. In every election after, the politicians courted their vote. It was through the influence of the female political power that prohibition was the law of the land until the 1930s.

By 1928, women had taken great strides in making a permanent mark in human history. A young woman learned to fly in spite of the opposition from male pilots. Because of her determination, Miss Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly the Atlantic Ocean. She paved the way for other female pilots who would follow her footsteps.

The idea of women doing things that had formerly been a man's domain was frightening to most men in America. One Cleveland County minister was way ahead of his time when he encouraged all of his children, including the girls, to be the very best they could be. As a result of his insight, his two daughters will always hold a position in Cleveland County and North Carolina history.

The Baptist minister, Rev. Thomas Dixon, urged his daughters to educate themselves and make their mark. Mrs. Addie Dixon Thacker not only helped her husband in the Presbyterian faith, but also was an accomplished writer and



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published a book on her Dixon family.

Mrs. Delia Dixon Carroll was the youngest of the children of Rev. Thomas Dixon and, according to Lee Weathers's book, was the first woman doctor in North Carolina. She was a physician at famous Meredith College for over 35 years.

With all their strides to gain equality with men, many women took up the same habits as men and, as a result, gained a bad reputation with the Europeans. One French aristocrat made the statement that he would never consider the American woman for a wife. He said they smoked and drank too much.

In an article that appeared in the Wednesday, July 4, 1928 issue of *The Cleveland Star*, he stated, "I am disgusted! Your American girl is excessive in her smoking and drinking. I admire her, but I cannot like her. She is clever, but lacking reserve. She is intoxicating, but OH! so intoxicated."

He said that the further west you traveled, the worse the women became. He said of the women of Oklahoma, "They drink as much in Oklahoma as in the east but not nearly as well, they smoke as much but not so gracefully."

In an article in the Monday, July 2, 1928 issue of *The Cleveland Star*, the paper announced an all-female race sponsored by the Central Carolina Racing Association. The race was to be held at the Cleveland County Fair Grounds and admission was to be \$1. Women from all over North Carolina were to be in the race.

Several women from Cleveland County would also be in the race and show their driving skill. The article stated, "Numbers of local drivers entered the big race, including several of Shelby's best-known young women. Litton Motor Company entered a car and the driver will be Miss Kathleen Hord. A.B.C. Motor Company entered a car and its driver will be Miss Blanche DePriest. Stewart Motor Company entered two cars. Driver for one car will be Miss Elizabeth Spangler, the driver of the second car will be announced later.

"George Alexander, Jeweler, will give a Loving Cup to the best looking entry (girl and car) in the contest. The race will begin promptly at 2 p.m. on July 4th. Come out and see the big race and celebrate the fourth of July."