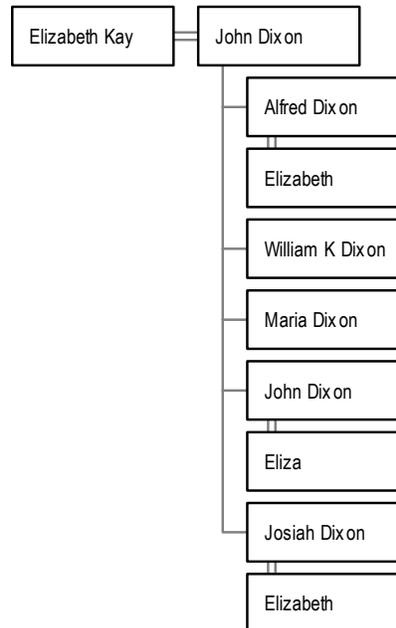


Elizabeth Kay



Elizabeth Kay, born about 1808 in Leeds, was the second known daughter born to John and Mary Kay. She married John Dixon, who had been born about 1812 Morley, on 6th November 1833 at St Peter's Leeds.ⁱ

We know from Elizabeth's great uncle's will that John Dixon was in the wool trade as they are both referred to as follows.

To my great nieces and great nephew Elizabeth Dixon wife of John Dixon of Leeds Woolstapler...£19 apiece...to be paid out of a sum of £90 owing to me by John Dixon and his Partner Josiah Dixon.

We also learn that John was in partnership, and it was likely that Josiah was his brother. In fact it seems that the extended Dixon family was also involved with wool.

Baine's 1822 Trades Directory has a listing for John Dixon and Sons, Woolstaplers, Meadow Lane. The home address is given as Bruntcliffe, Morley. It is likely that this refers to John Dixon S^{nr} (Elizabeth's father-in-law) and the sons referred to were John J^{nr} and Josiah. The same Directory also has a listing for Isaiah Dixon and Co, Woolstaplers, Meadow Lane and living at Smithson's Yard, Meadow Lane. Further, for the village of Morley, Baines lists the following Woollen Manufacturers.ⁱⁱ

Joseph Dixon (x2)
William Dixon (& scribbling miller)
David Dixon
Thomas Dixon

Pigot's 1822 Directory also lists Isaiah & Co as Woolstaplers, operating out of Meadow Lane. Later, Pigot's 1829 Directory of Trades has Dixon Isaiah & Son, Cloth-hall Street. There is an Isiah [sic] Dixon listed in the 1841 census who is a Wool Merchant, aged 60, and located at Spring Field Place, Leeds.ⁱⁱⁱ Isaiah does not appear in the 1851 census. This tends to confirm that Is(a)iah was brother to John S^{nr}, and it might be significant that Josiah, son of John S^{nr}, named one of his own sons Isaiah. All very convoluted and rather speculative and the connection (or otherwise) between the two Johns and Isaiah (and perhaps the other Morley Dixons) needs further research. But for the moment I will 'go' with my hunches.

The 1841 census has a listing for a John Dixon living in Bruntcliffe Wapentake and, if this is John Dixon S^{nr}, his wife and the mother of John J^{nr} was called Rachel, and was about five years younger than her husband. Rachel's birthplace is not known, apart from the fact that she is listed as being born in Yorkshire. There are no other family members listed. Noting that the couple was quite elderly, it is probable that any/all of their children would have left home to set up for themselves quite some time before 1841, and so it is not known if there were any other children apart from Josiah and John.^{iv}

John Dixon	70	Woollen Cloth Weaver
Rachel Dixon	65	

The 1851 census has John Dixon S^{nr} still living at 3 Bruntcliffe (Road?), Morley but by this time a widower. There are no other family members listed.^v

Dixon John	80	Farmer of 6 Acres	Morley
------------	----	-------------------	--------

No record has been yet been located of Rachel's death. There is a record for the registration of death of a John Dixon in the 1857 Oct-Dec quarter in the Dewsbury district (the registration district for Morley) but this has not been followed up.^w

I will deal briefly with Josiah Dixon (and even more briefly with possibly siblings of Josiah and John). He was born about 1804 in Morley. On 29th September 1825 he married Mary Ann Taylor at St Peter's, Leeds.^w She was born about 1805 in Hull. They are located in the 1841 census at Bottoms, Morley as follows.^w

Josiah Dixon	35	Wool Slubber
Mary-Ann Dixon	35	
John Dixon	9	
Isiah Dixon	6	

In 1851 Josiah and family are found still at Morley, but now living at 87 Gill Royd.^x

Josiah Dixon	47	Wool Carder	Morley
Mary A Dixon	46	Wife	Hull
John Dixon	19	Wool Carder	Woodhouse
Isiah Dixon	15	Wool Carder	Morley

Incidentally, for the 1851 census, living at 86 Gill Royd was James Dixon, aged 36 and born in Morley and his family – possibly brother to Josiah and John?^y.

Before moving back to John and Elizabeth Dixon, I have included the following account of the woollen industry at Morley taken from the description given on the Godfrey Edition of the Old Ordnance Survey Map of Morley (1906).

The Morley Bottoms area was, by 1801, one of the large clusters of houses, where the steep and rough land, most of it common, was an obvious place to build more cottages as the township of Morley grew. In this Bottoms area were also to be found most of the township's limited facilities...In 1801 most of these cottages would have contained a loom or looms because the weaving of cloth by hand, either on commissions from wealthier clothiers or to take oneself to Leeds market, was the mainstay of the community. Mills came only slowly to Morley, and at first to support the handloom weaver, not to replace him. Scribbling and carding, processes which prepare the raw wool, were amongst the earliest to be mechanized and it is perhaps not so surprising, given the limited water-power resources of hill-top Morley, that Yorkshire's first steam-powered mill was erected here in 1790. This was Crank Mill (Station Road), built by Lord Dartmouth, the Lord of the Manor, but leased to James and Joseph Webster. At first hand-loom weavers and other clothiers brought their wool to it to be carded and scribbled; later it became a cloth-finishing mill. The original building still stands today, though in depressing condition for so historic a feature.

The Webster brothers, lessees of Crank Mill, were typical of a more prosperous group of local families who were long-established in the cloth trade and had a little capital which they were prepared to venture into new ideas and processes. Another family, the Asquiths, set up a manufactory at Town End, where they installed hand looms and employed weavers. Another was set up in the large building...to the left of Morley Hill. Other clothiers, like the group who founded Morley's third mill at Gillroyd in 1834, had to mortgage their property and pool their resources to do so. As at Crank, Gillroyd undertook carding and scribbling at first but, as it prospered, branched out into other processes. Many of the original Gillroyd partners used their profits from it to go on to found mills of their own...As spinning, then weaving became mechanized, domestic production of cloth gradually declined to be replaced by factory production, with mills being built all over Morley. In some of these mills cloth was made using recycled wool, obtained by tearing down old rags, recovering the wool fibres and spinning them into yarn. Cloth made in this way, known as shoddy or mungo, had been developed at nearby Batley in 1813, but it is said to have been a Morley weaver from Hunger Hill, who first had the idea of making a mixed cloth with cotton warp and shoddy weft. Mungo and shoddy allowed the production of cheaper woollen cloth, and held woollen clothing to spread much more widely into the mass market.

Now back to Elizabeth and John. As was his father before him, John's line of business was the woollen trade, but John seems to have moved and have been based at Leeds. Baines has described the woollen manufacture and the Cloth Halls in his 1822 West Riding of Yorkshire Trade Directory.

The Woollen Cloth Manufacture, of which Leeds is the centre, constitutes in a peculiar degree the prosperity of the West Riding...The great bulk of the Woollen Manufacture in this district consisted formerly of the coarser kinds of

cloth. The first stages of the manufacture are carried on in the villages and hamlets in the surrounding country, where the wool goes through the respective operations of spinning, weaving, and fulling. From all these scattered establishments, which cover a considerable tract of country to the westward of the town, the cloth is sent in its unfinished state to the Cloth-halls in Leeds, where it is sold...The whole number of master cloth manufacturers in the West Riding of Yorkshire amounted, some years ago, to between 5 and 6,000, who employed, besides their wives and children, between 30 and 40,000 persons; latterly that number has been considerably diminished from the causes already stated [mechanisation]. The clothiers are men of small capitals, often annexing a little farm to their other business; great numbers of the rest have a field or two to support a horse and cow.

The Cloth Halls are perhaps the most important, though the plainest buildings in Leeds. In these halls, the principal sales of woollens from the manufacturer to the merchant take place. The arrangements of the markets are well adapted to the dispatch of business, and in brisk times exhibit an interesting view of the trade of the town and neighbourhood.

The mixed cloths are made of dyed wool, and the hall in which they are sold forms the principal part of the south side of a square, of which the other sides are formed by East Parade, South Parade, and Park Row. This hall was erected in 1758. The building is quadrangular, inclosing an open area, and is 127½ yards long and 66 yards broad. It is divided into 6 departments, which, from their magnitude, are properly enough called streets. Each street contains two rows of stands, and every stand measures twenty-two inches in front, having marked on it the name of the clothier to whom it belongs. The total number of stands is 1300. Each stand cost originally 3 guineas, but about the beginning of the present century they sold at from £16 to £24 each; since that time the value has been greatly reduced, and the average price does not at this time exceed fifty shillings. In the year 1810 an additional storey was erected on the north side of the Coloured Hall, and is used principally for the sale of ladies' cloths in the undyed state. The White Cloth Hall, which was built in the year 1775, is on the same plan with the other, of nearly the same extent, and the price of its stands has undergone similar fluctuations. The original cost of these stands was about thirty shillings: some years ago they advanced to six or eight pounds each; but now they sell on an average for not more than twenty shillings. This enormous depreciation is not owing to any decrease in the quantity of woollen goods manufactured, but to the factory system having so far prevailed over the domestic system as to reduce the number of that valuable class of men, the clothiers, attending the Leeds market, from upwards of three thousand to about one half that number. The markets for mixed and white cloths are held on Tuesdays and Saturdays, on which days only the merchants are permitted to buy or even to look at the cloth in the halls. The regulations are similar in both, and tend greatly to promote regularity and expedition. The markets are held in the forenoon, and open by the ringing of a bell; in a few minutes the merchants walk in, each manufacturer appearing behind his stand, and the sales immediately commence. At the end of an hour, a warning bell announces the approaching close of the market; and the sound of the third bell, in a quarter of an hour afterwards, terminates the business of the day. Each merchant now quits the hall on pain of a penalty of five shillings for every five minutes he continues in it after the last bell has rung; and thus, in an hour and a quarter, transactions are completed often to the amount of £15,000 or £20,000, and sometimes to still a greater extent. The mixed Cloth Hall opens at half-past eight in summer; nine in spring and autumn; and half-past nine in winter. The White Cloth Hall opens when the other closes; and strangers passing through the town frequently gratify themselves by visiting the halls during the hours of business, to which there is no objection.

The cloth is brought to these halls in the unfinished state, and it is dressed under the merchant's direction, either by his own workmen or by persons whose business it is to dress and finish woollen goods. One of the regulations of the hall is that clothiers, who have not served a regular apprenticeship to the business, cannot occupy any of the stands.

John and Elizabeth are included in the 1841 census at the Fox and Grape Yard, Leeds with all family members having been born in Yorkshire.^{xi}

Elizabeth Dixon	30	
John Dixon	25	Wool Dealer
Alfred Dixon	6	
William Dixon	5	
Maria Dixon	3	
John Dixon	1	

The Fox and Grape Yard was situated just behind the Fox and Grape Public House which was just across the road from the White Cloth Hall. I am not sure whether the census recorded the actual residential address or the business address for the Dixon family – looking at a map, the only apparent accommodation available at that location was the pub? Ten years later the family is now located at Cloth Hall Street, and have a new son, Josiah.^{xii}

John Dixon	39	Woolstapler	Morley
Elizabeth Dixon	43	Wife	Leeds
Alfred Dixon	16	Wool Stapler (Apprentice)	Leeds
Maria Dixon	13	Scholar	Leeds
John Dixon	10	Scholar	Leeds

Josiah Dixon 5 Scholar Leeds

Missing from home on census night is son William K Dixon who was a student enrolled at Bramham College. However, he is back home for the 1861 census, and this time it is Alfred who is not recorded with the family. The boys are all connected in some way with the woollen industry. It is not clear if Maria is the family housemaid or is working for another family. There is a slight discrepancy, in her favour, with Elizabeth's recorded age! The family is now living at 1 West Hillary Street, West Ward, Leeds.^{xii}

John Dixon	49	Woolstapler	Morley
Elizabeth Dixon	50	Wife	Leeds
William K Dixon	24	Wool Sorter	Leeds
Maria Dixon	22	Housemaid	Leeds
John Dixon	21	Bookkeeper in a Woollen Mill	Leeds
Josiah Dixon	15	Wool Sorter	Leeds

For the 1871 census Maria is the only child at home with her parents at 45 Southmount Street, Holbeck. John's occupation descriptor has changed to Wool Sorter. Elizabeth's correct age is recorded. Maria is still unmarried and employed at a Cloth Works. Her brothers have all married and left home.^{xiv}

John Dixon	59	Wool Sorter	Morley
Elizabeth Dixon	63	Wife	Leeds
Maria Dixon	33	Numberer of Pieces at Cloth Works	Leeds

1881 finds John and Elizabeth home alone, still living in Southmont Street, but now at number 7.^{xv}

John Dixon	69	Wool Sorter	Morley
Elizabeth Dixon	73	Wife	Leeds

This was to be their last census appearance as they both died within a short time of each other. FreeBMD death registrations for John Dixon, at Holbeck in 1884 and Elizabeth Dixon at Hunslet in 1888 are being followed up.

In confirmation, the death certificate shows that John Dixon, wool sorter, died on 10th September 1884 of Senile Decay at the age of 72. At the time of his death he was living at 7 South Mount Street, Holbeck. The person who listed as present at the death was M. Brook, daughter, of 2 Seymour Terrace, Hunslet.^{xvi}

John's widow Elizabeth outlived her husband by just short of four years, as documented by her death certificate. She died aged 81, on 3rd September 1888 at 2 Seymour Terrace, Hunslet. The cause of death was given as Old Age. Again, the person present at the death was M. Brook, daughter, of 2 Seymour Terrace, Hunslet.^{xvii}

We can assume from this that, after the death of her husband, Elizabeth Dixon moved in with her daughter. As far as is known, John and Elizabeth only had one daughter, Maria, and from the death certificates it appears that at some stage after the 1871 Maria married someone with the surname Brook.



ⁱ IGI MO71934.

ⁱⁱ Baine's 1822 West Riding of Yorkshire Trades Directory, p564.

ⁱⁱⁱ HO107/1349/4/~39.

^{iv} HO107/1267/7/-F14.

^v HO107/2322/p1.

^{vi} FreeBMD Death Index.

^{vii} IGI MO71932.

^{viii} HO107/1267/9/-F16/pp21-22.

^{ix} HO107 2322/p31.

^x Another Dixon, at 42 being around the same 'vintage' as John and Josiah, was living at 3 Cadman Court, Leeds. This was Samuel Dixon, Spinner of Wool. HO107/2320/p23.

^{xi} HO107/1346/2/-F27.

^{xii} HO107/2319/229.

^{xiii} RG9/3393/p63.

^{xiv} RG10/4522/p16.

^{xv} RG11/4498/p37.

^{xvi} Certified copy of Death Certificate DYB 561662.

^{xvii} Certified copy of Death Certificate DYB 561172.