Dixon, Nancy Alena **[1]**

Select rating No votes yet

Rate

Dixon, Nancy Alena

By Douglas Denatale, 1986

23 Oct. 1892–16 Aug. 1973

Nancy Alena Dixon, folksinger, who contributed an important link in the history of American traditional music, was the oldest child of the family that produced the Dixon brothers, Dorsey [2]and Howard [3]. At the age of eight she began work as a spinner in the Darlington Cotton Manufacturing Company in Darlington, S.C. She was employed as a spinner for the next fifty-four years, moving with her family to East Rockingham, N.C., where she cared for her ailing parents until their death. She retired from mill work in 1954.

While a child at the Darlington mill, Nancy Dixon learned a number of songs about mill life which she kept alive in later years by singing them for nieces and nephews. Folklorists Archie Green and Gene Earle, who recorded her brother Dorsey in 1962, visited her in the Glenwood Boarding Home where she sang for them "Hard Times in Here" [4] and the "Factory Girl. [5]" The latter song, perhaps the earliest American industrial ballad, was composed in Lowell, Mass., sometime in the 1830s and carried south by migrating mill workers. Nancy Dixon's version was almost certainly the last surviving example of an industrial song's tradition, tying twentieth-century Carolina mill workers to the earliest stages of American industrialization.

Nancy Dixon never married. Following her death in a nursing home in Sanford, she was buried in Eastside Cemetery, Rockingham.

References:

Sources cited under **Dorsey Murdock Dixon** [2].

Additional Resources:

Dorsey Dixon, (Nancy's Father): http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/wreck/bio.html [6]

Subjects: Biography [7]
UNC Press [8]
Women [9]
Authors: Denatale, Douglas [10]
Origin - location: Richmond County [11]
Rockingham [12]
From: Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press. [13]

1 January 1986 | Denatale, Douglas

Source URL: http://ncpedia.org/biography/dixon-nancy

Links:
[1] http://ncpedia.org/biography/dixon-nancy
[2] http://ncpedia.org/biography/dixon-dorsey-murdock
[3] http://ncpedia.org/biography/dixon-howard-briten
[4] http://www.lizlyle.lofgrens.org/RmOlSngs/RTOS-HardTimesMill.html
[5] http://www.lizlyle.lofgrens.org/RmOlSngs/RTOS-FactoryGirl.html
[6] http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/wreck/bio.html
[7] http://ncpedia.org/taxonomy/term/6
[8] http://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/unc-press
[9] http://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/women
[10] http://ncpedia.org/category/authors/denatale-douglas
[11] http://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmon-26
[12] http://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/rockingham
[13] http://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/dictionary-no