

= Archibald Dixon =

Archibald Dixon (April 2 , 1802 ? April 23 , 1876) was a U.S. Senator from Kentucky . He represented the Whig Party in both houses of the Kentucky General Assembly , and was elected the 12th Lieutenant Governor of Kentucky in 1844 , serving under Governor William Owsley . In 1851 , the Whigs nominated him for governor , but he lost to Lazarus W. Powell , his former law partner .

Dixon represented Henderson County at the Kentucky constitutional convention of 1849 . In this capacity , he ensured that strong protections of slave property were included in the Kentucky Constitution of 1850 . Later , the General Assembly chose Dixon to fill the unexpired Senate term of Henry Clay . He served from September 1 , 1852 , to March 3 , 1855 , and did not stand for re @-@ election . During his short tenure , Dixon 's major accomplishment was convincing Stephen Douglas to include language in the Kansas @-@ Nebraska Act that explicitly repealed the Missouri Compromise 's prohibition on slavery north of latitude 36 ° 30 ' .

Despite his pro @-@ slavery views , Dixon was loyal to the Union during the Civil War . He represented his county and his state in a number of failed conventions that sought to resolve the upcoming conflict before it began . In 1864 , he joined Kentucky governor Thomas E. Bramlette in an audience with President Abraham Lincoln protesting the recruitment of former slaves as Union soldiers in Kentucky . Dixon died on April 23 , 1876 .

= = Personal life = =

Archibald Dixon was born near Red House , Caswell County , North Carolina on April 2 , 1802 . He was the son of Captain Wynn and Rebecca Hart Dixon . Both Dixon 's father and grandfather fought in the Revolutionary War , the former enlisting at the age of sixteen . His grandfather , Colonel Henry Dixon , was commended by " Light Horse Harry " Lee for his service at the Battle of Camden . He was later killed at the Battle of Eutaw Springs .

In 1805 , Captain Dixon lost all of his property and moved the family to Henderson , Kentucky . Archibald Dixon was educated by his mother and attended the common schools of Henderson . In 1822 , he began to study law in the office of James Hillyer . He was admitted to the bar in 1824 , and commenced practice in Henderson . He became well known as a skilled defense attorney and was employed in a number of cases in Kentucky and Indiana .

In 1834 , Dixon married Elizabeth R. Cabell ; the couple had six children . [a] One of these was Rebecca Hart Dixon , second wife of future Kentucky governor John Y. Brown . Another daughter , Susan Bell Dixon , married Cuthbert Powell , a U.S. Representative from Virginia . One son , Henry , was elected a state senator in Kentucky , while another , Archibald , became a respected doctor in Henderson .

Elizabeth Cabell Dixon died in 1852 . On October 29 , 1853 , Dixon married Susan Peachy Bullitt . Bullitt was the paternal granddaughter of Alexander Scott Bullitt , the first lieutenant governor of Kentucky , and the maternal granddaughter of Dr. Thomas Walker , the first surveyor in the state of Kentucky . Dixon and Bullitt had additional children .

= = Political career = =

Dixon was elected to represent Henderson County in the Kentucky House of Representatives in 1830 . He served three consecutive one @-@ year terms , leaving the House in 1833 . Following this , he returned to his law practice and in 1835 , partnered with Lazarus W. Powell . From 1836 to 1840 , he represented Henderson , Daviess , and Hopkins counties in the Kentucky Senate . The next year , he returned to the Kentucky House , serving from 1841 to 1843 .

In 1844 , Dixon was chosen as the Whig nominee for lieutenant governor on a ticket with William Owsley . Dixon defeated his opponent , William S. Pilcher , by more than 11 @,@ 000 votes . At the expiration of his term , the Whig party considered nominating Dixon for governor , but instead chose the more experienced John J. Crittenden , who defeated Dixon 's former law partner , Lazarus Powell .

The voters of Henderson County chose Dixon to represent them at the state constitutional convention of 1849 . The Whigs nominated him to chair the convention , but he lost to the Democratic nominee James Guthrie by a vote of 50 to 43 . A large slaveholder , Dixon introduced numerous measures to protect the rights of slaveholders in the new constitution . Among them were assertions that slave property was just as inviolable as any other property , that the rights of property were above constitutional sanction , and that absolute power over property cannot exist in a republic . Though some of these ideas were challenged , all eventually found their way into the Kentucky Constitution of 1850 .

The Whigs nominated Dixon for governor in 1851 . The Democrats countered with Lazarus Powell . Still friends from their earlier days as law partners , the two often traveled together during the campaign . Cassius Marcellus Clay also entered the contest , representing the emancipationist wing of the Whig Party . Clay drew about 6 @, @ 000 votes , mostly from Whigs , and Powell won the election by a small majority .

= = = In the Senate = = =

On December 17 , 1851 , Henry Clay submitted a letter of resignation of his seat in the U.S. Senate , to be effective September 1 of the following year (1852) . Clay 's announcement came while the Kentucky General Assembly was in session . This was intentional . The majority of the Assembly was Whig , and Clay knew that if he resigned while the Assembly was in session , the majority would elect a Whig to be his successor . By contrast , if he had waited until September 1 to announce his resignation the Assembly would already have closed its session , and Governor Powell , a Democrat , would appoint a temporary successor until the legislature convened again two years later .

The Assembly acted according to Clay 's plans . By a vote of 71 ? 58 , they chose Dixon over Democrat James Guthrie to assume Clay 's seat effective September 1 . However , Clay died on June 29 , 1852 . Because Dixon 's commission stipulated an effective date of September 1 , Governor Powell proceeded to name Clay 's successor for the period until September 1 . He chose Democrat David Meriwether , who served those two months , then , with respect to the original commission issued by the legislature (or by simply not returning to the Senate upon the commencement of the next session) , effectively relinquished the seat to Dixon . After a lengthy Senate debate on the validity of his commission ? it having been issued prior to Clay 's death , with an effective date subsequent to the executive appointment of a successor ? Dixon was sworn in on December 20 , 1852 . He served the remainder of Clay 's term , but did not stand for reelection in 1854 .

A major issue during Dixon 's tenure in the Senate was the admission of the Nebraska Territory to the Union . Specifically , the question hinged upon the issue of whether or not slavery would be allowed in the state . Under the Missouri Compromise , slavery was prohibited in the territory . Because of this , the southern states opposed its admission . In an attempt to allay southern fears , Stephen Douglas introduced a bill in January 1854 that included a provision that " all questions pertaining to slavery in the territories , and in the new states to be formed therefrom are to be left to the people residing therein , through their appropriate representatives . " Douglas hoped to placate southerners with this language , which allowed for the possibility of legalized slavery in the potential state without specifically addressing the issue of the Missouri Compromise .

Southerners , however , saw that Douglas ' attempt was unlikely to result in legalization of slavery . While it allowed Nebraska to determine whether slavery would be legal there when it became a state , slavery was still forbidden under the Missouri Compromise as long as it remained a territory . If no slaveholders were allowed in the territory , it would be exceedingly unlikely that the state 's voters would allow for slavery in their constitution . Following this line of thought , Dixon drafted an amendment to Douglas ' bill that would repeal section eight of the Missouri Compromise , the section that prohibited slavery north of latitude 36 ° 30 ' . After a promise of support from Tennessee senator James C. Jones , Dixon introduced the amendment on January 16 , 1854 . This forced Douglas to confront the Missouri Compromise issue outright , and two days later , he visited Dixon

to discuss his position . Douglas was reluctant to repeal the Compromise , but was ultimately convinced by Dixon 's logic . He concluded the interview by exclaiming " By God , Sir , you are right . I will incorporate it in my bill , though I know it will raise a hell of a storm . " Over the next several days , Douglas incorporated Dixon 's suggestion and other pro @-@ slavery measures into the Kansas @-@ Nebraska Act , which President Franklin Pierce signed into law on May 30 , 1854 .

= = Later life = =

On June 1 , 1852 , the stockholders of the Henderson and Nashville Railroad met at Madisonville , Kentucky and elected Archibald Dixon as president of the company . He served until his resignation in spring 1853 .

Despite his pro @-@ slavery views , Dixon loyally supported the Union during the lead @-@ up to the Civil War . His sons , however , had Confederate sympathies . Dixon 's home county of Henderson was one of the first counties in Kentucky to express their feelings about the secession crisis . The county called an assembly at the county courthouse on November 10 , 1860 . Dixon was elected chair of the meeting , and immediately expressed a pro @-@ Union sentiment . A committee of five was appointed to draft resolutions stating Henderson County 's position . At a second meeting one week later ? which Dixon also chaired ? the committee reported their pro @-@ Union resolutions , which were approved .

In an attempt to stave off the Civil War , Dixon participated in a convention of border states and a peace convention in Frankfort , Kentucky , both in 1861 . Both conventions were unsuccessful . At the outset of the war , the Kentucky General Assembly elected six arbiters to recommend a course of action for the Commonwealth . Dixon represented the pro @-@ Union position along with John J. Crittenden and Samuel S. Nicholas . Kentucky governor Beriah Magoffin , John C. Breckinridge , and Richard Hawes represented the southern sympathizers . The arbiters met on May 11 , 1861 . After the pro @-@ Union men defeated a proposal to call a sovereignty convention , the six arbiters recommended a position of neutrality , which the General Assembly adopted .

In March 1864 , Dixon accompanied Kentucky Governor Thomas E. Bramlette and John Marshall Harlan , the state 's attorney general , to an audience with President Lincoln to protest the recruitment of blacks into the ranks of the Union Army . The governor eventually agreed to allow the practice , but only when whites failed to meet their draft quotas . Since recruitment of blacks had been taking place in the Commonwealth for more than two months already , the concession was little more than a face @-@ saving gesture by Bramlette . Following the end of the Civil War , Dixon retired from public life . He died in Henderson on April 23 , 1876 , and is buried in Fernwood Cemetery .

= = Legacy = =

Archibald Dixon is the namesake of Dixon , Kentucky .