

THADDEUS S.. KENDERDINE (1836 - 1922)

Born in what was then known as Lumberton, Pa., Thaddeus S. Kenderdine moved his family to Newtown in 1874 to establish a business which is still run by the family today. Avid reader and the author of eight books,* he also wrote regularly for the Newtown Enterprise, Delaware Valley Advance, Woodstown New Jersey Monitor Register, and Doylestown Intelligencer. Contained in Centennial of Newtown Friends Meeting is a chapter by Thaddeus S. Kenderdine entitled "Newtown Meeting and its Establishment." This includes the names of the original members of Newtown Preparative Meeting. It seems fitting to mention here that he also, in one of his books, listed all the original members of Solebury Meeting where he was a member for forty years before moving to Newtown.

Is it any wonder that one of the clearer memories his grandchildren had of him was his getting up from the Sunday dinner table and going directly to his desk or to the Mill to write? This was one of the reasons why they delighted in skipping across the street to visit their Aunt Libby and Uncle Robert Kenderdine, who, as they related, always had many interesting things to show small boys and girls.

Thaddeus S. Kenderdine was a man who was aware, in detail, of his surrounding world, and who wanted to taste as many experiences of it as he could, and to accurately record them. In 1858, in the spirit of adventure, he took on the rough job of driving oxen across the Plains, a journey from which many did not return. He survived oxen stampedes, sickness, Indian attacks, and near starvation--finally reaching California, and returning home by steamboat through the Panama Canal. He related these experiences in A California Tramp. He made a return trip to California by rail in 1897. To quote from his next book California Revisited, "To cross the continent in six days instead of six months, to see towns and cattle and gardens and orchards where I once saw sage brush covered plains, and herds of cattle where the prairies had been thick with buffalo, were indeed things to note. The first trip was a rude reality, the second journey was mainly one of pleasure."

In a section of one of his books reflecting on his boyhood, Thaddeus wrote of himself, "From my earliest boyhood I was a great reader. The trouble was the supply of book matter did not meet the demand. We took a weekly paper but that was soon read, advertisements and all. Then I fell back on our books, a dozen or so in all. When a local library was sold, my father bought many of the books and some of them I have now as a reminder of the change in literary taste."

Especially interested in education and the importance thereof, Thaddeus S. Kenderdine provided a scholarship for the purpose of aiding young members of Newtown Meeting. In addition to being a regular attender at First Day Meeting for

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Worship, he never failed to be present at Mid-week Meeting.

Mary Stapler Nystrom

* Books written by Thaddeus S. Kenderdine

A California Tramp (1888)

California Revisited (1898)

Kenderdines of America (1901)

Personal Recollections and Travels (1913)

Recollections, Travels and Autobiography (1921)

Personal Recollections and Travels At Home and Abroad
(1914)

Personal Recollections and Travels At Home and Abroad
(1916)

Personal Recollections and Travels (1917)