

Andrew Atkinson (- 11 Aug 1825)

Humphreys, Henry H., Andrew Atkinson Humphreys: A Biography, Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1924, pp. 6-8.

By reference to family papers, we find that Thomas Atkinson, of the Province of Ulster, County Donegal, Ireland, and of Prehend, the ancestral home of this family, married a Miss Knox, and in those family papers mention is made of a Sir John Knox as educating his nephew Andrew Atkinson, one of the sons of Thomas Atkinson, who was born Jan. 22, 1762, at Prehend, Cavan Garden, Ireland, who married Jean, or Jane, Murray, daughter of Sir Archibald Murray, Seventh Baronet of Black Barony, Scotland, b. Feb. 17, 1764, d. Oct. 20, 1836.

Andrew Atkinson and his wife came to America about the year 1785, living first on Spirit Creek, Georgia, near Augusta. From thence he moved to Florida, bought a plantation and raised flax. This plantation was on the Saint Johns River below where now stands Jacksonville, of that state. There Atkinson lived, calling his home Prehend, after the seat of his mother's family, the Knoxes, who lived in the vicinity of Londonderry, Ireland. The youngest sister of his mother (Letitia or Angel) was killed Nov., 1761, when a fortune hunter named John McNaughten, attempted to carry her off, shot her in an effort to kill her father. They were on their way in their carriage to Dublin, but a few miles from their home, when this unfortunate affair occurred. (See Littell's Living Age, No. 186, of Dec. 4, 1847, entitled "Old Fashioned Irish Courting.")

Andrew Atkinson was generous, impulsive, extravagant, and not disinclined to enter into the then prevailing custom of dueling. From this marriage came these children: Archibald, b. 1784, in Ireland, killed Aug. 8, 1813, in East Florida, while defending the rights of his adopted country against invaders from Georgia. Florida then belonged to Spain. Eliza, b. ---, d. July 30, 1831; Letitia, b. July 16, 1786, married Samuel Humphreys, son of Joshua, d. Jan. 24, 1859; John, b. ---, d. 1822; Mary Letitia, married Philip Yonge; George, b. ---, d. Feb. 2, 1826, unmarried; Jane, b. ---, married Dr. Gant, d. 1872; children, Georgiana.

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About the year 1780, Andrew Atkinson was an Ensign in the Thirty-third Regiment of English Foot; some portion of it was of the forces under Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia, which was surrendered to Washington and Rochambeau, Oct. 19, 1781.

Atkinson was stationed at the Castle of Edinburgh, Scotland. One day, either at guard mounting or a review of his regiment, upon returning to quarters, Atkinson, carrying the Colors, saw upon the battlements of the Castle, a handsome lady, who looked down upon the regiment as it passed. To her Atkinson lowered the Colors, an unheard-of proceeding. The lady was Jean or Jane, daughter of Sir Archibald Murray of Black Barony, Scotland.

Atkinson was then 18 years of age and she 16. It was love at first sight. An introduction was sought; he proposed, was accepted, but the parents objected, and a run-away marriage resulted. Atkinson had the younger son's portion, a few thousand pounds, and a Commission in the Army with a career before him which he ruined, and soon after resigned.

His friends and contemporaries were Sir Ralph Abercromby and Sir Eyre Cootes, with others distinguished in the wars of India and Egypt.