



## Our Atkinson Ancestors

by

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### Foreword

With the advent of popular DNA testing I was surprised to discover the incredible size of our Irish stock which has not received extensive attention from my family. Irish ethnic Identity is perhaps a nebulous term unless hyphenated as Irish- catholic, Scotch-Irish, or Anglo-Irish. Often our Irish Ancestors came from elsewhere and after leaving Ireland, intermarried with other ethnic groups leaving mixed ethnic identity. Such was the case with our Atkinson ancestors. Although not specifically discovered the author suspects that the Atkinsons of Ireland may have originated from England. After leaving Ireland they intermarried with other ethnic groups.

The Anglo-Irish ethnic identity predominated with the Atkinsons at least down to the marriage of Edward Albert Atkinson when the very strong Scottish Presbyterian ethnic group gained a footing.

Descendants are listed with Arabic numbers, their children with small roman numerals and their grandchildren with capital roman numerals. Abbreviations used appear at [Abbreviations](#). I have used ancestry.ca references for many censuses but the same information may be found at the Library and Archives of Canada which I have provided several useful links at <http://retson.ca/genealogysites.html#census> . I have also provided an online links to the descendants of William Atkinson at <http://retson.ca/atkinsondescendants.pdf> for those interested in descendants down the line (Note change this name when it gets changed in Dreamweaver).

I have used Brian Lalor’s Encyclopedia of Ireland extensively with out constantly giving credit.

## Atkinson Surname

According to George F. Black, *The Surname of Scotland*, the surname Atkinson comes from the diminutive Adkin with the d sharpened to t meaning 'son of Adam' Other names Acheson, Aicheson, Aitcheson, and Aitchison come from the diminutive Atty also have the meaning 'son of Adam' While the Atkinson surnames that I have discovered to date come from Ireland, it may be that they earlier came from Scotland.

According to Forebears Atkinson is the 3,883rd most common surname in the world with approximately 140,357 holding the name.<sup>1</sup>

## County Fermanagh

Website: [discovernorthernireland.com/about-northern-ireland/counties/co-fermanagh/county-fermanagh/](http://discovernorthernireland.com/about-northern-ireland/counties/co-fermanagh/county-fermanagh/)

County Fermanagh is one of the thirty-two counties of Ireland and one of the six counties of Northern Ireland. The county covers an area of 1,691 km<sup>2</sup> (653 sq. mi) and has a population of 61,805 as of 2011. Enniskillen is the county town and largest in both size and population.

Fermanagh is by far the smallest of Northern Ireland's six counties in terms of population, with just over one-third of the population of Northern Ireland's next smallest county, Armagh. It is the second smallest county in Northern Ireland by area and is ranked 25th in Ireland by size. Fermanagh borders County Tyrone to the north-east, County Monaghan to the south-east, County Cavan to the south-west, County Leitrim to the west and County Donegal to the north-west. The county town, Enniskillen, is the largest settlement in Fermanagh, situated in the middle of the county. The island town, Enniskillen, hosts a range of attractions including the Castle Coole Estate and Enniskillen Castle, which is home to the museum of The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and the 5th Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards.

It is mainly rural, with a population density of 36.1 people per km<sup>2</sup>, and is situated largely in the basin of the River Erne. It is dominated by two connected lakes: Upper and Lower Lough Erne, and, including water, spans an area of 1,851 km<sup>2</sup> (715 sq.; mi). It is approximately 120 km (75 mi) from Belfast and 160 km (99 mi) from Dublin.

Fermanagh was made into a county by statute of Elizabeth I, but it was not until the time of the Plantation of Ulster that it was finally brought under civil government. With the creation of Northern Ireland's district councils, Fermanagh District Council the only one of the 26 that contained all the county from which it derived its name. After the re-organisation of local government in 2015, Fermanagh was still the only county wholly within one council area, namely Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, albeit that it constituted only a part of that entity. For the purposes of elections to the UK Parliament, the territory of Fermanagh is part of the Fermanagh and South Tyrone Parliamentary Constituency. This constituency is renowned for high levels of voting and for electing Provisional IRA hunger-striker Bobby Sands as a member of parliament in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-election, April 1981, shortly before his death. Agriculture and tourism are two of the most important industries in Fermanagh. The main types of farming in the area are beef, dairy, sheep, pigs and some poultry. Most of the agricultural land is used as grassland for grazing and silage or hay rather than for other crops.

Fermanagh is one of four counties of Northern Ireland to have a majority of its population from a Catholic background, according to the 2011 census. Fermanagh was planted by English Anglicans rather than Scot

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<sup>1</sup> Forebears: (<http://forebears.io/surnames/atkinson>) accessed March 9, 2018

Presbyterians during the seventeenth century<sup>2</sup> and unusually for an area of Northern Ireland, there are few Presbyterians in Fermanagh. Most of the Protestants are members of the Church of Ireland (Church of England in Ireland) and there is also a Methodist community.

## **Background: Orangeman and Irish Ethic Identity**

The Ireland of our Ancestors included what in 2018 consists of the Republic of Ireland in the South and Northern Ireland in the North. Northern Ireland, a region of the United Kingdom, was created by the Government of Ireland Act (1920) and historically was regarded as Protestant. The largest Protestant organization in Northern Ireland is the Orange Order which today has over 100,000.<sup>3</sup>

The Loyal Orange Institution, more commonly known as the Orange Order, a Protestant fraternal order, was founded in County Armagh, Ireland in 1795, during a period of Protestant–Catholic sectarian conflict, as a Masonic-style fraternity sworn to maintain Protestant civil and religious liberties. It is headed by the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, which was established in 1798. Its name is a tribute to the Dutch-born Protestant king William of Orange, who defeated the army of Catholic king James II in the Williamite–Jacobite War (1688–1691). Its members wear orange sashes and are referred to as Orangemen. As a strict Protestant society, it does not accept non-Protestants as members unless they convert and adhere to the principles of the order nor does it accept Protestants married to Catholics.

Throughout the 1780s, sectarian tension had been building in County Armagh. Here the number of Protestants and Catholics (in what was then Ireland's most populous county) were of roughly equal number, and competition between them to rent patches of land near markets was fierce. In September 1795, at "The Diamond" Armagh, the Protestant Peep o' Day Boys and allies beat the Catholic Defenders after the battle had ended, the Peep o' Days marched into Loughgall, and in the house of James Sloan they founded the Orange Order, which was to be a Protestant defence association made up of lodges. principal pledge of these lodges was to defend "the King and his heirs so long as he or they support the Protestant Ascendancy".

The Society of United Irishmen was formed by liberal Presbyterians and Anglicans in Belfast in 1791. It sought reform of the Irish Parliament, Catholic Emancipation and the repeal of the Penal Laws. By the time the Orange Order was formed, the United Irishmen had become a revolutionary group advocating an independent Irish republic that would "Unite Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter". United Irishmen activity was on the rise, and the government hoped to thwart it by backing the Orange Order from 1796 onward. In 1796 the Irish Yeomanry containing 20,000 became a part-time force of civilians who provided military service to their own localities.

The United Irishmen launched a rebellion in 1798. In Ulster, most of the United Irish commanders and many of the rebels were Protestant. Orangemen were recruited into the yeomanry to help fight the rebellion. The Scullabogue Barn massacre saw over 100 non-combatant (mostly Protestant) men, women, and children imprisoned in a barn which was then set on fire. Partly because of this atrocity, the Orange Order quickly grew and large numbers of gentry with experience gained in the yeomanry came into the movement.

One major outcome of the United Irishmen rebellion was the 1800 Act of Union that merged the Irish Parliament with that of Westminster, creating the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Many Catholics supported the Act, but the Orange Order saw it as a threat to the "Protestant constitution" and 36 lodges in counties Armagh and Monaghan alone passed declarations opposing the Union.

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<sup>2</sup> Lalor, Brian, *The Encyclopedia of Ireland*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2003, Page 384

<sup>3</sup> Orange Order, *The Encyclopedia of Ireland*, 836

The Fourth Home Rule Act was passed as the Government of Ireland Act 1920; the six northeastern counties of Ulster became Northern Ireland and the other twenty-six counties became Southern Ireland. This self-governing entity within the United Kingdom was confirmed in its status under the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, and in its borders by the Boundary Commission agreement of 1925. Southern Ireland became first the Irish Free State in 1922 and then in 1949 a Republic.

The Orange Order had a central place in the new state of Northern Ireland. From 1921 to 1969, every Prime Minister of Northern Ireland was an Orangeman and member of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP); all but three Cabinet Ministers were Orangemen; all but one unionist Senators were Orangemen; and 87 of the 95 MPs who did not become Cabinet Ministers were Orangemen. At its peak in 1965, the Order's membership was around 70,000, which meant that roughly 1 in 5 adult Ulster Protestant males were members. Since 1965, it has lost a third of its membership, especially in Belfast and Derry. The Order's political influence suffered greatly after the unionist-controlled government of Northern Ireland was abolished in 1973. In 2012, it was stated that estimated membership of the Orange Order was around 34,000. Membership of the Order was historically lower in areas where Protestants are in the majority, and vice versa. In County Fermanagh, where the Catholic and Protestant populations are close to parity, membership in 1971 was three times as high as in the more Protestant counties of Antrim and Down, where it was just over 10% of adult Protestant males.

The basis of the modern Orange Order is the promotion and propagation of "biblical Protestantism" and the principles of the Reformation. As such the Order only accepts those who confess a belief in a Protestant religion. As well as Catholics, non-creedal and non-Trinitarian Christians are also banned. This includes members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Unitarians, Orthodox Christians, and some branches of Quakers. Previous rules specifically forbade Roman Catholics and their close relatives from joining but the current rules use the wording "non-reformed faith" instead. Converts to Protestantism can join by appealing to Grand Lodge. In Ireland, parades are a big part of the Order's activities. Most Orange lodges hold a yearly parade from their Orange hall to a local church.

Most jurisdictions require both the spouse and parents of potential applicants to be Protestant, although the Grand Lodge can be appealed to make exceptions for converts. Members have been expelled for attending Roman Catholic religious ceremonies. In the period from 1964 to 2002, 11% of those expelled from the order were expelled for their presence at a Roman Catholic religious event such as a baptism, service or funeral. This is based on Reformed Christian theology, which teaches that the Roman Catholic Mass is idolatry, a view promulgated by Protestant Reformers such as Martin Luther.

The Order takes as its basis the Open Bible and historical Reformed documents such as the Presbyterian Westminster Confession, Anglican 39 Articles and other Protestant creeds. All prospective members must affirm their Reformed Christian Faith prior to membership. All Lodge meetings commence with the reading of the Bible and prayers that non-practising Protestants, Roman Catholics and people of other faiths and none, 'may become wise unto salvation' (which is direct quote from 2 Timothy 3:15 in the Bible).

## **The Orange Order in Canada**

The Order was more formally organized in 1830 when Ogle Robert Gowan established the Grand Orange Lodge of British North America in the Upper Canada town of Elizabethtown, which became Brockville in 1832 (according to the plaque outside the original lodge in Brockville, Ontario).

While dominated by Irish Protestants, the Orange Order in Canada quickly accepted English, Scottish, German and First Nations members, as well as some United Empire Loyalists. Although Protestantism was necessary for membership, not all denominations tended to join. In Canada, Methodists and Anglicans outnumbered the more evangelical Baptists and Presbyterians. While precise figures are difficult to verify for the 19th century,

numbers increased swiftly from about 14,000 in 1834 to around 60,000 in 1900. The Order was strongest in Ontario, New Brunswick and Newfoundland, and the frontier regions of Quebec and yet it spread to every province and included members of all ages from all social backgrounds and classes. This wide membership generally reflected the demographic configuration of the area in which a lodge was found, including mining and logging towns, Prairie communities and urban centres. Lodge size varied greatly; however, the average lodge had 25–40 members in rural areas and double that figure in urban areas. At the peak of the Order in 1920, there were about 100,000 members in 2,000 lodges throughout Canada and the British colony of Newfoundland. In this latter region, about one in three adult Protestant males was a member of the Order, making Orangeism more popular there than anywhere else in the world, including Northern Ireland.

At the turn of the century Toronto was nicknamed "The Belfast of Canada". Most mayors were Orange until the 1950s, and Toronto Orangemen battled against Ottawa-driven initiatives like bilingualism and Catholic immigration. A third of the Ontario legislature was Orange in 1920.

Orangemen played a big part in suppressing the Upper Canada Rebellion of William Lyon Mackenzie in 1837. Though the rebellion was short-lived, 317 Orangemen were sworn into the local militia by the Mayor of Toronto and then resisted Mackenzie's march down Yonge Street in 1837. They were involved in resisting the Fenians at the Battle of Ridgeway in 1866. An obelisk there marks the spot where Orangemen died in defending the colony against an attack by members of Clan na Gael (commonly known as Fenians). Orangemen in western Canada helped suppress the rebellions of Louis Riel in 1870 and 1885. The murder of abducted Orangeman Thomas Scott was a turning point in the 1870 Red River Rebellion which caused the Dominion government to launch the Red River Expedition to restore order. The first Orange Warrant in Manitoba and the North West Territories was carried by a member of this expedition. Irish-born Protestant immigrants and soldiers transplanted the Orange Order to the shores of British North America in the early 19th century.

The Order was the chief social institution in Upper Canada, organizing many community and benevolent activities, and helping Protestant immigrants to settle. It remained a predominant political force in southern Ontario well into the twentieth century. There were scores of socially prominent citizens who were granted honorary membership but did not actually participate in official lodge business. Surprisingly given its great prestige, although there were many members drawn from the upper and middle classes, lodge membership was predominantly drawn from the ranks of labourers, street railway workers, teamsters, and other elements of the working class. Besides sentimental patriotic or imperialist motivations, many Orangemen joined because the benefits of mutual aid, security, and health supports made it easier to survive the difficulties of working class life. Middle class members, such as professionals, small-shop owners, and tavern-keepers, saw membership in terms of commercial gain through the steady attraction of lodge members as clientele. The Order's secrecy, solemn oaths, and masonic-type rituals bonded men together as part of a greater whole, and dressing in the order's distinctive sash and regalia for the Twelfth of July parade let members show off their status and achievements to the greater community. The Grand Orange Lodge of British America Benefit Fund was established in 1881 to provide fraternal benefits to members and remains as a modern insurance system.

Despite occasional flares of sectarian violence, the Order had become more reputable by the early 20th century. Alongside the traditional tenets of loyalty to empire and Protestantism, Orangemen also promoted temperance, morality and self-improvement and regularly hosted respectable leisure activities such as sporting and music events. After 1945, the Canadian Orange Order rapidly declined in membership and political influence. The development of the welfare state made its fraternal society functions less important. A more important cause of the decline was the secularization of Canadian society: with fewer Canadians attending churches of any sort, the old division between Protestant and Catholic seemed less relevant. Perhaps even more important was the decline of the British Empire and consequently the reduced value of maintaining the 'British Connection' which had always underpinned the Order.

Among our Atkinson ancestors, the importance of the Orange Order tended to decline with each successive generation as perhaps did the Irish identity. The Irish ancestors intermarried with Scottish, Scots-Irish and English ancestors and the Scottish ethnic identity tended to win out.

## Merrickville

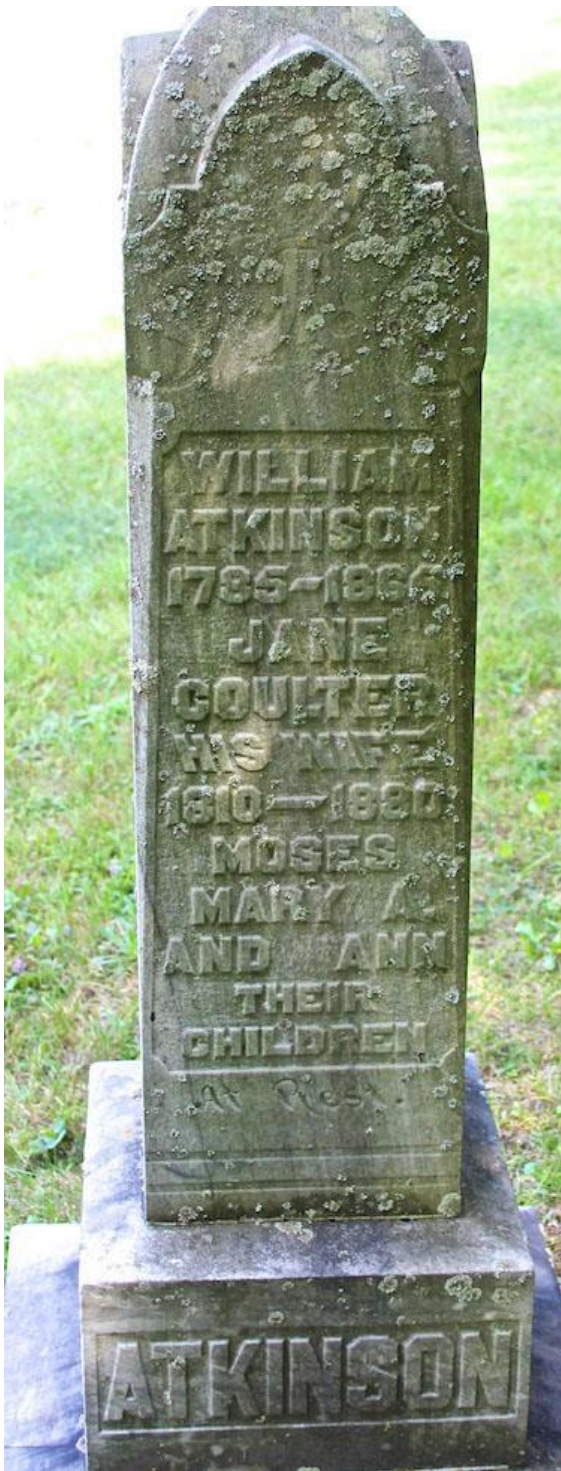
The first home of the Atkinsons in Canada was Merrickville, Ontario. Merrickville located on the Rideau River and Canal was settled by William Merrick in 1793, 46 years before the arrival of William Atkinson in 1839. Merrickville was once one of the largest industrial centers on the Rideau with grist mills, woollen mills and sawmills, all powered by the river. When Colonel By constructed the Rideau Canal (1826-1832), he built three locks in Merrickville. The original lockhouse, built for defence purposes, still stands beside the Canal. For overnight accommodation, there are two inns plus several bed and breakfast establishments located within the village, and several other B&B's are in the nearby countryside. Merrickville was named Canada's Prettiest Village in 1998 by Communities in Bloom and is a delightful village to visit.

### 1. William Atkinson 1791 – 1865 Jane Coulter 1810 – 1880

William Atkinson was born in 17914 in the County of Fermanagh, Northern Ireland.<sup>5</sup> According to his headstone William died in 1865, his wife Jane in 1880. The Canadian 1861 census gives Williams age as 70, his wife Jane as 60, Son Robert as 21, Moses as 15 and Elizabeth as 13<sup>6</sup>.

The inscription on his monument gives different dates for birth years: "William Atkinson 1785- 1865 Jane Coulter his wife 1810 - 1880, Moses, Mary A. and Anne, their children."

He immigrated to Canada in 1839-1840. William settled on a farm about three miles south of Merrickville on which a nice two-story house, ship lapped on the outside. The barn and stables were of log construction.



<sup>4</sup> The date on his headstone is 1785, the date as gathered from the Canadian census would be 1790-91: Ancestry.com and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1861 Census of Canada (Provo, UT, USA, Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2009), www.ancestry.ca, Library and Archives Canada; Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; Census Returns For 1861; Roll: C-1026. Record for William Atkinson. <http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1861Canada&h=791854885&indiv=try>.

<sup>5</sup> Atkinson, William, William Atkinson of Northern Ireland, March 15, 1963, hereafter referred to as Atkinson Report

<sup>6</sup> [http://data2.collectionscanada.gc.ca/1861/jpg/4108069\\_00337.jpg](http://data2.collectionscanada.gc.ca/1861/jpg/4108069_00337.jpg)

He married Jane Coulter, according to her headstone she was born in 1810<sup>7</sup>. According to the 1851<sup>8</sup> census and 1861 census<sup>9</sup> she was born in 1801. She died in 1880 and is buried in the Union Cemetery in Merrickville<sup>10</sup>. He died at the end of December 1865 and was buried at Union Cemetery, Merrickville, Grenville County on 2 Jan 1866.

The religion of the family in Ireland was the Church of Ireland and in Canada, the Church of England. William was a rampant Orangeman. The first Orange lodge was build in the district on the farm of John Lang, adjoining the west of William Atkinson's farm. This building was of log construction and remained there for many years after the new lodge was built at Carley's Corners.<sup>11</sup>

Possible children include,

- i. Mary Ann Atkinson, b. 04 Jun 1820 in Ireland, married John Kelly (b. 08 Oct 1814 Ireland, bp 02 Jul 1815 in Kilkenny, Ireland d. 13 Jun 1894 in Merrickville) she died 11 Nov 1907 in Merrickville
  - ii. James Atkinson, b. 1822; age 15 or 16 when he arrived in Canada (1837-1838) Occupied adjoining farms near Gananoque and Washburn Locks on the Rideau Canal.
  - iii. Moses Atkinson, born about 1845-46<sup>12</sup>. He was a captain of a boat whose boiler exploded at Oswego, N.Y. on Lake Ontario<sup>13</sup>. He is buried in Union Cemetery, Merrickville, Ontario on 25 August 1870<sup>14</sup>.
  - iv. Adolphus Atkinson may have settled at Adolphustown, near where the ferry crosses to Picton.
  - v. Edward Atkinson, a tailor in Smith Falls, Ontario<sup>15</sup>
2. vi. Thomas Atkinson (See Below)
- vii. Francis "Frank" Atkinson, whose age is given in 1851 census as 14 was born on 23 Dec 1837<sup>16</sup>, became a cobbler at Manotick, Ontario m. Charlotte Elizabeth Bowles (b. 18 Apr 1839) 1860 or 1861 in Merrickville<sup>17</sup>. They had seven children,

- I. Isabella Atkinson
- II. Elizabeth Atkinson
- III. Ellen Atkinson
- IV. Mary Ann Atkinson
- V. William Atkinson

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<sup>7</sup> Joane Coulter on the headstone, elsewhere Colter

<sup>8</sup> 1851 census: <http://data2.collectionscanada.gc.ca/e/e095/e002351427.jpg>

<sup>9</sup> 1861 census: [http://data2.collectionscanada.gc.ca/1861/jpg/4108069\\_00337.jpg](http://data2.collectionscanada.gc.ca/1861/jpg/4108069_00337.jpg)

<sup>10</sup> 1880 in Merrickville

<sup>11</sup> Atkinson Report

<sup>12</sup> Ancestry.com, 1851 Census of Canada East, Canada West, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia (Provo, UT, USA, Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006), Ancestry.com, Year: 1851; Census Place: Wolford, Grenville County, Canada West (Ontario); Schedule: A; Roll: C\_11724; Page: 31; Line: 34. Record for Moses Atkinson. <http://search.ancestry.ca/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1061&h=707154&indiv=try>.

<sup>13</sup> Atkinson Report

<sup>14</sup> Ancestry.com, Canada, Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current (Provo, UT, USA, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012), Ancestry.com, Record for Moses Atkinson. <http://search.ancestry.ca/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=60527&h=3953194&indiv=try>.

<sup>15</sup> [http://data2.collectionscanada.gc.ca/1861/jpg/4108069\\_00041.jpg](http://data2.collectionscanada.gc.ca/1861/jpg/4108069_00041.jpg)

<sup>16</sup> [https://search.ancestry.ca/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1901canada&h=14114052&indiv=try&o\\_vc=Record:OtherRecord&rhSource=7921](https://search.ancestry.ca/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1901canada&h=14114052&indiv=try&o_vc=Record:OtherRecord&rhSource=7921)

<sup>17</sup> Appreciation is expressed for the work of Rose Mary Linn, formerly of Vancouver for genealogy on this line

VI. Ethel Atkinson b. 03 Apr 1871, Manotick, Ontario, m. Archibald “Archie” Duffin Babcock, d. 19 Apr 1965 in Manotick, Ontario

VII. Caroline Atkinson

viii. William Atkinson occupied adjoining farms with James near Gananoque and Washburn Locks on the Rideau Canal. M. Nancy Holliston

ix. Robert Atkinson born about 1840-41 according to 1851 and 1861 Census, resided in father William’s house about 1890.

x. Jefferson “Jeffrey” born about a year later than Robert according to 1851 census. He does not appear in the 1861 census.

xi. Elizabeth Atkinson born about 1847-1848 according to 1851 and 1861 census, resided in father William’s house for a few years from 1890 on ward. She married Alfred Little about 1890 and subsequently Kemptville, Ontario where they ran a boarding house. Alfred Little operated a bus service from Kemptville Station to the Junction.

xii. Anne Atkinson buried in cemetery with Father William Atkinson (Little else is known of her. She does not appear to be alive in 1851 or 1861.<sup>18</sup>

Rose Mary Linn reports Alice Hughs of Merrickville was told by Harold Atkinson, grandson of Thomas Atkinson had a brother who died at sea. (This son is not recorded above)

## **2. Thomas Atkinson 1828 – 1919 Margaret Holliston 1836 – 1900**

Thomas Atkinson, son of William Atkinson and Jane Coulter, was born in 14 May 1830<sup>19</sup> in Northern Ireland and emigrated with his family in 1840 at the age of 10 to Canada settling around Wolford, Ontario.<sup>20</sup>

Thomas was about 5’10” in height and weighed about 190 lbs. had thick curly hair and a beard about four inches below his chin, trimmed square. He had a quiet disposition. He neither smoked nor drank. He was a goods woodman and quickly transformed virgin trees into four-foot lengths, marketing the wood in Merrickville. Sometimes two of the boys, Edward and George would take the load of wood to market while Thomas would get another load ready. He also worked on the macadamized road which went through from Merrickville to Brockville. The base of the road consisted of flat stones broken with a sledge hammer, raised up a couple of feet, and surfaced with fine stones or gravel. Thomas was capable of delivering a mighty punch with his left fist and was sometimes called upon when in Merrickville to settle a fight whom a bully had invaded the town and attempted to take over.

Thomas owned and farmed the third farm west of his father William. He purchased a second farm adjoining on the east side from a neighbour, William Lang. He later purchased a farm near Easton Corners on which was a brick yard. The brick made from this clay was a light colour and many of the houses in the district were built of this light-coloured brick. After retiring from the farm near Easton’s Corner he built a house in Merrickville, in which town he lived until his death. He died on 15 January 1919.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Census for 1851,1861

<sup>19</sup> 1901 Census (<http://data2.collectionscanada.ca/1901/z/z002/jpg/z000077684.jpg>)

<sup>20</sup> Date of birth and immigration taken from 1901 census.

<sup>21</sup> Atkinson Report



Thomas and his family attended the Church of England.

He married Margaret Holliston at a date uncertain. Margaret (Holliston) Atkinson, was born 1836 in Wolford, Grenville, Ontario, Canada. She died in Merrickville, Ontario on 8 Aug 1900.

Their children include

3. i. Edward Atkinson b. 16 Feb.1858 (See Below)

ii. George Atkinson b. January 1, 1860 m. Ada Louise Parks Feb 01, 1888 in Merrickville d. August 2, 1926 Bishops Mills. They had three children

VIII. Ross Elmer. Atkinson, 15 Jun 1892 in Bishop's Mills, Wolford Township, Grenville m. Jean Wilcox, d 1978

IX. George Roy Atkinson, 16 Jul 1893 in Bishop's Mills, Wolford Township, Grenville, m. Alma Myrtle Eagley 28 Apr 1920 at Carleton, Ontario, Canada, d. after 1936

X. Eva Mae Atkinson b. 28 May 1899, m. Charles John Sherrard 04 Sep 1923 in Grenville, Ontario, Canada, d. 07 Aug 1961 in Kingston, Ontario

iii. Jane Atkinson b December 25, 1862, m. Thomas Burchill Mary Atkinson b March 1864 d. 16 June 1945

XI. Mabel Clara Burchill b. 15 Dec 1886 in Grenville County, Ontario

iv. William Atkinson b. about 1867, d. 17 July 1871 age 4 ½

v. Margaret Atkinson b 15 Jun 1872<sup>22</sup> Wolford, Grenville, Ontario m. William Henry Kerford 13 Jan 1897 in Frankville Leeds, County d 1952

I. Raymond Kerford b. 29 Nov 1897 in Wolford Township, Ontario

II. Cecil Edgar Kerford b. 26 Jan 1900 in Wolford Township, Ontario (Edgar S Kerford in 1901 Census, Cleil E Kerford born Feb 1900 in 1911 census and Cecil Edgar Census on headstone)<sup>23</sup> married Gladys Loretta Wood b. 1 Oct 1914, d. 18 Dec 1999

III. Elizabeth Louise Kerford b. Nov 1902 in Wolford Township, Ontario

IV. George Stanley Kerford b. 22 Jan 1912 m. Elizabeth Myrtle Carley (1926-2007) d. 2002

vi. Thomas Atkinson b 8 Sep 1876<sup>24</sup> m. Margaret Eliza Barry 01 Jan 1907, d. 1940

I. Marguerite Etta Atkinson b. 16 Dec 1905 in Wolford, Grenville North, Ontario, Canada, m. Thomas McKibbon 05 Aug 1925 in Merrickville, Leeds, Ontario, Canada, d. 17 Oct 1989 in Merrickville, Ontario

II. Thomas Harold Atkinson in 03 Sep 1910 in Wolford, Ontario, Freda Barber (1912-1993) d. 1996

III. Jossie Atkinson b. 1918 in Wolford, Ontario,

vii. Elizabeth Atkinson b. 23 Feb 1878 died Aug 10, 1894 in Ontario, age 16 yrs., 5 months 15 days<sup>25</sup>

Thomas died January 15, 1919 in Merrickville, Grenville Ontario at the age of 91 according to his headstone.

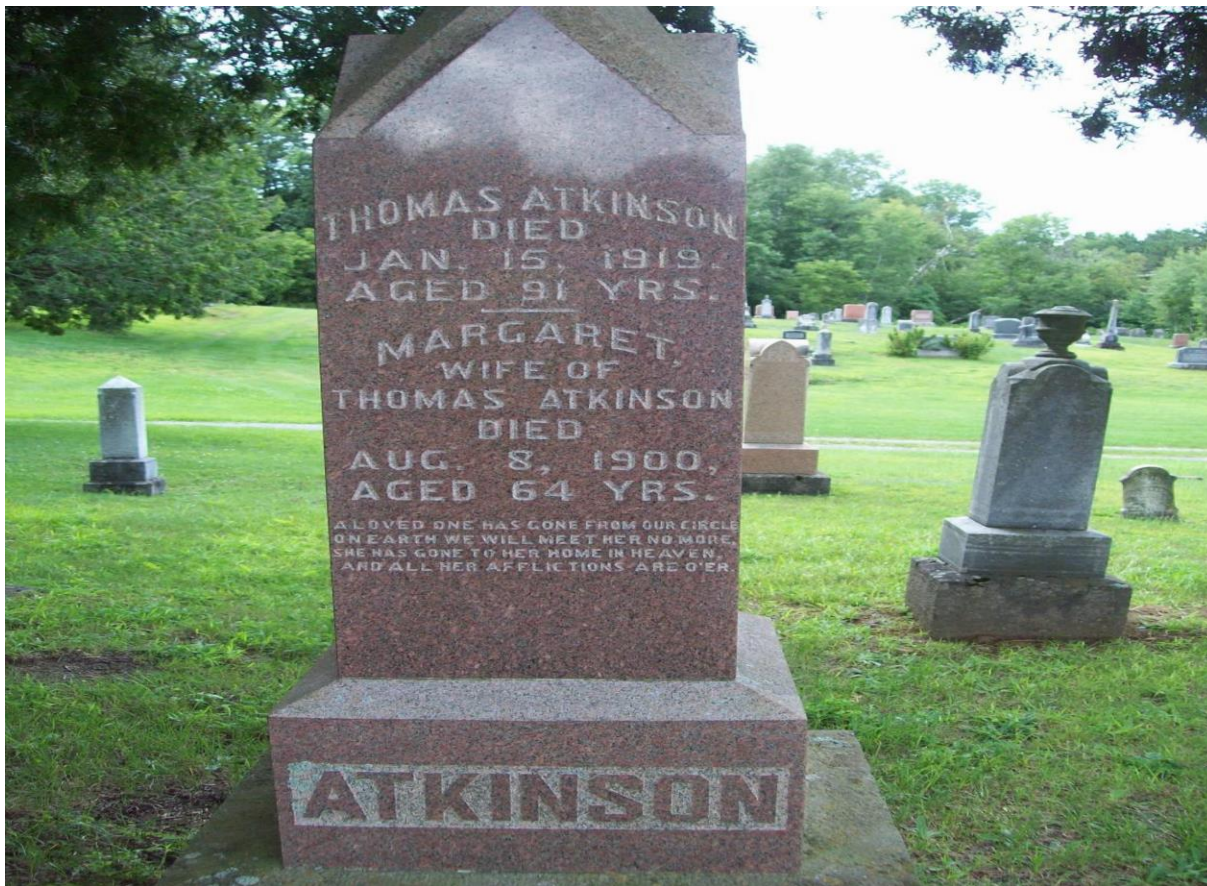
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<sup>22</sup> 1901 Census, Automated Genealogy indexed under Maggie

<sup>23</sup> In 1901 Census is listed as Stanley Edgar Kerford, in 1911 Census listed as Cleil Kerford and at <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/118954493/cecil-edgar-kerford> headstone

<sup>24</sup> 1901 Census <http://data2.collectionscanada.ca/1901/z/z002/jpg/z000077684.jpg>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/101408664/elizabeth-atkinson>, birth calculated from date of death and age as given on headstone



### 3. Edward Atkinson 1858 – 1944 Abigail Almeda Spicer 1860 – 1940

Edward Atkinson, son of Thomas Atkinson and Margaret Holliston, was born near Merrickville, Ontario. He was the first of 8 children - four boys and 4 girls. He was raised as a Presbyterian, his mother's religion.

He married Abigail Almeda Spicer on 3rd December 1879. Abigail Almeda Spicer, daughter of Robert Nicholson Spicer and Elizabeth Jane Perrin was born September 13, 1860. Grace Retson indicates this family farmed in Ferland Saskatchewan before returning to Merrickville.

When Edward married Abbie Spicer, his father gave his son a quarter section across and opposite his farm, along with a team of horses a cow some machinery and equipment. He did this for each one of his other sons until the last son Tommy who got the homestead. Ed and his family stayed on this farm until about 1897. Ed and a man name of Burchall entered a butcher business in Perth. They subsequent moved to Smith Falls.

Their children include,

- i. Ethel Atkinson b. 9 Jan 1881 in Merrickville, Ontario, d. 22 Apr. 1884 in Merrickville, Ontario, died unmarried without issue
- ii. William Thomas Atkinson b. 15 May 1882 Wolford Township, Ontario, m. Jane "Jennie" Elizabeth Otto 2 August 1909 in Ottawa, Ontario, d. 26 April 1978 in Ottawa, Ontario
- iii. Etta Atkinson m. Howard Phillips 7 Dec. 1912. Howard died 11 July 1954. They had 6 children
  - I. Orval d. 8 Oct. 1933
  - II. Clare,

III. Cecil (m. Dorothy Britton 3 June 1946),

IV. Wilbert (Served overseas in WW2 and was wounded in Holland),

V. Freddie

VI. Ethel (m. Jack Bailey, a test pilot who was killed on 28 June 1944 at Emma Lake, near Prince Albert. They had three children, Etta, Beverly and Jack. This last Etta married Al Richards). All of Howard and Etta Phillips children except Wilbert (Winnipeg) resided in Vancouver.

4 iv. Edward Elbert Atkinson b. 26 February 1887. Married Esther Jane Burns in Wascada Manitoba. Died 14 Jan 1957 Vancouver BC.

He died 9 January 1944. He is buried in Merrickville Union Cemetery #510.



#### **4. Edward Albert Atkinson 1887 – 1957 Esther Jane “Jean” Burns**

Edward Elbert Atkinson the second child of Edward Atkinson was born 26 February 1887 at Merrickville, Ontario. He lived in a farm at Merrickville. His father was a butcher in Smith Falls. He went to school until he was 14 years. He played the Trombone in the Town band. When he left for the West the band presented him a gift of a white vase in the possession of his daughter Grace Retson.

Ed worked for Frost and Woods, a Manufacturing plant. He went out on a harvest excursion to Manitoba and at Waskada, Manitoba met and subsequently married Esther Jean Burns on 25 Jan 1912. They lived in Waskada from 1912 to 1917.

They then moved on to Kerrobert Saskatchewan, a town in west central Saskatchewan, approximately 65 kilometres east of the Saskatchewan/Alberta border and 180 kilometres west of Saskatoon. The town is known for its large water tower built in 1914, clearly visible from 15 kilometres away. The village began with the name of Hartsburg in 1906 which became Kerr-Robert in 1910 with a final name change in 1924 to Kerrobert. It had a library from 1910 and a Court house in the centre of the town, built in 1920 for \$145,750. The brick and stone structure was the seat of the Kerrobert Judicial District and later was used as the Town of Kerrobert Municipal office.

Ed and Jean were generous people. Whenever a hobo would come into town and ask for a meal. Ed would send them to the Chinese restaurant for a meal and he would pay the owner. In 1924 when Ed was laid up for three months in bed with what was thought to be lead poisoning there was a message from the owner that his wife and children were to come for dinner each day at no charge. Jean never went once. He would install furnaces in the summer time for up to 50 miles of Kerrobert. When the farmer would get paid for their crops they would pay him. In the thirties, the farmers couldn't pay, and Ed cashed in his entire life insurance to pay Ashdown's Wholesaler where he had purchased the furnaces. Both he and his wife though that debts should be paid. Money was lent to you on good faith and you should honour that faith. He was one of the few allowed to charge credit on Ash- down's

Edward worked in Timmins taking a course in air conditioning. In the winter of 1942-43 he worked his trade at an internment camp in Medicine Hat. In the fall of 1943 they moved to Meyerthorpe, North of Edmonton. In the summer 1944, he set up a gunsmithing and plumbing business in Wilkie, Saskatchewan. In 1948, they moved to Vancouver. Ed died in 1957 and Jean in 1962. They had four children of which only two girl survived childhood,

5.
  - i. Ethel Jean Atkinson born 30 October 1913 m. Alex McRae
  - ii. William Burns Atkinson born 24 July 1915. William (Billie) died of an obstructed bowel at three months and was buried in the Burns plot in Neepawa Cemetery
6.
  - iii. Grace Elizabeth Atkinson born 11 December 1916. M. George Clifford Retson 26 July 1941 died June 4, 2008
  - iv. Robert Donald Atkinson born in 1 November 1920 had an appendectomy operation and died thirty days later at age 8. He was buried at Kerrobert.

He died 14 January 1957. His wife Esther Jane "Jean" Burns died 11 Feb 1961. They are buried side by side in Vancouver's Mountain View Cemetery, 5455 Fraser St., Jones new Block 20 A, Plot 14, Esther Jean Grave 14 Disc 214.

### **5. Ethel Jean Atkinson 1913 -1994 Edmund Alexander McRae 1914 - 1998**

Ethel Jean Atkinson, first child of Ed and Jean (Burns) Atkinson was born 30 Oct 1913. She married Alex McRae on 19 Dec 1941 in Kerrobert, Saskatchewan. She died 14 Feb 1994.

### **6. Grace Elizabeth Atkinson 1916 – 2008 George Clifford Retson 1912-1997**

Grace Elizabeth Atkinson, second daughter of Ed and Jean (Burns) Atkinson was born December 11, 1916, "10 to 6 P.M". - she had supper and never stopped eating (according to her mother). She moved from Waskada to Kerrobert when she 6 weeks old. She attended schools in Kerrobert, Saskatchewan. She was almost always first in her class. She sang in the junior choir where she sang solos in the junior choir and quartets with Alexa Baxter, Gladis Hanbidge and a fourth. She started to play the violin in Grade 10 and played in an orchestra for all the church suppers within 20 miles. The Minister, Benson Summers would go to sing solos and Grace would accompany him on the Piano.

She sang in the senior choir her last year or two at home. She wrote poetry. One of her favourites:

Elaine

On the grass the sunlight falls,  
Near a blackbird calls,  
A squirrel scurries across the lane,  
But both my eyes are for Elaine.

Her fair young head is on one side,  
Her soulful eyes are opened wide;  
They're brown, they look beseechingly,  
Elaine take your eyes from me.

Calm and quite and sweetly still  
She stands. I hear that blackbird trill.  
A tide of ecstasy thrills me now,  
For this is she - Our Guernsey cow.

She wrote essays and won various essay contests. Some made the local paper:

(By Grace Atkinson, Grade XI Kerrobert high school)

November 11<sup>th</sup>, the anniversary of that day, fourteen years ago when the greatest struggle waged between men ceased, has been set aside by our government to be held in sacred remembrance of our glorious dead; those who questioned not the price but gave their lives in what they believed to be the cause of righteousness. The hour when peace was declared restored in a chaotic world, marked the dawn of a Peace which we hoped, and still hope may usher in a new era when wars will be no more. This day should live in our hearts and our country's history as a day of solemn thanksgiving. It deserves a place in the calendars of Christian people second only to Christmas and Easter. In it there is no place for jubilation or glorying in national or military achievements; rather it is a day when we think sadly of the lives lost, of the suffering entailed. Yet thinking on these things we should give grateful thanks that in those days of trial there were raised up men and women who conquered fear, hardship, and by sheer determination, courage and fortitude showed to us the qualities of our race and nation. In their sacrifice was laid the foundation of our national life; here was given to us an inspiration which should ever stimulate us to see that we who live, and who come after, of those who have gone.

“Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,  
Lest we forget, lest we forget,”

Neither today nor on any other day may we forget the sacrifices they made, and as the eleventh hour draws near we shall stand in death-like silence and remember the past, think of the present and pray for the future.

The poppy has been chosen as an emblem of sacrifice and remembrance. Our first duty toward our dead soldiers is to help as we can those whom they have left. Earl Haig instituted an annual “Poppy Day” to raise money for ex-officers and disabled men by the sale of Flanders poppies. Every flower sold is the work of a disabled man in one of the Legion factories. Every man, woman and child should wear a poppy on Remembrance Day, and in this way assist a little to alleviate the sufferings caused by the Great War.

And so, keep faith with them, who lie  
In Flanders fields

Some she received merely recognition and others autographed books<sup>26</sup>. In the depths of the depression, she received a letter dated April 18, 1934 from J.D. Cameron enclosing a cheque for \$1.00 for her prize-winning essay in the Winnipeg Free Press entitled Optimism (Oh how I need it)

“Joy is divine, come storm, come shine,  
The hopeful are the gladdest,  
And doubt and dread, we believe,  
Of all things are the saddest.”

Optimism is an abstract quality of the mind which is hard to define and yet easy to recognize. There are only two classes of people-optimists and pessimists, for if one does not look ahead with hope, there must be some thoughts of dread which prevent him from doing so.

Life is too short for anger and venom, but just long enough for laughter and glad thoughts. There is no time for tears and sighs; but just enough for smiles and jollity. Look at the steaming kettle. Listen to it sing. It is up to its neck in hot water. Be optimistic. The hopeful are the gladdest. You are up to your neck in trouble? They have not swept over your head. Be like the little kettle, and a cheerful song begin. (And if you can't sing, whistle.)

A fifteen minute conversation on the right topic will convince you whether a person is or is not optimistic. Try grasshoppers, crops, weather. If he can survive them, he's immune to pessimism. People seem to have lost a great deal of their optimism in the last few years. Watch youth bring it back. We are not going to despair until there is no hope left, (and there 's not much).

Generally speaking, youth is optimistic. To us Life stretches out in a long, straight road and we are driving in the latest model Chrysler. If we run up against difficulties on the road we will detour (and blame the government.) If we are forced to stop for awhile we will overcome our troubles and start on our way again, making up for lost time.

Optimism is that quality of laughing when we feel like crying, of living when we feel like dying. One excellent example of optimism which everyone knows is the optimism of electioneers. Three parties enter the campaign and hope to get into power. Two lose. But do they worry? They continue hoping - hoping the provincial debt will be increased by a few million and the next election will herald them to power. That is optimism.

In morning's light let youth be bright,  
Take in the sunshine tender.  
Then at the close of life's decline  
Be full of sunset splendour”

She graduated from grade 12 in 1934 and then attended Success Business College in Saskatoon. She went to Success Business College (Typing and Shorthand) from July 15 until she got a job at Ashdown's Hardware in January and subsequently for W. H. Hellofs in Kerrobert. She worked for 6 weeks before being laid off. She went back to Success Business College to pick up some courses and then in June commenced work for MacDonald's Consolidated, a wholesale for Safeway for the summer. She passed Civil Service Exams (stenographic) in 1935 and got a job in the Federal seed branch for six months. She next had a job as head stenographer of a group of 12 with Massey Harris at Regina for \$60. She had written the Civil Service Clerical exams in Saskatoon before leaving for the Regina job and came fourth in Canada. She was offered a job with the 1936 census at \$75.00 a

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<sup>26</sup> Both Grace and her sister Jean received autographed books by Vilhalmur Stefansson

month where she worked for 13 months with the Bureau of Statistics. September 1, 1937, she transferred to the Department of Agriculture, Economics division on the promise of her getting a Grade two at \$90 a month after 6 months or so. After two years at \$60 a month she accepted a position with the Ottawa Journal for \$80 where she worked 6 months or so. She then became secretary to the chief of the legal division of the Department of Munitions and Supply for \$90. In 1940, she joined the Senate staff. She met Cliff Retson in January 1938 and in June 1938 they started going out nightly until he left for a road trip on his job. She would date Cliff when he was in Ottawa 6 months each year. They were married on 26 July 1941. She followed her husband who served as a 1st Lieut. in the Canadian Artillery across Canada. On November 11, 1949 they moved to 2020 Prince St. Colchester County which was later renumbered 2031 Prince. She was employed as a Court Stenographer in Truro and has the distinction of being appointed the first female Justice of the Peace in Nova Scotia. Grace took an active interest in music, home and school. She was an avid bridge player. She took university courses over the years and graduated with her B.A. from St. Mary University at age 64. Grace also took an avid interest in multiculturalism. She joined the Multicultural Association of Colchester at its inception in 1975, served as a Board member for many years. She served as secretary and then vice-president of the Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia. In November 2000 at their 25th Anniversary she received Ambassador in the Community Award presented by the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia where she received a standing ovation. In 2001 she was nominated for an Order of Nova Scotia.

Later in life she became an avid traveler. When Cliff and Grace retired in 1977 they travelled to visit son Donald to London, England for a week and then took a 2-week European trip taking in Paris, Munich, Heidelberg, Lucerne, Switzerland, Venice, Florence, and Rome and then returned to France by Hydroplane from Calais to Dover. After another week in London they took a train to Annan to visit Scottish relatives. On another trip in 1991-2 they flew to San Francisco, then Hong Kong for 4 days, then a 3-week cruise on the Queen Elizabeth II taking in Xiamen, Tangin and the Great Wall of China, Osaka, Yokohama and Tokyo, Japan. When she was 84 she travelled to Portugal for two weeks, California for a week, Moosonee, Ontario for eleven days and just after her 85th birthday traveled to Kenora, Ontario for Christmas and then on to Edmonton to visit her children outside Nova Scotia.

Grace was and possibly her sister as well were severely affected by the death of two brothers. At her funeral the minister indicated that she had informed him that she had never been able to pray after she had prayed for the recovery of her brother and this request had been denied. Stories told by Grace when she was young: she and her brother Donald played house where she would be the mother and nurse and he the father and doctor. On one occasion he was the postman and on a shoe box he wrote "post boxes". She was so mad at him that she wouldn't play with him for the rest of the day.

The next day he had an operation, got an infection and died. She never forgave herself for refusing to play with Donald that afternoon.

After a lengthy illness she passed away June 4, 2008 in Truro Nova Scotia.

### **The Atkinson Line**

1. William Atkinson 1790 – 1865 Jane Coulter 1810 – 1880
2. Thomas Atkinson 1828 – 1919 Margaret Holliston 1836 - 1900
3. Edward Atkinson 1858 – 1944 Abigail Almeda Spicer 1860 - 1940
4. Edward Albert Atkinson 1887 – 1957 Esther Jane "Jean" Burns
5. Ethel Jean Atkinson 1913 -1994 Edmund Alexander McRae 1914 - 1998
6. Grace Elizabeth Atkinson 1916 – 2008 George Clifford Retson 1912-1997

### **Abbreviations**

- b. born
- bp baptised/christened
- m. married

d. died  
abt about  
aft. After

## Resources for Atkinson

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