

NAME:COLVILE, Andrew

PARISH:

ENTERED SERVICE:1814

DATES:b. 1779 d. 1856

Appointments & Service

Outfit Year*:

Position:

Post:

District:

HBCA Reference:

**An Outfit year ran from 1 June to 31 May*

Andrew Colvile, (father of Eden Colvile) was born on the 6th November 1779, and in 1814 assumed by Royal License the name of Colvile in lieu of Wedderburn, his patronymic, because of the fact that his mother, Isabella, daughter of Andrew Blackburn, was great grand-niece and heir of the last Lord Colville of Ochiltree. Andrew Colvile's father, James Wedderburn of Inveresk, had previously assumed the name of Wedderburn Colvile in 1807. James Wedderburn was the third son of Sir John Wedderburn, 5th Baronet, who embraced the cause of the exiled House of Stuart and fought at Culloden as a volunteer in Lord Ogilvy's regiment. He was subsequently taken prisoner, attained and executed on Kennington Common in November 1746, when the Baronetcy of Wedderburn was forfeited. His father, Sir John Wedderburn, 4th Bart., had previously been deprived of his position as "Clerk of Dundee" because of the part he had taken in the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715. The name of Wedderburn was originally assumed from the lands and Barony of Wedderburn, CO. Berwick.

To revert to Andrew Wedderburn, it must be noted in passing that his sister, Miss Jean Wedderburn-Colvile, married in November, 1807, Thomas Douglas, Fifth Earl of Selkirk, founder of the Red River Settlement - the forerunner of the existing Province of Manitoba. Wedderburn became a Proprietor of the Hudson's Bay Company in June, 1809, and at a General Court on the 17th January, 1810, was duly elected a Member of the Committee in Succession to Thomas Neave, who had disqualified. Within a few weeks, on the 7th March, 1810, he submitted to the Board a plan "for the Improvement of the System of Trade in Hudson's Bay", which involved the most extensive re-organisation of the Company's affairs in North America which had ever been undertaken. Wedderburn's scheme was rendered necessary by the growing opposition of the North West Company and also because of the fact that owing to the long continuance of the Napoleonic Wars the Company's market for the sale of furs on the Continent of Europe had been to a large extent curtailed - in fact no Dividends were paid to the Stockholders between 1808 and 1815. The scheme included an arrangement whereby certain shares of the net profits obtained in the Trade were allocated to the officers of the Company in place of the premium hitherto allowed and also provided for the establishment of two new factories or districts - viz. Saskatchewan and Winnipeg - the former comprising all the countries on the waters of the Saskatchewan above Cumberland House, and the latter the remainder of the country situated on the waters flowing into Lake Winnipeg. At the same time two superintendents were appointed over the whole of the Company's territories - one to be entrusted with the charge of the five Northern Factories of York, Churchill, Severn, Saskatchewan and Winnipeg, and the other with the three Southern Factories of Albany, Moose and Eastmain. In addition, under Wedderburn's scheme, the wide powers in the matter of trading were granted to the Factors in charge of Districts.

As a brother-in-law of Lord Selkirk, Wedderburn was associated with him in his schemes for the establishment of the Red River Settlement, and on the death of the former he took over the trust. During his long period of office as a Member of the Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, commencing in 1810, he exercised great influence in the administration of their affairs and was instrumental on the part of the Company in bringing about the Union with the North West Company in 1821.

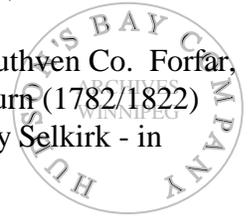
He succeeded Benjamin Harrison as Deputy Governor in 1839, and on the death of the Governor, Sir John Henry Pelly, Bart. In 1852, Colvile was chosen as his successor, a position which he held until his death on the 3rd February 1956.

On His death the following Resolution was adopted by the Committee:-

"That the Deputy Governor and Committee, in recording the lamented event, which has deprived them of a colleague, with whom they have so long acted, consider it due to the memory of their deceased friend to express their deep sense of the loss, which the Hudson's Bay Company has sustained by the death of the Governor, whose valuable services as a member of the Committee and in the Offices of Deputy Governor and Governor have extended to the lengthened period of upwards of forty-five years."

Andrew Colvile's will is dated the 4th June, 1834, and he is described at the time of his death as "Late of Ochiltree and of Crombie, Co. Fife", but when he first became a Proprietor of the Hudson's Bay Company, in 1809, he is described as of Upper Grosvenor Street, London, and of Beckenham, Co. Kent. His will was proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury on February 12th, 1856 and the amount of his estate at death was sworn as under £80,000. He married Firstly in 1802, Elizabeth Susannah, daughter of John Wedderburn of Clapham, who died without issue in 1803, and Secondly, 1806, the Hon. Louisa Mary Eden, 5th daughter of William Eden, 1st Lord Auckland. It seems almost certain that their second son Eden Colvile was so named in honour of his mother's maiden name. Their eldest son James William (1810/1880) was appointed in 1845, advocate-general of Bengal and in 1848 a Judge of the Supreme Court there. He received the honour of Knighthood in 1855, when he became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bengal and retired in 1859. In 1871, he became a paid member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.,

Andrew Colvile's younger brother, Peter Wedderburn (1781/1873) married in 1811 Anne daughter and heir of James Ogilvy of Ruthven Co. Forfar, and on the death of his father-in-law in 1826 assumed the additional name of Ogilvy, whilst his younger brother, James Wedderburn (1782/1822) became Solicitor General for Scotland in 1816. James' death occurred at St. Mary's Isle, Kirkcudbright - the seat of his sister Lady Selkirk - in November, 1822, whilst his son, Andrew Wedderburn (1821-1896) assumed the additional name of Maxwell in 1879.



It is a noteworthy fact that Andrew Colvile and his son Eden Colvile between them served on the Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company for a continuous period of no less than 79 years, since the former was elected in 1810 and the latter did not resign the Governorship until 1889.

Fort Wedderburn, established by the Hudson's Bay Company on Lake Athabaska in 1815, in opposition to Fort Chipewyan of the North West Company was so named in honour of Andrew Wedderburn, while Colvile House, near the junction of Peace River with Loon River, Colville River and Fort Colvile, near the junction of that river with the Columbia in the State of Washington, U. S. A. and Colvile Town, Vancouver's Island, were all so named by the Hudson's Bay Company in his honour.

Colville River in Alaska was so named in 1837 by Thomas Simpson - the explorer - in honour of Andrew Colvile, and Dr. John Rae named Colville Bay, Committee Bay, in the Gulf of Boothia as a tribute to him in 1847.

It is of interest to observe that Sir George Simpson - for many years Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land - commenced his career as Clerk in the counting house of the firm of Graham, Simpson and Wedderburn of Upper Tower Street, London, and it was whilst here that he attracted the attention of Andrew Colvile who in 1820 obtained his services for the Hudson's Bay Company. In the course of a letter dated York Factory, 8th September,

1821, and addressed to Colvile, Simpson conveys his most sincere thanks to him for having obtained for him the position of a Governor of Rupert's Land, and adds the following sentence -

"To you I Feel that I am solely indebted for my advancement in Life and it will ever be my study to show that your good offices have not been misapplied."

Filename: Colvile, Andrew (b. 1779 d. 1856) (fl.1814) CO 2002 August

