

PALATINE TOWN, URGLIN, CO CARLOW

A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

WILLIAM HENRY THORNTON (1781-1848)
of Knockara House, Palatine Town

Barrack Master, Carlow and Athy Barracks 1828-1842.

WILLIAM HENRY THORNTON (1781-1848) of
Palatine Town, Urglin, Co Carlow.

A brief biographical note by Harry (R J) Hawkins,
Barn Cottage Road Ends, Armathwaite, Carlisle.
Cumbria.

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INTRODUCTION.

This Note has been prepared using material collected from various sources during family history research up to 22 June 1996. The author is a descendant of William Henry Thornton through his son Robert Thornton.

Brief

William Henry Thornton was born C1781¹. He was the eldest son of Samuel Thornton of Palatinetown² and Old Leighlin, Co Carlow³. He had a younger brother Samuel Thornton*. From 1807 until 1843 he acquired a holding of lands in Palatinetown totalling approximately 150 acres plantation measure. On his death in 1848 the lands passed in trust for his wife Joanna Maria Thornton and her seven children still unprovided for with his second son, Frederick Thornton as a Trustee. Frederick Thornton died in about 1861 and Joanna Maria Thornton sold the lands in 1865.

Biography

William Henry Thornton was commissioned into the 32nd Regiment of Foot (Cornwall) as an Ensign on 28 August 1804 and into the Army on 28 Oct 1804 without purchase⁵. The 32nd Foot was in Dublin in July 1803 and had been recruiting earlier in the year in Southern Ireland⁶. He was promoted to Lieutenant on 23 Oct 1806⁷.

From 1804 until 1808 when the regiment embarked to the Peninsular, the 32nd Foot was engaged on recruitment in England and Ireland. William Henry Thornton had various postings in this period mainly as a recruiting officer⁸.

In July 1809 he transferred to the 12th Regiment of the Portuguese Army in the rank of Captain serving under Marshall William Carr Beresford⁹. His Army service is described as:

"Major Thornton served in the Peninsula from the first landing of the army in 1808 until the final expulsion of the enemy beyond the Pyrenees in 1813 and was present with the 32rd at the battles of Robia, Vimiera, Corunna, together with the affairs of Lugo and Batongas performing the duty of adjutant from Vimiera. Appointed to Portuguese service in May 1809 and was at the passage of the Loa, blockade of Ameida, battle of Fuentos, d'Onor, retreat to Busaco and lines of Lisbon. Commanded Portuguese Picquets at the repulse of a large enemy force in their attack to carry the wind mills in front of the lines of Alhambra. Followed the retreat of Massena's army from the lines and present at the Puente de Murcella, Guarda and numerous minor affairs; siege of Burges and retreat from thence when he commanded two companies at the destruction of the Bridge of Duanos on the Carrion and subsequent defence of the same. Again served on the advance of the army to the Ebro and at the battles of Vittoria, Pampolonia and the Pyrenees where he succeeded to temporary command in action of 28 July until dangerously wounded having his thigh fractured"¹⁰.

Nothing is known of his movements between being wounded at Pamplona in 1813 and his marriage in Lisbon in 1818. He was made Captain in the British Army on 25 Oct 1814 and placed on half-pay in the rank of Captain on 25 Dec 1816, continuing on half-pay until 6 Feb 1834 when he retired from the service¹¹. His rank in the Portuguese Army was that of Major¹² and he continued in the Portuguese Army until the Revolution of 1820¹³. He retained the rank of Major in the Portuguese Army.

From 13 February 1824 until his death in 1848 William Henry Thornton served as a Barrack Master for the British Army. Barrack Masters were responsible for the maintenance and readiness of the barracks and were employed by the Army Ordnance Department.

William Henry Thornton was Barrack Master at Fethard Barracks, Co Tipperary, from 13 Feb 1824 until 13 Feb 1827 and Carrick on Shannon (Carrick on Suir?) from 30 June until 28 Nov 1828. On 28 Nov 1828 he moved to Carlow Barracks which posting also included the supervision of Athy Barracks¹⁴. In 1842 he took over the barracks at Portobello, Beggars Bush and Pigeon House Fort, Dublin until 1845¹⁵. In 1847 he was Barrack Master in Hongkong where he died of "intermittent fever" on 22 October 1848 with the rank of Lt.Colonel¹⁶.

William Henry Thornton married Joanna Maria Verini in Lisbon on 29 January, 1818¹⁷. On the copy of the marriage entry made in 1831 her age is given as 28 years 11 months and his as 49 years 3 months. This would have been his age in 1831, so he would have been 36 years old in 1818 and his wife, Joanna 15 or just 16 years old.

William Henry Thornton and Joanna Maria Thornton had 12 children¹⁸, 5 sons and 7 daughters. The names and dates of birth of seven of the children are known¹⁹:

William Henry Thornton (Jun)	19 Aug 1818. Lisbon.
Frederick Thornton	19 Jul 1820 Carlow.
Robert Thornton	19 Jul 1822 Carlow.
Melasena Elloner Thornton	7 Aug 1826 Ireland
Archibald George Thornton	20 Sept 1828 Lei(a)ghlin, Carlow
Charles Augustus Thornton	19 Jan 1830 Lei(a)ghlin, Carlow
Josephine Thornton	9 April 1831 Lei(a)ghlin, Carlow

The Children:

William Henry Thornton (Jun), nothing is known about what happened to him.

Frederick Thornton was Medical Superintendent of the Frankford Dispensary in June 1846²⁰. In 1852 he was described as Medical Doctor of Frankford in Kings County²¹.

Robert Thornton was privately tutored and admitted to Trinity College, Dublin as a Pensioner on 14 Jan 1842²². . . On 24 Feb 1844, on the recommendation of Viscount Beresford, he applied for a position in the Medical Department of the British Army²³. On 6 July 1846 he was appointed assistant-surgeon to the 9th Foot²⁴: his career can be traced via the Army Lists. He married Mary Robson of Monkwearmouth, England, in British Honduras on 24 Feb 1860 and died on 16 Dec 1884. He is buried on Jersey²⁵.

Robert and Mary Thornton had three known children²⁶:

1. Hugh Thornton, a Captain in the Indian Army, married

Emily Jane Georgina St John and had issue: Matilda Alice, died young (buried town cemetery, Padstow) and Theodora 2. Maud Thornton²⁷ who married Alan Beresford Hawkins. Maud Thornton, married William Hichens and had issue;²⁸. 3. Annie, married ? Pennebaker, living in Modesto, California in 1921²⁹.

Nothing is known about the remainder of the children

William Henry Thornton and Palatinetown

William Henry Thornton acquired a holding (holding is used here to include interests in land whether owned, leased or sub-leased pending an unravelling of the land law!) of lands in Palatinetown, Urglin, over a period of twenty years from 1807. His father Samuel Thornton, by a Deed of Release date 18 June 1807, granted him 17 acres 1 rood 30 perches in Ballylennon and 12 acres 1 rood called Knockarda in Kellersane. He subsequently acquired other plots and his holdings are best represented by the sale documents prepared by the Landed Estates Courts for 13 June 1865³⁰.

The holdings represent a block of land comprising the whole of Palatinetown including Knockarda House and the field around, Thornville House, the cottages along the Baltinglass Road, the farm now known as Killyshane (then Palatine Lodge) and a block on the south side of the road being part of Ballylennon. The principal landowners being the Burtons of Burton Hall. The tenement holdings are shown in the Primary Valuation of Tenements under Johanna Thornton.

William Henry Thornton occupied Knockarda House in 1839 together with 32 acres 1 rood 35 perches and the holding contained part of Palatine Village, a police station, Thornville House and Knockarda House. Knockarda House was a "good 2-storey house, part slated and part thatched with excellent slated offices"³¹.

On a site visit in June 1996, Knockarda House was a ruin with substantial trees growing from part of the walls. The ruins give the appearance of having been stripped rather than left to decay, there was no accumulation of collapsed roof or wall material within the surviving walls. The interior was quite clear of rubbish. Part of the dwelling house survives to second storey window level and three arches survive in was the outbuildings. The adjacent field between the house and Thornville was planted with wheat. It is estimated that the house has been a ruin for 30/50 years.

William Henry Thornton's second son Frederick held the holdings in trust for his mother Joanna Maria Thornton³². Frederick died about 1860/61 as recorded in a Indenture of transfer of mortgage dated 14 Dec 1861³³

In 1855, Joanna Maria Thornton is described as living at Ashville, Blackrock, Dublin³⁴.

In 1861, Joanna Maria Thornton is described as living at Palatine Lodge³⁵.

In 1865, Palatine Lodge is described as an "excellent slated Cottage residence, with out-offices" and in the occupation of the Owner (Joanna Maria Thornton) in the sale documents of 1865³⁶. The existing building on the site now called Killyshane, has not been inspected.

Nothing is known about what happened to Joanna Maria Thornton after the sale of the holdings in 1865. She would have been aged about 63 years.

Other Thorntons In Urglin - relationships to each other unknown, unless stated.

Samual Thornton then of Shalford Co Wicklow, farmer leased to Denis Mahon for 30 years 18 acres 3 roods in Ballylennon. Deed of 1796.

Robert Thornton of Ballylennon, died 25 November 1834 aged 42 years -

gravestone, Urglin churchyard.

Robert Henry Thornton, son of Robert Thornton of 47 William Street, Dublin and grandson of the above born 4 September 1854, died 4 June 1861 aged 6 years and 2 months - same gravestone.

Daniel Thornton. The sale documents for 1865³⁷ refer to "the estate of Daniel Thornton". It is not known who Daniel Thornton was, it is possible he was the son of Frederick Thornton.

Robert Thornton, Ballylennon, plot Nos 69 and 71, Applotment of the Parish of Urglin, October 1830. Copy in Local Studies Library, Carlow.

Thomas Thornton - deed of 5/1/1714 for Knockarda in indentures of deeds for lands acquired by William Henry Thornton.

Thomas Thornton - will of 1777, Index to Irish Wills. W Phillimore 1909. Vol 1.

Henry Thornton - will of 6 May 1899, farmer of Ballylennon, Co Carlow died 13 August, administration granted at Killkenny to Robert Thornton of Ballylennon, farmer. Effects £280.

William Charles Thornton, proved 23 May 1908, late of Ballylennon, Palatine Co Carlow. Farmer, died 17 April 1908, Dublin, administration granted to Robert Thornton, farmer. Effects £150.
Abbreviations

LR - Land Registry, Dublin.

PRO - Public Record Office, London

WO - War Office papers in the Public Record Office.

1. Estimate from record of marriage and age at death.
2. Deed of Sale, 31/Oct/1823. LR.
3. Deed of Release dated 18/June/1807. LR.
4. Deed of Sale, 31/Oct/1823. LR.
5. Army List, PRO. Returns of Officer's Services 1828.
6. Historical Records of the 32nd (Cornwall) Light Infantry now 1st Battalion Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. Edinburgh Military Museum, Edinburgh Castle.
7. Army List, PRO.
8. Monthly returns of Officers Services, 1st battalion, 32nd Foot. W017. PRO.
9. Some 300 British officers transferred to the Portuguese Army under Beresford in order to train and strengthen it to fight the French. They were given an additional rank to attract them, see "The Peninsular Army" by Michael Glover. Beresford was a natural son of the Marquess of Waterford. After the war with Napoleon he stayed on to fight for the Portuguese in Brazil. He also argued with the British Government for his British officers to be given what had been promised when they transferred to the Portuguese Army. He seems to have supported William Henry Thornton, recommending his son Robert Thornton to the Army Medical Department.
10. Hart's Army List, 1845. War Services of the Barrack Masters, p328, No15.
11. See 12 below.
12. List of Officers on half-pay in Portuguese and Spanish Armies 1835. Army List 1835, PRO.
13. Returns of Officer's Service 1828. PRO.
14. Returns of Service, Barrackmasters, 1835. PRO. W054/742.
15. See 14 above.
16. Record of Burial. WO/42/23/190. PRO.
17. Reports of Officer's Marriages. W025/3239, p38. PRO.
18. Will of William Henry Thornton, PROB 11/2088/374. London. Granted in London as he was a serviceman who died overseas..
19. Returns of Officer's Service, 1828. PRO.
20. See 18.
21. Memorial of indented deed of Mortgage made 25 May 1852: Joanna Maria Thornton, Frederick Thornton and William Graham. LR, Dublin.
22. Graduates of Trinity College, Dublin.
23. Copy of application form to the Army Medical Department, W025/3931, PRO.
24. Army List.
25. Gravestone, St Helier Churchyard, Jersey. Also has his wife Mary Thornton inscribed on it.
26. Will of Hugh Thornton.
27. Hugh Thornton, Record of Service, India Office Library, L/AG/23/16/7, London.
28. Will of Hugh Thornton.
29. Will of Hugh Thornton.
30. Landed Estates Court: In the matter of the Estate of Daniel Thornton and several others, Mrs Joanna Maria Thornton and others. Rental and Particulars Part of the Lands of Ballylennon, Knockarda, Palatinetown and part of Killyshane. To be Sold in Five Lots. With maps. Copy in Local Studies Library, Carlow.
31. Ordnance Survey Field Name Books of County Carlow. 1839. Vol III. N-W. Parish of Urglin. Local Studies Library, Carlow.
32. William Henry Thornton's Will named the Rev Richard Laurance Fitzgibbon, Rector of Killeagh, Co Cork and his second son, Frederick Thornton and their survivors "all my right title and interest etc...". The Rev Fitzgibbon was dead by the date of a judgement obtained by a William Graham, shoemaker, of Carlow against William Henry Thornton for

£2000 dated 1 Feb 1843 to secure payment of a loan.

33. Indenture of transfer of mortgage leasing date 1VDec/1861 between William Graham, Joanna Maria Thornton, William Fitzwilliam Burton and John Power Burton. LR.

34. Indenture deed of lease dated 12 June 1855. LR.

35. See 33.

36. See 30.

37. See 30.

