

# Eleanor Stackhouse Atkinson

*Rensselaer, Jasper County*

January 7, 1863 – November 4, 1942

Eleanor Stackhouse was born on January 7, 1863 in Rensselaer, Indiana, the second child of Isaac M and Margaret (Smith) Stackhouse. According to an article in the *Rensselaer Republican* of November 14, 1942, her parents moved to Rensselaer from Lafayette in 1858. The family returned to Lafayette in 1872 when Eleanor was about nine years old and shortly thereafter settled in Southport, Indiana.

Eleanor graduated from Indianapolis Normal School (1882) and taught school for four years. From 1889 to 1891 she wrote for the *Chicago Tribune* under the name of Nora Marks. In these articles she sometimes went undercover, posing as a poor girl looking for work as a servant or a new recruit to the Salvation Army, among other roles, and described what she experienced. In 1891 she married Francis Blake Atkinson, the news editor of the *Chicago Evening Post*. Together they started *The Little Chronicle*, an illustrated weekly paper for children.

Many of Mrs. Atkinson's books were historical or historical fiction. By far her most influential book was *Greyfriars Bobby* (1910), the story of a Skye Terrier who guarded his master's grave in 19th Century Edinburgh for fourteen years after his master's death. The book was the foundation of at least three movies: *Challenge to Lassie* (1949). Disney's *Greyfriars Bobby: The True Story of A Dog* (1961), and a remake of this 1961 movie, *The Adventures of Greyfriar's Bobby* (2006). A statue of Bobby in Edinburgh is a popular tourist site and Edinburgh celebrates Greyfriars Bobby Day every January 14. Reprinted many times, the book remains more popular in the UK than in the US. Atkinson's stopped writing after *Poilu: A Dog of Roubaix* was published in 1918.

Eleanor's grandson was Wally Cox, a well-known television and movie actor in the 1950s and 1960s. She died in Orangetown, NY on November 4, 1942. Her ashes are buried at the foot of her mother's grave in Rensselaer's Weston Cemetery.

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Eleanore Stackhouse Atkinson's profile was provided to ICW by Judy Kanne, Jasper County Historian

For more information about the Eleanor Atkinson, go to:

<https://www.revolvy.com/main/index.php?s=Eleanor%20Stackhouse%20Atkinson>

*References will be published at the end of Women's History Month.*



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