The Milne Family: 300 Years of Ancestral History

Author: Kendall Burtch, 2007 Edited by: Barb Moore From early pioneers to the present, the Milne family has been apart of North Bay's history and have accumulated an extensive three hundred year history that has been traced through their ancestral lines. They originated from Scotland and were found as early as the mid-1700's in a town called Aberdeen. (See Appendix A) Aberdeen is now the third largest city in Scotland, but its history states that in the 17th and 18th centuries, unemployment, poverty, and poor social classes plagued the constant growth of the city.¹ This is where the Milne family resided before they immigrated to Canada in the mid 1800's. It can be assumed that with their farming background, and the population rise in Aberdeen, that they had to find a more suitable place to settle where their future generations would thrive.

To form this essay in a chronological order – which is the most appropriate route – it will be commenced with John Milne and Jean Mitchell. Unfortunately, information on the earlier Milne's has not been able to be recovered. All that is known to place them at the beginning of the Milne ancestry is that John Milne was born in 1766. He married Jean Mitchell in January of 1787, and they had six children: Barbara, Male, William, Margaret, John, and James. The family line discussed and researched here begins with John II, son of John I and Jean Milne.² John Milne II was their fifth child, born 3 January 1787 in Aberdeen, Scotland. In 1808 he married Margaret Anderson, also a native of Aberdeen³. Altogether they had seven children: Helen, Margaret, Fairly, John III, Christian, David, and Alexander. All of their children were born in Scotland, and later immigrated with their parents to Canada. In a published work by the Howick Historical Society, *The Lines of Howick*,

¹ Great Britain Historical 'GIS' Project Team, "Aberdeen, Scotland," Copyright 2004. <u>http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit_page.jsp?u_id=10192985&c_id=10090283</u> (March 2007)

 $^{^{2}}$ To make it easier for the reader, I will place roman numerals beside the John's in which I am talking about. There will be quite a few, and it may get confusing.

³ Date has been noted as approximate

information states that "in 1836, they sailed for America".⁴ It is unknown if the entire family immigrated, but it has been stated that both John Milne II, his wife Margaret Anderson and John Milne III with his new wife Mary Moir made the trip and arrived in Elora, Ontario.⁵

John Milne III was born in March of 1814; he married Mary Moir⁶ on 2 July 1836 in Aberdeen Scotland. After their arrival, John II and Margaret Anderson stayed for the remainder of their lives in the town of Elora in Wellington County, Ontario. John III and Mary Milne first settled in Nichol, Wellington County. They had their first six children: Peter William, Margaret, Ellen, John, Elisabeth, and David.⁷ between the years of 1837 and 1846. From Nichol, John III and Mary Milne moved to Garafraxa Township where they settled and had their last four children: Barbara Roy, Jane Jennie, William Andrew, and James A.⁸ They were recorded in the 1851 Census as living in Garafraxa Township. (See Appendix B). John Milne's profession was list as a farmer, and it was also shown they were living in a log home at the time. From Wellington County, the Milne's moved to Howick Township in Huron County. "They settled in Howick, purchasing 500 acres from the Crown in 1862 and 63 and called it Spring Hill Farms. They made their home on [lot number] C12-L19. Over the next few years John bought several hundred more acres on the 13th and 14th concessions, but resold them almost immediately."⁹ Upon ownership of this land, they also obtained "a particular area of about six acres" on the Maitland River.¹⁰ Between the 1860's and 80's the Milne's took over and operated a mill that had been previously erected on their property.

⁴ Jim Lingerfelt and Jenny Versteeg, <u>The Lines of Howick County</u>, (Gorrie, Ont: Howick Historical Society, 1856. This date of immigration will be suitable for this paper, but please keep in mind that other sources have stated that they did not immigrate until the late 1840's. The date of 1836 is approximate. ⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Mary Moir was born in Aberdeen, Scotland on 16 February 1817.

⁷ Peter William was born 26 Mar. 1837, Margaret was born 28 Aug. 1838, Ellen was born 6 Apr. 1840, John was born 1 Aug. 1842, Elisabeth was born 2 Nov. 1843, David was born 1 Mar. 1846

⁸ Barbara Roy was born 14 Nov. 1847, Jane Jennie was born 19 July 1849, William Andrew was born 12 May 1853, James A. was born in 1856.

⁹ Lingetfelt. The initial lots that they purchased from the Crown were the lots: C11-L19/20, C12-L19/20/23.

¹⁰ Maril, <u>Grey Township and its People</u>. N.A.

John Milne III operated the mill with his sons up until his passing in Grey County in 1874 from a head injury.¹¹ (See Appendix C) In his will, John left everything to his wife, Mary Moir Milne who survived him by twenty years. (See Appendix D) She passed away on 2 January 1896 at age 79. "A stroke of paralysis was the cause of death."¹² (See Appendix E). She was remembered throughout her community as a woman of "respect and esteem of all for her kindliness of disposition and willingness to prove a friend to all needing her aid."¹³

To follow the family to North Bay, a son of Mary Moir and John Milne must be focused on. William Andrew Milne was the ninth child of Mary and John Milne. He took over his father's mill after his passing in 1874; he was 24 at the time. On 1 June 1875, William Andrew Milne married Agnes Weir¹⁴ in Howick Township. They resided in Ethel, Grey Township and William continued to work at the mill. From 1882 to 1894, William Milne was extremely involved in the communal politics of Grey. He was first a councilor, then a deputy reeve, and lastly served as a reeve for six years.¹⁵ By 1894, the Milne's had eight children: Frederick, Blanche, Jessie, William Harcourt, May, Edna Lillian, Ellen, and Margaret.¹⁶ In 1896, the entire family moved to North Bay. Mr. Milne¹⁷ "became interested in lumbering in Northern Ontario."¹⁸ Soon, "Mills were founded at Spanish, Milnet, and Trout Mills, under the family name of Milne. These mills were operated under the name of William Milne and Sons."¹⁹ and it became a family business that prospered. As the years

¹¹ John Milne III was 68 years old when he died on 1 Nov. 1874.

¹² <u>The Brussels Post</u> (10 Jan. 1896) Mary Milne obituary.

¹³ Ibid.

 ¹⁴ Agnes Weir was born 23 June 1854 in Ireland; she immigrated with her family to Canada: Approx. 1859.
¹⁵ Maril.

¹⁶ Frederick was born 12 Jan. 1876, Blanche was born in 1878, Jessie was born 2 Nov. 1879, William Harcourt was born 10 Jan. 1882, May was born 9 June 1884, Edna Lillian was born 15 Mar. 1886, Ellen was born 20 Nov. 1889, and Margaret was born 29 Aug. 1891.

¹⁷ For the duration of the paper, Mr. Milne is referring to Andrew William Milne.

¹⁸ <u>The Nugget</u>, (7 Sept. 1932) W.A. Milne Obituary.

¹⁹ Ibid.

passed, the Milne's became known as a very influential family in the early years of North Bay.

After settling in North Bay in the late 1890's, Mr. Milne and his wife Agnes became quite involved in community activities. Agnes Milne became a life member of the Woman's Missionary Society of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; she also took a vast interest in all "welfare undertakings of the community."²⁰ She participated in the family lumbering business, and took great pride in raising her children. Mr. Milne was equally devoted to communal welfare. He was a member of many social clubs, a well known businessman, was a prominent member within St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, and a loyal supporter of community aid. Mr. Milne was an active member of the city council where he served as a councilor for several years. In 1907 Mr. Milne was elected mayor of North Bay as well as being chief magistrate from 1907-1908. William Milne was an ardent hunter, fisherman, and curler and cherished a love of clean sport."²¹ He was often at the head of committees and organized events. Mr. Milne was one of the founders of the first Masonic Lodge in North Bay. (See Appendix F) Lodge #617 was established in August 1922. Another group he belonged to was the Scottish Rite. Mr. Milne was known for his generosity and kindheartedness. In a 1933 issue of *The Nugget*, Mr. Milne was mentioned as being the only firm to place men in the woods to keep them working throughout the depression. The articles states: "Employment is being provided for fifty or sixty skilled log makers by William Milne and Sons, North Bay and Trout Mills, in a second logging camp"..."They were the only firm to put in camps in the North Bay timber agency last season."²² Mr. Milne used all efforts to keep his mills and operations open and running through all tough times. He was giving back

 ²⁰ <u>The Nugget</u>, (5 Feb. 1937) A.W. Milne Obituary.
²¹ <u>The Nugget</u>, (7 Sept. 1932) W.A. Milne Obituary.

²² The Nugget, (27 Nov. 1933).

to the community that did not have many means of employment at the time. Their business was referred to as the "backbone of the community".²³ They supported many men and their families enabling North Bay to profit from the Milne's lumbering business.

As has already been stated, the Milne and Son's lumbering business was founded in the late 1890's when they established mills in Trout Mills, Milnet, and Spanish. As time went on, their business grew significantly. The entirety of Trout and Turtle lakes were the Milne's domain. Trout Lake used to go by the name of Milne Lake until it was changed when operations ceased. "When the Trout Lake watershed was cut over they moved to Temagami and built a big mill, which was operated by Fred McNutt."²⁴ (See Appendix H) The business has remained a large part of the northern community, and still exists today.

William Harcourt Milne, fourth child to William Milne and Agnes, joined the Canadian Army in the First World War. While overseas, he founded the North Ontario Milne Forestry Corp and was able to upgrade his fathers business to an international corporation. which was an impressive feat . The head offices for their business were located in North Bay on Ferguson St. where the Vernon Directories state that they owned numbers eight to ten as well as a house numbered 64 on Copeland Street which has been known as the Milne family residence.²⁵ There was another office in the Milne name, under Colonel Wm. Milne. He operated the Milne and Sons Ltd – overseas operations. His address was 359 Klock Avenue.²⁶ They had multiple other properties around North Bay which were under the names of the other Milne children.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Fred McNutt is a surviving descendant of the Milne Family lineage (2007).

²⁵ Vernon Directories

²⁶ Vernon Directories

William Andrew Milne passed away at the age of 79 on September 2, 1932. His death certificate states that the cause of death was "Carcinoma of the Bladder". He had three previous operations over of two years to stop the cancer, but it persisted. He was buried in the Terrace Lawn Cemetery in North Bay.²⁷ The executors of his will were his sons in law: Herbert Anderson, and Charles Coleman. To his wife, Agnes Weir Milne, he left his entire estate and all that was connected to it, he also left his share of the business operations in her hands - which would be overseen by his sons William H. Milne, and Frederick Milne. He left significant amounts of money to each of his executors as well as to his wife. "He was one of the most highly esteemed figures in the community, and news of his passing occasioned widespread regret."²⁸ He was known for his generosity, communal involvement, and being a prominent lumberman in North Bay. Masonic honours were performed upon his passing.

Agnes Weir Milne passed away on 3 February, 1937, in her 83rd yr, five years after the death of her beloved husband and she was buried alongside him in Terrace Lawn. Her "death followed a brief illness after a paralytic stroke."²⁹ She was "widely known for her philanthropic interests during her 37 years of residence in North Bay."³⁰ She was another prized citizen that was missed in the years to follow. The executors of her will were Herbert Anderson and Charles Coleman. The division of belongings were left to her children – individually and equally – and was expressed in large sums of money and property. (See Appendix I)

Seven of the eight children of William and Agnes survived them. Frederick Milne was the first son. He married Mabel Detlor on February 3, 1904 and they had three children:

 ²⁷ <u>The Nugget</u>, (7 Sept. 1932) W.A. Milne Obituary.
²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ <u>The Nugget</u>, (5 Feb. 1937) A.W. Milne Obituary.

³⁰ Ibid.

Edith, Frances, and Madeline. In partnership with his brother Colonel William H. Milne, he took over the Milne Lumbering business in 1935. Frederick was general manager of the original mill at Trout Mills for several years. He was known for being the oldest living past master of the Nipissing Masonic Lodge (No. 420) and was a 33rd degree Mason.³¹ He was a member of St. Andrew's Church; a member of the "North Bay Rorab Shrine Club, the Lodge of Perfection, the North Bay Chapter of Rose Croix and Moore Sovereign Consistory of Hamilton."³² He had a permanent residence on Pinegrove Crescent in North Bay and a summer home on Silver Lady Lane, Trout Lake. His first wife Mabel died of unknown causes on 25 July 1947. He married for a second time in 1952 to Amelia Perry. Frederick Milne passed away on 19 September 1962, from an illness that lasted for eighteen months (the type of illness is unknown).

Blanche Milne was the first daughter born to William and Agnes Milne. She married Charles Ernest Coleman in North Bay on 5 July 1899. They had three children: Ervine, Marion, and Helen Mary. Before her marriage, she lived with her family in their residences at North Bay and Trout Creek and taught music for several years. Charles and Blanche took up residence in North Bay in the early 1900's and lived at 607 Jane Street. She was a prominent member of St. Andrew's Church and the Women's Missionary Society; she also belonged to the Canadian Club. "She took a keen interest in art, music and gardening and the flower beds surrounding her home were always a sight of beauty."³³ On 16 January 1942 her husband Charles passed away.³⁴ In 1961, Blanche Coleman moved to Toronto due to poor health, and passed away 4 May, 1962 at age 84. She was buried with the rest of her family at the

³¹ <u>The Nugget</u>. (20 Sept. 1962) Frederick Milne Obituary.

 $^{^{32}}$ Ibid.

³³ <u>The Nugget</u>, (5 May 1962) Mrs. C.E. Coleman Obituary.

³⁴ The causes of his death could not be found.

Terrace Lawn Cemetery. She was survived by her three children, six grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

The second daughter born to William and Agnes was Jessie Milne. She married Herbert Anderson on May 10, 1911. There was no relevant information to provide a lead to what happened to them after 1911.³⁵

The second son born to William and Agnes was William Harcourt Milne. In *The Nugget* he was referred to "A true Northern Ontario pioneer".³⁶ On 3 August 1910, he married Irene Isobel Dick of Toronto.³⁷ and they had three children: Donald Weir, William Kenneth, and Bruce Richard. They lived at 970 Pinewood Road in North Bay, and had a cottage on One Mile Bay, Trout Lake.³⁸ William Harcourt Milne became Colonel Milne after his service with the 23rd Regiment of the 159th Battalion of the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force.³⁹ On his declaration papers, it states that he served a total of 13 years with the Canadian militia. (See Appendix J). After his arrival back home, he took over Milne and Sons Lumbering, in partnership with his brother Frederick. After his brother's retirement from the company in 1947, Col. Milne decided to pass the company along. So within five years, "the interests were sold to his son, Donald, and J.W. McNutt, whose wife is a daughter of Fred Milne."⁴⁰ Colonel Milne had always taken a great interest in the community and the lives of others. Throughout his lifetime, he was a member of the North Bay Rotary Club, the North Bay Scottish Rite, Rameses Shrine Temple, the Nipissing Masonic Lodge No. 420,

³⁵ Information was scarce on the Andersons. Assumptions can be made that they resided in North Bay for a few years, and then moved. There have been sources that state they moved to Toronto, and others that state they moved to the United States because of a job opportunity for H. Anderson. It is unknown.

³⁶ <u>The Nugget</u>, (4 June 1959) W.H. Milne obituary.

³⁷ For more information on their marriage, please see their newspaper wedding announcement from *The Nugget*.

³⁸ <u>The Nugget</u>, (4 June 1959) W.H. Milne obituary.

³⁹ Colonel William H. Milne's Officer's Declaration Papers

⁴⁰ <u>The Nugget</u>, (4 June 1959) W.H. Milne obituary.

and the Canadian Legion Branch No. 23.⁴¹ He was one of the original members of the Legion in the early 1920's. "On October 26th, 1926 Colonel William Milne became the first president of the newly chartered "Branch 23 North Bay"."⁴² (See Appendix K) He also was a member of the Great War Veterans' Association in North Bay. On October 19, 1940, his third son Bruce – nicknamed "Dick", was 20 years old when he was "killed in a plane accident while training with the Royal Canadian Air Force in Canada".⁴³ It has been said that he never fully recovered from his son's death. Known to be a horticulturalist, one of Colonel Milne's past-times was his garden. Another of his "greatest prides was a stand of red and white pines he personally planted within the past ten years on a tree farm at Trout Lake, near One Mile Bay where it meets the Peninsula Road."⁴⁴ Fortunately those trees are still there, as they are on a protected site and now they would be almost sixty years old. The road that intercepts with Peninsula Road was at one time named Milne Road, but unfortunately it has been changed and it now West Peninsula Road. For years his family enjoyed their time out on what was known as Camp Island on Trout Lake. Not long after their inhabitance of the island the name was changed to Milne's Island.⁴⁵ "The 93-acre island has since been owned by D.W. Milne and Dr. Milne but at the father's request has been preserved for public use and is a popular picnicking place. The old cottages used by the family have long ago been torn down."⁴⁶ Colonel William Harcourt Milne was active up until his sudden passing on 3 June 1959. and was buried at Terrace Lawn Cemetery.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² The Royal Canadian Legion Branch No.23 By-Law Book, Back Cover.

⁴³ <u>The Nugget</u>, (4 June 1959) W.H. Milne obituary.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid. Dr. Milne is Col. W.H. Milne's son Kenneth. For further information please refer to the Obituary of Col. W.H. Milne – an article from *The Nugget*.

The fifth child to William and Agnes Milne was May Milne. She married Cecil H. Prest on August 21, 1906 and they had two children: Audrey and William. They did settle in North Bay. Unfortunately, May passed away during the 'flu epidemic' that went through North Bay in 1919. She was only thirty-five years old at the time. Their son William was also claimed by the epidemic at age 4 yrs.

Edna Lillian Milne was the sixth child of William and Agnes Milne. She married George Wallace McDonald on 16 September 1914 and they had two children: Isabel and Ruth Edna. Like her sisters, Edna was also a life member of St. Andrew's Church in North Bay, the Women's Missionary Society and a member of the North Bay Canadian Club and "an accomplished pianist."⁴⁷ After a brief illness, Edna Lillian McDonald passed away on 13 July 1976. Unlike her brothers and sisters, she was buried at Union Cemetery. Her two daughters survived her – at the time they were living in Burlington, and Edmonton, Alberta.

Ellen Milne was the seventh child and fifth daughter to William and Agnes Milne. She married Frederick O. Weeks on 6 October 1910. They had one known living child, but all details are not specified. Ellen was the last living of the Milne children. She passed away in 1990 in Ottawa.

The final child of William and Agnes Milne was Margaret . She married William J. Bell in 1915. It is not known if there were any children. At some point in their lives they moved to Toronto and it is assumed they settled there for the rest of their lives. Margaret Bell passed away in 1972. Further information is unknown.

⁴⁷ <u>The Nugget</u>, (15 July 1976) Edna Lillian Milne McDonald obituary.

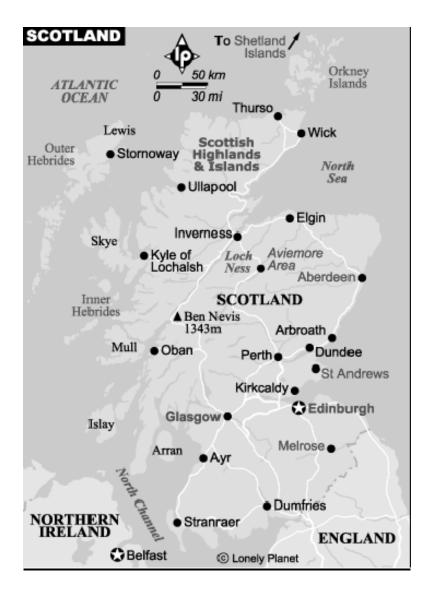
The Milne Family tree has been to an extent completed. Further information has been from the living Milne descendants who are still residents of North Bay. Edith Milne, daughter of Frederick Milne married James Wesley McNutt on 27 October 1934.⁴⁸ 'Wes' McNutt took over in partnership with Colonel Milne's son Donald Milne to run the original Milne Lumbering Business. In 1946, these two men formed Lakeview Builders Supplies Ltd., Lakeview Forest Products Ltd., and the Oakville Lumber Company.⁴⁹ These three separate divisions would replace the original Milne and Son's Lumbering Business. These divisions still exist today and are primarily run by Edith and Wes' son Fred McNutt, who still lives in North Bay with his wife Anne.

The Milne Family has branched out from North Bay and now currently live all over Canada. They accomplished many feats in their long ancestral family line that still continues to bring life to North Bay and area. The pioneers of North Bay cannot be forgotten. They are the pillars of North Bay history, as well as the building blocks that have made the city of North Bay into what it is today.

⁴⁸ For further information, please refer to their marriage announcement published in *The Nugget*.

⁴⁹ <u>The Nugget</u>, (25 Sept. 1978) Donald W. Milne's obituary.

APPENDIX A



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APPENDIX B

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Names of Inmates.	Profession, Trade or Occupation.	Place of Birth.	Religion.	Residence if out of limits.	Age next birth day.	Male.
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1851 Census – Milne Family in Garafraxa Township, Wellington County

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APPENDIX C

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John Milne's Death Certificate

APPENDIX D

John Milne's Will

APPENDIX E

OBIT .- Mary Milne, relict of the 8 late John Milne, passed away to her re-77 ward on Thursday of last week, at the fs good old age of 79 years and 11 months. About two years ago last September de-ceased removed from Ethel to Stirling 0 a Falls, where she resided with her daughtł 1. ter. A stroke of paralysis was the cause of death. Mr. Milne died about 20 years 4 17 1. ago, aged 60 years. There are 10 child, ron living, viz. :--Peter, South River. ce er Party Sound ; Jno., Mrs. Wallis, and Mrs. B. Milne, of Stirling Falls ; Mrs. be 1 W: Anderson, of Sundridge; Mrs. H. Howard, of Orange Hill; Wm. and David, of Ethel; Barbara, of Wrozeter; a i and Jas., of Tennessee. One sister died 26 years 1470. The body of Mrs. Milne a 8 ł ng was brought to Ethel on the afternoon train jast Saturday and the funeral took place from the residence of Wm. Milne on Monday afternoon, interment being sit 15 made at Wrozeter, where Mr. Milne was buried. The subject of this notice was well known in this locality and enjoyed the respect and esteem of all for her kindliness of disposition and willingness en ġ. lit n's to prove a Irlend to all needing her aid. ٠. Wrozeter. n

Mary Moir Milne Obituary from the Brussels Post

APPENDIX F

Masonic By-Law, 1922

From our By-laws. Ontario, Dominion of Canada, Grand Master of the Most Honorable Fraternity of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Canada. <text> [4]

APPENDIX G

Milne Lumber Mill at Trout Lake, 1903



APPENDIX H

Pioneer Families of North Bay- article



APPENDIX I

Agnes Milne's Will

APPENDIX J

Colonel William Harcourt Milne's Declaration Papers

APPENDIX K

The Legion By-Law Book, Back Cover

FURTHER INFORMATION AND SOURCES:

- 1. Agnes Weir Milne's Obituary
- 2. William Andrew Milne's Obituary
- 3. Frederick Milne's Obituary
- 4. Colonel William Harcourt Milne's Obituary
- 5. Marriage Announcement for Col. Wm. Milne and Irene Dick
- 6. Edna Lillian Milne McDonald's Obituary
- 7. Blanche Milne Coleman's Obituary
- 8. Bruce Richard Dick Milne's Obituary
- 9. Donald Weir Milne's Obituary
- 10. Mrs. Dorothy Janet Milne's Obituary
- 11. Edith Milne McNutt's Obituary
- 12. James Wesley McNutt's Obituary
- 13. Marriage Announcement for Edith Milne and J.W. McNutt
- 14. Masonic Lodge No. 617 By-law and initial member list
- 15. Mary Moir Milne's Obituary
- 16. John Milne's Death Certificate
- 17. "Pioneer Families of North Bay" newspaper article
- 18. Index to North Bay by W.K. P. Kennedy
- 19. 1905 North Bay Phone Book Log
- 20. Photo of the Milne home at 64 Copeland Street
- 21. Photo of the Milne Mill on Trout Lake, 1903
- 22. "The Lines of Howick", The History of Howick Twp., 1856-1995.
- 23. "Grey Township and its People"
- 24. Registration of Membership to the Royal Canadian Legion Col. W.H. Milne
- 25. The Legion's Annual Bursaries Program at Canadore College
- 26. "Mayors of North Bay"
- 27. Censuses 1901, 1911
- 28. Birth Records Frederick, Blanche, Jessie, William H., May, Edna Lillian, Ellen and Margaret MILNE
- 29. Marriage Records Andrew William Milne, Frederick Milne, Charles E. Coleman, Herbert Anderson, William H. Milne, Cecil H. Prest, George W. McDonald, Frederick O. Weeks
- 30. Death Records William Andrew Milne, Agnes Weir Milne, John Milne
- 31. Vernon Directory Results
- 32. Newspaper Index
- 33. Land Record
- 34. Wills William Andrew Milne, Agnes Weir Milne
- 35. "Another Camp to be Opened Soon" article from the Nugget
- 36. "Mrs. W.H. Milne Heads W.M.S. for Year 1934" article from the Nugget
- 37. Newspaper Ad for William and Son's Lumbering Business
- 38. Howick Township Records Grave markings, deaths, marriages, etc.
- 39. Information from Rootsweb.com
- 40. Contributions from Mr. Frederick McNutt

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