

***MILL - MILNE - MILAN:***

*the variableness of Angus name spellings.*

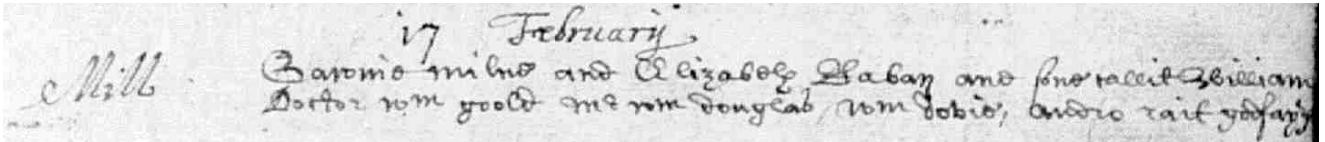
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### *MILL - MILNE - MILAN: the variableness of Angus name spellings.*

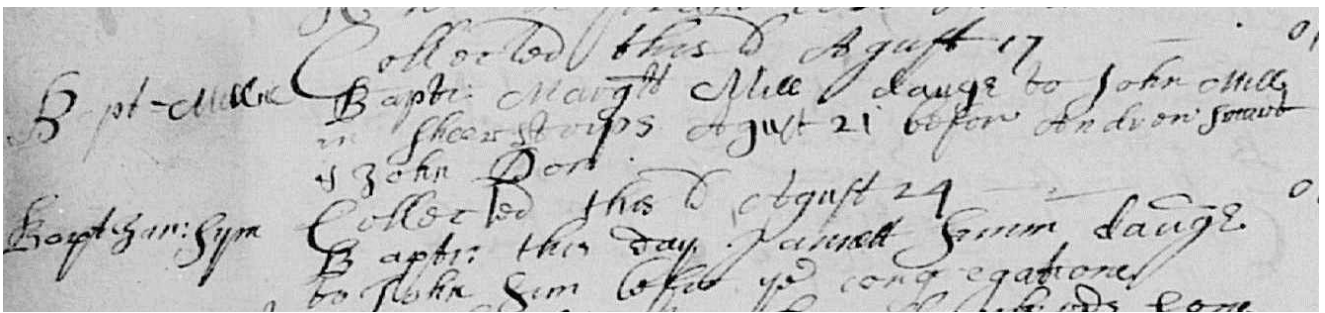
Researching family history one quickly gets used to the idea that any number of possible spellings may be encountered, at times within a single document; but none the less it has been surprising to discover just how often the names MILNE and MILL were seemingly randomly interchangeable, sometimes even within one register entry.

The examples quoted here were all come across while researching the MILNE families of Edzell and its neighbouring parishes, especially Stracathro, Menmuir and Logie Pert.

After the '45 many Highland names were anglicised, for example DEOR becoming DEWAR; but some of the cases cited here predate these upheavals by generations.



This early example <sup>1</sup>, from Aberdeen in 1653 clearly shows the surname MILL in the left margin; but then records son William being born to Gawine MILNE and Elizabeth RABAN. (Note incidentally the godfathers, including Doctor Wm Gould)



The entry above <sup>2</sup> is from 1690 and illustrates the reverse situation, registering Marg<sup>tt</sup> MILL's baptism to father John MILL in Sheerstrips, in the parish of Edzell. The margin entry, on the other hand, seems to have the name as MILLNE.

(Even more amusing is the entry beneath it which has Jannett SIMM daughter to John SIM - with the margin entry as SYM.)

Also around this time the parish of Kinnell in 1707 has the marriage of John ROGER and Margaret MILL<sup>3</sup> of Inverkeilor (4 miles further east). The couple's children, though, were all baptised at Brechin, firstly son David a year on with the mother's surname MILL, then five further baptisms now giving the parents as John RODGER and Margaret MILNE.

Returning to Edzell, the penultimate David Lindsay of Edzell kept a Rental Book, parts of which have survived, dated 1672 and 1699. Unfortunately, as Jervise notes<sup>4</sup>, "one or more leaves are wanting here" (for Sclaitfoord); - [Slateford - Edzell]

but between Bonsagard and Cowiehill we can read:

" ..... Alexr. MILL, 3 bols of meal and 1 bol of bear; 2 merks and a half of tind silver, 4 putrie."

The Edzell marriage records start in 1641 and the first MILL entry comes in October 1645 when Elspit MILL marries John MERTIN. Then under three years later Elizabeth MILL married David WILL in July

1. O.P.R. Births 168 / 0A 0040 0161 Aberdeen 17 / 02 / 1653

2. O.P.R. Births 285 / 00 0010 0166 Edzell 21 / 08 / 1690

3. O.P.R. Marriages 296 / 00 0010 0180 Kinnell 16 / 07 / 1707

4. *The History and Traditions of the Lands of the Lindsays*, pp. 412-3, Andrew Jervise, Edinburgh 1882

1648. There must also have been a John MILL at this time because there is a will dated July 15th 1657 in which Margaret HAMPTON <sup>1</sup> leaves her money, goods and gear to her husband, named as John MILL the younger. The couple were resident at Invereskandy, two hundred years before David MILNE was listed there in 1851! (For the first MILNE entry in the marriage register we must wait well over a hundred years.)

The Edzell baptism records start somewhat later. There are baptisms to father John MILL or MILLE in 1690 Margt, 1695 Jean and 1697 James; but between these, in 1692, comes David MILLNE born to father John MILLNE. In this case of course it is not possible to be certain they are all to the same family, since no mother's name is given; but certainly a considerable number of later MILL entries are definitely listed as MILNE for their siblings.

Staying in Edzell, in the 1760s we find three Edzell baptisms to David MILL and Catharine MACHER - Alex<sup>r</sup> in 1764, Jean in 1765 and Marg<sup>t</sup> in 1766; but earlier we find Ann MILNE baptised in 1762 to David MILNE and Catharine MACHER. And after the three MILL entries there come another two MILNE entries, Isabel in 1768 and James in 1770, again to David MILNE and Catharine MACHER.

A similar situation also occurs a generation later, again at Edzell, when Alexander MILL and Isabella LOW had children Mary 1808 and Jean 1809, but with the register then showing Alexander MILNE and Isabella LOW having four more children, Catharine in 1811, Alexander 1814, John 1816 and Thomas 1818. (*Alexander MILNE was a cottar man in Westside in 1808, a ploughman apparently.*)

James MILNE and Elizabeth CARNEGIE married in July 1779 - see the Edzell register, dated July 10th. Elizabeth was from the neighbouring parish of Lethnot and Navar, however, and the register there, a fortnight later, has the couple as Elizabeth CARNEGY and James MILL.

A decade later a James MILL was baptised at Edzell on September 26th 1790 - to father James MILL, subtenant in Dalphupper; but this is almost certainly the same family that was listed three years earlier under James MILNE subtenant in Dalphupper when his son John MILNE <sup>2</sup> was born in 1787. It will be interesting to return to John a little later!

Perhaps the most famous instance of MILNE / MILL transfer is that of James MILL the Scots-born philosopher and historian, born in 1773 at nearby Logie Pert to father James MILNE, “a quiet, mild-mannered man” and his wife Isabel FENTON. According to the *Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy* Isabel “was a more forceful figure. Determined that her first-born son should get ahead in the world, she changed the family name from the Scottish “Milne” to the more English-sounding “Mill,” and kept young James away from other children, demanding that he spend most of his waking hours immersed in study.” <sup>3</sup>

James in his turn would be father to the renowned philosopher John Stuart MILL, born in London in 1806.

The explanation for the family's change of name, though, is perhaps rather more prosaic, at least originally, because long before Isabel FENTON's time there had already been these MILL / MILNE variations in the family.

John MILNE married Jean PIPER at Logie Pert on October 20th 1732. A son John was born in 1735 and there is then a gap of seven years before we see David MILL born in 1742 (*with the parents named David MILL and Jean PIPER*); but then Jean 1744, James 1747, Mary 1750 and lastly William in 1755, are all back to being MILNE.

James was baptised on June 6th 1747. He married in April 1771 at Forfar to Isabel FENTON and the couple had two children born at Bridge End in Logie Pert, James MILNE born April 6th 1773 and less than two years later brother William MILL born in February 1775.

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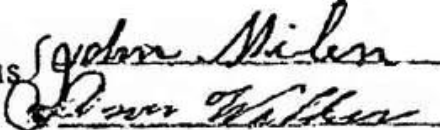
1. Brechin Commissary Court, Ref: CC3/3/6

2. O.P.R. Births 285 / 0020 0172 Edzell 29 / 04 / 1787

3. Stanford University Encyclopedia of Philosophy Article, revised June 19th 2014 by Terence Ball.

Of course in many of these examples quoted it is unlikely that the families themselves even knew how their names had been entered in the registers, which were often written up months after the event. (Two entries **after** that for James MILL at Dalhopper in 1790 there is an entry for Anne MILNE, baptised in 1788 to father Joseph MILL who in the next entry, again 1790, is Joseph MILNE.)

But reverting to James MILL's brother, John MILNE, born at Dalhopper in 1787, we know that this was not the case, at least so far as his marriage was concerned, because when he married at Arksey near Doncaster in 1816 he was able to sign the actual register: <sup>1</sup>

This Marriage was solemnized between us 

as MILEN, though the vicar himself registered the name as MILAN.

The couple had seven children in Doncaster, Yorkshire between 1817 and 1734, the register spellings being in turn MALLAN, MELLON, MILAN, MALEN, MILON, MILAN and MILAN.

We can be fairly certain how the name was pronounced by John himself: Mill-en with a very indeterminate e as in 'the' - and with a Highland accent.

During later census returns <sup>2</sup> when members of the family were living away from home in digs there are two different occasions where the recorder has entered the name as MILLAN. Indeed, when John's grandson Thomas married in Hull <sup>3</sup> in 1884 he married as a MILLAN. In fact the pronunciation remained like this until the 1920s, the stress then changing for some reason to MILAN (as in Italy) in a number of different branches of the family in Doncaster who did not even realise they were related.

Oddest of all, though, is that when John MILNE, as was, returned to Angus in 1837, sadly dying in Dundee as the result of a stage-coach accident, his burial at the New Howff <sup>4</sup> there was recorded as John MILAN. And when this was reported in Edinburgh's Caledonian Mercury <sup>5</sup> it had transmuted into an even less Scottish looking MILANE.

We regret to state, that Mr John Milane, seedsman, near Doncaster, one of the gentlemen who were severely injured by the accident which happened to the Parnell coach on Thursday fortnight, died in the Dundee Infirmary on Tuesday se'ennight.

Whether this had much to do with the family's wishing to 'anglicise' the name, though, is rather unlikely!

Shakespeare's Duke of Milan in *The Tempest* was almost certainly pronounced Mill-en, and even now, like as not, we are called Mill-en in the street, and who's to argue!

On the other hand, here is part of a review <sup>6</sup> of a production of *The Tempest* in Forest Meadows CA in 2011, the reviewers clearly not too concerned with the niceties of scansion:

"Director **Jon Tracy** holds the audience spellbound with his bold and imaginative realization. His "Tempest" is a brilliant achievement. One thing - just a tiny thing, really - seems a bit odd, given the liberties taken with the setting and approach. That is, having the actors use the Elizabethan pronunciation "Millen" instead of the more recognizable "Milan". Authenticity doesn't seem to be an important consideration here, so why say Millen when you mean Milan?"

1. May 16th 1816, All Saints Church, Arksey near Doncaster

2. 1881: Fredk MILLAN 23 of Doncaster, Boarder at Shrewsbury St Julian, Atcham

1881: Thomas MILLAN Lodger, 17 Short Union Street North, Doncaster

3. February 25th 1884, St Mark's Hull

4. New or Constitution Road Cemetery, Dundee, November 25th 1837

5. Edinburgh, Midlothian, December 2nd 1837

6. Suzanne and Greg Angeo, Dominican University, San Rafael review.