

Genealogy Basics –Verifying Records using Nova Scotia Mine Fatalities Database, 1838 – 1992, From Nova Scotia Archives, Men in the Mines

By Joe Petrie

INTRODUCTION:

This article focuses on how I used the Nova Scotia Mine Fatalities database to verify a statement in correspondence from a cousin that indicated her grandfather, Daniel Brown, had three brothers who died from mine accidents; specifically, Robert Brown, 1911; (John) Thomas Brown, 1915 and Walter Brown, 1934.

Please note that the information provided by another cousin did not include Thomas and did not indicate that Robert and Walter died from mine accidents. I'll confess that I did not validate the information before adding it to my database.

Daniel Brown's granddaughter wrote:

"An elderly aunt asked me to search for info on my maternal grandfather's side of the family. I'm not sure where (? google search) but I came across the family tree of George and Isobel Petrie. My grandfather's name was Daniel Brown s/o George Brown married to Jane McGillivray. Thanks to your hard work I was able to share with my aunt the ancestry back to Lilley Petrie who married John Brown!"

My aunt was very happy with this info but mentioned to me that her grandfather ... had another sibling named Thomas who died as the result of a mine accident and was not listed. She put his age at around 24 yrs and said that he has a headstone in the Ocean Avenue Cemetery, Dominion, CB. A quick search finds John T. Brown who died in 1915 in that graveyard. It seems to line up with his brother Robert and his parents George and Jane.<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gsr&GSiman=1&GScid=2322556&GSfn=&GSln=brown>

I also was able to find Thomas' s death certificate on the NS Archives "Historical Vital Statistics" website where the death cert. shows a Thomas Brown s/o George of Dominion who died of "concussion, hemorrhage, accidental" in 1915 age 28 and buried in Ocean Avenue Cemetery Dominion. (Registration Year: 1915 Book: 28 Page: 41 Number: 217) In fact my grandfather had 3 brothers die from mining accidents: Robert 1911, Thomas 1915 and Walter in 1934.... and this information was well known within the family."

BACKGROUND:

The Nova Scotia Archives describe the Nova Scotia Mine Fatalities database as follows:

"Nova Scotia Mine Fatalities, 1838-1992

The searchable database presented here is based on two fatality lists compiled originally by the Nova Scotia Department of Mines and Energy. These lists have been classified as the 'Mine Injuries and Fatalities' series, in the Department of Labour fonds held at Nova Scotia Archives (RG 19, vol. 4, no. 5 and vol. 5, no. 2; mfm.15675). They appear to have been compiled from names recorded over the years in the *Annual Reports* of the Nova Scotia Department of Mines.

Many additional information sources for mine and quarry fatalities in Nova Scotia have been identified and reviewed as part of this project, in order to expand the scope and time-coverage provided by the two foundation lists. ([Click here for a list of our sources.](#)) Other similar listings are known to exist privately in the province; one of them, compiled and made available to us by Mary Willa Littler of Springhill, NS, covers the years 1876-1994 and has enabled us to add valuable information on mine fatalities from the Springhill area.

The database now contains 2,584 entries and is searchable on the name of the deceased, date of death, cause of death, name of mine (where known), type of mine, and location (community and/or county) in Nova Scotia. Only 7 names have been identified for the years prior to 1866."

HOW I USED THE MINE FATALITY DATABASE:

The search criteria could have been friendlier. I searched for Brown. The 18 results included a Browner. I copied the results into Excel 2003. Then I deleted the records for fatalities for the other Counties. I deleted two columns. I highlighted, italicized and bolded the results for Robert, (John) Thomas and Walter.

Results of Search for Brown Fatalities in Cape Breton Mines

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Cause</u>	<u>Mine</u>
Brown, Frank	5/21/1907	Fall of stone	Caledonia Mine
Brown, Charles	9/11/1907	Fall of stone	Sydney No. 3
<i>Brown, Robert</i>	<i>10/12/1911</i>	<i>Run over by trip</i>	<i>Dominion No. 1</i>
<i>Brown, Thomas</i>	<i>8/17/1915</i>	<i>Fall of stone</i>	<i>Dominion No. 1</i>
Brown, Michael	8/6/1928	Fall of coal	Dominion No. 14
<i>Brown, Walter</i>	<i>5/6/1934</i>		<i>Dominion No. 1B</i>
Brown, George	12/6/1938	Broken cable on riding rake	Princess Mine
Brown, Daniel	12/6/1938	Broken cable on riding rake	Princess Mine
Brown, David	9/19/1939		Princess Mine
Brown, Albert	1/28/1960		Princess Mine

SUMMARY:

I updated my database as follows:

I added a record for (John) Thomas.

I updated the records for Robert and Walter

I corrected their brother Daniel's and his family's records. I plan to do more work on his family soon!

I deleted the record(s) for the "incorrect" Daniel who was born in Scotland and not in Cape Breton.

I double-checked the FamilySearch Antigonish Diocese records. There is no christening record for Thomas.

I started to research George and Jane Brown's two daughters, Margaret and Bridget who are not enumerated with the family in the Census of 1901.

I sent a draft copy of this article to the young lady that sent the correspondence. I hope that she will provide more information on George and Jane Brown's family. What I have was contributed and is finally validated. I have gathered Census records, Parish records for Births, Christenings and Marriages, Accident records and Death records for George and Jane Brown's branch of the Petrie family. There are christening records for their two daughters. But there is nothing else.

I resolved to publish a new Modified Register Report next spring. The current report is nearly 4 years old. It is really outdated.

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Your corrections, comments and suggestions are appreciated. Please Email me at joe-apg@norwoodlight.com .

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