

## **Constable Edgar Millen – Reg # 9669 - RCMP Honour Roll # 51**

Recently I submitted an article to our Vancouver Division web site on the recollections of members involved in the attempted arrest and search for Albert Johnson, always to be known as “*The Mad Trapper of Rat River*.” See: <http://www.rcmpveteransvancouver.com/the-mad-trapper-of-rat-river/> The attempted arrest of Johnson resulted in the death of RCMP member Edgar Millen.

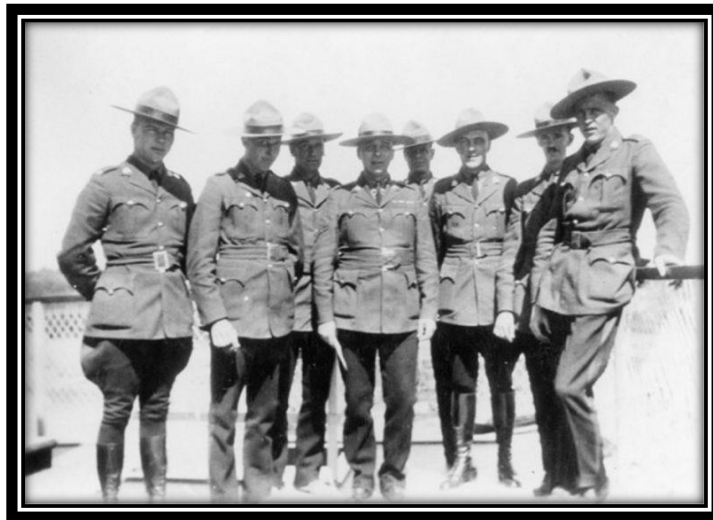
I have always said it is amazing me how telling the story of one member or event in the history of the Force connects you to other stories. Eighty-eight years after the death of Edgar Millen, as a result of the above article, I have been connected to one of Edgar Millen’s relatives.

My friend, retired Superintendent Al Bunn, (ret’d), Reg # 22180/O.1436, upon reading the article contacted me and informed me that he had a friend who was a relative of Edgar Millen and is in possession of photographs of Millen. Al, suggested it might be worthwhile to contact him. Which I did. Dots begin to connect!

Keith Briggeman’s grandfather was Edgar Millen’s brother. Being the only male grandchild, he was tasked with the safekeeping Edgar’s possessions.

Keith retired after 34 years with BP Canada Energy Company and heritage companies. His formal education is finance where he worked prior to becoming the Manager, Corporate Security for BP Canada as well as the Manager, Corporate Security for BP America mid-west assets. Although he was never in law enforcement, he spent a great deal of time working with Calgary Police, Edmonton Police and R.C.M.P. mostly out of “K” Division as well as various State Police Agencies and on occasion the F.B.I.

Keith has been kind enough to share his connection to Edgar Millen and provided photographs for us to enjoy and visualize life as a Mounted Policeman in the early 1900s and northern living. Read on!



**Extreme left is Constable Alfred Wheldon “Buns” King, Reg # 10211, wounded by Albert Johnson - Extreme right is Constable Edgar Millen, Reg # 9669.**

*“My name is Keith Briggeman and I am the great nephew of Edgar Millen. My maternal grandfather Jack Millen (a.k.a. John Millen) was Edgar’s older brother. Jack Millen had one child who was my mother. I was his only grandson.*

*As a child, every time I was at my grandfather’s house a picture of Edgar in a sterling silver frame would always be on the front room coffee table.*



*In 1972 at the age of 17, Jack Millen asked me to take over custody and control of all matters pertaining to his brother Edgar. This not only included physical assets belonging to Edgar but also to ensure the story as known by Edgar’s family remained accurate and factual.*

*The accurate and factual part is a little harder to accomplish when you have Hollywood movies made about the story of the Mad Trapper of Rat River and facts are few and far between in the script.*

*As per Jack Millen’s wishes the majority of Edgar’s items were donated to museums prior to the naming of Edgar Millen Park in Edmonton on May 31, 1968.*



*As a child the story of Albert Johnson was discussed on many occasions. The family called Edgar's murderer by the name of Albert Johnson and they never referred to him as the Mad Trapper. My grandfather said using a name rather than a label made it more personal and this murderer could not hide behind a title such as the Mad Trapper of Rat River.*

*The family knew that the name Albert Johnson was probably not his real name but that was the name locals called him and the initials matched what was monogrammed on his holster. A.J. No one seemed to have a better name to call him so Albert Johnson it was.*

*Edgar was called by his nickname "Newt" by his friends and fellow members of the Force but not by his family. Edgar was Edgar and nothing else.*

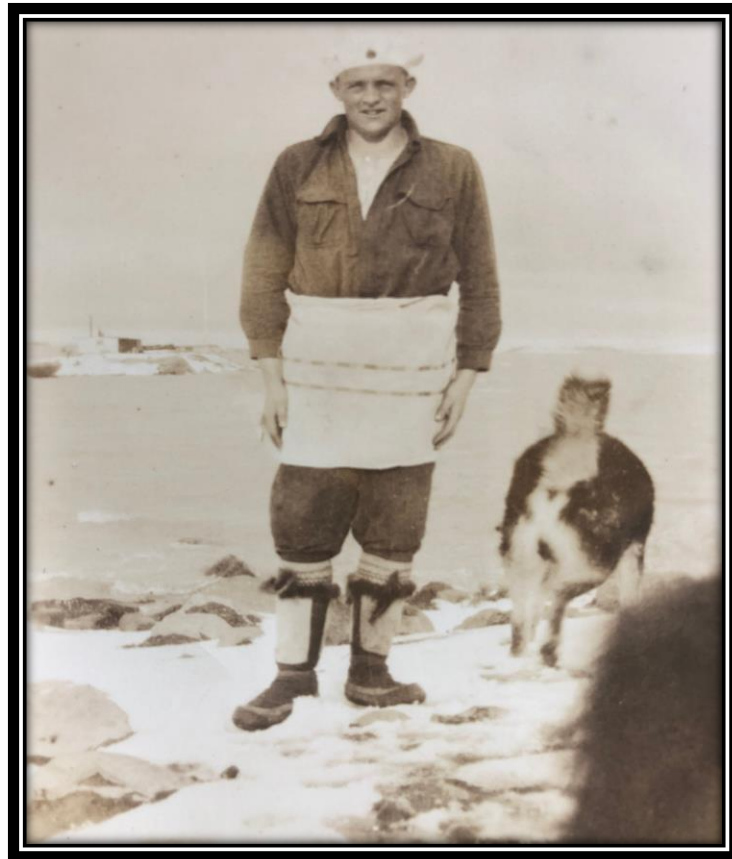
*The Millen family which included Jack the oldest child, Edgar, Christina and Annie, immigrated with their parents in May 1907 from Currah, Ireland, a small area just outside of Dublin, Ireland. They travelled onboard a White Star Cruise liner to New York and then onto Alberta. The majority of their belongings were held back to be shipped at a later date once the family was settled in the Edmonton area and they could afford the passage for their furniture and other belongings.*

*Although there is no historic documentation as to how long it took the family to earn enough money to pay for their belongings to be shipped. We do know it was around March or April 1912. Unfortunately, the White Star Cruise Liner used to ship their belongings was the Titanic. The story of the ill-fated Titanic is well known. It sank, after hitting an iceberg on April 14, 1912.*

*When the Titanic was located in 1985 my mother was contacted by a legal firm. She was asked to sign a contract which stated if any of the Millen property was found and positively identified she would have the first right to purchase any items at the price set by the salvage company. No items were found that we know of.*

*The majority of family stories about Edgar were either in regards to his murder or his love of baking. Apparently, Edgar made a mean fruit pie. Baking was Edgars way of relaxing while helping others in the sharing of his baked treats.*

*The following was one of the families favourite photos of Edgar in Aklavik in his baking gear.*



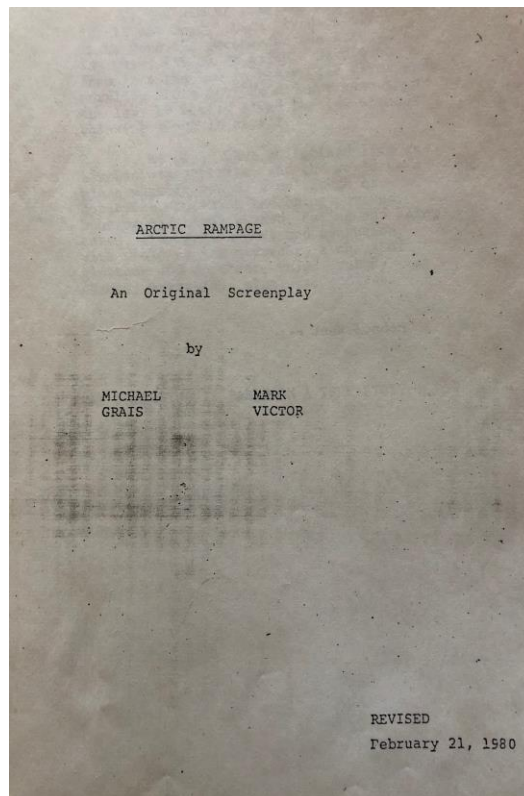
*In regards to Albert Johnson the family story focused mainly on how resilient and tenacious all parties involved were. Right from the time Corporal King was shot and wounded on December 31, 1931 and the heroic actions of his team members to get him back to the Aklavik Anglican Mission Hospital in a 24-hour period in -45c temperatures with only dog sleds for transportation.*

*The family also talked a lot about Albert Johnson's amazing stamina and trickery during the entire man hunt.*

*When you consider it took 48 days and covered approximately 240 kilometres in -40c temperatures. During that time Albert Johnson left many false trails in the snow. These included walking in one direction and then walking backwards in his existing footsteps and backing down to where he originally changed course, only to change course and head in another direction. Searchers several times believed they were on his trail only to discover it was a false trail. There were even several occasions where Albert Johnson wore his snowshoes backwards fooling trackers as to his real direction of travel and by doing so causing delays in their search.*

*There was also a lot of focus by the family on the items Albert Johnson was found with \$2,410.00, pearls, gold teeth that did not come from his mouth and kidney pills. The family strongly believed the kidney pills would lead to the eventual positive identification of the murderer, which they did not.*

*When Golden Harvest Films out of Hong Kong hired Murray Shostak to be the director of a Hollywood movie about the Albert Johnson affair, Millen family members were given copies of the script. The movie was entitled "Arctic Rampage" and was not at all based on fact.*



*The family thought they had been given copies of the script so they could make comment and help make a more accurate film. The production company had no interest in hearing the family's opinions and refused to communicate with us. This rose the question as to why the family members were given copies of the script in the first place. The movie was retitled "Death Hunt" just prior to release.*

*I teamed up with Denny May the son flying ace Wop May and our request was simple. Change the names of the main characters to fictional names and show the R.C.M.P. in a more professional light. The request went unanswered.*

*My wife and I attended the world premiere of "Death Hunt" on behalf of the family. Our biggest take away was how incredibly inaccurate this movie was from the truth, even though the opening credits stated this was based on a true story. Fortunately, the movie was not well made and even the star power of Charles Bronson, Lee Marvin and Angie Dickenson could not save it.*

*On behalf of the Millen Family I thank each and every member whether active or retired for their service as one of our nations police officers.*

*Special thanks to Ric Hall for his article entitled The Mad Trapper of Rat River issued on RCMP Veterans Association - Vancouver Division. This is an excellent, detailed summary of events.*

*I will continue my job of keeping Edgar's story as factual and as relevant as possible which of course gets harder to do as each year roles by.*

*Edgar was great with sending pictures home to his brother Jack but was inconsistent with labeling. The following pictures are labelled as identified by Edgar. Pictures that were not labelled by Edgar have been left blank."*



**Edgar and Jack Millen – 1915**



**RCMP Members – “G” Division  
Unfortunately, most are not named**



**Edgar Millen – 2<sup>nd</sup> from the left**



**Edgar Millen – a northern Mounted Policeman**



**Edgar Millen – standing in the center - hand in pocket**



**Edgar Millen – back row 2<sup>nd</sup> from the left**





### An assortment of Edgar's badges and buttons





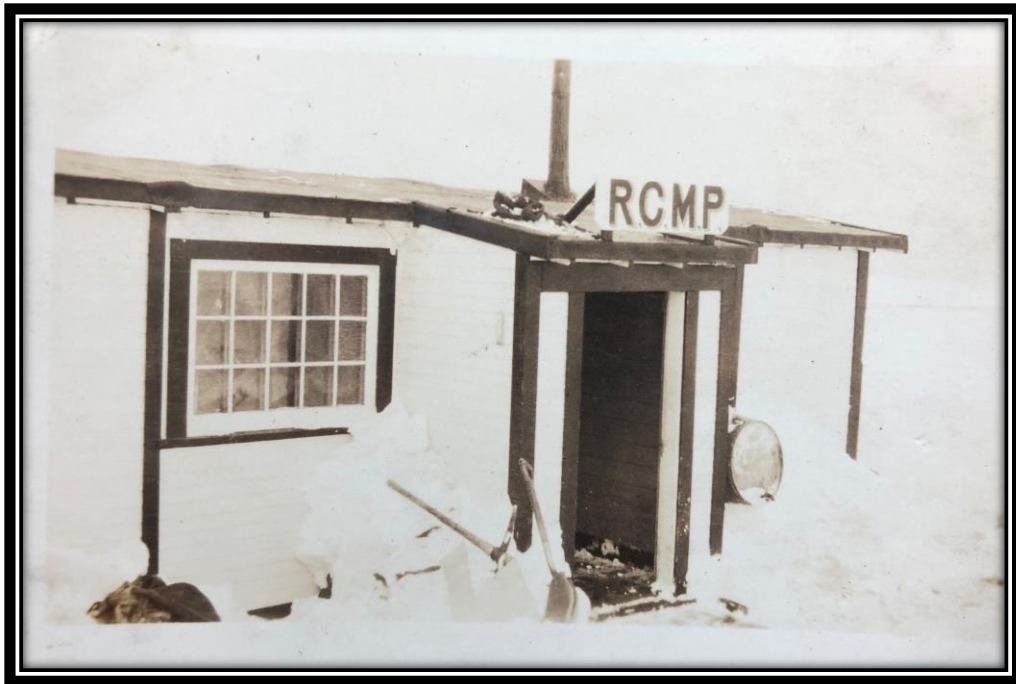


**McPherson Detachment**





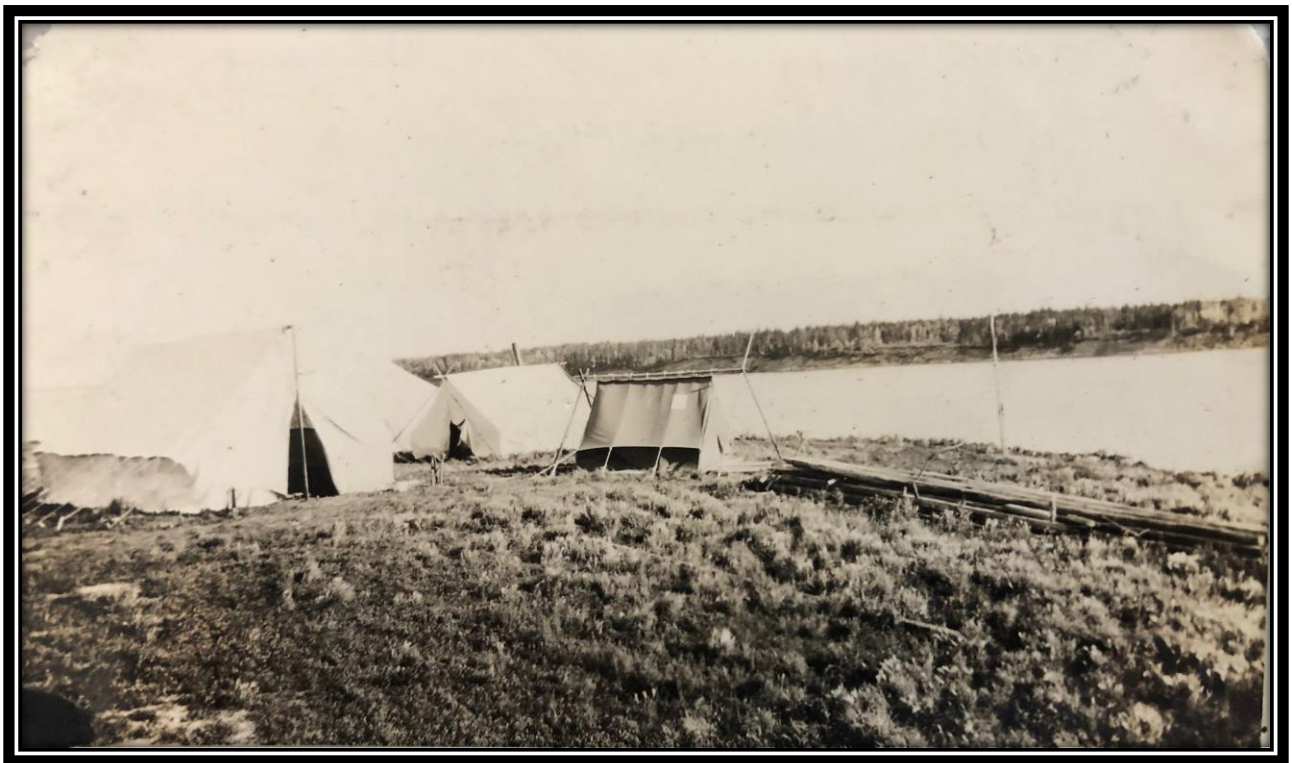
**McPherson from the Water**



**Picture on right - Gil Baker and Constable Hogan**  
**Note: unable to locate Reg #s or full names**



**On the trail of a murderer – the police camp.  
No further details given.**



## Life in the North



## Indian Mission











## **NJ & Company steamer Northland Echo**



**If you look very closely you can see a Mounted Policeman standing talking to another man.**







**Edgar Millen seated holding small boy**



**Edgar Millen with a group of civilians aboard Bay Chimo**



**Crew of the Bay Chimo**

**The following photos are all labelled the same: "RCMP search for murderer A.J."**







**Random Pictures – unfortunately no names are provided**



**(Left - It appears to be a RCMP photographer aboard a ship. Perhaps he took the pictures on the Northland Echo. Right - A Sergeant doing his duty holding his wife's purse.)**



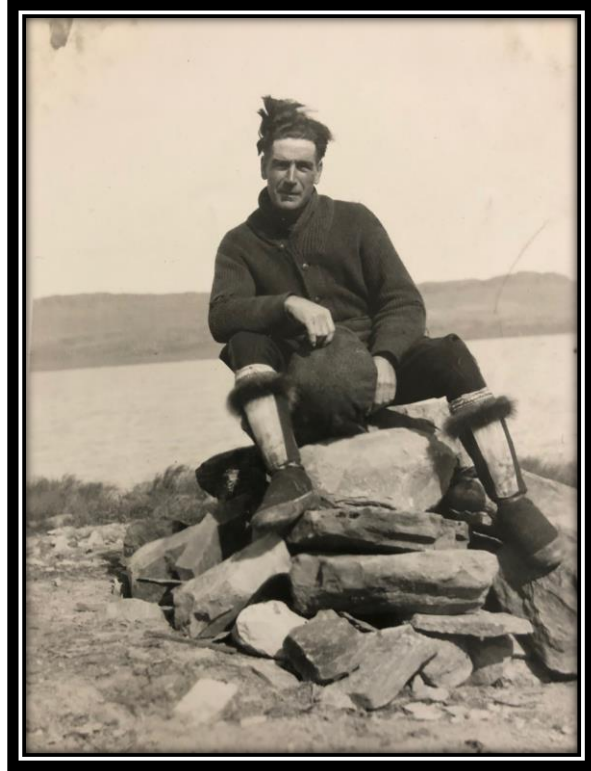


**It appears to be a RCMP member, wearing forage cap, near the front of the boat.**





**A northern character!**



**A RCMP member?**



**A tough day on the trail!**

Millen Creek, NWT, near Fort McPherson, Mount Millen, Yukon, northeast of Lapierre House, Millen Street, Inuvik, NWT, Millen Park, Edmonton and Millen Lane, “Depot” Division, are all named after Edgar Millen.

**Ric Hall 24394/O.1330**

**2020-09-07**