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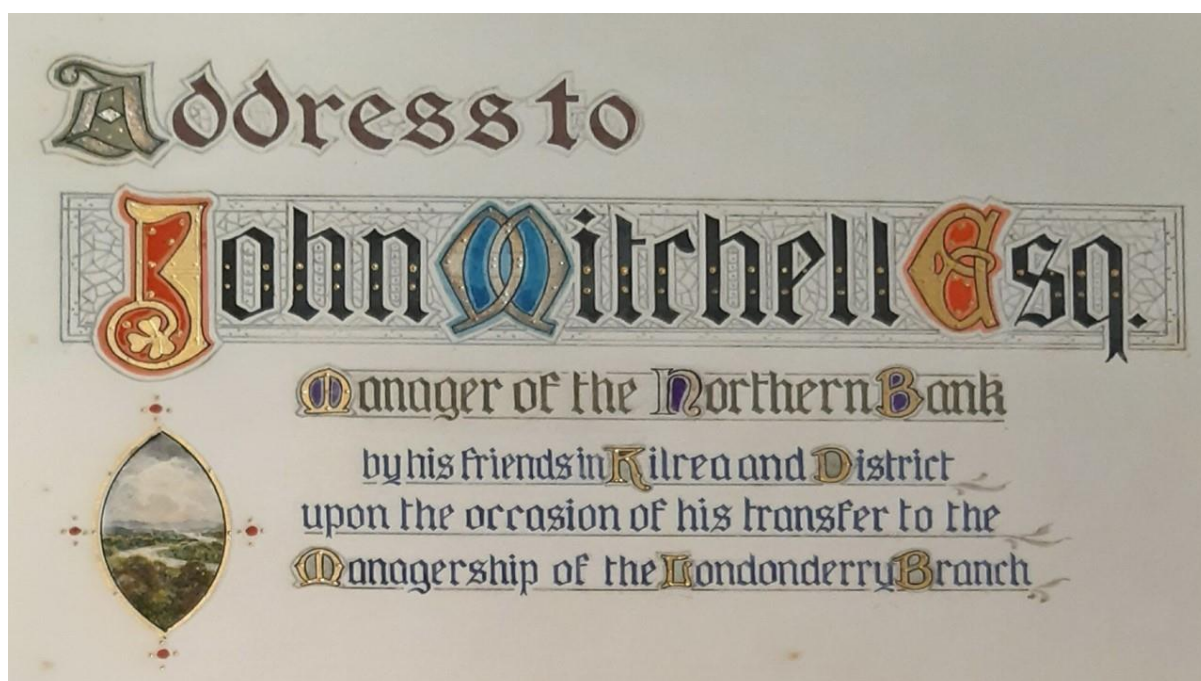
## RESEARCH ON JOHN MITCHELL, NORTHERN BANK, KILREA

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Family Tree

<p style="text-align: center;">Peter Mitchell 1858/59 to 20/02/1910 &lt;&lt;&lt;&lt; ---- &gt;&gt;&gt;&gt; 14/05/1878 Marriage to Hester Kennedy McPherson 1881 to 22/11/1929</p>						
v						
<p>John Mitchell 13/02/1879? Glasgow? to 06/11/1946 'married'</p>	<p>Hester Kennedy Mitchell 02/10/1880 Glasgow to 03/06/1936 'not married'</p>	<p>Mary Mitchell 30/12/1885 Glasgow to xxxx 'no evidence of marriage'</p>	<p>Peter Mitchell 09/06/1886 Milford to 22/10/1917 'killed in action'</p>	<p>Colina Mitchell 14/07/1889 Milford to 17/02/1960 'married'</p>	<p>Robert Birmingham Clements Mitchell 26/07/1893 Milford to 31/08/1935 'no evidence of marriage'</p>	<p>Jessie McPherson Mitchell 25/05/1896 Milford to xxxx 'married'</p>
v					v	
<p>Violet Leigh Arrowsmith 1890 to 28/04/1958 &lt;&lt;&lt;&lt; ---- &gt;&gt;&gt;&gt; 08/09/1914 Marriage</p>					<p>Arnold Thomas Barrs 1885 to 18/08/1952 &lt;&lt;&lt;&lt; ---- &gt;&gt;&gt;&gt; 19/09/1912 Marriage</p>	
v					v	
<p>Capt. Ian Desmond Vance Mitchell 01/07/1919 to 22/07/1942 'killed in action'</p>					<p>Hester Doreen Mitchell Barrs 1918 to 26/09/2008</p>	
					<p>'no evidence of children'</p>	



## Research to identify descendants of John Mitchell, Northern Bank, Kilrea who was in receipt of an 'Illuminated Address' book dated 27th October 1923.

### Summary

During the clear out of the Northern Bank (Danske Bank) branch in Kilrea, Co. Londonderry prior to its closure in December 2020, an '*Illuminated Address*' book was found in storage. This hardback book, in 'used' condition consists of 8 thick card pages bound in a red cover with gold leaf patterns embossed on each cover. It is dated the 27th October 1923 and was given to '*John Mitchell, Manager of the Northern Bank by his friends in Kilrea and District upon the occasion of his transfer to the Managership of the Londonderry Branch*'<sup>1</sup>. The book was designed and printed by '*Carey and Thomson*' of Royal Avenue, Belfast. In addition to the 3 pages of the address and the list of subscribers, there are water colour pictures of 'The Bann Bridge, Kilrea', 'The Northern Bank Kilrea', 'Kilrea From Railway Station' and 'The Golf Links Kilrea'.

Gavin Bamford was asked by Andrew Hunter, Northern Bank t/a Danske Bank to trace a living descendant of John Mitchell as the bank would like to return the book to his family. Gavin undertook his research as Chair of local history group, '**History Hub Ulster**'

The research was undertaken using the on-line resources of Ancestry, British Newspaper Archive, Commonwealth War Graces Commission (CWGC), Find My Past, Google, Irish Genealogy, National Archives of Ireland, Public Records of Northern Ireland (PRONI) and Scottish People.

Unfortunately, there are no direct 'blood' descendants of John Mitchell. John married Violet Arrowsmith in 1914 and they had one son, Ian Desmond Vance Mitchell who was born in 1919. Ian was a serving officer in the British Army when World War 2 broke out. He was already based in Singapore when the Japanese invaded. Ian was a prisoner of war when he died in 1942 aged 23.

John had 6 siblings, 2 brothers and 4 sisters. Colina married Arnold Barrs in 1912. They had one daughter, Hester who was born in 1918. Hester Barrs died in 2008. Jessie married John Macintosh in 1929. No evidence has been found of either Hester nor Jessie having children.



## Timeline

Peter Mitchell (John's father) was born about 1858 to John Mitchell, ship master merchant service and Mary Mitchell nee Kerr. On 14th May 1878 Peter, seaman merchant service, married Hester Kennedy McPherson, dressmaker, at 36 South Kinning Place, Glasgow. Hester was also born about 1858 and was the daughter of Dugald McPherson, spirit salesman and Hester McPherson nee Kennedy.<sup>ii</sup>

John Mitchell was born in Glasgow on 13th February 1879 to Peter Mitchell, ship master and Hester Kennedy McPherson Mitchell nee Kennedy. On 2nd October 1880, a sister Hester Kennedy Mitchell was born at 24 Ardgowan Street, Glasgow.<sup>iii</sup> The Scottish Census taken on 3rd April 1881 records the family as Peter, Hester, John & Hester Mitchell living at 24 Ardgowan Street, Glasgow.<sup>iv</sup> A sister, Mary Mitchell was born at 81 Cathcart Street, Glasgow on 30th December 1885.<sup>v</sup>

In 1886 the family moved from Glasgow to Milford, Co. Donegal where the rest of John's siblings were born. Peter Mitchell on 9th June 1886<sup>vi</sup>, Colina Mitchell on 14th July 1889<sup>vii</sup>, Robert Birmingham (or Bermingham) Clements Mitchell on 26th July 1893<sup>viii</sup> and Jessie McPherson Mitchell on 25th May 1896<sup>ix</sup>.

John Mitchell may have joined Northern Bank around 1897 when he was aged 18. This researcher has not had sight of his Staff Record Card held in the Northern Bank archives. This card would have recorded his full name, address at joining, religion, branch transfer dates, salary together with individual managerial comments on his banking ability.

The Irish Census was undertaken on 31st March 1901. The Mitchell family consisting of Peter (43), Hester (44), Hester (20), Mary (16), Peter (14), Colina (11), Robert (7) and Jessie (4) were living in house 18, Milford, Co. Donegal<sup>x</sup>. John Mitchell was not with his family on that day. He was identified as a visitor to the Lawrie family in house 27, College Green, Belfast. The census document recorded his place of birth as Scotland and his occupation as a Bank Clerk<sup>xi</sup>. John was aged 22 and may have been working in one of the Belfast city centre branches such as Wellington Place or Head Office, Victoria Street. The Wellington Place branch moved into Donegal Square in 1903.

Within a few years, John had been transferred to Northern Bank, Londonderry. The '*Derry Journal*' of 2nd November 1908 records a John Mitchell, Northern Bank selling tickets for a grand benefit football match<sup>xii</sup>.

It is not clear when the family moved back to Scotland. John's father, Peter Mitchell (51), master mariner died of 'failure of the heart (sudden death)' at his home, 11 Park Road, Pollockshaws, Glasgow on 20th February 1910<sup>xiii</sup>. The '*Coleraine Chronicle*' of 26th February 1910 reported the death of Capt. Peter Mitchell and mentioned his son 'Jack' Mitchell, Northern Bank, Londonderry<sup>xiv</sup>.

The next Irish Census was held on 2nd April 1911. John Mitchell (37, Scotland, Presbyterian, Bank Official) was identified as a boarder in house 32 Pound Hill, Clones Urban, Co. Monaghan. He and another bank official, Charles Ignatius Murray were boarding with the Keary family<sup>xv</sup>.

John's younger sister, Colina married Arnold Thomas Barrs (1885-1952) at 193 Bath Street, Glasgow on 19th September 1912<sup>xvi</sup>.

The 28th September 1912 was proclaimed throughout the country as *'Ulster Day'* when men and women signed the *'Ulster Covenant'* or *'Ulster Declaration'* respectively. A 'John Mitchell' with an address at Latlorcan, Co. Monaghan signed the covenant in the Methodist Church, Monaghan<sup>xvii</sup>. This is a tentative link with John's 1911 census address. It is possible that John had been transferred from Belfast to a branch further south.

John Mitchell, bank manager with an address in Warrenpoint married Violet Leigh Arrowsmith on 8th September 1914 at the Holy Trinity Church of Ireland, Rathmines, Dublin<sup>xviii</sup>.

War had been declared against Germany by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland on 4th August 1914. The *'1824-1924 Northern Bank Centenary Volume'* written by Edwin D Hill does not record John Mitchell as serving in the forces. However, both of John's brothers volunteered for service in the Great War and enlisted into the forces. Robert joined the Royal Navy and served from 10th March 1915 to 7th June 1919 as a Lieutenant<sup>xix</sup>. Peter enlisted as a Private with Service Number 41801 on 26th August 1916 into the Highland Light Infantry (Glasgow Highlanders) before transferring to the 15th (Service) Battalion, Royal Scots (Lothian) Regiment. He served in France and Flanders from 9th August 1917 and was killed in action, aged 31, at Houthulst Forest on 22nd October 1917. A pension of 15 shillings per week was awarded from 21st May 1918 to his mother, Hester<sup>xx</sup>.

John's niece, Hester Doreen Mitchell Barrs was born at Eastwood, Lanark in 1918 to Arnold Thomas Barrs and Colina Barrs nee Mitchell<sup>xxi</sup>.

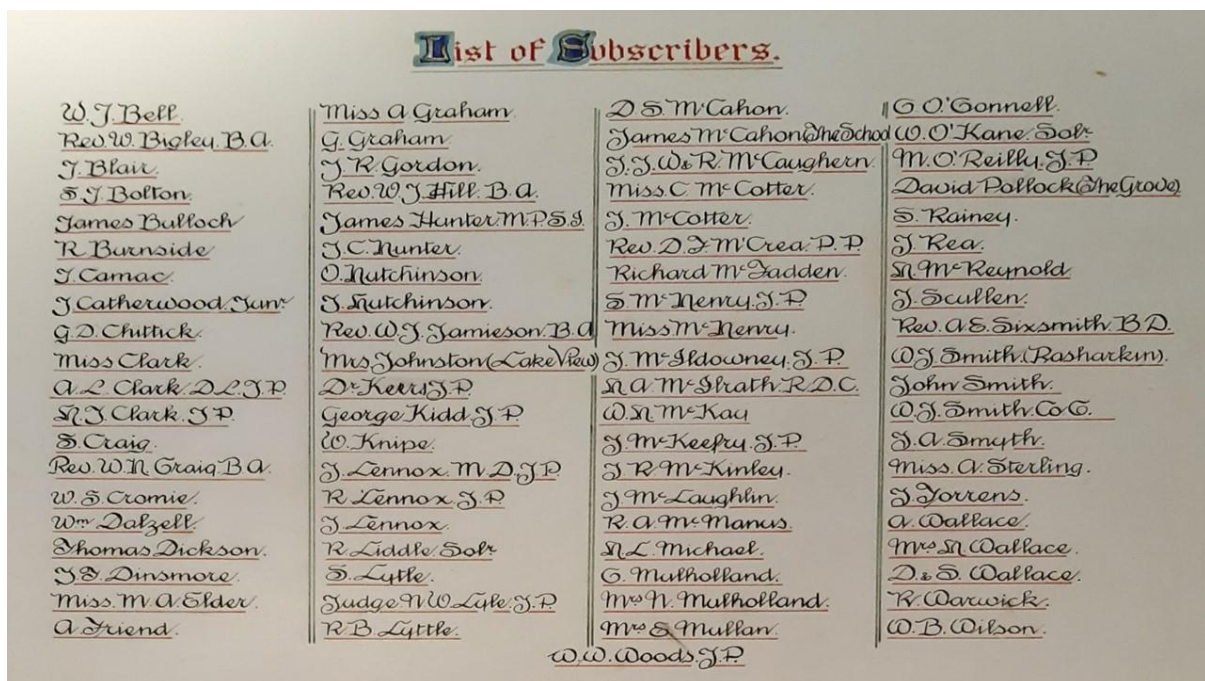
A son, Ian Desmond Vance Mitchell was born on 1st July 1919 to John and Violet Mitchell<sup>xxii</sup>.

By this time, John had been transferred to Northern Bank, Kilrea branch and as the manager, he and his family would have been living in the managers accommodation above the branch. Their address would have been Northern Bank House, Kilrea. John was a keen golfer and was instrumental in setting up a new golf club in Kilrea. The *'Belfast News-Letter'* of 19th September 1919 reported that John had been appointed as Honorary Treasurer of the club<sup>xxiii</sup>. John played in local tournaments with the *'Mid-Ulster Mail'* of 5th May 1923 reporting that John had been beaten by H Armstrong of Cookstown GC<sup>xxiv</sup>.



As one of the local bank managers, John would have been obliged to take an interest in other activities in and around Kilrea. The *'Ballymoney Free Press and Northern Counties Advertiser'* reported on 14th June 1923 that John attended a 'Sale of Work' at Finvoy and that a vote of thanks to the committee was seconded by him<sup>xxv</sup>.

The bank directors would have advised John about a transfer to their Londonderry branch probably around the summer of 1923. Staff, customers and friends around Kilrea soon heard of his impending transfer. A local committee consisting of local residents, W M Woods, JP (Chairman & Joint Honorary Treasurer); J R Gordon (Joint Honorary Treasurer); M O'Reilly, JP (Joint Honorary Secretary) and W S Cromie (Joint Honorary Secretary) organised the drafting and publication of an *'Illuminated Address'* book. There were 81 subscribers to the book. On 27th October 1923 the *'Illuminated Address'* book was presented to John Mitchell on his transfer from Northern Bank, Kilrea to Londonderry branch as Manager. This piece of ephemera is held by Northern Bank and is the subject of this research<sup>xxvi</sup>.



The transfer to the branch in Shipquay Place, Londonderry took place and the family moved into the managers accommodation within the 3-story building. Their address would have been Northern Bank House, Londonderry. The family appears to have settled in well. The *'Londonderry Sentinel'* of 3rd February 1925 published an article about the Londonderry Guardians in which a 'Master Mitchell, Northern Bank' gifted books or toys<sup>xxvii</sup>. This would refer to Ian Mitchell who was then aged 6.

As the local bank manager, John would have involved himself with local community organisations often being asked to be an *'honorary treasurer'*. He would also have to appear in court cases when action had to be taken for or against a customer. On 6th May 1927 the *'Derry Journal'* reported that Probate of the Will of Col. Browne Leckey has been granted to Mr John Mitchell of Northern Bank, Derry<sup>xxviii</sup>. The *'Londonderry Sentinel'* of 17th November 1928 reported on the Relief of Derry fund with Mr James Mitchell, Northern Bank mentioned. 'James' was probably a misprint. The *'Londonderry Sentinel'* of 27th November 1928 reported on a legal court case where an injunction on

favour of the plaintiffs, Mr John Mitchell, Northern Bank manager, Londonderry & others was granted<sup>xxix</sup>.

John was a keen member of the Irish Bank Officials' Association (IBOA) and may have been in a senior local position within the union. The '*Northern Whig*' dated 12th March 1929 reported Mr John Mitchell, Northern Bank as presiding over a meeting<sup>xxx</sup>.

On 28th March 1929, John's sister, Jessie McPherson Mitchell (32) married John Kinkaid Macintosh (31), Marine Engineer of 11 Campbell Street, Maryhill, Glasgow<sup>xxxi</sup>.

Later in 1929 and into the mid 30's, tragedy was to impact the wider Mitchell family.

John's mother, Hester Kennedy McPherson Mitchell of 11 Park Road, Pollockshaws, Glasgow died on 22nd November 1929. Probate was granted on 6th March 1930 to John Mitchell, Manager and Robert Birmingham Clements Mitchell, Mariner<sup>xxxii</sup>. His brother, Robert Birmingham Clements Mitchell died on 31st August 1935 in Karachi Civil Hospital, (then) India<sup>xxxiii</sup>. He was still serving in the Royal Navy. His sister, Hester Kennedy Mitchell, Post Office Clerk, of 40 Hector Road, Shawlands, Glasgow died on 3rd June 1936. Probate was granted to Colina Mitchell or Barrs, 36 Fernleigh Road, Newlands, Glasgow (her sister) and John Mitchell, Manager, Northern Banking Company, Londonderry (her brother)<sup>xxxiv</sup>.

Life as a bank manager in Londonderry continued with John involving himself (and probably his staff) in local activities and organisations. The '*Londonderry Sentinel*' of 14th September 1935 reported that donations could be made to J Mitchell, Northern Bank, Honorary Treasurer regarding a presentation of a plaque to HMS Londonderry<sup>xxxv</sup>. No doubt, his staff would have been sorting, counting and processing the many charity lodgements. On 23rd September 1936 the '*Derry Journal*' reported Mr J Mitchell, Northern Bank as donating 3 guineas (£3 3s 0d) to the Radium Fund, Derry Infirmary Board<sup>xxxvi</sup>. On 5th November 1937 the '*Derry Journal*' reported on legal court case involving the demolition of a Derry house. John Mitchell, Northern Bank, Derry. Trustees of Colonel C H Browne Leckey deceased<sup>xxxvii</sup>. The '*Londonderry Sentinel*' of 22nd June 1940 reported that Mr J Mitchell, Northern Bank had been appointed Honorary Treasurer of the YMCA in respect of work for the forces<sup>xxxviii</sup>. On 22nd November 1940 the '*Derry Journal*' reported that Mr John Mitchell, Northern Bank Ltd, Londonderry. Honorary Treasurer of the Mayor's Coal Fund was acknowledging subscriptions<sup>xxxix</sup>. The '*Derry Journal*' of 3rd February 1941 reported that the local committee of the Derry Air Corps Training had appointed Mr Mitchell, Northern Bank as their Treasurer<sup>xl</sup>.

John's son, Ian Mitchell had been serving in the British Army as an officer for a few years prior to the war being declared on 3rd September 1939. Ian had gained promotion to Captain and was based in Singapore when the Japanese invaded that country. He became a prisoner of war. According to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), Capt. Ian Desmond Vance Mitchell, Service Number 71121, 1st Battalion Leicestershire Regiment died on 22nd July 1942 in Singapore. He is buried in the Kranji Cemetery, Singapore with a CWGC headstone and a family inscription 'Thy Will Be Done'<sup>xli</sup>.

Sadly, the following year, the '*Belfast News-Letter*' reported in its 20th July 1943 edition that John Mitchell has received a postcard advising that Capt. I D V Mitchell is a prisoner-of-war in Japanese

hands and is well<sup>xlii</sup>. The arrival of this postcard would surely have been very difficult for John and Violet to take in.

John Mitchell, Manager, Northern Bank, retired, died on 6th November 1946 according to a death notice published in the *'Londonderry Sentinel'* <sup>xliii</sup>. He was living in 6 Eglinton Park, Dun Laoghaire at the time of his death.

The *'Londonderry Sentinel'* reported on an annual basis that Violet Mitchell made donations to the Derry City & County Hospital in memory of her son, Capt. I D V Mitchell on 'this his birthday' <sup>xliv</sup>. His birthday was confirmed as 1st July 1919 in a further newspaper entry in the Derry Journal of 26th July 1950 (not scanned). Violet also remembered John's passing with an entry in the *'Londonderry Sentinel'* of 21st February 1954 'In loving memory of her dear husband, John Mitchell on this his birthday, 13th February' <sup>xlv</sup>.

Violet Mitchell died on 28th April 1958 with her estate being dealt with by Northern Bank<sup>xlvi</sup>. Her obituary was published in the *'Londonderry Sentinel'* of 29th April 1958. It stated 'the only son' <sup>xlvii</sup>. On 4th May 1959 details of Mrs V L Mitchell's estate was published in the Belfast Telegraph<sup>xlviii</sup>.

John's sister, Colina Barrs died in Cathcart on 17th February 1960 aged 70<sup>xlix</sup>. I can find no evidence of children.

Hester Doreen Mitchell Barrs died in Mearnskirk House, Newton Mearns, Glasgow on 26th September 2008 aged 90<sup>l</sup>. As a maiden niece of John's, I can find no evidence of children.







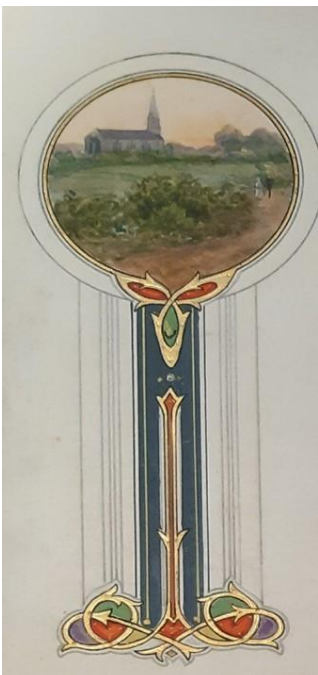
Dear Mr. Mitchell,

**A** wide circle of friends acquaintances and wellwishers

in Killea heard with the utmost concern of your transfer to Derry City and while deeply regretting your departure, we rejoice that the Directors have recognised your ability and rewarded it by this important step in promotion.

**W**hen you came amongst us as a stranger several years ago you quickly soared into the foremost place in our estimation. Your obliging and very kindly disposition your intellectual and social attainments, and your sincerity and honesty of purpose soon captured our wholehearted regard so that individually and collectively we feel a personal loss in the circumstances that demand your pre-eminent abilities in a busier and more important centre.

**W**e recall that you were one of the first that conceived the idea of starting a Golf Club in Killea of which, for a term you were the competent and courteous Captain, and which you indefatigably fostered and promoted to its present prosperity.



In this, as in all your other cherished ideals you were generously and ably assisted by your very amiable and accomplished wife whose winsome manner in this and all other social matters compelled our utmost esteem.

**M**anagers of the Northern Bank may come and managers may go from Killea, but in you we feel that we have lost the most efficient and painstaking, the truest of friends, the truest of counsellors, steadfast, transparently real and honest.

**I**n bidding you adieu we assure you that you have our very best wishes for the future welfare and prosperity of yourself and your dear ones. As a mark but not as the measure of our sincere regard we beg you to accept this illuminated album and the accompanying Service of Silver Plate to remind you in after times of your sojourn in Killea.

Signed on behalf of the Subscribers.

W. W. Woodz S.P. Chairman and Joint Hon. Treasurer.  
J. R. Gordon Joint Hon. Treasurer.  
M. O'Keilly S.P. } Joint Hon. Secretaries.  
A. P. Cronin }

Killea 27th October 1923.



## Notes

Research into John Mitchell, Northern Bank proved quite difficult as there were 2 men with that name working for the bank.

The *'Northern Whig'* dated 15th April 1889 published an article entitled *'Address and Presentation to John Mitchell, Esq, late cashier of the Downpatrick Branch of the Northern Bank'*<sup>ii</sup>. The article did not say which branch this man was appointed manager to. The subject of this document would have been aged 10 in 1889. The *'Newry Reporter'* dated 30th November 1893 reported that John Mitchell, Northern Bank had attended a public meeting about a new building at Newry Intermediate School<sup>iii</sup>. As our subject John would have been aged 14 this article refers to the other John Mitchell. The *'Newry Telegraph'* dated 29th October 1895 and many others carried an advertisement for the Northern Assurance Company with Agent at Newry, John Mitchell, Northern Bank<sup>iii</sup>. Once again, this was attributed to the other John Mitchell.

John Mitchell, Manager, Northern Bank, Newry died on 21st April 1910<sup>liv</sup>.

## End notes

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- i Northern Bank
- ii Scotlands People
- iii Scotlands People
- iv Scotlands People
- v Scotlands People
- vi Irish Genealogy
- vii Irish Genealogy
- viii Irish Genealogy
- ix Irish Genealogy
- x National Archives of Ireland
- xi National Archives of Ireland
- xii British Newspaper Archives
- xiii Scotlands People
- xiv British Newspaper Archives
- xv National Archives of Ireland
- xvi Ancestry.co.uk
- xvii Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI)
- xviii Irish Genealogy
- xix Ancestry.co.uk
- xx Ancestry.co.uk
- xxi Ancestry.co.uk
- xxii British Newspaper Archives
- xxiii British Newspaper Archives
- xxiv British Newspaper Archives
- xxv British Newspaper Archives
- xxvi Northern Bank
- xxvii British Newspaper Archives
- xxviii British Newspaper Archives
- xxix British Newspaper Archives
- xxx British Newspaper Archives
- xxxi Scotlands People
- xxxii Scotlands People
- xxxiii Ancestry.co.uk
- xxxiv Scotlands People
- xxxv British Newspaper Archives
- xxxvi British Newspaper Archives
- xxxvii British Newspaper Archives
- xxxviii British Newspaper Archives
- xxxix British Newspaper Archives
- xl British Newspaper Archives
- xli Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)
- xlii British Newspaper Archives
- xliii British Newspaper Archives
- xliv British Newspaper Archives
- xlv British Newspaper Archives
- xlvi Public Records Office of Northern Ireland.
- xlvii British Newspaper Archives
- xlviii British Newspaper Archives
- xliv Ancestry.co.uk
- l Ancestry.co.uk
- li British Newspaper Archives
- lii British Newspaper Archives
- liii British Newspaper Archives
- liv British Newspaper Archives