



What Was Their Name?

Jim Cansler

Stone Creek Genealogy Club

Name Variations & Conventions

- Understanding the origin of given and surnames can assist you in your research
- Surnames may be different after immigration
- Surnames typically follow a pattern that historically allowed them to change with each generation, change of location or change of occupation
- Standardization of surnames became more common in the early 1800's. (i.e. Surname registration was first required in 1811 in the Netherlands)

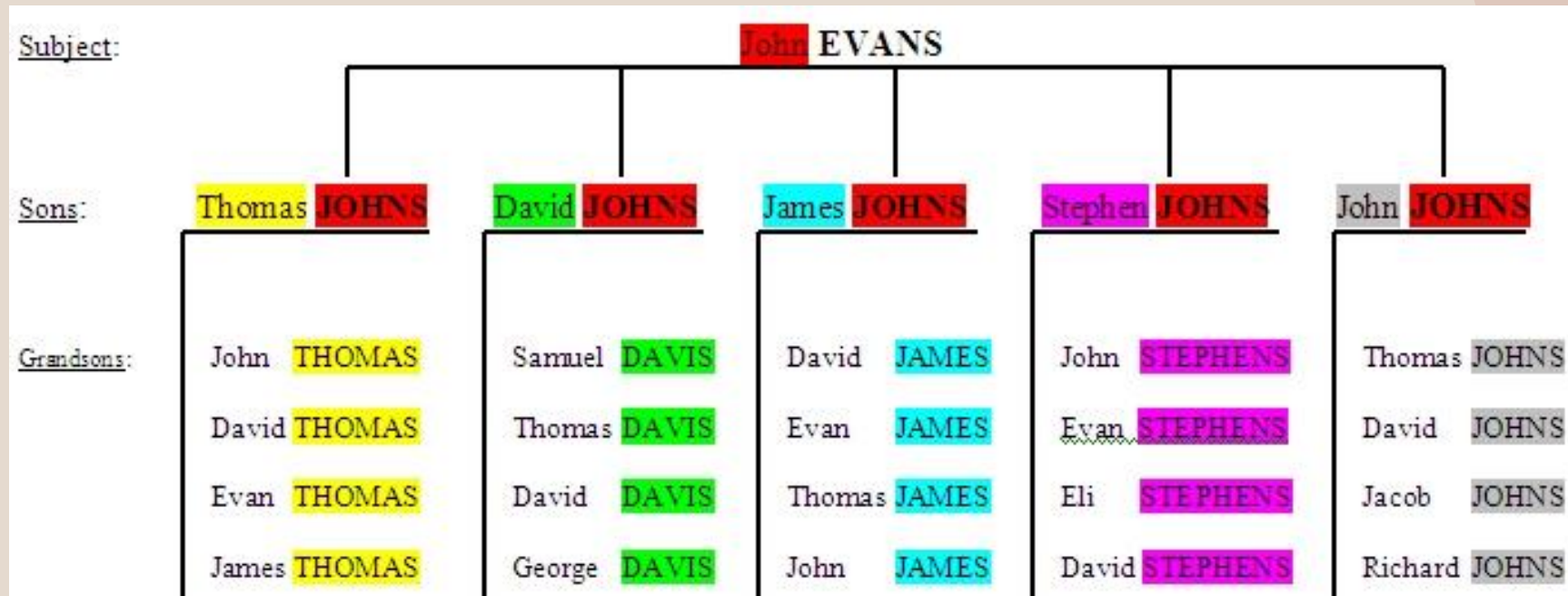
Given Name Customs

- Understanding the customs for assigning of given names gives you a pattern that can assist you in your research
- Patronymics was used in many regions to create new generational names
- In many regions only first names were assigned in prior to the late middle ages.
- Stability in naming customs took hold in the 1700-1800s.
- Late 1800's and Post WW 1 the rise of “popular” names has prevailed.
- Many given names are Chistian (Saints) or Biblical names with many variants across languages and regions.

Surname Change for Europeans at Immigration

- Non-English speaking immigrants to the North America, especially from Germanic areas, often modified their names after arrival in the colonies. This was sometimes in conjunction with registering property and completion of other required documentation for the colonies.
- Pronunciation issues also led to changes on records or conversation
- The United States customs and immigration services did not change people's names from what was on the ship passenger lists.
- The change of immigrant names was sometimes to lessen perceived or real discrimination.

Patronymic Naming System (Wales)



Source: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/index.php?curid=25032>

German Naming Pattern

Some German families used the following pattern for naming children, mostly in areas close to the Netherlands, because this pattern was really a Dutch, not German, custom:

Son's Name

- 1st father's father
- 2nd mother's father
- 3rd father
- 4th father's father's father
- 5th mother's father's father
- 6th father's mother's father
- 7th mother's mother's father

Daughter's Name

- 1st mother's mother
- 2nd father's mother
- 3rd mother
- 4th father's father's mother
- 5th mother's father's mother
- 6th father's mother's mother
- 7th mother's mother's mother

Source: FamilySearch

England

- Surnames introduced in 1066 (Norman Invasion)
- Started with nobility and spread over following centuries to everyone
- Initial Surnames could have been based upon:
 - Location
 - Occupation or trade
 - Animals
 - Descriptive
 - Ethnic
 - Patronymic
 - Clan (Scotland)
- Given Names – similar pattern to Ireland and Scotland

Ireland Naming Customs

A traditional naming pattern was often used by Irish parents until the later 19th century:

- First son usually named for the father's father
- Second son usually named for the mother's father
- Third son usually named for the father
- Fourth son usually named for the father's eldest brother
- Fifth son usually named for the mother's eldest brother
- First daughter usually named for the mother's mother
- Second daughter usually named for the father's mother
- Third daughter usually named for the mother
- Fourth daughter usually named for the mother's eldest sister
- Fifth daughter usually named for the father's eldest sister.
- Note: Names might be re-used if early child dies.

Source: FamilySearch

Ireland - Nicknames

- Many nicknames are easy to spot, but others are not. The nicknames used for Bridget include Bedelia, Bedina, Beesy, Bess, Bessie, Biddy, Breda/Breeda, Briddy, Bride, Brideen, Bridie, Cordelia, Dillie/Dilly, Dina, and Phidelia.
- One further complication is the use of the same name for both males and females. Giles is one example, with Giley and Jiley (as well as several other derivatives) being nicknames for both sexes. Another example is the given name Florence. In this case, nicknames sometimes make it easier to distinguish between the male (Flo, Florrie/Florry and Flurry) and the female (Flo, Flora, and Flossie).

Source: [Ireland Naming Customs • FamilySearch](#)

Scotland-1

The Scots, for the most part, had a naming pattern which can be seen in many families. The pattern generally went as follows:

- The first son was named after the father's father.
- The second son after the mother's father.
- The third son after the father.
- The first daughter after the mother's mother.
- The second daughter after the father's mother.
- The third daughter after the mother.

Scotland-2

According to "The Scottish Onomastic Child-naming Pattern," by John Barrett Robb, another naming system called the "ancestral pattern," generally went as follows:

- The first son was named for his father's father.
- The second son was named for his mother's father.
- The third son was named for his father's father's father.
- The fourth son was named for his mother's mother's father.
- The fifth son was named for his father's mother's father.
- The sixth son was named for his mother's father's father.
- The seventh through tenth sons were named for their father's four great-grandfathers.
- The eleventh through fourteenth sons were named for their mother's four great-grandfathers.

Russia

What are the rules for Russian names?

Names consist of a GIVEN NAME (imya), a PATRONYMIC (otchestvo), and a SURNAME (familiya).

It is customary to use patronymics as middle names. Patronymics are derived from the father's given name and end with -ovich or -evich. The female patronymics end in -ovna or -evna.

- Vladimir – Vladimirovich, Vladimirovna
- Mikhail – Mikhailovich, Mikhailovna
- Ivan – Ivanovich, Ivanovna

Source: Wikipedia

Norway

The last name is typically formed by adding *–sen* (for male) or *–datter* (for female) to the end of the father's first name.

For example, if a man named Olaf has a son named Lars, Lars's full name would be Lars Olafsen, which means “the son of Olaf”.

Source: <https://www.routesnorth.com/norway/norwegian-last-names-a-simple-guide>

Netherlands – Given Name

The history of Dutch given names can roughly be divided in four main periods

- Migration Period (pre 12th century: The domination of Germanic names.
- High Middle Ages: Holy names.
- A period of stability (Early Modern era–1960s)
 - First-born son is named after paternal grandfather
 - First-born daughter is named after maternal grandmother
 - Second son is named after maternal grandfather
 - Second daughter is named after paternal grandmother
 - Subsequent children were often named after uncles and aunts
- The post-World War II period: mostly popular names

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_name#History_of_Dutch_given_names

Netherlands – Surname

- Long history of surnames (places, occupations, traits)
- Patronymics: The oldest form used the possessive of the father's name along with the word for son or daughter. Examples would be a boy born to Jan being named Pieter Janszoon while his daughter might be named Geertje Jansdochter.
- Formal registration of surnames in 1811
- Women normally keep their legal name the same after marriage ... but hyphenate in non-legal situations
- Prefixes (van and de) often capitalized in non Dutch areas.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_name#History_of_Dutch_given_names

Websites for research

- Irish Names - Behind the Name
<https://www.behindthename.com/names/usage/irish>
- Family Search Main Page
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main_Page
- Ireland Naming Customs • FamilySearch
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ireland_Naming_Customs
- Scotland Personal Names and Surnames • FamilySearch
https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Scotland_Naming_Customs#Clan_Names
- British surnames, British surname meanings and origins | British Surnames
<https://britishsurnames.co.uk/>
- Wikipedia or Google:
Search 'country' naming customs OR 'country' naming conventions (Example: 'Ireland naming customs')