



www.tennent.org.uk/resource

Naming Patterns

Traditionally Scots and Irish parents often named their children using the following patterns, though some variations do exist.

Boys

1st Son named after Father's, Father

2nd Son named after Mother's, Father

3rd Son named after the Father

4th Son named after Father's, eldest brother

5th Son named after Father's, 2nd oldest brother or Mother's, eldest brother

Girls

1st Daughter named after Mother's, Mother

2nd Daughter named after Father's, Mother

3rd Daughter named after Mother

4th Daughter named after Mother's, eldest sister

5th Daughter named after Mother's, 2nd oldest sister or Father's, eldest sister

Variations

The principle difference between the Scottish & Irish naming patterns was that when an Irish father remarries after his first wife has died, then the first daughter born to this new marriage was often named after the deceased wife, and included her whole name.

When a child dies young, then their name was used for the next child of the same sex, thereby keeping alive the name of the relative who they were 'named for'.

There are instances where a child was named after a person of esteem or had carried out a service for one or both the parents, e.g. an Aunt, or an Uncle, perhaps a neighbour or friend, or someone who had helped in times of adversity.

In Ireland they may also have given their child, as a middle name, the last name of the priest who performed the baptism or some other influential person in the community.

Parents may also use the Mothers or Grandmother's maiden name as a child's middle name.
