

Onomastics

Family Naming Patterns

From the names of the children in a family,
you might be able to make an educated guess
for the names of

- ◆ **their parents**
- ◆ **their grandparents**
- ◆ **even their great-grandparents**
- ◆ **and any of their missing brothers and/or sisters**

<http://udel.edu/~tdoherty>

Family Naming Patterns

- ◆ **Some families followed the rules rigidly;
whereas, others did not.**
- ◆ **Varied by culture (English/German/Swedish)**
- ◆ **Varied by time (20th vs 18th century)**
- ◆ **What naming pattern did the neighbors use?
- census 1850-1930**

Source: <http://www.byub.org/ancestors/records/vital/extra5.html>

More Sources [Naming Patterns in Families: General, Cyndi's List,](#)
Use links in [English, Irish, French, German, Spanish, Arabic, Indian, African](#)
center frame [Nicknames: #1, #2; Popular 1880s->Now, Misspeld Knames](#)
of class web site:

Standard English Family Naming Pattern

You can use the kid's names to guess their grandparents' names

Children	Named After
◆ 1 st son	father's father
◆ 2 nd son	mother's father
◆ 3 rd son	father
◆ 4 th son	father's eldest brother
◆ 5 th son	father's 2 nd eldest (or mother's eldest) brother
◆ 1 st dau	mother's mother
◆ 2 nd dau	father's mother
◆ 3 rd dau	mother
◆ 4 th dau	mother's eldest sister
◆ 5 th dau	mother's 2 nd eldest (or father's eldest) sister

Source: <http://www.byub.org/ancestors/records/vital/extra5.html>

Family Naming Patterns

Some Exceptions

- ◆ When a child died, it was common to give the next child of the same gender the same name.
- ◆ When a mother died during childbirth or a father during a pregnancy, it was common to name that child after their parent of the same gender.
- ◆ When a wife or husband died, it was common to give the first child of the same gender from the next spouse, the given name and surname of the departed spouse.
- ◆ Instead of naming a child after an eldest brother or sister, the name of a favorite brother or sister or friend might be used.
- ◆ If a name was already used, e.g. if the father was named after his father, his middle name might be used for his son; or that rule might be skipped.

Source: <http://www.byub.org/ancestors/records/vital/extra5.html>

Extended Modified English Family Naming Pattern

Children	Named After
◆ 1 st son	father's father [yellow highlighting means same as slide #3]
◆ 2 nd son	mother's father
◆ 3 rd son	father's paternal grandfather
◆ 4 th son	father's oldest brother or mother's paternal grandfather
◆ 5 th son	mother's oldest brother or father's maternal grandfather
◆ 6 th son	father's 2 nd oldest brother or mother's paternal grandfather
◆ 1 st dau	mother's mother
◆ 2 nd dau	father's mother
◆ 3 rd dau	mother or mother's maternal grandmother(g-mom)
◆ 4 th dau	mother's oldest sister or father's paternal g-mom
◆ 5 th dau	father's oldest sister or mother's paternal g-mom
◆ 6 th dau	mother's 2 nd oldest sister or father's paternal grandmother

Source: <http://www.byub.org/ancestors/records/vital/extra5.html>

19th Century English Family Naming Patterns

You can use the kids' names to guess their g-grandparents' names (a 4-generation span) or to guess a missing child's name.

Children	Named After
◆ 1 st son	father's father [yellow highlighting means same as 1 st slide]
◆ 2 nd son	mother's father
◆ 3 rd son	father's paternal grandfather
◆ 4 th son	father's eldest brother or mother's paternal grandfather
◆ 5 th son	mother's eldest brother or father's maternal grandfather
◆ 6 th son	father's 2 nd eldest brother or mother's maternal grandfather
◆ 1 st dau	mother's mother
◆ 2 nd dau	father's mother
◆ 3 rd dau	mother or mother's maternal grandmother(g-mom)
◆ 4 th dau	mother's eldest sister or father's paternal g-mom
◆ 5 th dau	father's eldest sister or mother's paternal g-mom
◆ 6 th dau	mother's 2 nd eldest sister or father's paternal grandmother

Source: <http://www.byub.org/ancestors/records/vital/extra5.html>

German Family Naming Pattern e.g. 18th Century PA

Often all boys were given the same male Saint's name for a first name and all girls were given the same female Saint's name.

Children were distinguished and went by their middle names.

Children	Middle Name for
◆ 1 st son	father's father [yellow highlighting means same as 1 st slide]
◆ 2 nd son	mother's father
◆ 3 rd son	father
◆ 4 th son	father's paternal grandfather
◆ 5 th son	mother's paternal grandfather
◆ 6 th son	father's maternal grandfather
◆ 7 th son	mother's maternal grandfather
◆ 1 st dau	father's mother
◆ 2 nd dau	mother's mother
◆ 3 rd dau	mother
◆ 4 th dau	father's paternal grandmother
◆ 5 th dau	mother's paternal grandmother
◆ 6 th dau	father's maternal grandmother
◆ 7 th dau	mother's maternal grandmother

You might be able to use the kids' names to guess their g-grandparents' names (a 4-generation span) or to guess a missing child's name.

Early Colonial American Naming Notes (Variable)

Children	Named After
◆ 1 st son	father [yellow highlighting means same as 1 st slide - none]
◆ 2 nd son	father's oldest brother + mother's or maternal grandmother's maiden name*
- younger sons were often given maiden name of a paternal grandmother as a middle or even a first name.	
- as more children were born, more maiden names were used, but generally only those in the direct ancestral line.	
◆ 1 st dau	mother's mother*
◆ 2 nd dau	mother's oldest sister

- all daughters might be given the maiden name of a grandmother to ensure they would be eligible to inherit land on their mother's side.

* add middle name of 2nd son to 1st name of eldest dau to get maternal grandmother

Sources: <http://www.byub.org/ancestors/records/vital/extra5.html>

Also see name origins: <http://www.behindthename.com>