



Common Scottish Given Name Variants, Equivalents and Nicknames

There are a lot of variations to given names in the Scottish birth, marriage and death records.

There can be a lot of variations in how given names were spelled in the Scottish birth, marriage and death records for a number of reasons.

- Spellings were not fixed.
- During a period with low literacy, spelling variants were especially common.
- Traditional spellings of some names changed over time.
- Names were often spelled like they sounded, but pronunciations changed over time.
- Names were often spelled like they sounded, but the way to capture that sound varied across different listeners. This was especially true when moving from Scotland to the United States.
- A lot of names had common abbreviated forms.
- A lot of names had corresponding nicknames that were routinely used.

Being familiar with some of the more common variants, equivalents and nicknames can make it easier to match records across time, sources and spellings to the same individual.

For example, in the 1841 U.K. Census, Jemima Russell's given name appeared as "Menie", a spelling variant of "Minnie", which in turn was a common nickname of "Jemima". Knowing that made it possible to match the census record to Jemima Russell.

Sets of common given name spelling variants, equivalents and nicknames that I have come across when researching our Scottish ancestors include the following:

- Agnes, Nancy
- Alexander, Alexdr
- Andrew, Andro, Androw
- Daniel, Donald
- Grace, Grizzel
- Helen, Ellen
- Henry, Henrie
- Hugh, Hew, Heugh
- Isobel, Isabel
- Janet, Jannet, Jhonet, Jonat, Jonnet, Jonet
- Janet, Jean, Jane
- Janet, Jeanette
- Jean, Jane
- Jeanette, Jeannette, Jessie, Nettie, Netta
- Jemima, Jemina, Mina, Minnie, Menie
- John, Ihone, Jo.
- Joseph, Joe
- Margaret, Margrat, Margret, Margreat
- Margaret, Peg, Peggy
- Neil, Neal, Neill, Neall
- Philip, Phillip
- Robert, Robt
- Steven, Stephen, Stephan
- Thomas, Tom, Thos
- William, Willm, Wm

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