

Quhat's in a Nayme?

Fountaindale Public Library District

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Presented by Maureen Brady

I) Introduction.

A) What is a name?

B) Name origins.

1) Surnames

- (a) Occupation
- (b) Personal description
- (c) Location
- (d) Patronymic

2) Given Names / Forenames

- (a) Scripture
- (b) Famous person
- (c) Family
 - i. 1st son – paternal grandfather
 - ii. 2nd son – maternal grandfather
 - iii. 3rd son – father
 - iv. 1st daughter – maternal grandmother
 - v. 2nd daughter – paternal grandmother
 - vi. 3rd daughter – mother
 - vii. Additional children – aunts, uncles
- (d) Special association
- (e) Trends

C) Why we can't find "our" names.

1) Who is creating the record?

- (a) Native speaker or not.
- (b) Record not in English.
- (c) Using "shorthand".
- (d) "Lazy" recorder.

2) Historical and cultural variations.

- (a) Historical spelling preferences.
- (b) Silent letters.
- (c) "DIT" names (France & Quebec).
- (d) "TO" / "T" names (Scotland).

3) Spelling wasn't important.

- 4) **Indexer interpretation.**
- 5) **Personal name changes.**
- 6) **Nicknames.**
- 7) **Recorder writes “what he hears”.**
- 8) **Outright mistakes.**

II) Research strategies.

- A) **Don’t make assumptions.**
- B) **Develop your own knowledge base.**
 - 1) **Become familiar with the “local” language – sounds and letters.**
 - 2) **Become familiar with the family’s cultural naming traditions.**
 - 3) **Develop a name variants list.**
 - (a) **Include both given and surnames**
 - (b) **Don’t forget the source.**
 - 4) **Learn the handwriting characteristics of the scribe.**
- C) **Tips for finding those elusive names.**
 - 1) **Use wild cards.**
 - 2) **Be creative with your searches – “Think outside the box”.**
 - 3) **Say the name out loud and then spell “what you hear”.**
 - 4) **Names that begin with a vowel may have a silent “H” added to the front.**
 - 5) **Vowels can be, and very often are, interchangeable.**
 - 6) **Double (or single) “L”, “M”, “N”, “R” and “T”, if in the middle of the name.**
 - 7) **Add or remove an ending “S”, “T” or “C”.**
 - 8) **Add or remove suffixes.**

III) Resources

- A) **Behind the Name (behindthename.com)**
- B) **Cyndi’s List**
 - 1) **Handwriting and Script (cyndislist.com/handwriting/)**
 - 2) **Languages and Translations (cyndislist.com/languages/)**
- C) **Family Search Wiki (familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page)**
 - 1) **Cultural naming patterns (search Country name)**
 - 2) **Spelling Substitution Tables (search Spelling Substitution Tables)**