

Methodology

The table below is based on the given names found in [the IGI](#) (the LDS International Genealogical Index) for Scotland, for the following surnames:

Jamison, McArthur, McCrae, McDowell, McFarlane, McKnight, Robb
with **Cunningham** substituted for **McFarlane** for the female names

The names were chosen, for the most part, because they are of rather high frequency in Elsdon D. Smith, *American Surnames* (1969), which is itself based on tabulations from Social Security Administration data in 1964. I passed over those of the very highest frequency, like McDonald, because it would have taken a lot longer to tabulate them, and I preferred to spend my available time looking at a variety of smaller surname groups.

It would, in fact, have been impossible to do this with the IGI anyway, which imposes a limit of 5000 results for one search. And as a matter of fact, I ran into this 5000 limit a couple times with the most common name, John, and had to extrapolate an estimated number, based on the proportion of Johns to James in the other, smaller, groups. I also substituted Cunningham for McFarlane for the females because both Mary and Margaret exceeded 5000 and perhaps other given names would have too.

Secondly, I somewhat arbitrarily favored the names of the clan groups I'm most interested in: Robb, McKnight (McNaughtan), and McFarlane (I would have done Robertson if it hadn't been for the size limitations). The McArthur, McFarlane, and McKnights, are in fact next door neighbors in Argyllshire, situated near the heads of Loch Awe, Loch Fyne, and the northernmost finger of the Firth of Clyde, and the Robbs probably lived in this same area as well, as they were supposed to have constituted septs of both the McFarlands and the Robertsons, the latter located some 40m NE in the central Perth district. Thus, these name groups are mostly from the western coast—the Argyll portion of the Highlands, with only McDowell and Cunningham representing the Lowlands, *per se*, though their clan areas are not far removed from those of the McFarlanes etc. McCrae alone is a bit anomalous because it is rather far-flung —abutting the western islands, to be sure, but rather far north.

In fact I rather expected to find a bit more homogeneity in given name frequencies across these clan groups than I actually did. As it turned out, certain names were especially favored in certain clans (Alexander among the McArthurs and McCraes, and William among the McArthurs, and most striking, both James and William predominating over John for the McKnights - which seems to carry over to Pennsylvania as well), but given the characteristic inbreeding, I suppose these minor variations are to be expected. Preferred female names are never quite as concentrated, and they are also somewhat more variable.

There is no doubt considerable sample bias here, not only because of my very limited selection, but because of the inherent spottiness, and inaccuracy of the IGI. However, the IGI for England is very largely based on actual parish records, and this is true to some extent for Scotland as well, and there is a fairly high proportion of specific dates in the Scottish index, compared, at least, to the American IGI. In fact, the Scottish inaccuracies seem to come mostly from gratuitous, low-quality, American interpolations and repetitions, though at the same time the extensive American involvement with this data also makes it a bit more representative as a measure for Scotch-Irish immigrants to America.

Hopefully, I haven't missed any high-frequency names, and I have made my "Other Names" category rather small—perhaps too small. None of the published sets of characteristic or popular names I have found for this group correspond very well either to my own personal experience in researching the American primary records (none that I've seen, for example, seem to have included such important names as Isabella), or to the set I've come up with here. On the whole, I think the statistics above are fairly accurate, at least to within a few percentage points, and thus are accurate enough for probabilistic onomastic reasoning.

The 20 Most Frequent Given Names in the IGI for Scotland

For Males			For Females		
%	Totals	Men's Names	%	Totals	Women's Names
26	24692	John	16.2	16529	Margaret
15.5	14673	James	12.3	12525	Mary
13.3	12616	William	11.8	12053	Jennet
9.5	9022	Alexander	10.9	11078	Elizabeth
8	7548	Robert	10.1	10348	Jean
4.37	4136	Andrew	7.4	7516	Ann
3.99	3784	David	7.2	7338	Isabella
3.81	3613	Thomas	7.0	7103	Catherine
3.7	3511	George	4.4	4456	Helen
2.8	2653	Archibald	4.3	4388	Agnes
1.72	1631	Patrick	1.2	1250	Sarah
1.67	1585	Charles	1.1	1115	Barbara
1.52	1446	Daniel	1.0	1070	Jessie
.75	710	Joseph	.76	776	Flora
.67	637	Samuel	.61	620	Susan
.54	507	Henry	.51	520	Martha
.42	395	Angus	.44	449	Grace
.27	267	Richard	.28	287	Rachel
.27	260	Adam	.25	255	Hannah
.19	177	Edward	.21	214	Rebecca
	900	OTHER Names ^[1]	2.1	2158	OTHER Names ^[2]
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	94763	Total sample size		102048	Total sample size

¹ Other Names for men which just missed the cut were Ronald=55, and Benjamin=49.

² The most frequent female name after Rebecca was Esther=117.