

As my report, "[The Scottish Onomastic Child-naming Pattern](#)" explains, there are two variants of the Scottish Onomastic Pattern, which I have dubbed the ANCESTRAL and the PARENTAL; for convenience, I have replicated these in the [APPENDIX](#) to this report. Both variants are found in Scotland, and both occur in the set of American ROBB families in the descendency below. These two variants are the same for the first two children of each sex, and for the vast majority of Scottish-originated families, whether in Scotland, or amongst reasonably recent emigrants to Ireland, America, or elsewhere, it is apparent that the general pattern had at least a strong influence on the naming of these early children, and in most cases, the pattern was determinative. Outside of Scotland, though, complications crept in, and the pure application of the pattern began to attenuate with the passing of the generations, as 3rd and 4th generation immigrants assimilated into the mainstream of their new country.

Another complicating factor, was that when middle names began to come in (in America after the Revolution, in Scotland somewhat later) an accommodation had to be made. In Scotland, it appears that in most cases, the middle name given the child was simply the surname of the ancestor honored in the naming; thus a grandson of John McARTHUR, surnamed ROBB after his father, might be named John McArthur ROBB. This practice can also be seen in America briefly (before the pattern faded out there), but even more common, perhaps, was to name the first son for both his paternal and maternal grandfathers, and the first daughter for both of her grandmothers. When this telescoping occurred, naturally, the next child of that sex would be given the 3rd name called for by the pattern.

Thanks to these complications, and more importantly because of the lack of ancestral data, it can often be difficult or impossible to determine which variant of the pattern is in effect for a particular conjugal family, or even for the naming of a particular child. For that reason, I generally identify indeterminate namings as EQUIVOCAL, rather than ANCESTRAL or PARENTAL. In the example descendency below, though, I have generally confined my usage of the term EQUIVOCAL to the typing of the overall family, and supplied both the ANCESTRAL and the PARENTAL interpretive possibilities for each child whose naming is EQUIVOCAL.

Other conventions observed in the data and annotations, below:

The Surname is ROBB unless otherwise indicated.

Birth dates are shown in parentheses:

“abt” qualifier means evidence-based date is accurate to within a year or so;

“say” qualifier means the date is a guesstimate based on the known circumstances, and on typical patterns

“+” = married; marriage dates are omitted, below.

Onomastic relationships *to the child* are commented **in red**; some are also “telescoped”—i.e. one name satisfies two relationships.

Where no relationship comment appears, it is because the relationship is indeterminate due to insufficient ancestral data.

The overall pattern for the children of a particular family (ANCESTRAL, PARENTAL, or EQUIVOCAL) is commented **in green**.

1 William ROBB (say 1700), Scotch-Irish immigrant to LancasterCoPA

---+1Isobel (_?_) (say 1702)

---+2Margaret (_?_) (say 1712)

---2 John (abt 1729) of LancasterCoPA, and WashingtonCoPA

-----+ Barbara McKNIGHT (say 1733)

[The onomastics say that Barbara's parents should be John & Agnes McKNIGHT, and that she was not therefore the daughter of the James McKNIGHT, with wife Barbara, who made John2 Robb a co-executor of his will but fails to name a daughter Barbara therein. There were several John McKNIGHTs in the area, but I can't put my finger yet on one whose wife's name was Agnes or "Nancy".]

[John2 & Barbara followed an EQUIVOCAL pattern, but from the fact that son William3 followed the ANCESTRAL pattern, I suspect that father John2 did as well.]

-----3 William (1757) [for father's father]

-----+ Mary RALSTON

[Mary is likely the daughter of John2 & Barbara's WashingtonCoPA neighbor Samuel Ralston; from the onomastics, Mary figures to have had a mother named Isabel or Ann, but I haven't found a record naming Samuel Ralston's wife.]

[William3 & Mary appear to have followed the ANCESTRAL pattern.]

-----4 Agnes ("Nancy")

[Possibly her full name was Barbara Agnes, named for both grandmothers; many first daughters were named thus when middle names came in at about this time.]

-----+ John CALEG (CLEGG?)/KEPP?; [daughters named Barbara and Mary]

-----4 Isabel (abt 1793) [perhaps for father's father's mother (ANCESTRAL)]

[If first daughter Agnes was name for both her grandmothers, then the next daughter, Isabel, should be named for her mother (PARENTAL), or her mother's father's mother (ANCESTRAL). I think that Isabel, like Agnes, probably had a middle name; otherwise, the female pattern breaks down for the daughters, even though it appears to be in effect for the sons. If the PARENTAL pattern were being followed, one would expect the single name Mary at this point, but instead, we get the name of the father's father's mother, which would in the ANCESTRAL pattern be the 4th name used. I think that the ANCESTRAL pattern is indeed in effect here and that Isabel had a middle name, or another given name, that belonged to her mother's father's mother, which would normally be the 3rd name used. Alternatively, the 3rd name used in this family might simply be that of the father's father's mother—marking a variation in the traditional ANCESTRAL pattern. And I note that William3's son William4, also used the name of his father's father's mother as the 3rd name used, if William4's first daughter, Mary, also had a middle name that was her mother's mother.]

-----4 John (say 1795) [for father's father]

-----4 Ann (say 1797)

-----4 Samuel (abt 1799) [for probable mother's father]

- 4 William (say 1801) [either for father (PARENTAL) or father's father's father (ANCESTRAL)]
- + Belle BRUNT[ON], possibly daughter of John of First Moon Twp, BeaverCoPA
 [William4 & [Isa]belle's pattern was EQUIVOCAL, or even eclectic, due probably to unknown middle names.
 I suspect, however, given the apparently ANCESTRAL pattern of father William3 that it too was ANCESTRAL.]
- 5 Mary (say 1827) [for father's mother
 and maybe Mary's middle name was her mother's mother's]
- 5 William (abt 1829) [for father's father, and father - telescoping]
- 5 Barbara (abt 1832) [perhaps for father's father's mother (ANCESTRAL)]
- 5 Sarah (abt 1834)
- 5 John Anderson (abt 1838) [the John is probably for mother's father
 but there were also Anderson families in the picture]
- 5 Thomas J (abt 1840)
- 4 Joseph (say 1804) [for father's next oldest brother (PARENTAL)]
- 4 Lettice (say 1806)
- 4 James L (abt 1808) [James followed no particular pattern in naming his children.]
- 3 John (1759) [probably for mother's father,
 perhaps also for father (PARENTAL) - telescoping]
- + Jane Kelso (1766), [?daughter of George & ?Jane]
 [There were just two Kelso households in the area in the 1790 USC, one headed by George, one by John, both in the portion
 of AlleghenyCoPA which was appropriated from WashingtonCo, where John3's brother, William3 (John2, Wm1) lived. Acc to Boucher's
 ...Pittsburgh and her People, George's son James had a second dau named Jane, thus George's wife, too, should have been named Jane.]
 [John3 & Jane probably followed the ANCESTRAL pattern. Though most of the evidence is EQUIVOCAL, the naming
 of the fourth daughter, Isabel, tips the balance to the ANCESTRAL side.]
- 4 John [for father's father
 AND if PARENTAL pattern in effect, also for father - telescoping]
- 4 George [for mother's father, probably]
- 4 Jane [for mother's mother?
 AND if PARENTAL pattern is in effect, also the mother - telescoping]
- 4 Barbara [for father's mother]
- 4 Elizabeth
- 4 William [for father's father's father (ANCESTRAL)
 OR if PARENTAL pattern is in effect, for father's oldest brother]
- 4 Isabel [for father's father's mother (ANCESTRAL)]
- 4 Mark

- 2 Samuel (say 1732) [named a second son William, but otherwise did not follow either standard pattern]
- 2 William (say 1735) [most children unknown, but probably didn't follow either standard pattern]
- 2 Joseph (say 1741)
- + Jean VOGAN
 - [Joseph2 & Jean followed the PARENTAL pattern.]
- 3 Isabelle (1770) [for father's mother]
- 3 William (1771) [for father's father]
- 3 Margaret (1773) [for father's second wife, probably]
- 3 Hannah (1774)
- 3 [Joseph? (1776)] [for father (PARENTAL)]
 - [this son Joseph isn't as well documented as the other children here]
- 3 John (1778) [for father's oldest brother (PARENTAL)]
- 3 James (1780)
- 3 Josiah (1784)
- 3 Jean (1790) [for mother (PARENTAL)]

- 2 Andrew (say 1748) [Andrew2, like brother Joseph2 followed the PARENTAL pattern.]

APPENDIX: The ANCESTRAL and the PARENTAL Variants of the Scottish Child-naming Pattern

The ANCESTRAL Scottish Child-naming Pattern

1st son is named for his father's father.

2nd son is named for his mother's father

3rd son is named for his father's father's father

4th son is named for his mother's mother's father

5th son is named for his father's mother's father

6th son is named for his mother's father's father

7th-10th sons are named for their father's great-grandfathers

11th-14th sons are named for their mother's great-grandfathers

1st daughter is named for her mother's mother

2nd daughter is named for her father's mother

3rd daughter is named for her mother's father's mother

4th daughter is named for her father's father's mother

5th daughter is named for her mother's mother's mother

6th daughter is named for her father's mother's mother

7th-10th daughters are named for their mother's great-grandmothers

11th-14th daughters are named for their mother's great-grandmothers

The PARENTAL Scottish Child-naming Pattern

- 1st son is named for his father's father.
- 2nd son is named for his mother's father
- 3rd son is named for his father
- 4th son is named for his father's eldest brother
- 5th son is named for his father's next eldest brother

- 1st daughter is named for her mother's mother
- 2nd daughter is named for her father's mother
- 3rd daughter is named for her mother
- 4th daughter is named for her mother's eldest sister
- 5th daughter is named for her mother's next eldest sister

and the pattern continues with subsequent children of each sex named for the next eldest same sex parental siblings. In practice, the 4th-Nth children may be named for mother's brothers, or father's sisters, as well, and not necessarily in the order of their birth. Thus, this PARENTAL pattern becomes unreliable after the third or fourth child. Where the parental pattern is in effect, though (with the third children of each sex named for their parents), one would expect that the fourth son would be named for his father's oldest brother. Other variations I have seen in this otherwise looser pattern, are the ostensible naming of children for their father's or mother's step-parents, as well as for their birth parents.