

What's in a Name?

The first people in Scotland to acquire hereditary surnames were nobles and great landowners, who called themselves after the land they possessed. Tenants of a village often took the name of the village in which they resided or were identified by that name when they left to take residence elsewhere. Lords of baronies and farmers often signed documents with the name of their estate or farm instead of their Christian name. This practice was finally forbidden by an act of Parliament in 1672 allowing only nobles to employ their land titles.



KIRKPATRICK

Kirkpatrick was the name of a small farming village in the parish of Closeburn, Scotland, having derived its name from a chapel dedicated to Saint Patrick. (Kirk means "church"; Kirk-Patrick or Patrick's church).

The first of this name appears to be a Roger de Kirkpatrick who attested to a charter by one of the Bruces who died in 1141. The records fail to mention his office, location or place of residence. Another ancient record indicates that Ivo de Kirkpatrick and his heirs had a charter from Robert Bruce granting a place between the fishings of Blawad and the water of Esk, circa 1190.

Near the end of the 18th Century, William, son of William Kirkpatrick of Conheath, became a wine merchant and married Donna Francesca, daughter of Baron de Grivegne and one of their daughters married the Emperor Napoleon III. The marriage with a Kirkpatrick was being considered in aristocratic circles a mesalliance. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe of Hoddam was consulted and produced a family tree showing a root in kings. This was shown to King Ferdinand VII who then approved the marriage.

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