

DUTCH SYSTEM OF NAMING CHILDREN

In New Netherland and later, Dutch parents used a fairly consistent system of naming their children.

- 1) The first two sons and first two daughters were usually named after the grandparents of the children
- 2) The first son was most often named after the husband's father
- 3) Often the first son and daughter were both named after the parents of the husband
- 4) In other families, the first daughter took the name of the wife's mother.

This was the basic system, but, of course, not all families used it strictly. A disagreement with a parent might mean that no child was named after that person. Or a beloved or deceased grandparent or sibling might be honored before a parent. Sometimes, a child was named for a witness who was present at the baptism, or even for a famous person.

If a Dutch child died at an early age, and the child had been named in honor of a grandparent, it was common to name the next child of that sex for that same person. Therefore, Dutch families many times baptized more than one child with the same name, but only the second (or third) child of that name was alive at the time the last child received the name.

We all know that records proving parentage can be very difficult to find. In the absence of such proof, for Dutch men and women you should try to determine the names of all of their children. If you can learn the names of the parents of one of the spouses, and those names appear in the names of the children, you can be pretty sure that the Dutch naming system was being applied. Then, all you have to do is see what names remain of the first two sons and first two daughters. At that point, you will have two given names left, and one or both are likely to be the names of the parents of the other spouse.