

Roddy-Ruddy One-Name Study

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HYPOTHESIS

The Roddy and Ruddy family names originated separately, but due to migration and comingling, mispronunciation due to different accents and dialects, and misunderstanding and mis-transcribing the spoken name during census and official reporting, the two families' names have intermixed and have sometimes been used interchangeably, even within the same family.

Genetically, there seems to be both a connection to the two surnames in modern times, as well as distinct family groups with different geographical origins, all apparently originating in Ireland and England. It is proposed that English Ruddy families originated from the Rudd families living in the Norfolk region of England in the early 16th century. The first Ruddy family appears in Bedfordshire in 1570 and can be linked through migration to earlier Rud and Rudd families whose earliest christenings are recorded in the 1530's in the Norfolk area. At the same time the first Roddy surname variant appears in 1579 in Cheshire, near Liverpool, on the west side of England.

Unlike the Rud → Rudd → Ruddy trend connecting these families, there is no clear geographic or family connection between the Rod and Rodd surnames and the Roddy variants. In fact, Rod and Rodd seem to originate in Germany more than anywhere else, whereas Roddy seems to have originated in the northern parts of Ireland, from the Anglicized ancient Gaelic names O'Rodaighe and O'Rodachan.

It is proposed that Roddy families originated from Ireland, tied to the earliest records of the Gaelic O'Rodaighe families. As these families spread during the 13th-16th centuries, some migrated east across the Irish Sea to Liverpool and Cornwall. During the 17th century and the times of the Plantations of Ireland, both the English Roddy and Ruddy families appear to have returned to northern Ireland as Scot-Irish Presbyterians. Many of the original Irish Roddy families are Catholic, or come from Catholic origins, while many of the English Roddy and Ruddy families are non-Catholic and congregate in the northern part of Ireland, including Northern Ireland, and the border area between northern England and Scotland.