

*Worldwide knowledge and understanding of Australian Indigenous cultures, past and present*

What's in a name? Names are not always what they seem, particularly in Indigenous family history research. When tracing your family history it is worth bearing the following in mind:

- **Indigenous people were often identified in older records by a given and/or traditional name only**
- **When Aboriginal people did take European names, their origins commonly include -**

European translations of traditional names

The name of the property they worked on

The name of the property owner or other employer

- **You may find unexpected variations in the spellings of names**

Until very late in the 19th century, there were very few people who could read and write well, meaning that a person may not know that their name was being spelt incorrectly. Names were often spelt as they had sounded, leaving plenty of scope for errors. Some examples are listed below.

- **The name that you know someone by may not be the name listed on official documentation**

Quite often people used names during their life that were different to their birth name. For example, Vera Lillian at birth was known as Lillian throughout life. Mary Jane through life was Janet May at birth. People also often used shortened forms of their first names, for example:

Allen = Al, Alen, Alan

Ann = Hannah

Barney = Herbert

Beverly = Bevely, Bev

Bill = William

Catherine = Cathy, Kate, Kay

Cecil = Cec

Charlotte = Lottie

Christene = Christeen, Christ, Crissy,

Chrissy, Christie

Desree = Des

Dianne = Diane, Dianna, Diana, Di

Doreen = Dor

Dorothy = Dolly, Dot, Dorrie

Edward = Edie, Eddie

Elizabeth = Betty, Bess, Beth, Liz,

Lizzie, Eliza, Tibby, Libby

Ellen = Nell, Nellie, Helen

Ernest = Ernist, Ern, Ernie, Erny

Florence = Florrie, Florry, Flo

Frances = Fanny, Fanno, Fran

Francis = Frank

Frederick = Fred, Freddy

Helen = Nell, Ellen

Herbert = Herb, Bert

Jack = John

James = Jim, Jimmy, Jimmie

Jeffery = Jeff, Geoffrey, Geoff

Jessie = Jessica, Jessy, Jes

Joseph = Joe, Jo, Joey

Joyce = Joy

Judith = Judy

Kathleen = Kathline, Kath

Lesley = Leslie, Les

Lynette = Lyn

Margaret = Maggie, Meg, Peg, Molly,

Daisy

Marjorie = Marjory, Marj

Mary = Maisie

Matilda = Tilly, Mattie, Matie, Tilda

Michael = Mick

Nancy = Agnes

Nevil = Nevel, Nev

Patricia = Pat, Patty, Trish

Patrick = Pat, Paddy

Reginald = Reginal, Reg, Reggie

Robert = Rob, Bob, Bobby

Ronald = Ron, Ronnie, Ronny

Stanley = Stan

Steven = Stephen, Steve

Valerie = Valery, Val

## Family names

Hurley/Early

Anderson/ Henderson

Holden/Olden

Hawkins/Orkins

Henry/Enemy

If you know of any others variations in first or family names we would be pleased to add them to the list