

Mac or Mc?

***Mac*, Gaelic for "son" is the most common element of Scottish and Irish surnames. In both countries, *Mc* is always an abbreviation of *Mac*. There is absolutely no truth to the American myth that *Mac* is Scottish and *Mc* is Irish. In the United States, early census takers were often instructed to abbreviate *Mac* to *Mc*. *Mac* also used to be abbreviated *M*" although this spelling is not common now. At times, all three versions can be seen. In an early book on Highland music, the author spelled his own family name three different ways on the first two pages -- "MacDonald", "McDonald" and "M'Donald".**