

Hume not recorded as Irish name,
only as Lowland Scots / N. of England.

Extract from B White: 1

Derry boy

Derry's housing shortage is of long duration, and it was in his grandparents' small terrace home in 20 Lower Nassau Street that John was born on January 18 1937. Sam Hume and Annie Doherty had married the year before – Sam at forty-six, his bride fourteen years younger – and like many another Derry couple had to live in one room of the family home, then on the northern outskirts of the city, between Rosemount and the Glen. With the baby's arrival they moved briefly to the Brandywell district, to the home of Neil Gillespie, an old Derry republican friend of Sam's, at Southend Park on the other side of the Bogside, below the walls of St Columb's College. Not until John was four, and had two brothers and two sisters, did the Humes find a place of their own, another small rented house, 10 Glenbrook Terrace, with two rooms upstairs and two down, no bathroom and an outside toilet in the yard. But it was a homely, neighbourly district, with steep cobbled streets sloping towards the green hills of Donegal and hardly another house in between.

By the time he married, Sam Hume had lived a fuller life than most of his contemporaries and was widely respected for his wit and wisdom. The Humes were from the border counties of Scotland, a great-grandfather of John's having emigrated to the Co. Donegal village of Burt, just seven miles from Derry, in the mid-1800s. He worked as a stonemason on the Donegal railways, leaving his mark on the bridges and stationmasters' houses still standing today. He was a Presbyterian, a rarity for the area, and inevitably married a Catholic, leaving his religion but retaining his genes for succeeding generations. In the Humes of today, there are some of the Scottish traits of taciturnity, single-mindedness and a lack of emotion which distinguish them from their contemporaries. All four of John's grandparents were country folk from the Inishowen peninsula in Donegal; his mother's mother, of the Barr family of Fahan, grew up a short distance from Burt, below the ancient round fort of the