

Personal Names that Became Ethnic Epithets

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Abstract

The inventory of generic nicknames for ethnic persons and groups, which have been used in American slang, dialects, and other popular speech, reflects the history of ethnic conflict in plural society. The sociologist can usefully view ethnic epithets as the lexical content of urban and ethnic folklores. About one in six of these stereotypical names is formed on a personal name. In a search of the scholarly records of American popular speech, I found 186 such terms and 32 variants for 35 different ethnic groups. Over 100 of the terms are given names and a few surnames that were thought to be common in various groups and came to be applied derisively to any member of the group. About 50 other names are nicknames formed on personal names that historically have been used as symbols of anonymity and low status, especially those formed on *John* and *Charlie*. Finally, over 30 terms are personal names taken from popular historical associations, literary characters, popular verse, and folklore.

Eigennamen als Scheldwoorden om Nationale Groeperingen te Beschimpen

De vocabulaire van doorsnee bijnamen zoals deze bestaat in Amerikaanse dialecten, plat, of ordinair taalgebruik, weerspiegelt de geschiedenis van conflicten tussen talloze volksgroepen in een pluralistische maatschappij. Het is een groot voordeel voor de socioloog om deze volkse scheldwoorden te beschouwen als de lexicographische inhoud van stedelijke en plattelandse gewoonten. Ongeveer een zesde deel van deze stereotypische namen is gebaseerd op eigennamen. Ik vond 186 van zulke woorden met 32 verscheidene vormen voor 35 verschillende volks groeperingen in de geleerde annalen van populair Amerikaans taalgebruik. Meer dan 100 van deze woorden, inclusief enige voornamen, zijn familie namen, die, zoals onjuist wordt gesuggereerd, veel voorkomen in bepaalde groepen. Dit zijn dan de namen die gebruikt worden om ieder lid van deze groepering te bespotten. Ongeveer 50 andere namen zijn bijnamen die van oudsher gebruikt zijn als symbolen voor onbenulligheid en lagere komaf, zoals *Janmaat*, *Joris*, of *Dik Trom* in Nederland, of *John* en *Charlie* in de V.S. Tenslotte, meer dan 30 van zulke woorden zijn eigennamen die ontleend zijn aan populaire figuren uit de geschiedenis, helden (en kneusjes) uit de roman literatuur, of volkswijsjes en andere, uit de tijdse, gebruiken.

Ethnic epithets in historical American English are mostly pejorative references to purported group attributes. These include supposed physical differences, putative national or ethnic character, and stereotypes of dietary practices. Many are simply alterations of the proper name of a group. Of interest here are the personal names that came to be used as generic names or nicknames for persons of various ethnic groups. About one in six of all ethnic epithets in American slang and dialects is formed on a personal name. The semantics of ethnic epithets in general have long

interested social scientists. The subset formed on personal names is lexical data for the study of the deviant uses of proper names. This paper introduces, classifies, and describes the historical inventory of these terms in American popular speech.

Most ethnic epithets formed on personal names are given names and a few surnames popularly associated with various groups, such as *Mike* and *Murphy* for Irishmen, *Olaf* for Swedish men, *Hans* for German men, *Tony* for Italian men, *Closh* for Dutchmen, *Abe* for Jewish men, *Ivan* for Russian men, *Lize* for black women, and *Bridget* for Irish women. Other ethnic epithets formed on personal names are names from popular historical associations, literary characters studied in the schoolroom, popular verse, folklore, and the popular culture of the mass media. A few examples are *Jeff Davis* for an ethnic Southerner, *Hiawatha* for a Native American Indian, *Johnny Cake* for a French Canadian, *Hans Wurst* for a German, and *Sapphire* for a black woman.

I found 186 such terms and 32 variants for 35 ethnic groups. Some of the names are applied to different groups; each application is counted as a separate lexical item. The 186 terms are a subset of the 1,078 terms for 54 ethnic groups that I collected for a larger study of the historical inventory of all nounal epithets in the slang and dialects of American English.¹

All the words may be found in scholarly records. Many of the terms were ephemeral and most are now obsolete or obsolescent, though a few might be heard today. The inventory was collected for the most part from 20 dictionaries and word lists of nineteenth- and twentieth-century American slang and dialect, but also from many other scattered, diverse sources. Many of the terms are not American coinages but are loanwords from the languages of major immigrant groups, especially British English. They became Americanisms in a broad sense of that term when Americans applied the names to immigrants in their new American settings. Many ethnic epithets, including many in the subset, may be found, for example, among the 500 terms listed by Berrey and Van Den Bark² and the 275 terms in Wentworth and Flexner.³

THE SOCIOLOGY OF ETHNIC EPITHETS

Social scientists traditionally view ethnic epithets as reflections and

¹Irving Lewis Allen, *The Language of Ethnic Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

²Lester V. Berrey and Melvin Van Den Bark, *The American Thesaurus of Slang: A Complete Reference Book of Colloquial Speech*, 2nd ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1953), pp. 346–49.

³Harold Wentworth and Stuart Berg Flexner, *Dictionary of American Slang*, 2nd supp. ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1975), pp. 651–52, 764, *et passim*.

indicators of prejudice, ethnocentrism, and social distance.⁴ While this is certainly true at one level, the historical inventories of these names in the language, their targets, origins, and semantics also reflect the earlier patterns of contact and cultural conflict between groups that produced ethnocentrism.⁵ The social scientist also views epithets as the lexical content of ethnic and urban folklores. These lores, and sometimes the narratives that accompany folk etymologies, express the stresses of ethnic diversity and give ideological consistency and cognitive harmony to the social and psychological processes of ethnic conflict.

The formation and use of generic nicknames for ethnic persons in the macrocosm of society makes an elucidating analogy with the formation and use of personal nicknames in the microcosms of small social worlds, such as those of school children.⁶ Personal nicknames are added in the course of a person's life history as affectionate, ridiculing, or scolding references, for example, to behavioral or physical characteristics, some striking incident, or recurrences associated with a person. Nicknames among school children are used to create and maintain status hierarchies, to enforce norms, and generally to exert social control.⁷ Anthropologists also point out that personal nicknames are used to maintain status hierarchies and to enforce social norms in various societies.⁸

Generic nicknames for ethnic persons, similarly, are added in the course of a group's history of relations with other groups and similarly allude to stereotypical physical and character traits and to cultural attributes popularly associated with a group, such as certain personal names. Intergroup nicknaming in the macrocosm of the local community or the nation, as in smaller social worlds, serves to create and maintain status hierarchies — this time hierarchies among ethnic groups.

Most of the generic names that derive from personal names are slang, though many originated in dialects and jargon. Ethnic epithets have all the earmarks of slang, particularly the trait of characterizing a referent as well as denoting it.⁹ Slang in general is greatly a male vocabulary.¹⁰ Name-

⁴E.g., Erdman B. Palmore, "Ethnophaulisms and Ethnocentrism," *American Journal of Sociology*, 67 (1962), pp. 442–45.

⁵Allen, chap. 2.

⁶Jane Morgan, Christopher O'Neill, and Rom Harré, *Nicknames: Their Origins and Social Consequences* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979).

⁷Morgan, O'Neill, and Harré, pp. 46–97.

⁸E.g., Richard T. Antoun, "On the Significance of Names in an Arab Village," *Ethnology*, 7 (1968), pp. 158–70; John H. McDowell, "Toward a Semiotics of Nicknaming: The Kamsá Example," *Journal of American Folklore*, 94 (1981), pp. 1–18.

⁹Bethany K. Dumas and Jonathan Lighter, "Is Slang a Word for Linguists?" *American Speech*, 53 (1978), pp. 5–17.

¹⁰Stuart Berg Flexner, "Preface," in H. Wentworth and S. B. Flexner, eds., *Dictionary of American Slang* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1960), pp. vi–xv.

calling is especially an expression of aggressive male social roles. Ethnic epithets express male anxieties and hostilities stemming from competitive intergroup relations in the traditionally male marketplaces for jobs and income. Most of the 186 epithets formed on personal names are male given names and chiefly were used by men. The few feminine names were also used mainly by men and refer pejoratively to women in various roles with respect to men.¹¹

In sum, generic nicknames for ethnic persons reflect the history of ethnic conflict in plural society. The inventory of these names was greatly an aggressive male vocabulary of slang that was used to exert social control over minorities, including women. Ethnic majorities used the names as weapons of ideology to justify and to maintain status hierarchies, while minorities used similar names in similar ways to express resentment toward their subordination. Each of these social phenomena is reflected in the historical inventory of all ethnic epithets and in the subset of 186 terms based on personal names.

THE SOCIAL ORIGINS OF THE VOCABULARY

The names may be divided into three broad categories, which sometimes overlap. First, about 50 terms are cultural symbols of anonymity and low status, such as *John* and *Charlie*, which are used for a variety of different groups. Second, over 30 names are allusions to popular historical associations. A third and largest class is over 100 names that are given and family names thought common in various ethnic groups. Fuller annotations on dates of first appearance of the terms in American printed texts and etymologies are available in Allen and in earlier sources cited there.¹²

John as the Symbol of Ethnic Everyman

The most frequently occurring epithet formed on a personal name is *John*, its diminutives *Johnny*, *-ie*, and through popular usage, *Jack*, *Jock*, and *Jocko*, *John*'s feminine sound counterparts, *Joan*, *Jane*, *Jenny*, and *John*'s foreign equivalents, *Hans*, *Ivan*, *Jean*, *Jan*, and *Sean*. Thirty epithets are modeled on *John*, its variants and equivalents. Forms of *John* have been applied to U.S. groups as various as blacks, Native American Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Cornish, Welsh, English, Scots, Irish,

¹¹Irving Allen, "Male Sex Roles and Epithets for Ethnic Women in American Slang," *Sex Roles*, forthcoming.

¹²Allen, 1983, chap. 3.

Dutch, Germans, Greeks, ethnic Southerners, and especially the French and French Canadians.

Terms of social opposition are a frequent topic in slang.¹³ In British and American English, for reasons I do not fully understand, *John* is the favored pejorative denomination for outsiders — “them” as opposed to “us.” For example, *John* is used for any group being held at social distance (“Johnny Chinaman”), persons being dismissed (the “Dear John” letter), anonymous or “average” persons (“John Doe”), nonpersons (the prostitute’s “John”), and an easy mark or victim (“dumb John”). *John* and its equivalents are common given names in several European national cultures, which surely also influenced their use as generic names for outsiders, especially ethnic outsiders.

Several British loanwords in American English, some borrowed earlier by the British from the French, have been used for the French in America, such as *Jean*, *Jean Crapaud*, *Jean Potage*, and *Johnny*. Other British loans have been extended to, and a few original Americanisms have been used for, the French Canadians: *Johnny Crapaud*, *Jean-* or *John-Baptiste*, *Jean Batiste*, *Jean Corteau*, *Johnny Cake*, and *Johnny Peasoup*.

Other loans of John words from British English and their American variants have been used for British Isles groups in the United States. *Cousin Jack*, *Cousin Jacky*, *Cousin Jan*, and *Cousin Jenny* were used for the Cornish. *Cousin Jack* was also used for the Welsh. *Jock* and *Jackie* were used for Scots. *Johnny* was used for the English, as well as the old personification *John Bull*, its variant *Johnny Bull*, and its recent feminization, *Joan Bull*. *Jonathan* was an early term for the Yankees of New England when most were of British descent. *Yankee* itself derives from *Jan Kaas*, John Cheese, which was an English epithet for the Dutch. *Jan Kaas* was somehow turned on the English of New England, where it stuck, the *-kaas* later being taken as a plural inflection.

John, *Johnny*, *John Chinaman*, and *Johnny Chinaman* were used for the Chinese. *Jocko*, a form of *Jock*, from *Jack*, was used for the Japanese. *Mister John* was used for American Indians. In the nineteenth century, *Free Jack*, also shortened to *Jack*, was used for blacks; *Monkey Jane* is a 1920s term for a black woman. The ubiquitous *Johnny* also was used for a Greek or a Turk. *Johnny Squarehead*, *Hans*, and *Hans Wurst* were used for Germans. *Johnny Reb* was used for Southerners. *Shoneen*, the diminutive of *Seon*, (*Séan*) i.e., John, has been used for the Irish. Rural Southern blacks called poor whites *Cheap John* and *Cheap Jack*.

¹³Flexner.

Charlie is another ethnic slur, which resembles *John* and *Johnny* in its uses. *Charlie* early was used for the Chinese and recently for the Vietnamese. (*Carlo* was a rare generic name for an Italian.) But *Charlie* is today best known as a black term for whites: *Mister Charlie*, *-ey*, and *Charlie*. Wry variants are *Mister Charles*, *Charles*, and *Chuck*. For the female counterpart of *Charlie* or *Charles*, the cognate *Charlene* was briefly used.

Other diminutive names, such as *Sammy* and *Tommy*, similarly have been used for outgroups. *Sammy* was used for Scots. Jews were called *Sammys*, perhaps only from *Samuel*, but Wentworth and Flexner's *DAS* says that *Sammy* was influenced by the initials of Sigma Alpha Mu, a Jewish college fraternity, whose members were called *Sammys*. Ethnic Appalachian Southerners in the industrial cities of the Ohio Valley in the 1950s were called *SAMs*, an acronym for Southern Appalachian Migrants. *Tommy* was used for the English and derives from *Tommy Atkins*, the personification of British soldiers, much like G.I. Joe in the United States. (The British called American soldiers *Sammys* during WWI, after *Uncle Sam*.) British Canadians were recently nicknamed *TOM*, an acronym, because a certain elite was thought to concentrate in Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal, and I suspect *TOM* was also constructed to be reminiscent of *Tommy* for the English.

Ethnic Appalachian Southerners have been called *Hillbillies* since about 1900; the *-billy* component is an old term for any fellow. *Hillnelly* was later modeled on *Hillbilly*. *Erb*, possibly from a Cockney pronunciation of *Herb*, a loanword from British English circa WWI, was later applied to any Japanese.

Cultural Allusions

Over 30 other names for American ethnic groups derive from historical associations, literary allusions, folklore, and the popular culture of the mass media.

By way of historical associations, blacks in the 1920s and 1930s were called both *Marcus* and *Garvey*, from the name of the separatist leader. By the nineteenth century, Dutch descendants in New York were indiscriminately called *Knickerbockers*. The Japanese and sometimes Japanese Americans during WWII were called *Tojo*, after General Hideki Tojo. *House of David Boy*, a derisive name for Jews, is of course a biblical reference. An old, borrowed name for the Swiss is *Colin Tampon*, which Ernest Weekley said alludes to the drum roll of the Swiss Guard. U.S. Southerners have been called *Jeff* and *Jeff Davis*. Germans were called *Turners*, which only mimics a personal name, because it is from

Turnverein, the German-American fraternal and athletic societies, whose members were called "Turners." In the early decades of this century, a German was sometimes called a *Hohenzollern*, from the name of the former royal family. Germans were also called *Cousin Michael*, from *der deutsche Michel*, the German peasantry.

By way of literary allusions, *Sambo* for blacks, which possibly derives from a Hausan personal name meaning "second son," was popularized again in recent times by Bannerman and Ver Beck's 1930 children's story *The Little Black Sambo Story Book*. *Uncle Remus*, which became a popular nickname for older black men, is the character in the stories by Joel Chandler Harris. In the late nineteenth century, *Liza* or *Lize* became a common nickname for a black girl or woman; H. L. Mencken said the name was "apparently a reminiscence of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'."¹⁴ American Indians were sometimes nicknamed *Hiawatha*, and Jews, *Shylock*. *Pinocchio*, a recent nickname for an Italian, is the name of the puppet in Carlo Lorenzini's fairy tale. *John Bull*, the personification of the English, also became *Johnny Bull*, a nickname for an Englishman, both deriving from the title of Arbuthnot's 1712 allegory, "The History of John Bull." *Joan Bull* is a modern feminization.

Folklore is the source of several terms. *Johnny Cake* for French Canadians, according to A. A. Roback, derives from a children's doggerel in Montreal Protestant schools around 1900: "French peasoup and Johnny cake/ Make your father a bellyache."¹⁵ *Hans Wurst* for Germans is from the name of the buffoon in German folk plays since 1600. *Speedy Gonzalez* for a Mexican derives from the name of the rapacious hero of the ethnic "jokes." *Buttinski* for a Jew probably comes from non-Jewish ethnic folklore about the supposed verbal assertiveness of Jews; the *-ski* is from the ending of surnames of many Eastern Jews.

The popular culture of the mass media, beginning with minstrelsy, is a larger and still vital source of ethnic epithets, especially in black and white relations. Minstrel songs popularized a few names for blacks. H. L. Mencken¹⁶ relates these. *Jim Crow*, from *Crow*, an earlier term for blacks, was introduced by Thomas D. Rice's 1828 dance and song "Jim Crow," which contained the line "My name's Jim Crow." *Rastus* was a popular nickname for blacks in the 1880s, and it was made even more

¹⁴H. L. Mencken, *The American Language*, 4th ed. and two supplements, abridged, with annotations and new material by Raven I. McDavid, Jr. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), p. 386.

¹⁵Abraham A. Roback, *A Dictionary of International Slurs* (Cambridge, Mass.: Sci-Art Publishers, 1944; reprinted by Maledicta Press, Waukesha, Wisc., 1979), p. 51.

¹⁶Mencken, pp. 386-87.

popular by "Rastus on Parade," an 1896 song by Kerry Mills. A few others are obvious. *Old Black Joe* was popularized if not introduced by the 1860 Stephen Foster song of that title. *Aunt Jemima* was popularized in 1876 by the minstrel song "Old Aunt Jemima," and later it was surely influenced by the brandname of the pancake mix.

The recent popular culture of radio, movies, and television inspired other names. *Buckwheat* for blacks derives from the historical idea that blacks ate buckwheat as a staple, but the name was certainly reinforced by the name of Buckwheat Thomas, the child actor in the "Our Gang" movie series. *Sapphire* for a black woman was inspired by the namesake character on the "Amos and Andy" radio and television programs. *Goldberg*, a name that urban blacks in the 1960s used for Jews who employed black domestics, was also earlier a stereotypical name for Jews. *Mickey Mouse* and *Sylvester*, the latter from Mel Blanc's ridiculous cartoon cat character, are black names for whites.

NAMES THOUGHT COMMON IN GROUPS

The final class of over a hundred personal names that became stereotypes for ethnic persons is personal names, mostly given names, that outsiders thought were especially common in a group. The blacks, Jews, and Mexicans have accumulated the largest number of these, though this particular stereotyping device has been used for 18 other groups. I will discuss the names for each target group.

Black men were stereotyped with the names *George*, *James*, *Leroy*, and *Moses*; black women were slightly nicknamed *Mandy*, probably from *Amanda*. A few generic names for black men probably originated as West African given names, became known in this country as names of slaves, and later were applied loosely to any black man. *Cuffee* or *Cuffy* was recorded in 1713 and was used for blacks down to the 1880s. It has been shortened to *Cuff*, and *Cuddy* seems to be a later variant. The name derives from the West African day name, Cuffee, for a male child born on Friday.¹⁷ Similarly, *Quashee*, *-ie*, recorded in the 1840s, derives from Ashanti *Quashee*, a male child born on Sunday. The variant *Squasho* appeared about 1900. *Sambo* possibly derives from a given name in several West African languages.¹⁸

Irish personal names seem especially apt to be made generic. The most

¹⁷J. L. Dillard, *Black Names* (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), p. 91.

¹⁸David Dalby, "The African Element in American English," in Thomas Kochman, ed., *Rappin' and Stylin' Out* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), pp. 170–86.

variously turned is *Pat*, from *Patrick*, which was a popular given name. *Pat* was variegated to *Patty*, *Patlander*, and, for women, *Patess*. Closely related is *Paddy*, from *Padraig*, the Gaelic form of *Patrick*. *Paddy* was variegated to *Paddylander* and *Paddyw(h)ack*. These names became so famous as generic names for the Irish that blacks extended their meaning and made them generic for all whites. Blacks have called whites *Paddy*, *Paddy Boy*, *Patty*, *Patty Boy*, and *White Paddy*. Another black term for whites is *Dap*, backslang from *Pad*, from *Paddy*. (Another black name for whites, *Honkey*, a dialectal black pronunciation of *Hunkey*, the old slur for an East or Central European immigrant, is a similar extension to all whites, though it is not formed on a personal name.)

The nicknames for any Irishman that derive from *Michael*, including *Michael* itself, are as well known. *Mike* was a generic name for any Irishman, but *Mick* and *Mickey* were more offensive and appeared in the slurs *Whiskey Mick* and *Cheap Shanty Mick*. In the nineteenth century, Mexicans were sometimes called *Micks*, for the term was generalized to several despised, low-status groups, perhaps especially if they were Roman Catholic. (As in the cases of *Pat* and *Paddy*, *Mickey* has become a black term for whites, probably also influenced by Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse and the slang idea of *mickey mouse* as trivial work.) Other nicknames for Irishmen derive from given names: *Ted* and *Teddy* from *Theodore*; *Tad* from *Thaddeus*; and, for women, *Bridget* and its diminutive *Biddy*.

Several nicknames for the Irish derive from family names, such as *Dogan*, *Donovan*, *Mulligan*, *Murphy* (often shortened to *Murph* and burlesqued to *Moiphy*), and *Teague*. *Mac(k)* for any Irishman comes from the prefix of many Irish surnames and for the same reason *Mac(k)* is also a popular name for Scots.

Other British Isles groups were called names that were based on personal names. Scotsmen have been called *Mac(k)* more often than the Irish. *Sandy* is a familiar form of *Alexander*, and *Sawney* is a variant of *Sandy*. Scotsmen were also nicknamed *MacTavish* and *Saunders*. The Welsh were called *Taffy* (and *Taffy Mouth*), from the sound of the Welsh *Dafydd*, i.e., *David* (as *Davy*), a common given name and a sobriquet for St. David, the patron saint of Wales. Welsh women in the United States were called *Cousin Anne*, a feminine counterpart of *Cousin Jack*. (Cornishmen in the United States were also called *Cousin Jack*, and Cornish women, *Cousin Jenny*.)

Most of the names for Jews derive from given names, though the family names *Levi* and *Goldberg* have been used. The following given names have been recorded as slurs when used generically: *Abe* and *Abie* (from

Abraham), *Dave*, *Ikey* and *Ike* (from *Isaac*), *Ikey-Mo* (from a blend of *Ikey* and *Mo*, from *Moses*), *Izzy* (from *Isadore*), *Jake* (from *Jacob*), *Max*, *Moses*, *Mouchey* (perhaps from *Moishe*, i.e., *Moses*), *Sol* (from *Solomon*). *Sammy* is from *Samuel*, but see my discussion of the generic *Sammy* under terms that connote low status and anonymity. For women, *Rachel* and *Rebecca* similarly were used.

The slur *Dago*, from the Spanish and Portuguese given name *Diego*, was attached to Italians by the late nineteenth century, though it was earlier used for the Spanish and the Portuguese and, rarely, for Mexicans. Other generic names for Italians are *Carlo* and *Tony*, from, and also, *Antonio*. Fred Tarpley¹⁹ reported *Poppie Squalie* from Northeast Texas; possibly it is from the sound of *Pasquale*. *Dino*, a diminutive of *Constantino*, was used for Italian men, as well as for Mexicans and other groups associated with low-status labor, when it was sometimes spelled *Dyno*.

Hispanic men have been called *Pedro* (Mexicans and Puerto Ricans), *José* (Spaniards), and *Don* (Portuguese, and from the title before some Portuguese surnames). *Chico*, from Spanish *chico*, little boy, has been used for Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and even Filipinos.

German immigrants in the United States have been called *Fritz* and *Fritzie*, -y, *Heiney* (from *Heinrich*), and *Hans* (cf. *Hans Wurst*, a name for Germans derived from a folkloristic allusion). Young women were slightly referred to as *Gretchen*. Dutchmen were called *Hans*, a common given name in Holland, *Closh*, from *Claus*, and with mock respect, *Mynheer Closh*. Dutchmen have also been called *Nic(k) Frog*, where *Nic(k)* is from *Nicholas* and *Frog* from *Froglander*.

A variety of other European groups have one or two stereotypical names derived from personal names. *Horwat* was noted in 1919 to apply to any Hungarian. Lee Pederson reported that *Stashu* (i.e., *Stanley*) was used for Poles in Chicago.²⁰ *Olaf* and *Ole* were used for Swedes. *Abdul* was a ridiculing name for any Turk. Russians are still called *Ivan* and, with mock formality, *Ivan Ivanovitch*. The -itch suffix on many Slavic surnames caused Serbs and Croats to be called *Itch*, *Itchy*, and irresistibly *Itchy-coo*.

Blacks have used several generic names for whites that are formed on personal names. I discussed above the *Charlie* and *Mister Charlie* complex of names. Blacks also called whites *Mister Eddie*, *Mister Jones*,

¹⁹Fred Tarpley, *From Blinky to Blue-John: A Word Atlas of Northeast Texas* (Wolfe City, Texas: The University Press, 1970), p. 250.

²⁰Lee A. Pederson, "Terms of Abuse for Some Chicago Social Groups," *Publication of the American Dialect Society*, 42 (1964), pp. 24-48.

Fred, and *Herbie*. *Miss Anne* and *Miss Annie* are names for a white woman, especially one in a position of authority. Whites, perhaps only white women, in the South were sometimes called *Gillian*, which possibly derives from the identical informal name for *Juliana*. *Gillian* for *Juliana* somehow came to mean a “wench.” I note, however, that *Gillie*, *-ey*, and *Giles* were nineteenth-century slang for a stupid person.

Finally, Berry reports that eleven generic names for residents of isolated, racially mixed communities are derived from family names thought common in these groups.²¹ About 200 such communities of people of various Indian, white, and black mixes are in the eastern United States. Social scientists call them “Tri-Racial Isolates.” Berry speculates that the name *Pools* for one such group derives from the surname *Vanderpool*; *Males* may derive from *Mayle*, *Mail*, or *Mahle*; *Creels* from *Creel*; *Chavises* from *Chavis*; *Collinses* from *Collins*; *Coe-clan* from *Coe*; *Bones* from *Boone* (though it might be from *redbone*, an epithet for a racially mixed person); *Goins*, he speculates, also might be from a surname. The *VanGuilder(s)*, the *Laster Tribe*, and the *Clapper(s)* each derive from those family names. (Another subset of names for communities of Tri-Racial Isolates is a score of names that derive from place names, a related topic deserving of an onomastic note.)²²

CONCLUSION

Personal names that became ethnic epithets show some of the origins of intergroup name-calling in cultural clashes. Prejudice, these onomastic data suggest to me, grows out of conflictful relations that draw into relief cultural differences between groups. The particulars of these differences, such as personal names, become the stuff of name-calling.

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²¹Brewton Berry, *Almost White* (New York: Macmillan, 1963).

²²See Berry, p. 34.