

Placenames Used as Nicknames: A Study of Major League Baseball Players

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Abstract

From the beginning of major league baseball, at least 122 players have had nicknames taken from placenames, the majority used in the early twentieth century. These nicknames were of several types and came from many places, mostly the American South. Understanding how these nicknames came about increases our understanding of nicknames and extends our knowledge of placenames.

The study of nicknames in American society is hampered by the lack of an historical data base. Most nicknames are not remembered much past an individual's lifetime unless he or she becomes famous. Official documents usually do not include nicknames, and for the general population there is no repository of nicknames. There are, however, compilations of the lives of certain categories of individuals who received notoriety. Sometimes these include nicknames. Examples are various types of entertainers, military and political figures, notorious criminals and deviants, and athletes. One of the most complete sets of data to include nicknames has been kept on major league baseball players. Information has been recorded on every person who played in a major league game since 1871, even on those who appeared in no more than one-half inning of one game.

In this paper I document one type of nickname used for major league baseball players, *place nicknames*, and analyze them in a socio-historical context. The result is an increased understanding of the use of nicknames and incidentally an extended knowledge of placenames. The analysis includes the use of place nicknames over time, the geographical locations to which the nicknames refer, the types of places to which the nicknames refer, the types of nicknames, and other referents of the nicknames besides places.

Player nicknames are recorded in *The Baseball Encyclopedia*, first published in 1969. The most recent update includes the 1987 season

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(Reichler). Even this 2,900-page volume is limited for nickname research. Only "official" nicknames appear, those known to the general public and recorded. They may or may not be the ones used by individuals in close interaction with players in everyday life. From the few cases where both sets of data exist, they are not always identical (Skipper, "Baseball Babes" 25-26). More importantly, *The Baseball Encyclopedia* provides only the nicknames without any information about origins or meanings. Nevertheless, it is still the best available source to begin the study of nicknames of baseball players. The search for origins and meanings led to over 100 sources.

In past research I have found it useful to define a nickname as Elsdon Smith does. It is not a name derived from or a diminutive of a person's given name but one which is added to, substituted for, or used alternatively with a person's given name. Thus, common diminutives such as *Chick* for *Charles* or name derivatives such as *Smitty* for *Smith* are excluded from the operational definition of nickname. This distinction, however, does not enter into the analysis of place nicknames.

The Appendix, divided by geographical areas, lists the player's names, career dates, place nicknames, the place to which the nickname refers, and information concerning origins and meanings of the nicknames. It is the source by which the tables are derived, as well as the other data used for analysis.

Frequency of Use Over Time

From 1871 until 1989 *at least* 122 major league baseball players had placenames for nicknames. Table 1 summarizes the place nickname data by time period and type of nickname. A player's major league debut year determines the time period.

As Table 1 shows, the number of place nicknames increases sharply from 16 in the nineteenth century period, to 44 in the 1900-19 decades, then falls to 33 between 1920 and 1939, and continues to decline to 23 between 1940 and 1959. There is a major reduction to just five in the 1960s and 1970s, and but one placename nickname has appeared in the 1980s. Thus place nicknames were most popular in the early years of this century and have been decreasing since the 1920s to the point where they are close to non-existent in the 1980s. This pattern is the same as I have reported for all types of baseball player's nicknames ("Sociological Significance"). In other words, baseball players' nicknames in general have been declining since the 1920s, not just place nicknames. In fact, I

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Table 1. Number and percentage of major league baseball players with place nicknames by time period and type of nickname: singular, multiple and multiple subtypes.

Time Period:	1871-99	1900-19	1920-39	1940-59	1960-79	1980-87	TOTALS
Singular Reference	37.5%	54.3%	63.6%	52.2%	0.0%	0.0%	Pct. Nr. 51.6% 63
Multiple Reference							
Type I	25.0	28.6	12.1	8.7	20.0	0.0	18.9 23
Type II	12.5	7.1	6.1	8.7	60.0	100.0	10.6 13
Type III	25.0	9.5	18.2	30.4	20.0	0.0	18.9 23
Total Multiple	<u>62.5</u>	<u>45.7</u>	<u>36.4</u>	<u>47.8</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>48.4</u> 59
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total Number	16	44	33	23	5	1	122
Percentage: of Total Number	13.1	36.1	27.0	18.8	4.1	0.8	100
Singular Reference = Placename only Multiple Reference, Type I = Placename plus personal name Multiple Reference, Type II = Placename plus non-personal name Multiple Reference, Type III = "The" before placename plus non-personal name							

found this decline also the case with notorious American criminals and deviants ("Nicknames of Notorious"), jazz musicians ("Nicknames, Folk Heroes and Jazz Musicians"), blues singers (Skipper and Leslie), and famous football players ("Nicknames of Famous").

As I have argued elsewhere, nicknames may reflect the degree of identification, closeness, and intimacy that the public feels toward baseball players at a given time ("Sociological Significance"). The reduction in the use of nicknames parallels a similar decline in Americans' belief in the legends and myths about folk heroes of which baseball players were an important part. It also parallels a steep decline in fans' abilities to identify with baseball players as ordinary folks dedicated to the tradition of the game. This identification becomes difficult when players unionize, strike, employ agents, and receive extraordinarily

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high salaries. In 1987, for example, 58 baseball players had salaries of one million dollars or more and 212 had salaries of at least one-half million (Chass). In an even larger sense, the decline in the use of nicknames may be part of the more general process of the transition of American society from a folk-rural orientation to that of a mass-urban type, that is, the change from a *Gemeinschaft* model characterized by a sense of solidarity, a common identity rooted in tradition and personal relationships, to a *Gesellschaft* model in which individualism, mobility, impersonality, and an emphasis on change are common features.

Types of Nicknames

The place nicknames of baseball players may be classified into two major reference types, singular and multiple. Players nicknamed "Germany," "Broadway," "Dixie," and "Tex" are examples of singular reference. Table 1 shows that just over one-half (51.6%) of the baseball place nicknames are of this type and that they are most common during the period from 1900 to 1959. Place nicknames referring to countries, regions, states, and streets are most often singular reference (Table 2), as are those referring to places in the South and those outside the United States (Table 3). Although it is possible to differentiate singular place nicknames which are full names, such as "Germany," from short names, such as "Tex," I am not sure how useful this is. Therefore, I have not included this distinction in the tables. It is worth noting that a singular reference place nickname is most appropriate as a term of address, that is, what you call the player either face to face, or in correspondence. It is not quite as useful as a term of reference, that is, what is used to refer to the player to others, especially in his absence. "Tex," for instance, would commonly be used in speaking to a player by this name, but it is less useful in referring to a specific player when there may be several with the same nickname. It merely gives a geographic reference.

Multiple reference place nicknames always consist of more than one word and refer to something more than just a place. There are three subtypes. Together they represent 48 percent of the place nicknames. The first subtype combines the placename with a personal name, as in "Memphis Bill" or "Harvard Eddie." In every case it is the player's first name which is used as part of the nickname. About 19 percent of the place nicknames are of this subtype. The use of the place with the first name appears to have been more popular before 1920 (Table 1), never used for a foreign reference, and very seldom for a southern one (Table 3). In

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Table 2. Number and percentage of major league baseball players with place nicknames by type of place to which they refer and type of nickname.

	Country	Region	State	City	Town	College	Street	Totals	
								Pct.	Nr.
Singular									
Reference	83.5	75.0	64.1	9.0	29.0	25.0	85.7	51.6	63
Mult. Ref.									
Subtypes									
Type I	0.0	10.0	5.1	45.5	25.8	62.5	14.3	18.9	23
Type II	0.0	0.0	20.5	9.1	12.9	0.0	0.0	10.6	13
Type III	16.7	15.0	10.3	36.4	32.3	12.5	0.0	18.9	23
Mult. Ref.	<u>16.7</u>	<u>25.0</u>	<u>35.9</u>	<u>91.0</u>	<u>71.0</u>	<u>75.0</u>	<u>14.3</u>	<u>48.4</u>	<u>59</u>
Total Pct.	100.0	100.	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	122
<p>See Table 1 for definition of reference types. All numbers are percentages except the Nr. column.</p>									

Table 3. Number and percentage of major league baseball players with place nicknames by geographic location and type of nickname.

	Foreign	East	Midwest & West	North	South	Totals	
Sing. Ref.	80.0	34.6	20.0	22.2	66.1	51.6	63
Mult. Ref.							
Subtypes							
Type I	0.0	38.5	33.3	44.4	6.5	18.9	23
Type II	0.0	3.8	26.6	11.1	11.3	10.6	13
Type III	20.0	23.1	20.0	22.2	16.1	18.9	23
Mult. Ref.	<u>20.0</u>	<u>65.4</u>	<u>80.0</u>	<u>77.8</u>	<u>33.9</u>	<u>48.4</u>	<u>59</u>
Total	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>122</u>
Percentage of Total Number	8.2	21.3	12.3	7.4	50.8		
<p>See Table 1 for definition of reference types.</p>							

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general, even though multiple reference nicknames are not as appropriate as terms of address as singular ones, this subtype is used in this way. One can call a player "Jersey Joe" face to face, although it is probably more common as a term of reference. At the same time, as terms of reference, multiple reference nicknames are more specific than singular ones. For instance, with this subtype, "Portland Bill" limits the reference from all players with an association with the city to just those named *Bill*.

The second subtype of multiple reference place nicknames consists of the placename but replaces the personal name with one which describes some attribute of the player, as in "Kentucky Rosebud" or "Commerce Comet." In the first case, "Rosebud" refers to the player's red hair, an ascribed characteristic. In the second case, "Comet" refers to the speed by which the player's home runs left the playing field, an achieved characteristic. While this subtype represents the lowest percentage, 10.6 percent of the place nicknames, three out of the five, 60 percent, from 1960-79 are of this variety (Table 1). The second subtype is used for only state, city, and town references (Table 3). This subtype is less appropriate as a term of address, and is probably used primarily as a term of reference. As such, it may be even more selective than using the player's first name. "Hammond Hummer" would seem to apply to even fewer individuals than "Hammond Bob."

The final subtype of multiple reference nicknames has the definite article—"The"—before the placename and the name describing the player, as in "The Gallatin Squash" or "The Nashville Narcissus." "The" is never used in conjunction with the player's name. About 19 percent of the place nicknames are of this subtype, They appear as much after 1939 as before (Table 1) and almost always with the name of a town or city (Table 2). It is the only multiple reference subtype which is used for a foreign geographical area as well as all sections of the country (Table 3). It would seem to be exclusively a term of reference and never as a term of address.¹ The use of "The" makes this multiple reference subtype the most selective, bestowing upon the player along with the placename and the descriptive name a distinctive nickname which is not likely to be used for any other baseball player. In another line of endeavor, there may be an example of "The Georgia Peach," but there is not likely to be another one in the world of baseball. This is true not only of place nicknames, but any nickname which includes "The." Many players have been nicknamed "Kid," but only Ted Williams is known as "The Kid," or "The Thumper" or "The Splendid Splinter."

It is much more likely that players with "The" in their nickname have achieved stardom status. Such nicknames never stem from childhood and probably are seldom bestowed by other ball players. I suspect that in the vast majority of cases sportswriters and sportscasters are the source of this subtype of nickname.

Places To Which The Nicknames Refer: Locations and Type

As Table 4 shows, nicknames which refer to places outside of the United States represent about 8 percent of the total. Four players of German descent were nicknamed "Germany." Three were called "Klondike" after the region in Canada where gold was discovered in 1897. It is conceivable that each may have been in the Klondike during that period and thus acquired the nickname. Three nicknames indicate the player's Latin American nationality: "The Pride of Havana," "Mex," and the "Dominican Dandy."

Just over 21 percent of the nicknames denoted places in eastern states. Six players were nicknamed after the college or university attended, including Princeton, Yale, Harvard, Colby, and Columbia. New York City's famous street, Broadway, provided the nickname of six other players. But "Broadway" does not always have the same geographical association as other place nicknames nor does it always have the same connotation. For one player it referred to his fashionable dress, another his street-wise behavior, and for three others their love of wine, women, and night life. In only one case did "Broadway" denote geographical location. One other street nickname, "Tioga George," located the player's residence in North Philadelphia. "The Reading Rifle" and "The Springfield Rifle" were city nicknames used for two players with strong throwing arms. State nicknames for this area are uncommon; the only one is "Jersey Joe." Seven towns are represented.

Fifteen players or about 12 percent of the total were nicknamed for places in the Midwest. One fastball pitcher had the nickname of his home state, Indiana, "Hoosier Thunderbolt," and one player's name came from a region in Minnesota, "Peaceful Valley." Eleven came from town names, and two from cities. The "Hammond Hummer" was from Hammond, Indiana, and Charles Stengel's nickname, "Casey," is the written form of *K.C.*, referring to his hometown of Kansas City.

Even combined, the northern and western sections of the country,

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including Hawaii, were represented by only 7 percent of the total place nicknames. Three players were nicknamed for cities and four for towns. The remaining two nicknames came from regions, "Death Valley Jim" and "The Wild Elk of The Wasatch."

Place nicknames from the southern region of the country dominate in every time period in the twentieth century and constitute about 51 percent of the total. This is true in spite of the fact that the South has produced the fewest major league players. This dominance is due primarily to the use of two nicknames: "Dixie" referring to the South as a region, and "Tex" or a form of it, referring to the state of Texas. There were ten instances of "Dixie" and one "Dixie Thrush." In all cases the recipients of the nicknames were born and /or raised in southern states. "Tex" was the nickname of 23 players, and "Tex" or "Texas" was part of five others. Almost all of the players with a Texas nickname were born and raised in Texas or lived there. The name *Texas* alone represents almost one-quarter of the total population of place nicknames. Nine other nicknames came from the names of southern states, including *Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi*. Thus, 37 or 95 percent of the 39 state nicknames were from the southern section of the country.

Table 4. Number and percentage of major league baseball players with place nicknames by time period and geographical location.

Time Period	Foreign	Geographical Location				Totals	
		East	Midwest	Northwest	South	Pct.	Nr.
1871-99	18.7%	31.2%	39.5%	0.0%	12.5%	13.1%	16
1900-19	11.4	18.2	11.4	11.4	47.6	36.1	44
1920-39	0.0	21.1	3.0	6.1	69.7	27.0	33
1940-59	4.3	26.1	8.7	4.3	56.5	18.9	23
1960-79	20.0	0.0	20.0	20.0	40.0	4.1	5
1980-87	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.8	1
Pct. of total:	8.2	21.3	12.3	7.4	50.8	100.0	
Number	10	26	15	9	62		122

There are three southern city nicknames, "Memphis Bill," and "The Nashville Narcissus," and "Spartanburg John," and eight town nicknames. One player was nicknamed after a southern mountain region, The Ozarks, and another after a university, Duke.²

Discussion

While there are several patterns in the data worthy of mention, the most striking is the high percentage of place nicknames associated with the South. In all but the 1871-99 period, by far the highest percentage of the nicknames refer to places in the South. Since the game of baseball originated on the East Coast and the first professional team was from the Midwest (Cincinnati in 1869), it is understandable that eastern and mid-western placenames would be more prominent in the 1871-99 period than those from the South and West. Why southern place nicknames should dominate after that time is probably due in large part to the development of southern solidarity and a strong sense of regionalism. It was fostered by such factors as a dominant homogenous population of primarily English, Scottish, and Irish background, a common economic base dependent on agriculture, and feelings of persecution over the issue of slavery, loss of the Civil War, and exploitation during the reconstruction period. These factors along with others helped to create a southern solidarity unparalleled elsewhere in the United States. Loyalty to the region and an identification with it was, and probably still is, greater than in other sections of the country (Reed).

Place nicknames may be a manifestation of southern regionalism. For example, there is no real equivalent of "Dixie" for other sections of the country. Texas was once an independent republic. Due in part to this historical background, Texans have always considered themselves "different," a collective self concept of being bigger and better, Texans probably have a stronger identification with Texas than do the people living in any other American state. This helps explain why "Tex" and "Texas" are used as place nicknames for ball players more than the place nicknames of all the other states combined. But, alone it is not a sufficient explanation.

Unfortunately, writers have not often recorded how or by whom ballplayers were nicknamed either "Dixie" or "Tex." Evidently such nicknames were thought to be self explanatory. There is no evidence that the players gave themselves the nickname, which rarely happens in any case. It is equally unlikely that individuals would be nicknamed "Tex"

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by other Texans or for that matter that southerners would nickname each other "Dixie." What is more likely, is that the nicknames were bestowed by individuals outside of Texas or in the case of "Dixie" outside the South, especially when we note that from 1901-58 all 16 major league teams were located in the East and Midwest, none further south than St. Louis. If this naming process is true, then it may be an indication that people outside of the South and the state of Texas recognize that there is either something special, or at least different, about the South and the state of Texas, or they recognize that southerners and Texans think there is. Either way, the difference is great enough that place nicknames are assigned which identify players with the southern region or the state of Texas. Given the visibility of baseball players and the propensity of the public before World War II to view them as folk heroes, this external recognition might have had the effect of reinforcing southern solidarity and Texas identification.

All of the players with place nicknames were white. None were black. In one sense this is not surprising, since black players were not integrated into major league baseball until 1947, a time in which baseball nicknames in general and place nicknames in particular declined rapidly. Other reasons may apply, however. In another context I analyzed the names of nearly 2,000 black players in the upper echelons of the black baseball leagues from 1884-1950 ("Nicknames, Folk Heroes and Assimilation"). The percentage with nicknames was almost the same as for white major leaguers. Yet only three of the black players had place nicknames. Since the nicknames of players in the black leagues were almost all given by other blacks), the lack of place nicknames may be an indication that blacks had less geographical identification than whites. Given that the South as a region had by far the highest percentage of place nicknames, it is understandable that blacks might not have had the same identification with it as whites, since it was associated with the enslavement of their race.

While states represent the highest percentage of place nicknames, it must be kept in mind how much the total is affected by just the one state—Texas. Perhaps a more important finding is that towns are more than twice as likely to be used as place nicknames than cities. The names of major cities do not usually become the nicknames of major league baseball players. Furthermore, the towns used as nicknames tend to have unusual names such as *Vinegar Bend*, *Pea Ridge*, *Ninety Six*, *Snohomish*, and *Wahoo*. A third interesting pattern is that Broadway, one of the most

famous American streets, is with but one exception the only street to be adopted for a nickname. And its use differs in one important aspect from all the other place nicknames. In six of the seven cases its meaning implies something more than geographical location. The nickname "Broadway" transcends its geographical identification.

A final pattern involves the colleges and universities whose names are used as nicknames. All eight are eastern (Duke, southeast) private, and prestigious. They were given to players who debuted before 1940 when it was still fairly unusual for major league baseball players to have attended college. Thus, the nickname was a badge of distinction. This became increasingly less true after World War II with the increase in college enrollment and with the dismantlement of many of the minor leagues. College baseball became a primary training ground for major leaguers and no longer worthy of such special identification.

Summary and Comment

The data and analysis of this report may be evaluated on several different levels of abstraction. First, the report provides a description of one total population of place nicknames, that of professional major league baseball players. We know what they are, and by virtue of that, what they are not. We know something about the types of places that are used for nicknames, and their relative frequency of use over time.

At a second level of abstraction, place nicknames of baseball players provide some insights into American society in an historical and cultural context. They suggest the strong feelings of regionalism which existed in the southern section of the country and a rather special identification with one particular state—Texas. They suggest the badge of distinction higher education once bestowed upon individuals. They suggest a possible difference in geographical orientation between blacks and whites. They suggest the perhaps intense feelings that at least some Americans had for rural small towns, especially those with quaint names. In a larger sense the diminishing use of place nicknames over time, similar to the same pattern for personal nicknames in general, is a reflection of the major changes taking place in American society as it moves ever and ever closer to an impersonal, rational, bureaucratic model. A type of society in which the intimacy implied by a nickname is not only inappropriate, but increasingly irrelevant.

Finally, baseball player's place nicknames tell us something about the category of place nicknames themselves and perhaps even

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placenames in general. In terms of construction, they may be classified as singular reference or multiple plural. Multiple reference place nicknames may be divided into three subtypes: the person's first name is used in conjunction with the place-name, a term describing the person is used with the placename, and in the third subtype a "The" is used before either of the other two subtypes. The place nicknames may also be classified on the basis of their appropriateness as terms of address and terms of reference.

The scheme employed here is neither demonstrative nor definitive, neither all inclusive nor mutually exclusive. It may be useful, however, in developing a more systematic way of thinking about all kinds of place nicknames or for that matter all kinds of placenames. Certainly it would have to be modified and revised before its utility is maximized. In an important sense, however, classification is one of the first steps in theory building. It is one level beyond pure description and documentation. This is an area of onomastics which needs to be emphasized. I hope that this report will encourage others to channel greater efforts in that direction.

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Notes

1. In the summer of 1988 I had the opportunity to interview Joe Hauser, who had played on the same team with Ty Cobb. I asked Hauser if he ever addressed Cobb as "The Georgia Peach." His quizzical expression told the story. He did not know what I meant. He stated that he and others always called Cobb "Ty" and never "Georgia" or "Peach" let alone using "The." He went on to say that behind his back players used a variety of terms of reference none of which were complimentary, and many were derogatory. Thus, "The Georgia Peach" nickname was not used by fellow ballplayers either as a term of address or as a term of reference.

2. While not an example of a place nickname, the unusual case of Frank Bodie (1911-21) should be mentioned in any discussion of placenames and major league baseball players. He is the only player to change his last name to a placename. Bodie was born Franceto Sanguenitta Pezzola in San Francisco, California. His family adopted *Bodie* from the name of the now almost forgotten mining town in western California between Yosemite National Park and the Nevada border where Frank's father worked. *Franceto* was changed to *Frank*. Bodie also had a nickname. At age two his parents started calling him "Ping," after a friend of the family. This nickname was reinforced during his baseball career. It was said that he swung so hard that when his bat met with a pitch it gave forth a distinctive *ping* sound. Thus, Franceto Pezzola went through life as "Ping" Bodie.

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APPENDIX

Name	Career Dates	Place Nickname	Type of Place
Players With Nicknames Referring To Places Outside of The United States			
1. George Smith	1884-98	"Germany"	country - Germany
He was of German descent.			
2. Herman Long	1889-1904	"Germany"	country - Germany
He was of German descent.			
3. William Douglas	1896-1904	"Klondike"	region - Canada
Origin undiscovered at present.			
4. Herman Schaeffer	1901-18	"Germany"	country - Germany
He was of German descent.			
5. Harry Kane	1902-06	"Klondike"	region - Canada
Origin undiscovered at present.			
6. Armstrong Smith	1912	"Klondike"	region - Canada
Origin undiscovered at present.			
7. Joseph Schultz	1912-25	"Germany"	country - Germany
He was of German descent.			
8. Adolpho Lugue	1914-35	"The Pride of Havana"	city - Cuba
He was born and raised in Havana, Cuba.			
9. Benjamin Valenzuela	1958	"Mex"	country - Mexico
Born and raised in Los Mochis, Mexico. Also called "Papelero."			
10. Juan Marichal	1960-73	"The Dominican Dandy"	country - Domin.Repub.
He was born and raised in the Dominican Republic.			

Players With Nicknames Referring To Places In The Eastern Section of The United States			
1. John Farrel	1874	"Hartford Jack"	city - Connecticut
He was born in Hartford, CT.			
2. Charles Farrell	1888-1905	"The Duke of Marlboro"	town - Massachusetts
In 1891 in an exhibition game he was introduced as "Now Batting, 'The Duke of Marlboro.'"			
3. Charles Reilly	1889-97	"Princeton Charlie"	college - New Jersey
He was from New Brunswick, NJ, and attended Princeton University. On April 29, 1892, he became the first pinch hitter in major league history.			
4. William Murphy	1894-97	"Yale"	college - Connecticut
He attended Yale University.			
5. Alexander Smith	1897-1906	"Broadway"	street - New York
He was known to be street-wise and a dapper dresser who was frequently seen placing bets on horse races.			
6. Edward Plank	1901-17	"Gettysburg Eddie"	town - Pennsylvania
He was born and raised in Gettysburg, PA, attended Gettysburg College, and worked at the Civil War battlefield in off season.			
7. Edward Grant	1905-15	"Harvard Eddie"	college - Massachusetts
He attended Harvard University. During WWI he was killed during the battle of the Argonne Forest.			

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8. John Coombs 1906-20 "Colby Jack" college - Maine
He attended Colby College in Waterville, ME.
9. Ezra Midkiff 1909-13 "Salt Rock" town - West Virginia
He made his home in Salt Rock, WV.
10. Herbert Pennock 1912-34 "The Knight of Kennett" town - Pennsylvania
He was born and raised in and was the pride of Kennett Square, PA.
11. George Henry Burns 1914-29 "Tioga George" street - Philadelphia
He lived on Tioga Street in North Philadelphia when he was playing for the Philadelphia Athletics. The nickname was used to distinguish him from a contemporary player, George Joseph Burns.
12. George Allen Smith 1916-23 "Columbia George" college - New York
He was nicknamed by a sports writer because he had attended Columbia University.
13. Hugh McQuillan 1918-27 "The Astoria Eagle" town - New York
He came from Astoria, LI, the home of early movie studios. He was also called "Handsome Hugh" because of his good looks.
14. Joseph Kiefer 1920-26 "Harlem Joe" city - New York
He came from New York City. He was a pitcher with a live fastball and was also called "Smoke."
15. Henry Gehrig 1933-39 "Columbia Lou" college - New York
He attended Columbia University. In his early years he was called "Buster," and "Biscuit Pants" by his New York Yankee teammates. His most enduring nickname is "Iron Horse" referring to his record of 2,130 consecutive games played. "Iron Horse" was a term used to describe early steam locomotives.
16. Kenneth James 1924-30 "Broadway" street - New York
He was known as a playboy. "Broadway" refers to his love of night life.
17. Joseph Stripp 1923-38 "Jersey Joe" state - New Jersey
His home was Harrison, NJ.
18. Lynford Larry 1929-40 "Broadway" street - New York
He was a lover of night life.
19. William Schuster 1937-45 "Broadway" street - New York
He was a lover of night life. He was well known for his off-the-field antics and sometimes called "Monkey On A String." Schuster was also called "Saber" because of his loud yell, which reminded people of the jungle character Saber's call to elephants.
20. Charles Wagner 1938-46 "Broadway" street - New York
He was a fancy dresser who set the fashion pace for his teammates before WWII.
21. Albert Flair 1941 "Broadway" street - New York
He was known as a womanizer and liked the night life.
22. Carl Furillo 1946-60 "The Reading Rifle" city - Pennsylvania
He had a very strong throwing arm. He received the nickname while playing for Reading, PA, in the Eastern League. He was credited with throwing out six runners at first base while playing right field. He was also called "Skoonj," an Italian word which in his case meant snail. He was very slow on the base paths.
23. Victor Raschi 1946-55 "The Springfield Rifle" city - Massachusetts
His home was Springfield, MA. As a pitcher he was known for his fastball.
24. Robert Thompson 1946-60 "The Staten Island Scot" city - New York
He was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, but grew up in Staten Island, NY.

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25. Frank Shea 1947-55 "Naugatuck Nugget" town - Connecticut
His home was Naugatuck, CT. Nugget refers to his value. He received the nickname during an outstanding rookie season. Shea had a speckled and freckled face, and he was often called "Spec" or "Specs."
26. Walter Dropo 1949-61 "Moose" town - Connecticut
He was from Mossup, CT. Dropo was 6'5" tall and weighed in excess of 225 pounds. This reinforced the nickname.

Players With Nicknames Referring To The Midwestern Section of The United States

1. Amos Rusie 1889-1901 "Hoosier Thunderbolt" state - Indiana
He made his home in Indiana. As a pitcher he threw so hard that fans wondered why his arm did not come flying off after the ball.
2. James Hughey 1891-1900 "Cold Water Jim" town - Michigan
He was born and raised in Cold Water, MI.
3. Robert Denzer 1897-1901 "Peaceful Valley" region - Minnesota
He was born and raised in Le Sueur, MN, which is in the Peaceful Valley.
4. Elmer Flick 1898-1910 "Bedford Sheriff" town - Ohio
He was born and raised in Bedford, OH. Called Sheriff by teammates for no apparent reason.
5. Samuel Leever 1898-1910 "The Goshen Schoolmaster" town - Ohio
In the off-season he was a school teacher in Goshen, OH.
6. Samuel Cranford 1899-1917 "Wahoo Sam" town - Nebraska
He was born and raised in Wahoo, NE. He insisted that his nickname be placed on his plaque at the Hall of Fame.
7. Roy Patterson 1901-07 "St. Croix Boy Wonder" town - Wisconsin
He was raised in St. Croix, WI, where he started his career as a pitcher at an early age.
8. George Mullin 1902-15 "Wabash George" town - Indiana
His home was in Wabash, IN.
9. William Rariden 1909-20 "Bedford Bill" town - Indiana
He was born and raised in Bedford, IN.
10. Edward Wright 1916 "Ceylon" town - Minnesota
He was raised in Ceylon, MN.
11. Charles Stengel 1919-25 "Casey" city - Kansas City
Stengel was from Kansas City. At the start of his professional career, when asked where he was from, he said, "K.C." The nickname "KC" eventually evolved in print as "Casey." During his long managerial career he was called "The Old Professor."
12. Henry Meine 1922-34 "The Count of Luxemburg" town - Missouri
His home was in Luxemburg, MO. "Count" refers to his royal pitching.
13. Mickey Mantle 1951-68 "The Commerce Comet" town - Oklahoma
He grew up in Commerce OK. In 1950 his long home runs for Joplin, MO, in the Western Association were called "Comets."
14. Robert Anderson 1957-65 "Hammond Hummer" city - Indiana
He was born and raised in the East Chicago-Hammond, IN, area. "Hummer" refers to fast ball.
15. Lu Clinton 1960-67 "Ponca City Lou" town - Oklahoma
He was born in Ponca City, OK.

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Players With Nicknames Referring To Places In The Western and Northwestern Sections of The United States

1. James Scott 1909-17 "Death Valley Jim" region - California
He was nicknamed after "Death Valley Scotty" a famous character of the California desert.
2. William Henry James 1911-19 "Portland Bill" city - Oregon
He pitched for Portland of the Pacific Coast League at the same time William Lawrence James was pitching for Seattle. The nickname was used to distinguish between them.
3. William Dell 1912-17 "Wheezer" town - Idaho
He grew up in the town of Weiser, ID.
4. William Lawrence 1913-19 "Seattle Bill" city - Washington
He pitched for Seattle of the Pacific Coast League at the same time William Henry James pitched for Portland. The nickname was used to distinguish between them.
5. John Williams 1914 "Honolulu Johnny" city - Hawaii
He was born and raised in Honolulu, HI, and was one of the first players from the islands.
6. Douglass Taitt 1928-32 "Poco" town - Idaho
In the minor leagues he once played for a team in Pocatello, ID.
7. Edward Heusser 1935-48 "The Wild Elk of the Wassatch" region - Utah
His home was in Murray, UT, near the Wassatch Mountain Range. Johnny Martin, a contemporary player whose primary nickname was "Pepper" was called "The Wild Hoss of the Osage." Heusser's nickname is a take-off from that one.
8. Clifford Torgeson 1947-61 "The Earl of Snohomish" town - Washington
His hometown was Snohomish, WA, and his middle name was Earl.
9. Johnnie Seale 1964-65 "Durango Kid" town - Colorado
As a kid he lived in Durango, CO.

Players With Nicknames Referring To Places In The Southern Section of The United States

1. Frank Hoffman 1888 "The Texas Wonder" state - Texas
He was born in Houston, TX.
2. Samuel Strang 1896-1908 "The Dixie Thrush" region - South
He was born, raised, and made his home in Chattanooga, TN.
3. John McMakin 1902 "Spartanburg John" city - South Carolina
He was born and raised in Spartanburg, SC.
4. Howard Camnitz 1904-15 "Kentucky Rosebud" state - Kentucky
He was born and raised in McKinney, KY. Rosebud refers to his red hair.
5. Tyrus Cobb 1905-28 "The Georgia Peach" state - Georgia
He was born and raised in Georgia, the "Peach State." The nickname was given to Cobb by the sportswriter Joe H. Jackson of the *Detroit Free Press* during spring training in 1906.
6. Ross Erwin 1907-14 "Tex" state - Texas
He was born in Forney, TX.
7. John Never 1907 "Tex" state - Texas
Origin at present undiscovered.
8. Charles Pruiett 1907-09 "Tex" state - Texas
He played in the Texas League.

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9. Jack Ryan 1908-11 "Gulfport" town - Mississippi
He grew up in Gulfport, MS.
10. Ewart Walker 1909-12 "Dixie" region - South
He was from the South, living in Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama. He received his nickname while playing for Zanesville, OH, in 1909 when a morning newspaper headline read "Dixie Walker Pitches Today."
11. Joseph McDonald 1910 "Tex" state - Texas
He was born in Galveston, TX.
12. William Covington 1911-12 "Tex" state - Texas
He grew up in Texas.
13. William R. Jones 1911 "Tex" state - Texas
He was thought to have the size and build of a Texan.
14. Herbert Perdue 1911-15 "The Gallatin Squash" town - Tennessee
He grew up in Gallatin, TN.
15. Frank Davis 1912-26 "Dixie" region - South
He was born in Wilson Mills, NC.
16. Charles McDonald 1912-15 "Tex" state - Texas
He was born in Farmersville, TX.
17. James Walker 1912-22 "Dixie" region - South
He was born in Lawrenceburg, TN.
18. Erenie Herbert 1913-15 "Tex" state - Texas
He grew up in Texas.
19. Adam Johnson 1914-18 "Tex" state - Texas
He was born in Burnet, TX.
20. Guy Morton, Sr. 1914-24 "Alabama Blossom" state - Alabama
He was born and raised in Vernon, AL.
21. George Wisterzil 1914-15 "Tex" state - Texas
He grew up in the state of Texas.
22. Edward Hoffman 1915 "Tex" state - Texas
He was born and raised in San Antonio, TX.
23. Dorsey Carroll 1919 "Dixie" region - South
He was born in Paducah, KY.
24. William Harriss 1920-28 "Texas Ranger" state - Texas
He was born in Brownsville, TX. The "Ranger" referred to his build, 6'6", 180 pounds.
25. Gordon Leverett 1922-29 "Dixie" region - South
He was born in Georgetown, TX.
26. Guy Bush 1923-45 "Mississippi Mudcat" state - Mississippi
He was raised on a Mississippi plantation. "Mudcat" refers to the catfish that live in the muddy streams of Mississippi.
27. Charles Lucas 1923-38 "The Nashville Narcissus" state - Tennessee
He was from Nashville, TN.
28. Theodore Lyons 1923-38 "Tex" state - Texas
He was not from the state of Texas. Lyons was nicknamed by sportswriter Malcolm Maclean in 1923 when he was unable to discover his first name in time to make a column deadline.
29. Douglas Parker 1923 "Dixie" region - South
He was born and raised in Forest Home, AL.

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30. William Terry 1923-36 "Memphis Bill" city - Tennessee
He made his home in Memphis, TN.
31. Earle Combs 1924-35 "The Kentucky Colonel" state - Kentucky
He was born in Peabworth, KY. He was also called "The Southern Gentleman" because he did not smoke, drink, or use profanity. "Mail Carrier" and "Waiter" were two other nicknames. The former referred to his speed and the latter because he was so often on base waiting for his Yankee teammates to drive him home.
32. Clyde Day 1924-31 "Pea Ridge" town - Arkansas
His hometown was Pea Ridge, AR. Day was sometimes called "Hog" because after he struck out a batter for the last out of an inning, he would let loose with an ear splitting hog call.
33. Gomer Wilson 1924 "Tex" state - Texas
He was born in Trenton, TX.
34. Ernest Vache 1925 "Tex" state - Texas
He played in the Texas League before the major leagues.
35. Sidney Womack 1926 "Tex" state - Texas
He grew up in Texas.
36. Joe Moore 1930-41 "The Gause Ghost" town - Texas
He was born in Gause, TX.
37. Lonnie Warneke 1930-45 "The Arkansas Humming Bird" state - Arkansas
He was born in Mt. Ida, AR. A St. Louis sportswriter impressed with his lively fastball and darting form of delivery gave him his nickname.
38. Fred Walker 1931-49 "Dixie" region - South
He was born in Villa Rica, GA, the son of major league Ewart Walker from whom he inherited the nickname "Dixie." He was also called "The People's Cherce" by admiring Brooklyn fans.
39. James Carlton 1932-40 "Tex" state - Texas
He was born in Commanche, TX, and was nicknamed by baseball historian Ernest Lanigan in 1926.
40. Joseph Vaughan 1932-48 "Arky" state - Arkansas
He was born in Clifty, AR, and acquired his nickname at age four.
41. Wedo Martini 1935 "Southern" region - South
He was born in Birmingham, AL.
42. Paul Kardow 1936 "Tex" state - Texas
He was born in Humble, TX.
43. Lloyd Russell 1938 "Tex" state - Texas
He grew up in the state of Texas.
44. Edward Parsons 1939-43 "Dixie" region - South
He was born and raised in Talladega, AL. In addition, the fact that his middle name is Dixon led Beaumont, TX, sportswriter Tiny Shurlock to nickname him "Dixie" in 1939.
45. Carvel Rowell 1939-48 "Bama" state - Alabama
He was born in Citronelle, AL.
46. Eric Tipton 1939-45 "Dukie" college - Duke
He attended Duke University in North Carolina. He was also called "Blue Devil," from the nickname of Duke's athletic teams.
47. John Rucker 1940-46 "The Crabapple" town - Georgia
He was born in Crabapple, GA, and was known for his speed.

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48. Cecil Hughson 1941-49 "Tex" state - Texas
He was born in Kyle, TX.
49. Alvis Shirley 1941-46 "Tex" state - Texas
He was born in Birthright, TX.
50. William Voiselle 1942-50 "Ninety-Six" town - South Carolina
He grew up in Ninety Six, SC. The nickname but not the town is hyphenated.
He was 6'4" and weighed over 200 pounds and was also called "Big Bill." It
is not surprising that his uniform number was 96.
51. John Krause 1943-46 "Texas Jack" state - Texas
He was born in San Antonio, TX.
52. Clint Hartung 1947-52 "The Hondo Hurricane" town - Texas
He was born in Hondo, TX, and nicknamed by sportswriters. Hartung had
angular ears and was also called "Floppy."
53. Homer Howell 1947-56 "Dixie" region - South
He was born in Louisville, KY.
54. Gus Zernial 1949-59 "Ozark Ike" region - South
He was born in Beaumont, TX, but was nicknamed by sportswriter Fred
Harvey of the Hollywood Stars of the Pacific Coast League after the rustic
cartoon character whom he resembled.
55. Murray Wall 1950-59 "Tex" state - Texas
He was born in Dallas, TX.
56. Roland Hoyle 1952 "Tex" state - Texas
Origin undiscovered at present.
57. Wilmer Mizell 1952-62 "Vinegar" town - Alabama
He was raised in Vinegar Bend, AL.
58. Roy Upright 1953 "Dixie" region - South
He was born in Kannapolis, NC.
59. Robert Nelson 1955-57 "Tex" state- Texas
He was born in Dallas, TX. He was also called "Babe."
60. James Kern 1974-84 "Texas Tornado" state - Texas
He pitched in the Texas League during his minor league career. "Tornado"
refers to his fast ball. Kern was 6'5" and weighed 185 pounds. He was also
called "Emu" because he resembled an over-sized bird. His off-the-field
antics led to the nickname of "Airhead."
61. Ronald Guidry 1975-88 "Louisiana Lightning" state - Louisiana
He was born and raised in Carencero, LA. "Lightning" refers to his fastball.
He is also called "Gator."
62. Roger Clemens 1985 - "Big Tex" state - Texas
He played college baseball at the University of Texas; he stands 6'4" and
weighs 230 pounds.