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Nicknames and Surnames: Neglected Origins of Family Names, Especially Surnames Derived from Inn Signs

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Abstract

Surnames come from more diverse sources than are recognized in the four categories set out by Elsdon Smith (in his *New Dictionary of American Family Names*). Among these are surnames from women's given names and occupations as well as from men's and, especially, surnames not only from personal nicknames but also from the nicknames of places and inn signs.

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... from another house I take my name,
An house of ancient fame....
(Edmund Spenser, *Prothalamion*)

"Names are not just arbitrary symbols," Paul Leslie and James Skipper write in a special issue of *Names* devoted to personal nicknames; "they signify status, achievement, privilege, and meaningful social organization" (273). Nicknames are much the same, and they extend beyond the obvious ones of personal life such as *Fatso, Stinky*, or *Shorty* and the not so obvious ones such as *Pincher* (inevitable with *Martin*) and the nicknames of characters in literature and folklore, like *The Artful Dodger* and *Joe Sixpack*. There are also nicknames for places: countries (*John Bull's Other Island*), parts of countries (*The Sun Belt*), neighborhoods (*Chinatown*) and smaller units (*The Great White Way, Skid Row, Bughouse Square*). We nickname all sorts of people, places, and things, from sports teams (*The Fighting Irish*) to regiments (*The Old and Bold*), but most scholarship, whether in linguistics or in psychology, has been devoted to nicknames as additional names for individuals.[2]

In the introduction to his annotated bibliography of personal nicknames, Edwin Lawson notes:

> Many of our surnames, by some estimates as many as 25 percent, were originally nicknames. Thus the names *Read, Reed,* or *Reid* all referred originally to a man with red hair or ruddy complexion; *Gross* was a nickname for a fat man; *Longfellow,* for a tall man; and *Loud,* a noisy person. Some nicknames that became surnames go back to the eleventh century. (323)

Lawson's annotations to *A Dictionary of Surnames,* by Patrick Hanks and Flavia Hodges, cite *Kozlov* (from Russian for "goat") and *Prowse* (from Middle English for "redoubtable warrior") and to *A Dictionary of British Surnames,* by P. H. Reaney, *Chaffin* 'bald' and *Gutsell* 'good soul' as examples of the many nickname surnames.

In this paper I take all of my examples of surnames derived from nicknames from Elsdon Smith's *New Dictionary of American Family Names* because it deals with surnames which, though derived from many countries, are all more or less common in the Americas. There is, inevitably perhaps, some disagreement about origins or meanings of many surnames, but this is not the place to debate cases where Hanks and Hodges, Reaney, and others may contradict Smith. In the case of certain non-English surnames, I have checked Smith's entries against several specialized dictionaries.[3]

In the preface to his dictionary, Smith describes the standard categories of surname origins:

> Practically all of the European family names were derived in one or another of the following four ways: I. From the man's place of residence, either present or past; II. From the man's occupation; III. From the father's name; IV. From a descriptive nickname. (xiv)

This paper will suggest that surnames deriving from nicknames, when more fully understood, demand the revision of these categories in some particulars. Further, it will argue specifically that the surname derived "from a descriptive nickname" is too often taken to suggest personal nicknames and underestimates the importance of surnames derived from nicknames of places rather than individuals. What we must awkwardly call "placename nickname surnames," for want of a better term now, have not been given significant attention in the rather inadequate scholarship on nicknames, scholarship in which nicknames have too often been confused with shortened names and affectionate names.

We commence with Category I, the source of such names as *Jack London, Isaiah Berlin,* and—what might pass as a surname—*Giraldus Cambrensis.* It needs to be said that "Jack of London" is rather close in

its "added name" (French *surnom*, Old English *eke name*) to the naming device seen in *Minnesota Fats, Tennessee Williams*, and *The Cisco Kid*. Surnames and forenames (*Florence*, for instance) can both derive from placenames. When a placename becomes a forename, things are clear; things are less clear when a placename is added to a forename as a distinguishing feature. There is a continuum rather than a sharp distinction between *eke name* (nickname) and *surnom* (surname). It may be that we cannot call a name a surname until it has been inherited by people for whom it cannot possibly function as a descriptive nickname.

Category II, "the man's occupation," must be challenged. It is the woman's occupation that gave us such surnames as *Baxter, Dempster*, and *Webster*. Nor is it clear in names such as *Curtis* that only a man could have been "short" or "courteous," any more than it is certain that *Curtis* belongs in Category II (occupation: "of the court") rather than in Category IV (descriptive nickname).

Category III must be revised, for it is the mother's and not the father's name that produced (from *Elizabeth*) *Bibbs* and *Betty* or (from *Barbara*) *Babb, Babe, Babcock, Babson, Baby*, maybe *Babbitt* (which Sinclair Lewis got into the dictionary, many surnames as well as forenames becoming ordinary words). Some female forenames are used unchanged as surnames (*Beatrice, Bertha*) and others are sightly changed (Polish *Betka* from some Elizabeth and Norwegian *Ibsen* from some Isabelle). We cannot always immediately notice a female parental name (patronymic is an incorrect term here) in *Bell* or *Bellini* (perhaps from some Annabelle or Isabelle), *Anson* (Anne's son), *Moult* (Maude's son), or *Maggott* (Marguerite's son), while *Polson* may be either Paul's son or Polly's son (*Polly* being a nickname too). There are Poles named *Lenetsky* (Lena's son) and Jews named *Gittleson* and *Raskin* (Rachel's son). In fact, Jewish law used to require illegitimate children to bear not their father's name but *ben* 'son of' or *bat* 'daughter of' followed by the mother's forename. There are, of course, plenty of patronymics: *Johnson, Jones, Jenkins* and such with *-son, -sen, -vitch, -wicz, -ian, -ez, -off, -ov, -ski*, and so on. Not as obvious as *Richards* or *Richardson* are surnames derived from the nicknames of Richards: *Dick, Dicks, Dickens, Dickenson, Dickison, Dickson, Dix, Dixon, Hickey, Hicks, Hickson, Higgins, Higgs, Hitchens, Pritchet(t)*, and *Rix*.

Pet names of the father supplied surnames. For example, from *Bartholomew* came such surnames as *Bard* and *Bart*; *Banach, Barkowiak, Bartkowicz*, and *Bartkiewicz* in Polish; *Bartkus* in Lithuanian; *Bartke* and similar forms in German; *Bartos* in Czech and Hungarian; etc. The com-

monest pet name for the son of *X* was *Little X*. Thus *Adam* gave rise to *Aiken, Aikin, Aitken, Akin, Akins, Atkinson*, and the name synonymous with the British soldier (*Tommy Atkins* was the sample name on the Victorian recruiting form). *Adams* and *Adamson* were joined by *Atchinson, Atchison, Alley, Allie, Adcock, Adducci, Addis*, and more. Other "Little X" surnames are *Allison* (which may come from a male named *Alexander* or a female named *Alice*), *Ames* (from *Amery*), *Ablin* and *Appling*, etc. (from *Abel*), *Armijo* (from *Hermengildo*), *Azzarello* (from *Galeazzo*). Some are surprising, like *Bidault* and *Bieschke* from some Peter, the English equivalent being *Peterkin* and the French *Biro*. *Brose* (*Ambrose*) and *Braham* (*Abraham*) show the language at work, but so do *Bogus, Bramlet, Bramson, Balducci, Baldino, Bardo, Basso, Bartolini, Bates, Benda, Benz*, and *Bean* and *Beene* (both from some Benedict or other Ben). Sometimes the father's full forename is lost, but we can see Teutonic forename elements enough in the following to determine they came from pet patronymics: *Bade, Bode, Bahnsen, Bartz, Bechtell, Beilke, Berlowitz, Berth, Bill, Billow, Bock, Bodtke, Boeing, Bohnen, Bold, Bonnell*, and *Bugge*.

The actual ancestor's forename is lost in *Mac Astasney* (Gaelic *Mac an tSasanaigh* 'son of the Englishman'), *Mangan* 'grandson of the little hairy man,' *Logan* 'grandson of the little weak man.' Irish names can reflect son (*Mac, Mc, M'*) as well as grandson (*O*, formerly *au*), just as people descended from some "old-womanish" person (Russian *Babich* and *Mirkin*) or deformed person (*Cudlip* for a hare-lip, *Bunche* for a hunchback) may have received names that did not describe them at all. An Italian inheriting *Maniaci* did not have to be a maniac, nor an Irish *Boyle* be connected with any "vain pledge." Nor did *Bowie* 'little *buagh*' or 'little victor' have to have the forename of his ancestor.

Do we not need another word than *patronymic* to describe a surname that does not actually tell us the ancestor's name? Edward MacLysaght cites many Irish examples, including the "dark strangers" from whom *Doyle* and *MacDowell* were named, the "hard hero" of *Crowley*, alongside *Quaid* or "little Walter" and the *ruadh* or "red" *Roe*. Maybe we even need a word that distinguishes between the ancestor's real name and his nickname which, Maclysaght says, in some cases replaced the surname with the likes of "*bán* (white) ... *laódir* Lawder" (9). Do we not need to say *parental name* rather than *patronymic* for the likes of *Maryanski* or *Rifkin*, the surnames deriving from mothers, not fathers?

Sometimes we get the wrong meaning for the likes of *Mailman* 'tenant farmer' or 'enameler's assistant' or *Teachout* (from the French

for "little blemish") or *Quirk* (Irish for "descendant of the bushy-haired man" or perhaps "Heart's grandson"). We may miss the correct nationality of the likes of *Body* (Hungarian "man from the meadow") or *Blood* (Welsh *ap Lloyd* 'son of the grey one.' Some Norman who had the habit of swearing *par Dieu* gave us both *Bigod* and the series *Pardo(e), Pardue, Purdue, Purdie, Purdy*. We must be able to distinguish between *Farr* from the place in Sutherland (where it means "passage") and *Farr* from an English inn sign of the bull (or maybe the boar). We must get our categories and such terms as *patronymic* straight as well.

Category IV is "from a descriptive nickname." Here I venture to introduce a new idea which goes beyond the likes of French *Bleriot* 'badger' or Italian *Pinnatu* 'hairless' or *Drinkwater, Bevilaqua, Boileau, Trinkwasser*, etc. This category usually is filled by names relating to personal appearance (*Short, Cade* 'lumpy,' *Dziubczynski* 'birdbeak,' *Baines* or *Czyzewski* for a blond) or clothes (Spanish *Capa*, Italian *Scarlatti*, or English *Cashman*, when referring to a wearer of, rather than a maker of, leg armor) or manner (*Strangeways*, Russian *Barsky* 'lordly,' perhaps in derision, or Dutch *Bose* 'quarrelsome'). It can get confused with occupation names: did *Cuttle* wear or make coats of mail? I suggest it can also be associated with the most common source of British surnames, namely surnames from placenames. Think of the possibility of nicknames (rather than particular names) of places.

A person's place of residence may not have been given a toponym but only a descriptor. A man named *Denver* can trace his ancestor to a single place, a place in Norfolk where "the Danes came through." But an *Ashley* might come from any one of a number of places with that toponym or from a place with quite another name—or no official name at all, just a place with one or more ash trees in a meadow. *Denver* is one named place. *Ashley* may be one of a number of named or unnamed places. But *Atwater* is just some unnamed place by the water, the name of that water being unspecified. I would say that *Atwater* is a nickname for a place rather than a placename per se. To that I could add *Brook(s), Crawford* (a "crow ford," harder to identify when altered to *Crofutt* or *Crowfoot*), French *Rivière* (Englished as *Revere* sometimes) and *Fontaine*, Italian *LaGuardia* (when no specific "outpost") and *Bacchi* 'stepping stones in the water,' Russian *Brodsky* 'ford,' Dutch *van der Meer* and *ten Broek* 'marsh,' not 'brook,' etc. John who lived at the well was *John Atwell*, though the well may have had a name, now lost. This was a nickname as surely as *Peabody* (for a man decked out too showily, like a

peacock) or *Balfe* 'stammerer' or Spanish *Sarro* 'yellow teeth' or English *Bashfull* (when it is not the toponymic *Bashfield* 'field near a stream,' in disguise) or *Boykin* 'little lad' or French *Beaudry* 'commanding presence.' Irish examples can be especially misleading: consider *Clone* 'meadow,' *Downs* 'fort,' and *Geenoge* 'sunny little spot.' In other languages we have French *Chennault* 'irrigation canal,' German *Althaus* 'old house' and *Hegel* 'hedge,' German *Brandeis* and Norwegian *Brenna* (both for "land cleared by burning").

Scholars have taken some interest in surnames derived from toponyms as evidence of population shifts and settlement patterns. They ought now to consider what information about where people lived or what they considered to be important landmarks is contained in names such as *Bridge(s), Ford,* and *Meadows,* It is remarkable, for instance, how certain kinds of trees are singled out for notice in certain cultures and how people were named for trees and even bushes near where they lived: *Applebaum, Applegate, Askelund, Aspinall, Berkhout, Bessette, Bjørk, Bokowski, Boom, Bosch, Bosco, Brahms, Bysshe, Castagna, Chase, Cizek, Cormier,* all the way down the alphabet to *Wood(s)*. True, we always must be careful not to jump to conclusions about surnames. *Bush* might be an Americanization of some quite different foreign name. It may come from the trade of wine merchant—"a good wine needs no bush" is an old proverb that recalls ancient advertising methods—as easily as from the bushes seen also in misleading names such as *Bushell(e)*, which is the same as French *Bussell* or *Boisel* 'small wood,' and has no relation to a unit of volume measurement as *Jubbins* and other surnames do. Some names can be variously translated: Portuguese *Costa* can be "coast" or "hillside." English *Satterfield* may mean the original bearer of the name lived in or near a hill pasture or in a hut on open country or in or near a field where robbers gathered. *Saturday* is not a nickname surname but *Statterleigh* (a Devon placename) altered. *Taws* is the son of Thomas, *Tempkin* of *Timothy, Tennyson* of Dennis, *Terry* of Terrence, *Thoreau* of Matthew.

Fully aware of language change and also of the fact that even when the correct surname points to a possible origin on medieval inn signs we must recognize that a name can also have other possible explanations, I want to devote the rest of this paper to an examination of a neglected source of surnames: the signs that were placed in a largely illiterate age to designate public houses (as signs also designated other business premises, whence the name *Scheer* 'shears' where one otherwise might have had *Schneider*, our *Taylor*). In an earlier paper ("If Your Wife") I

discussed the names of English inns (and alterations such as *Elephant and Castle* from *Infanta de Castille, Cat and Fiddle* from *Caton Fidèle*, and even in English *Bag o' Nails* from *Bacchanals* and *Goat and Compasses* from *God Encompasses Us*). This paper will conclude with a study of surnames form inn signs, both clear (such as *Crowninshield* and *Rothschild*) and not so clear.

We need but mention that inn signs can tell us a great deal in semiotics of the culture of their period through their displays of icons of religion, heraldry, and other medieval concerns. There was evidence, for instance, of the cult of Mariology (until the Puritans destroyed or distorted such images) and "the boast of heraldry" (sometimes with canting coats such as the shells of *Shelley* or the rebus of the bolt and tun for *Bolton*) and the folklore attached to animals (from which may derive such surnames as English *Suggs* 'sow,' German *Pelikan* as a symbol of self-sacrifice, Estonian *Rebane* as one of many versions of the sly fox when not simply a symbol of the foxhunt, French *Ratinaud* 'little rat,' and Polish and Ukrainian *Zuk* 'beetle').

It is true that such names as *Rose, Crown*, and *Swan* may have other explanations, but inn signs are a source of at least some examples of (say) *Cheever, Lamb*, or *Vitelli*, while the keeping of actual animals explains other instances. Though we can never be certain in individual cases, we can be assured that animals on inn signs (just one of their many charges, some heraldic and mythical, some real) gave rise to surnames in a considerable number of cases. In all surname study there must be some uncertainty, whether of the actual names of the Scottish *Frazier* (from Friesland) or Irish *Gallagher* 'foreign help,' whether we can tell what tricks the Polish *Domanski* was up to or why some Ukrainian named *Burian* lived among "weeds." We can never be sure why some *Speight(s)* reminded someone of a woodpecker or why some Italian was called *Spina* (because that's a pet form of *Crispino*? because he was morose and sullen? because he lived near a thorn tree? because he lived near an inn with a sign of a porcupine from some noble's arms? because of some *nolo me tangere* message?).

Sometimes the animals-on-signs connections are less than straightforward. An *Acorn* may suggest the thrift of squirrels, an *Agar* the speed of a greyhound. *Beaver* may also be French *Beauvoir* in the nation that made *Shotover* out of *Chateau Vert* and *Buckley* out of *Beauclerc*. Or *Beaver* can be from Welsh *ap Ivor*. *Bracket(t)* can be a little hunting dog and *Bullet(t)* a small bull, while *Catlet(t)* can be a small

cat or derived from the feminine forename *Catherine* (like *Catlin, Catron, Catterson*). *Conway* is "yellow hound" when not a placename or personal name from Welsh or Irish. There are hundreds of animal names (such as *Colfax* 'black fox' and German *Zipp* 'thrush') and an unspecifiable number must be from inn signs.

Take birds, common in heraldry. Think of the double-headed eagle—there was an English inn with the sign of a double-headed swan, because it had stocks right in front of it—and martlet as the sign of the fourth son (because martlets were popularly believed never to stop flying and were depicted in heraldry without feet, with "nothing to stand on," like a non-inheriting fourth son). Birds were also common in nature, hunted and kept as poultry or pets. Thus English surnames include *Bird, Byrd, Bunting* 'finch,' *Coe* 'jackdaw,' *Corbett* and *Corban* and *Corbin* and *Corbyn* (reminding us that the name for raven could, like so many other names, be spelled in a variety of ways and come to us from other languages as well, as witness *Braine* from *bran* in Irish). There were *Coutts* 'coot,' *Crain* and *Crane, Crow(e), Culver* 'dove,' and so on down to Wren(n).

German bird names include *Adler* and *Ahrens* 'eagle,' *Amsel* 'blackbird,' *Astor* 'hawk,' also used in English for someone born at Easter, as an Italian might be *Pasquale*), etc., but German inn signs liked to stress animals such as the bear (*Baar, Baer, Behnke, Beehren, Berendt, Bradtke, Bruin*, even *Berliner* when it refers to "little bear" and not the city) as did the British (the Manners arms are a bear rampant with the crest of a bear erased—cut off at the waist—for the motto "Bear and Forbear"). German surnames may hide inn-sign origins in some examples like *Auer* 'bison,' *Bickle* 'pickaxe,' *Blum(e)* 'flower,' *Brodkorb* 'bread basket,' *Uhr* 'aurochs.' What appears upon a nation's inn signs is important cultural information, and names need to be studied for the clues they can give sociologists and historians. These facts are as significant as the importance of placenames in English surnames, the Italian propensity to mock physical deformity in surnames, the French ironic insults in surnames, and other national characteristics.

French inn signs gave us some people named *Agnew* 'lamb' (the *Agnus Dei* being a fairly common sign), *Cabot* 'miller's thumb' (a fish, as English has *Herring, Trout*, etc.), *Cerf* 'hart' (some Jews translating the German into French), *Cheval(ier)* and *Blanchard* 'white horse,' *Chevrolet* 'little goat.' French surnames are preponderately toponymic, occupational, or ironically complimentary. The use of French in our heraldry both technically (*gules, vair, chevron*) and popularly (a green *roundel* was called a *pomme* 'apple')

introduced into England soon after surnames (in the "second quarter of the twelfth century" [MacKinnon 9]) and French names for heraldic charges, etc., may have contributed some of our surnames. But others, like Spanish *Aquila* 'eagle' and *Belasco* (for a black bird, maybe a raven) or Portuguese *Coelho* 'rabbit,' may be animal nicknames given for other reasons.

Italian nickname surnames include some from inn signs. They get lost in the welter of insulting names (*Malatesta* 'bad head' rather like *Kennedy* and *Cabozzo*, suggesting our expression "touched in the head"; *Maldonato* means "badly given" and not to be confused with *Maldonado*, which comes from *Macdonald* and was used by Italians for a Scot of any surname). Insults go along with the common physical descriptions (*Ciampa* is "Lefty," common in every language including Hungarian, where it is *Balogh*; and *Rossi* or *Russo* 'red,' the commonest Italian surname because the commonest departure there from the brunette, which is widely noted in names such as English *Brown* and *Black*, Spanish *Baez, Cárdenas, Morro* (and less politely *Negrón*), German *Schwartz*, Czech *Cernak* and *Charney*, etc.). Italian surprises with the likes of *Babani* 'crab louse,' *Caparello* 'untidy,' *Malpedio* (probably "lame"), *Villano, Sforza, Boccaccio*, and nicknames like *Sodoma*, but such names are not unheard of elsewhere. Think of French *Bara* 'deceitful,' the "crookedness" noted in Irish *Crimmons* and Scottish *Cameron* and *Campbell*, the insults now disguised by language change in English *Unwin* 'unfriendly' or *Pretty* 'crafty' or by irony in other tongues. Leslie Dunkling comments on surname change (such as *Bugge* to *Howard*) and "the gentlemen called *Bub, Holdwater, Poopy, Piddle, Honeybum, Leakey, Rump* and *Teate*" (83) who changed their names in the last century. Surname change is rarer in some other countries, and so Sicilian still has *Arichiazza* 'big ears,' (Caldiero 218), Italian *Puccio* 'insect,' noted by Gerardi and De Frank 30). Recently, I commented on Emilio de Felice's study of Italian surnames from telephone books, which saw that "nearly one third of all the surnames ... are represented by one subscriber each. Collectors of unique names will have a field day there" (Ashley, *What's in a Name* 40).

Among Eastern European surnames derogatory nicknames abound: Romanian *Fata* 'effeminate,' Polish *Balash* 'beanpole,' Russian *Bulganin* 'scandalous' suggest the norms of the societies involved, important information nicknames always give us even when other names do not. For instance, the objection to "old-womanish" already mentioned is pronounced in Eastern Europe. Witness Polish *Babin*, Ukrainian *Babij*, Russian *Babuch* and their many equivalents. Derogation may be concealed in some animal names: Polish *Szpak* suggests the cunning of starlings and

Czapla the long legs of cranes, just as much as the industry of the beaver may be reflected in *Bibro, Bobrich, Bobroff, Bobrow*, and *Bobrowski*. But what is meant by Polish *Czynk* 'finch' or *Bocian* 'stork,' or *Boba(k)* 'marmot'? Or, for that matter, by Romanian *Balaban* and Italian *Falcone* 'falcon' or oddities such as Russian *Chaiken* 'gull' and Ukrainian *Chrobak* 'worm'? Most of these were probably not from inn signs, but Czech *Čapek* 'stork,' Hungarian *Csillag* 'star,' Russian *Sorokin* and Swiss *Agassis* (both "magpie") may possibly be, so may be English *Gildersleeve* 'gilded sleeve' and the occasional *Talbot* (a kind of dog). These may well come from inn signs, and so may many of the wolves (*Wolf, Wolfe, Woolf, Lopes, Lopez, Lupino*, etc.) and foxes (*Fox, Foxe, Fuchs, Renard, Voss*, etc.).

In surnames derived from nicknames involving animals there is a largely unexplored treasure trove of folklore revealing the qualities attributed to animals, birds, even insects. These significances sometimes led to the depiction of these creatures on inn signs even when heraldry (which also needs to have the folklore and totemic aspects taken into account) did not dictate that. In onomastics we may find the key to problems in many other disciplines, clues uniquely preserved when passing jests were enshrined in inherited, lasting personal names. There is plenty to think about in Spanish *Ortega* 'grouse' and *Raposa* 'sly fox,' Lithuanian *Genys* 'woodpecker,' Ukrainian *Rak* 'crab,' Czech *Mroze* 'whale' as well as the heraldic stag "at graze," the griffin "segreant," the lion "coward" or "couchant."

Though we cannot claim that any specific *Lyons* (say) is from an inn sign, nor indeed that any specific *Loewe* is not a *Levy* altered (for names have been doctored, too, and some *Levy*s became *Halevy*s or even *Offenbach*s), it is certain inn signs did provide some surnames of note. Take the word of the great antiquary and historian William Camden:

> I have heard of them which say they spake of knowledge, that some in late time dwelling at the sign of the Dolphin, Bull, White Horse, Racket, Peacock, etc. were commonly called Thomas at the Dolphin, Will at the Bull, George at the White Horse, Robin at the Racket; which names, as many other of like sort, with omitting at, became afterwards hereditary to their children.

So, as we have *Thomas à Becket* and *Samuel Beckett, Anthony à Wood* and *Grant Wood*, so Mervin at the Griffin may lead to *Merv Griffin* and a dweller at The Snipe bequeath to his progeny the surname *Snite*.

It may be argued that these are close to toponymic names ("place of residence") or even "occupation" names (if the original bearers were

employed at the public houses). However, *The Rose* and *The Bull* are not what we generally call toponyms in the same sense as is *Sevenoaks* (which produced the surname *Snooks*). They are the names of specific locations but more like *Waterous* ("house by the water," see McLure 92) or *Hofstra* ("court" in Dutch, which also gave us *Conover*, altering the equivalent of "cool garden"). They are more to be thought of in terms of nicknames like Italian *Baio* 'bay horse,' *Calandra* 'lark,' *Buongiono* and *Centanni* (for people who often said "Good Morning" or toasted you wishing you "A Hundred Years"). They are in the tradition of *Cicero* 'chickpea' (for someone with warts) or *Ciucci* 'donkey' or *Tuppenny* or *Festa* or *Kiss* (Slavic "small").

Names that can be traced to no specific toponymic name, to no occupation current or obsolete (*Carpenter, Smith, Wright*, and *Latimer, Lorimer*, and all the names that prove the importance once of archery: *Arrowsmith, Bowman, Fletcher, Flower, Stringer*, etc.) or to no formal name of a parent (and that would include *Cass* from *Cassandra* and *Sisson* from *Susan*) have to be regarded as part of the group "from a descriptive nickname." Those nickname surnames deserve more attention. Some, to cite surnames derived from nicknames picked up by playing parts in medieval pageants (*Angell* is but one, and *Tamony* played the little drum in accompaniment), have been totally ignored. Here we have touched on surnames derived from nicknames principally in connection with public houses like *The Bull* and *Le Servin* 'The Lynx' (in France).

In these names we see largely untapped onomastic resources touching the study of genealogy and history, sociology and folklore, and other disciplines outside of linguistics. These names reveal something of the psychology of naming. We have inherited them from our forefathers (and, I must add, our foremothers); they still constitute an integral part of our personal identities and our ethnic heritages. They are intimately connected with ourselves and our roots. They are also evidence of one of the most important facts stressed in the scholarship of Kelsie B. Harder over the years, and that is this: the study of names is not ivory-tower playing with words but significant investigation of human behavior, interdisciplinary and indispensible.

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Notes

1. This is a revised version of a paper read at an American Name Society session at the Modern Language Association meeting in Chicago on December 30, 1990.
2. Notable exceptions are scholarly notes such as those by Brown and Harré.
3. See Benson, Bystrom, Cottle, Davies, Dexter, Dunkling, Franklyn, Fucilla, Grehan, Kaganoff, Kalman, MacLysaght, Matthews, Naumann, Reaney, Unbegaun, and White.

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