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Americanization of European family names in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

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Surnames are often the only constant in a family which otherwise changes its location, its language, its personal names, its occupation, its religion, and its social status. (Saxbe 1998)

The historical background

THE EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT OF North America from the seventeenth century onwards brought immigrants from every part of Europe. Many of them were Protestant Christian religious fundamentals (Puritans, Quakers, Mennonites, and others) driven from their homes by persecution. Later came more orthodox Protestants (Lutherans, Calvinists, Huguenots), settling under the benign auspices of the colonial government, which offered Huguenots (French Protestants) refuge in America from persecution in France, and in the early eighteenth century systematically encouraged emigration of Protestants from Catholic regions of Germany such as the Palatinate. Other early settlers, for example in Virginia and Georgia, had a more mercantile or adventurous motivation, including agriculture on an industrial scale in some areas (cotton, tobacco), and trade and trapping in others. Meanwhile, in Canada and Louisiana the religion of the settlers was Roman Catholic, as of course it was in the Spanish-speaking regions of Texas, Florida, and "south of the border."

In the early days almost all the settlers came from the countries of western Europe. The floods of immigration from central and eastern Europe were a later phenomenon, occurring mainly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The earliest settlements were along the eastern seaboard, later penetrating farther and farther inland, each national group focusing on a particular location or region, often associated with a river,

which provided a means of transport and communication: the French along the St. Lawrence; the Dutch in the Hudson Valley; the Swedes in the Delaware Valley; the Germans in Pennsylvania; and so on. The names of these territories (in English translation) were *New France* (French-speaking Canada), *New Netherland* (the Hudson Valley), and *New Sweden* (the Delaware). Exceptionally, the German-speakers did not establish a territory called *New Germany*, perhaps because Germany itself was so politically fragmented at the time and the German immigrants themselves, from many German-speaking areas, came for a variety of religious and political motives: there was less of a unifying political motivation for German immigrants than there was for the Dutch and French. They made up for the absence of a region called *New Germany*, however, with numerous cities and towns with names such as *New Bern*, *New Brunswick*, *New Palz*, and *Germania*.[1]

Having arrived in the New World, the various groups of European settlers then proceeded to fight among themselves. Gradually, for better or worse, British supremacy was established and English became the language of administration throughout the colonies of the eastern seaboard. In 1674 New Netherland was ceded to the British; *New Amsterdam* became *New York* and *Beverwijck* became *Albany* (both city names being adopted in honor of titles of the victorious Duke of York). A century later, the French of New France and Vermont suffered a similar fate: in 1764, after eight years of bitter warfare, the French conceded defeat. The upshot of these military and political events was that both French and Dutch speakers found themselves living under an English-speaking administration. German settlers had been living under British colonial administration from the very beginning.

One byproduct of this symbiosis was the emergence of English forms of French, Dutch, and German surnames, usually in parallel with the originals. It was quite normal for a person to have two surnames, one used in Dutch-, German-, or French-speaking contexts, the other used in English-speaking contexts. Often, the latter was a straightforward as-

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[1]Bern, the capital of Switzerland, is predominately German-speaking. *Brunswick* is the usual English spelling for *Braunschweig*, in north-central Germany; similarly, *Palz* is a respelling of *Pfalz*, usually rendered *Palatinate* in English.

similation to an English name, either phonologically (Dutch *Jansen* became English *Johnson*) or by translation (French *Dubois* became *Woods* or Swedish *Eklöf* became *Oakleaf*). In such cases, the overall pattern is clear, but the genealogical details may be impossible to pick out. Of all the Americans, past and present, called *Johnson*, which ones are from Dutch families originally called *Jansen* or *Janszoon*? We shall never know for certain about all of them. On the other hand, in individual cases circumstantial evidence such as forenames and locality can provide valuable clues. Thus, if someone succeeds in tracing his or her ancestry back to a certain Cornelis Johnson who, according to *International Genealogical Index* (*IGI*) was born in 1685 in New Jersey and married on Long Island in about 1709, the hypothesis that the latter's father was a Dutch Jansen or Janszoon is more than plausible. The forename is Dutch and the location is one of Dutch settlement.

In other cases, new, distinctively American names were created, some of them looking suspiciously like English names, since they conform not only to the phonology but also to characteristic formative elements of English surnames, for example the endings *-ley* and *-er* (the latter also common in German). Thus, German *Kegler* 'skittle-player', which in colloquial usage denoted an illegitimate child, became American *Cagley*. *Chisley* and *Chisler* are both from German *Schüssler* 'bowl maker'. *Fraley* or *Fraleigh* is from German *Fröhlich* 'cheerful'. Derivation of *Fraley* from Irish *Frawley* (Gaelic Ó Freaghaile 'descendant of Fergal') cannot be ruled out on linguistic grounds, but the location of early bearers in eighteenth-century Pennsylvania makes the German source much more probable. The genealogist Douglas R. Fraley (n.d.) traces at least one family of this name to Hans Michel (Michael) Froelich, who came to the colonies in 1729 and settled in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. This example shows how linguistic, historical-political, and demographic factors must be taken into account by the student of American Names.

Americanization of French names

The first thing to say about French family names in North America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is that there were two

kinds of French immigrants: Catholic adventurers and Huguenot refugees. The two groups would not have seen themselves as having much in common, though the records suggest that the Roman Catholic French Canadians were rather more tolerant than the Catholic politicians and administrators of seventeenth-century France. The two groups shared a number of common surnames, for example *Berthelot* and *Blanchard*, the Huguenot bearers being from quite separate families. To confuse matters still further, in southern England (especially London) some well-established English family names of medieval Norman French origin, for example *Dabney*, *Dansie*, and *Delahay* (*Dillehay*, *Dilly*), were re-adopted by French Huguenot refugees coming in at the end of the seventeenth century.

The Catholic adventurers spread up the St Lawrence, around the Great Lakes, and down the Mississippi, founding settlements as they went and establishing a loose control over the vast territory then known as Louisiana (subsequently sold to the U.S. by Napoleon in 1803). In the south of this area they joined up with other French settlers who had come directly by sea to New Orleans and other French-speaking settlements on the Gulf of Mexico. In Vermont, Maine, and certain other parts of New England, there was considerable language contact between English and French. In this area, Americanized forms of many French names are recorded from the eighteenth century, sometimes altered beyond recognition.

Americanizations of French names tend to be phonetic respellings according to the perceived sound of the name, often with some highly idiosyncratic variations. Some examples are listed below. Other examples are mentioned in Whitebook (2003).

According to André Lapierre (2000), some French names, for example *Gilbert* and *Gauthier*, kept their French spelling but acquired an English pronunciation, sometimes merging with a pre-existing English name. In other cases, Americanizations of French names tend to be phonetic respellings according to the perceived sound of the name, often with some highly idiosyncratic variations, so that *Auclair* acquired a spurious Irish appearance as *O'Clair*. Further examples of Americanization are listed below. Other examples are mentioned by Susan Whitebrook (2003).

One or two general tendencies may be observed. Chief among these is that North American French names typically end in *-ette* where European French names have *-et* (table 1). In some cases the base form is altered (table 2), and this characteristic is so prevalent that even some English names are found in a North American Frenchified form with an *-ette* ending (table 3).

Table 1. Some North American French surnames in -ette

Arquette *for* Arquet	Gassette *for* Gasset	Molette *for* Molet
Bequette *for* Béquet	Gaudette *for* Gaudet	Paquette *for* Paquet
Binette *for* Binet	Genette *for* Genet	Nollette *for* Nolet
Bonette *for* Bonet	Gillette *for* Gillet	Robinette *for* Robinet
Brouillette *for* Brouillet	Jaquette *for* Jacquet	Niquette *for* Niquet
Doucette *for* Doucet	Luquette *for* Luquet	Sublette *for* Sublet
Frechette *for* Fréchet	Marlette *for* Marlet	Touchette *for* Touchet
Frenette *for* Frenet	Minette *for* Minet	

Table 2. Some North American French surnames ending in -ette, in which the base form is altered

Amonette *for* Hamond	Godette *for* Gaudet
Arnette *for* Arnold	Majette *for* Marguerite
Beaudette *and* Bodette *for* Baudet	Milette *from* Emilet, *a diminutive of* Emile
Boyette *for* Boyault	Morissette *for* Mauricet
Cadarette *for* Cadoret	Ouellette *for* Ouilet
Caouette *for* Caillouet	Shifflette *for* Chifflet *'scoffer'*
Dukette *for* Duquet (Du Quai *'from the quayside'*)	Shorette *for* Charrette

Table 3. Some North American French surnames ending in -ette, formed from English names

Averette *and* Everette *for* Everett	Leggette *for* Legett
Bartlette *for* Bartlett	Matchette *for* Matchett
Bramlette *for* Bramlett	Rowlette *for* Rowlet
Faucette *for* Fawcett	

This feature may be simply a reflex of the pronunciation, in that the spelling indicates that the full value of the final *-t* is preserved in the Canadian French names, although lost in their European counter-

parts. Alternatively, there may be some sense that family names ought to be feminine, as is the noun *famille* 'family'. This hypothesis could also explain the characteristic use of the feminine definite article where European French normally has the masculine one. This is not an exclusively North American phenomenon; it does occur in European French, but more rarely, as also in Italian names such as *La Forte* 'the strong one', which occurs alongside the more normal masculine form *Il Forte*. Table 4 shows that in Canada and Louisiana feminization was the source of a rich crop of American names, including some idiosyncratic forms under English influence.

Table 4. Americanized feminine forms of French surnames

American Form	French Source
Labove, Labauve	Leboeuf *'the bull'*
Labeau, Labo	Lebeau *'the handsome man', alongside* Lebow and Leabo
Lablanc	Leblanc *'the white'*
Labounty	Labonté *'wealth'*
Lachat	Lechat *'the cat'*
Ladue	Ledoux *'sweet-natured', 'gentle'*
Laduke	Leduc *'the duke'*
Lafavor	Lefèvre *'the smith'*
Laginess, Lajiness	Lajeunesse *'youthfulness' (i.e. callow or naïve)*
Lamaster	Lemaître *'the master craftsman', alongside* Lemaster
Lamountain	Lamontagne *'mountain'*
Lashua and Lashway	Lajoie *'joy'*

Some of the surnames in table 4 originated as aliases or secondary surnames, known as "*dit* names." Characteristically, a *dit* name was adopted as a unique identifier by a soldier when joining the French army, as a nom-de-guerre. A well-known example is that of Étienne Gourdon, who chose the secondary surname *Vadebonœur* 'go with a good heart'. His descendants could then acquire either of two surnames: *Gourdon* or *Vadebonœur*. Genealogical research is often required in order to decide whether a modern American surname is from a traditional French surname or from a Canadian secondary name. The following are the main classes of etymologies, with examples, for secondary surnames (though other, more individualistic formations are also found):

- From places, localities, and regions: *d'Avignon, Lyonnais, Breton, Langlois* 'English', *Langevin* 'from l'Anjou', *Lavanway* (for *Lavanois*), *Potwine* (for *Poitevin*, from *Poitou*).
- Adaptations of someone's full name: *Castonguay*, from *Gaston Guay*.
- A repetition of someone's own first name:. *Andre Gachet dit Andre, Paul Berger dit Paul, Simon Menestres dit Saint Simon, Pierre Legrand dit Lapierre*.
- A repetition of someone's own surname (soldiers would sometimes simply pick their own existing last name as a secondary surname): *Jean Valade dit Valade, Denis Antoine Caron dit Caron*.
- From plants, especially flowers: *Lafleur* 'the flower', *Latulippe* 'the tulip', *Laviolette* 'the violet', *Larose* 'the rose'.
- From personality characteristics aspired to: *Sanschagrin* 'without distress', *Sansfaçon* 'without pretense', *Sanssouci* 'without care', *Vadebonœur* 'go with a good heart'.
- From other nicknames: *LaTerreur* 'the terror', *Frappe-d'abord* 'strike first', *Prêt-à-boire* 'ready to drink'.

A fuller and very readable account of the history behind these developments may be found on Larry Roux's web page: *1755: The French and Indian War* (2000).

Translation of French names was common: *Vertefeuille* became *Greenleaf*; *Boulanger* became *Baker*; *Lefèvre* became *Smith*; *Meunier* became *Miller*. Mistranslations also occurred: *La Fond* (variant of *La Font* 'fountain' or 'spring') was translated as *Bottom*; *Poissant* (variant of *Puissant* 'powerful') was translated as *Fish*. In other cases, folk etymology plays a part: *Armé* 'armed man' was Americanized as *Army*, *Fèvre* as *Favor(s)*. Whitebook (2003: 1: xlvii) notes that *Fèvre* also became *Bean*: after the vocabulary word for "smith" was replaced by *forgeron*, the original signification of *Fèvre* was lost and it was reinterpreted as *féve* 'bean'.

Other patterns in the phonological and orthographic changes of French surnames include the following:

- Loss of orthographic *h*, especially initial *H-*: *Abair* from *Habert*, *Arvie* from *Hervé*, *Ashey* from *Hachet* or *Hachée*.
- Replacement of *-uis* by *-oy*: *Depoy* from *Depuis*.
- Replacement of *–eau* and *-aux*, by *-o* or *-ow*, as in *Trudo* (from *Trudeau*), *Damerow* (from *Damereau*), *Crapo* (from *Crépaux*) *Marso* (from *Marceau*, a variant of *Marcel*), *Neddo* (from *Nadeau*), *Ourso* (from *Ourseau* 'little bear'), *Denno* (from *Daigneau*, a variant of *Daniel*), *Lebo* (from *Lebeau* 'handsome'), *Roshto* (from *Rocheteau*), *Deshazo* (from *Deschazeau* 'from the houses' i.e. 'villager'), *Tatro* (from *Tétreault* 'weaver'). Final *-o* in American names also represents other French origins, for example *Burpo* from *Bonrepos* 'good rest'.
- Replacement of *-ois* and *-oit* by *-way*: *Benway* (from *Benoit*), *Bushway* (from *Bourgeois*). In other cases, for example *DuBose* (from *Dubois*), *Boyes* (from *Bois*), the phonological *-s* was preserved—or resuscitated.
- Loss of a final orthographic plosive (especially *-d* after *-r-*, which was already silent in seventeenth-century French): *Argue* (from *Arguin*), *Ballor* (from *Ballard*), *Bushor* (from *Bouchard*), *Burgor* (from *Beauregard*), *Bashaw* (from *Bachoie*), *Forgey* (from *Forget*). The latter is unusual: **Forgette* would have been more in accordance with the pattern of North American French naming.
- Respelling of *-ch-* as *-sh-*: *Deshane* (from *Duchêne*), *Deshaw* and *Deshong* (from *Deschaux*), *Shackett* (from *Choquette*), *Shamblin* (from *Chamberlin*), *Sharbono* (from *Charbonneau*), *Sharum* (from *Charron*), *Shifflett* (from *Chifflet* 'mocker'), *Shinault* (from *Chenault*).
- Replacement of *-t-* by *-k-*: *Gokey* (from *Gauthier*), *Plankey* (from *Plantier*), *Shorkey* (from *Chartier*).
- Misdivision: *Sawtelle* (from *Desautels*), *Shambo* (from *Archambault*).
- Respelling of nasalized French vowels: *Mershon* (from *Marchand* 'merchant'), *Marmon* (from *Marmont*, the name of places in Lot-et-Garonne and Ain), *Pettibone* (from *Petitbon* 'good little fellow'), *Rulon* (from *Roland*), *Bushong* (from *Bouchon*).
- Reduction of syllables: *Bundrant* and *Bundren* (from *Bondurant*), *Bitney* (from *Bétourné* 'malformed'), *Dashnaw* (from *Dagenais*).

Sometimes a combination of factors in the process of Americanization, some of them regular, others quite idiosyncratic, has distorted a French surname beyond immediate recognition, for example *Yando(w)* (from *Gandon*), *Belongia* (from *Beringer*, via the variant *Bélanger*), *Carmony* (from *Garmigny*, a habitational name from Germigny in Seine-et-Marne), *Dibrell* (from *du Breuil*), *Disharoon* (most probably from *de Charente*), *Laizure* and *Leisure* (from *Lesieur* 'the cobbler'), *Perigo*, (from *Périgord*), and *Perisho* (from *Pariseau*). In some cases, e.g. *Goodroad* (from *Gaudreau*), the process of Americanization was aided and abetted by folk etymology.

Tremblay 'aspen', one of the most common French-Canadian surnames, gave rise to a rich collection of New England surnames, among them *Trombley*, *Trombly*, *Tromblee*, *Trumbly*, and *Twombly*. French *Baudouin* became *Bowdoin* in New England.

In addition to Anglicizations of French names, it should be noted that this is not a one-way street. North America also boasts Frenchifications of English names (*Avaritte* for *Everett*, *Stinnette* for *Stennett*), of Scottish names (*Fogerson* for *Ferguson*, *Tullos* for *Tulloch*), and of Irish names (*Aubry* for *O'Brian*, *Bruffy* for *Brophy*, *Dewire* for *Dwyer*, *Lamunyon* for *Munyon*). Irish soldiers fought alongside the French against the English in the wars of the 1750s, and some of them found it expedient to adopt a French identity after the defeat at the Plains of Abraham. There are also Frenchified forms of German names (*Waguespack* for *Wagensbach*, *Amburgey* for *Hamburger*, *Camire* for *Kammeyer*); Germanizations of French names (*Barschwa* for *Bourgeois*, noted in Ohio by the genealogist William B. Saxbe [1998]); Hispanizations of German, Slavic, and French names; and other assimilations. Onomastically as well as socially, America is a melting pot from which standardizations are even now gradually emerging. Nothing more will be said about these other assimilations here: my focus will be on Anglicizations.

American Huguenot names

The Huguenots were French Protestants, who were especially widespread in Languedoc (southeastern France), where the traditional

local language is Occitan, more closely related to Catalan than to northern French. In 1598, by the Edict of Nantes, the French king Henri IV officially granted religious tolerance to Huguenots. However, sporadic persecution continued locally in France throughout the seventeenth century. In 1685 the Edict of Nantes was revoked by Louis XIV, and persecution of Protestants became official French government policy. Huguenots in the thousands left their homes, fleeing at first in all directions: to the Protestant principalities of Germany, to the Netherlands, and to England. From the Netherlands in particular many of them moved on to South Africa, where they became intermingled with the Dutch Boers; many more came to North America, settling mainly in the Carolinas, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, and above all among both the Dutch and the English in New York (New Rochelle, N. Y, is a Huguenot settlement). Many Huguenot names acquired an English form at this time. The picture is further complicated by the fact that some alterations to the forms of Huguenot surnames took place in Germany, the Netherlands, and England, while other changes occurred on American soil. As a result, German, Dutch, and English forms of French names, sometimes greatly changed, are common in families of Huguenot descent. Some Huguenot names became widely scattered: *Duplessis*, for example, was taken first to the Netherlands, and then became established in the late seventeenth century in both Virginia and South Africa.

A typical migration pattern was that of the Berrien family, French Huguenots who established themselves in the Netherlands before coming to North America. Cornelius Jansen Berrien (died 1689) arrived in Flatbush (now a section of Brooklyn, N. Y.) in 1669, and in 1685 he moved to Newtown, Long Island. A more famous example is the Bayard family, who moved from France to the Netherlands quite early in the sixteenth century, long before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes unleashed the storm that in turn generated a torrent of Huguenot refugees. In 1647 Anna Bayard, widow of the French-Dutch Huguenot Samuel Bayard, with her three young children, accompanied her brother Peter Stuyvesant to the New World when he was appointed director general of New Netherland. Her sons Petrus and Nicolaas Bayard, both born in Alphen, The Netherlands, had many

prominent descendants in North America. The family tie had already been strengthened by a reciprocal marriage, when Peter Stuyvesant had married Judith, sister of Samuel Bayard.

Both *Bayard* and *Berrien* survived as surnames in North America in their unaltered French spelling, but with Anglicized pronunciations. Quite often, however, Huguenot names took on a new form, either in North America or en route. Without genealogical documentation, there is generally no way of distinguishing Huguenot names from other French names. The linguistic evidence alone is insufficient. The linguistic processes governing the alteration of Huguenot names were the same as those governing changes to other French names, with these added dimensions: in Pennsylvania the new host language might be German rather than English; in New Netherland (the Hudson Valley) it was Dutch. Although it is often hard to establish the facts about the origin of these peculiarly American names, the task has been made immeasurably easier during the past few years with the advent of online resources such as www.familysearch.org and genealogical forums, where occasionally well researched, truly scholarly genealogical reports are posted among the announcements of searches for lost ancestors, family reunions, personal bewilderment, and general chitchat.

Several hundred American family names are believed to be of Huguenot origin. Appendix 1 discusses those that are notable for their change of form.

Americanization of Dutch names

The story of the Dutch in North America is summarized in Gehring (2003). The standard reference work for Dutch surnames is in fact Belgian (Debrabandere 1993), although this is gradually being overtaken by the Nederlandse Familienamen Databank of the Meertens Instituut (2000), which is beginning to make available far more extensive records than could be published in book form.

In the seventeenth century (from 1614 onward), a vast area of the eastern seaboard of North America, centered in the Hudson Valley, was a Dutch colony, and was very actively settled by the

Dutch themselves and by others, including French Huguenots. By 1674 it had all passed into English administration. This had a profound effect on the Dutch surnames of North America. Many Dutch names were assimilated to their English cognates. Patronymics such as *Pietersze* (*Pieterszoon*) were regularly assimilated to English forms such as *Peterson*. Occupational names were likewise assimilated: *Brouwer* to *Brewer*, *Cuyper* to *Cooper*, *Visscher* to *Fisher*, and so on. In other cases, occupational names and nicknames were translated: *Timmerman* became *Carpenter*; *Vos* became *Fox*. Where an original Dutch spelling is found as an American surname, it is very often a sign of more recent immigration, for example the large group of nineteenth century religious dissidents who settled in Michigan in the nineteenth century.

A few fairly regular respellings have governed the creation of modern American surnames from Dutch originals. The Dutch prefix *Van*, used in habitational and topographic surnames, was often dropped, as was *De* 'the', occurring with occupational names and nicknames, so *De Klerk* became *Clark*, and *De Jong* 'the young(er)' became *Jong*, in many cases being further assimilated to *Young*.

Appendix 2 lists typical phonetic and orthographic changes to Dutch names, some of them also affecting German names.

Americanization of German names

German-American names have been studied in particular by Edda Gentry (2003; see also Bahlow 2002) and by Jürgen Eichhoff (1996; 2001). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, almost all German-speaking immigrants to North America were Protestants. Not until the nineteenth century did Roman Catholic Germans start coming to North America in significant numbers. Indeed, in the eighteenth century Roman Catholic immigration was explicitly prohibited by the British colonial authorities.

The first organized groups of German-speaking immigrants to come to North America were Mennonites (named for a radical Dutch priest called Menno Simons, who had joined the Anabaptist movement

in 1536). The first group of Mennonites arrived in 1683 in Pennsylvania, where they were welcomed as part of William Penn's "holy experiment" of religious tolerance. From 1708 onward the British government officially encouraged the immigration of Protestant Germans, and for the next hundred years there was a steady flow of Protestant emigrants from the innumerable Catholic principalities of Germany and from Switzerland. It is estimated that by the end of the eighteenth century one-third of the population of Pennsylvania was German-speaking. German Protestant settlements were also established in Maryland and elsewhere. German, in the form of "Pennsylvania Dutch" (which is not Dutch but *Deutsch* 'German') is still spoken in the rural districts of Pennsylvania, especially among the Amish (pronounced /ámɪš/), a widespread and extremely conservative Protestant community who eschew motor vehicles, electricity, telecommunications, and other aspects of modern technology. Amish surnames are preserved for the most part in their original German form, and they had comparatively little contact with their English-speaking neighbors in the early centuries. They therefore have no part in the present survey.

More striking, for present purposes, are the German settlers who ended up in English-speaking areas and acquired English forms of their surnames. Not a few of these were mercenaries[2] brought over by the British to fight against the rebels in the Revolutionary War in the 1770s; ironically, many of them settled in the new Republic which they had been brought over to repress.

The American surname *Amsbaugh*, for example, has been traced to a German soldier who settled in Pennsylvania, originally a member of one of two regiments of mercenaries from Ansbach fighting in the Revolutionary War. It seems likely that the American surname comes from the German placename by way of the name of the regiments. In some cases the original German form of the American names has been lost or

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[2]"Mercenaries" is the traditional term for those soldiers from Hesse who fought on the British side in the American Revolution. It should be kept in mind, however, that most of these men were pressed into service by their own rulers, who sold them to the British Crown to fight against the colonists. They were not mercenaries in the usual sense of that word; they did not go to war for their own profit, and in fact many of them deserted to the other side at the first opportunity.

is uncertain. *Kice*, for example, has been traced back to a Hessian mercenary, Peter Kice, who deserted and settled in Wharton, N. J., in 1777, but we do not know the German form of his name. Another member of this regiment who deserted was Johann Kowes, from whom bearers of the American surname *Kious* are descended. Henry Linkous was another; he settled in Blacksburg, Va., and his original name is likewise lost. It is striking how widely scattered these settlements are.

In other cases, the German form is known or can be reconstructed. *Nazelrod*, is from German *Nesselrodt* 'red nettle'; *Trice* is probably from German *Treis* 'fallow land', although it is possible that the name comes directly from a place called *Treis* in Hesse. Both are names of families descended from Hessian mercenaries.

As in the case of names of French and Dutch origin, the altered forms of German names in America arose mostly in the eighteenth century. Where an original German form is preserved, it can be indicative of later (nineteenth- or twentieth-century) immigration. The altered names exhibit the usual mixture of regular phonological and orthographic alteration, translation, mistranslation, folk etymology, and idiosyncratic alteration, as in French and Dutch names. Appendix 3 lists examples.

Confusing a German name with a Cherokee name: a cautionary tale

In the unstable, changeable, and partially documented world of surnames, caution is always advisable and certainty sometimes unattainable. Surnames researchers are often faced with a difficult choice between evaluating a plausible hypothesis on inadequate evidence and saying nothing. In the absence of conclusive evidence, mistakes can occur, despite the best intentions. What, for example, are we to make of *Sixkiller*, with its 102 listed subscribers in the 1997 U. S. telephone directory? The first printing of *DAFN* (*Dictionary of American Family Names*) speculated tentatively that it might be an altered form of German *Sechsheller*, a habitational name for someone from Sechshelden in Hesse. This hypothesis is phonologically plausible, but we now know that it is wrong. The *IGI* shows beyond dispute that *Sixkiller* is a Cherokee name. William Bright comments (personal communication) that the

similar name *Fourkiller* is documented as the name of a Cherokee leader, a war name representing a translation of Cherokee *Nunggihtehe*, *Nankeeteehee*, indicating that the person so named had killed four enemy warriors. The English variant *Foekiller* is also found. There are several other such surnames among the Cherokee, for example *Whitekiller* and *Creekkiller*. The chief executive of the Cherokee tribe in the 1990s was Mrs. Wilma Mankiller.

There are very few Native American names in *DAFN*? Why is this? The reasons are both simple and complex. The simplest reason is that very few such names meet *DAFN*'s frequency criterion of 100 listed telephone subscribers. Among the more complex underlying reasons are the fact that there has been no long tradition of hereditary surnames—the concept of a heredity surname is comparatively recent among Native American peoples; the fact that "Native American" is not a homogeneous group (there is huge cultural diversity, which coupled with decimation of populations, means that there are comparatively few bearers of each surname); and mainly that, insofar as Native Americans use a hereditary surname at all for official purposes such as telephone listings, they have very often adopted high-frequency Anglo names such as *Williams*, *Jones*, and *Johnson*. Even among the Navajo, who have hereditary surnames in sizable numbers derived from their own language (for example, *Begay* 'his son', *Chee* 'red', *Nakai* 'wanderer', *Tsosie* 'longhaired'), adoptions of Anglo names such as *Billie* and *Pete* are also common.

Anglicization of Irish names

The story of Anglicization of Irish names lies outside the scope of this paper, as it took place for the most part in Ireland, not in America. The English (and therefore American) forms of Irish names are very different from their Gaelic originals, as any Irish entry in *DAFN* will demonstrate. The phonological systems of English and Irish Gaelic are about as different as any two phonological systems could be: it is a rich irony that they ended up sharing the same islands. The English ascendancy in Ireland ensured total subjugation of Irish forms to Anglicized forms: teaching in the Irish (Gaelic) language was ex-

pressly forbidden, and discrimination was actively practiced against bearers of Irish names. Partly as a result of discrimination, the native Irish often deliberately disguised their names in English forms, dropping obvious signals like *O'* and *Mac*, and respelling according to English sound patterns. Since 1922, this pattern has been reversed, and more and more Irish people have been resuscitating the ancient Irish Gaelic forms of their surnames. But all of these developments have taken place in Ireland, not in North America.

A comparatively small number of uniquely American spellings are found among the Anglicized forms—for example *Canady* as a variant of *Kennedy*.

Anglicization of English and Scottish names

A few names of English origin acquired distinctively American forms. Many northern English names ending in *-by* are spelled with the ending *-bee* in America. Other cases are more idiosyncratic.

Estes was once believed to be of Spanish origin, but there is no evidence to support this. The name was brought to New England by Matthew (1645–1723) and Richard (1647– ?) Estes, sons of Robert and Dorothy Estes of Dover, England. The founder of the Virginia and Tennessee family of this name was Benjamin Estes (born 1736 in Virginia, died 1811 in Tennessee). As far as can be established, this name is a variant of *East*, preserving a Tudor English pronunciation in two syllables.

Styron is from *Styring*, a Yorkshire surname of uncertain origin, possibly from a lost placename.

There are many cases where an English name is re-spelled phonetically in a North American context. *Burham* (a habitational name from a village in Kent) is spelled *Burum* in North America. *Balcombe* (a habitational name from a village in Sussex) is spelled variously *Balcum*, *Baucom*, *Baucum* and otherwise in North America.

The Scottish habitational or ducal name *Buccleugh* is found in North America as *Bucklew*, *Buckelew*, *Buckalew*, *Buckaloo*, and in quite few other spelling too.

Americanizations of European names are generally explained in terms of language contact between continental European languages and English. However, changes to English and Scottish names cannot, of course, be attributed to language contact: English is not altered by contact with itself. The obvious alternative explanation in such cases is absence of literacy or, rather, loss of contact with any sense of the original and "correct" form of the name.

Scandinavian names in North America

Scandinavian migration to North America is summarized by Olav Veka (2003). There was little Danish or Norwegian migration to America until the nineteenth century. Norwegian American surnames characteristically come from the names of particular farms on the west coast of Norway, from which the immigrant ancestors set out to make a new life in the New World. Many of these were readily Americanized; for example, *Evenhus* 'Eyvind's house' became *Evenhouse*.

Danish American names are much harder to spot. A very large number of them are patronymics, such as *Hansen*, which fell together with Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch, and North German cognates with the general English patronymic ending *-son*. Other Danish names are shared with North German.

Many Swedish names are of patronymic origin, and in North America they stayed close to their original Swedish form. Typically, from earliest times to the present day, Swedish *-ss-* in patronymics has been simplified to *-s-*, so that for example *Persson* became *Person*, *Halvorsson* became *Halvorson*, and *Larsson* became *Larson*.

A Swedish colony was established in the Delaware Valley as early as 1638. After only seventeen years it was lost to the Dutch (1655), who in turn lost it to the British in 1664. Moreover, in the seventeenth century hereditary surnames were not yet fully established among Swedes: many people still used patronymics rather than surnames. For this and other reasons, there is a comparatively tiny number of surnames of Swedish origin that acquired distinctively American forms in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Exceptions are *Dolbow* (Swedish *Dalbo*, either a "person from Dalsland" or a "valley inhabitant"), associated with Salem, N. J., from the seventeenth century and *Barkdoll*/*Bergdoll* (Swedish *Bergdahl* 'mountain + valley', the

second element typical of a "meaningless" suffix often attached to a toponymic surname), recorded in Maryland in the eighteenth century.

When Swedish emigration to the Midwest (Minnesota and elsewhere) became a flood in the nineteenth century, the names of many Swedish immigrants characteristically acquired an American English form or were direct translations. Swedish *Eklöf*, for example, is first recorded as *Oakleaf* in America during the 1840s. Americanization thus involved, on the one hand, translation and folk translation, and on the other, systematic orthographic changes such as wholesale removal of accents and simplification of non-English consonant clusters. Thus *Sjögren* became *Seagreen* as well as *Shugren*, *Bäckström* became *Beckstrom*, *Åman* became *Ohman;* *Bengtsson* became *Benson*, *Liljeqvist* became *Lilyquist*, and *Ljung* almost invariably became *Young*, an English name to which it is etymologically unrelated. Literal translation of elements gave *Newbranch* alongside the Swedish form *Nygren* and the orthographic compromise *Newgren*, all of which co-exist and thrive in America. In this respect, the processes affecting Americanization of Swedish names in the nineteenth century were very similar to those affecting German and Dutch names.

Roy W. Swanson (1928: 474) observes that systematic Americanization of Swedish names was at its height at the time of the Civil War in the 1860s.

> The Yankee recruiting clerks who took down the names of the Swedish volunteers distorted the names beyond recognition, . . . even such a typically Swedish name as *Åkerblom* in the adjutant general's reports took the Celtic form of *O'Kerblom*! But after a sixty-year interval, when there was yet another war, the names of the Swedish-American draft were set down correctly.

In other words, by the time the immigration station at Ellis Island was established (1892), recognition of non-English name forms had become widely established and respected.

Names in more recent American immigrant communities

The vast numbers of Jewish, Italian, Slavic, and Hungarian names that were brought to the United States in the late nineteenth

century and the early twentieth century on the whole tended to preserve their forms as in the language of origin. There are many reasons for this, including an increase in literacy, so that people began to care about the written form of their names, and an increasing awareness of other languages among English speakers.

Occasionally long names are simplified: Jewish *Kirschenbluth* was Americanized to *Kirsh*; the Moravian surname *Pustejovsky* was in at least one case Americanized as *Post*; Polish *Bładaśiewicz* was Americanized as *Bladey*.

Among speakers of American English awareness of other languages did not, apparently, extend to awareness of their phonology. It was a characteristic of American names in the twentieth century that even Polish names very often preserve their original spelling in North American, though these do not always readily lend themselves to spelling pronunciation in English—for example *Krzewicki* is often pronounced /krɛzwíki/ in American contexts.

Something similar is happening with Italian names. The spelling of *Abate* is preserved, but it is sometimes pronounced as two syllables /əbét/, not three /ɑbáːti/. *Ciccone*, too, is pronounced as /síkon/ rather than /čikóːni/.

Most Italian immigration to North America took place between 1880 and 1930. Only a few Italian family names were already in place before the Civil War. One such case is *Taliaferro*. Robert Taliaferro was among the earliest settlers of Virginia from England in the 1620s; he had many prominent American descendants. A subtle change has occurred in the spelling of the Italian name (*Tagliaferro*): among descendants of the early immigrant it has lost its *-g-*. In the twentieth century *Tagliaferro* was reintroduced to America from Italy, complete with *-g-*.

American names of uncertain origin

Some American names remain unexplained or puzzling, despite the best combined efforts of scholars and family historians. It is sometimes impossible for a family historian even to get to first base and decide which language to start researching. Certainly, the two most expensive words in *DAFN* are "Origin unidentified": each oc-

currence of this despairing phrase represents up to 30 false starts and frustrating investigations in different source languages.

There are over 1,300 such names in *DAFN* (about 2% of the total number of entries). Examples include *Anas* (which appears to be of multiple origin), *Arritt, Bagdon, Barbush, Barganier, Bargerstock, Batcho, Bedillion, Bendure, Binkerd, Bistany, Bleth, Bloodsaw, Borash, Boruff, Brickson, Byassee, Bybee, Carnicom, Chrisco, Clevidence, Clubine, Coaxum, Corprew, Dasenbrock, Derryberry, Derse, Desko, Drumwright, Gildow, Gilleo, Givner, Glymph, Goheen, Golis, Gongola, Hankla, Hardina, Hickernell, Hively, Hoppock, Jadwin, Jenelle, Jividen, Kagarise, Karrels, Larr, Lasyone, Leckrone, Luckadoo, Mallernee, Manasco, Mehok, Nafus, Namanny, Narehood, Noojin, Omohundro, Peatross, Pitstick, Plybon, Reliford, Shelnutt, Shelor, Sroufe, Tresner, Tyo,* and *Vitatoe.*

Sometimes, in some cases like these, one has the feeling that the true explanation *must* be just around the corner, and yet during a tenyear research period, it has continued to be elusive. Appearances can be deceptive. (*Drumwright*, for example, is unlikely to be an occupational name for a drum maker.)

In other cases, newly posted genealogical records resolved a mystery. *Gurganus* and *Gurganious* have recently been traced back to Edward Gurgany from England, who patented a land grant at Curles Neck, Va., as early as 1617. The name is almost certainly a derivative of the Welsh personal name *Gwrgenau.*

To illustrate the problems more clearly, three puzzling American surnames are discussed here in slightly more detail.

- *Abshire* may be of English origin, but eighteenth-century forename evidence suggests that a German origin is more likely. William, Abraham, Christian, Jacob, and Lodowick Abshire are mentioned in a taxation list for Franklin County, Va., for 1786. The earliest known bearer is Lewis Abshire, who bought land in Virginia as early as 1637. Perhaps the surname is an Americanized form of German *Habicher* 'hawker', in which case Lewis Abshire could have been Ludwig Habicher in German contexts.

- *Bashore* was already well established in Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century. Johannes Boesshaar, for example, also known as

Basehor, was born in 1760 in Lancaster County, Penn., and died there in 1837. His surname is probably an Americanized form of Dutch or North German *Boesshaar*, which is of uncertain etymology, perhaps a Low German form of the personal name *Bosshardt*. This name is found in a rich variety of Americanized forms, including *Basehore, Beshore, Bosher,* and *Paysore.* There also seems to have been some confusion with derivatives of French *Bouchard* and *Brasseur.*

- *Dana.* There has been much speculation about the origins of this famous American family name, which is now also widely used as a forename. The most plausible theory is that it is Huguenot, a variant of *D'Aunay*, from any of several places in France called *Aunay*. Confusingly, the name acquired an Irish flavor, being associated, surely erroneously, with a Gaelic forename identically spelled (*Dana*). The picture is further confused by the existence of Hungarian and Slavic derivatives of *Daniel* and *Bogdan* spelled *Dana*. These cannot be the source of the American family name, however, for Richard Dana had already come from England in 1640 to Cambridge, Mass., where he died in 1690. His most famous descendant was Richard Henry Dana (1815–82), lawyer, anti-slavery campaigner, adventurer, and author of *Two Years before the Mast.*

How reliable is the evidence?

For many American surnames of European origin, reliable evidence can be found in reference works in the relevant source languages. And increasingly, as this article has tried to demonstrate, the origins of even some of the most surprising altered American name forms are becoming well documented by genealogists and family historians. Such work is now often posted on the internet, although searching for well-documented research reports among a myriad trivial messages can be time-consuming and frustrating.

In other cases, the picture is confused due to lack of evidence or by false evidence (for example, the invention of fictitious ancestors in family folklore). The *International Genealogical Index* (*IGI*), a vast but unedited and unscrutinized collection of records, is a wonderful resource and generally reliable enough to use as a statistical database, even though it contains occasional errors, fantasies,

and confusion. It is only too easy for scholars focusing on details to overstate the impact of these occasional errors and to ignore the larger picture.

As a general rule, if an American surname that appears to be English in spelling and pronunciation is not found in English or Scottish records in the on-line resources at www.familysearch.org, its origins can normally be sought in the Americanization of German or Dutch names. However, this rule of thumb is by no means infallible. Another factor that has to be taken into account is that quite a few English names (for example, *Arledge, Blish, Bramlett, Burnworth, Childrey, Corlew, Dockham, Ellithorpe, Farnsley, Gupton, Harnage, Massengill, Rippetoe, Talcott, Throckmorton*) have thrived in North America but died out in England.

Researchers using the resources of familysearch.com must bear in mind the "failure-to-find fallacy." On the one hand, English records are well represented at this website, so failure to find a name with an English source here or in *IGI* records lends considerable strength to the hypothesis that the name is not of English origin. On the other hand, the records of some other countries (Russia and Greece, for example) are far less well represented, so that (for example) failure to find a name in a Greek source at familysearch.com does not imply that the name is not Greek. It merely implies that the Greek records in familysearch.com are not very extensive.

Even very sparse evidence can sometimes be convincing. For example, just five occurrences of the surname *Nachazel*, all recorded by *IGI* in the same region of Bohemia, are sufficient to suggest that the name must be of Czech origin, even though Czech reference works are silent about it. (It is probably a nickname for a miser, from the past participle of *nacházet* 'to pile up'.)

Conclusion

Much work remains to be done on teasing out and double-checking the origins of uniquely American family names. The new on-line resources that are now available have given a tremendous boost to this process, as this article has attempted to demonstrate.

In the past few years, the internet has transformed the possibilities for rapid and efficient research in many fields. In no subject is this more true than personal names research, where conclusions typically depend on an assessment of probabilities based on thousands if not millions of tiny fragments of information (bearers of names past and present; their various locations at different times in their lives; their family relationships; the language that each of them spoke; their literacy in that language, the languages with which they came into contact, and so on). Language contact in eighteenth-century North America was principally between French and English, Dutch and English, and German and English, with the result that many French, Dutch, and German families bore an English surname in parallel with their original family name. In many cases, the conclusions summarized in this article are indebted, at least in part, to postings on genealogical web sites, too numerous to mention individually. The genealogical evidence is compared with the linguistic patterns of change that are known to have occurred, and evaluated in the light of phonological plausibility. Except in the rare cases where documentary evidence exists of two simultaneous forms of the name of an individual, the best that an onomast can do is to weigh the probabilities. Thanks to the dedicated labors of family historians and transcribers of old records such as nineteenth-century censuses and even older parish records, the details of the historical record are gradually being filled in, and the probabilities are gradually converted into certainties.

Folk myth in America has it that Americanized forms of European family names were created at Ellis Island as a result of linguistic confusion between immigrants and U.S. immigration officials. This is largely nonsense. Although several million immigrants did indeed come to America through Ellis Island, it was in operation for only a relatively short period (1892–1924), and the majority of family names survived the immigration process there relatively unscathed.

Nevertheless, it is tempting to speculate that otherwise unexplained family names may have originated at an immigration station such as Ellis Island. *Peruski*, for example, is apparently unknown as a Polish, Ukrainian, or Russian surname. Could it have originated at Ellis Island—the result, perhaps, of a polite response by a bewildered immigrant to a question such as "What is your surname?" In Russian

"Pa ruski?" means "in Russian?" Currently available evidence is inconclusive, so it is necessary to hold such speculations in abeyance until family historians have done their work and collected evidence on which the probabilities can be assessed. However, two things seem clear. One is that folk stories about name changes at Ellis Island (for example, that the Polish name *Micza* 'Michael' was assimilated by Irish immigration officials to *McShea*) are exaggerated, or at any rate not well supported by documentary evidence. The other is that the vast majority of Americanizations of European family names took place at a much earlier date—typically in the eighteenth century, over a century before the immigration center at Ellis Island was set up. These changes occurred by natural, organic linguistic processes, as a result of language contact after the families in question had arrived and settled in North America. Insofar as bureaucratic influences had an influence at all, the bureaucrats were the parish clerks and colonial administrators of eighteenth-century British America, not immigration officials.

Appendix 1. American names of Huguenot origin notable for change of form

- *Bebout, Beabout*: probably Americanized forms of French *Bibeau*.
- *Bobo*: probably French *Bobeau*. Elizabeth Bobo received a land grant in King and Queen County, Va., in 1719. Sampson Bobo, a Protestant born in France about 1735, married Sarah Simpson of Caroline County, Va., and became the progenitor of a prominent southern family.
- *Boshers, Boshears, Beshears*: these are probably Americanized forms of the personal name *Bouchard*. There has also been some confusion with *Brasseur*.
- *Brashear, Brashears, Brasher, Breshears, Broshears*: these are Americanized forms of *Brasseur* 'brewer'.
- *Bruley*: French *Brûlé* 'burnt'.
- *Budlong*: from French *Bouillon*.
- *Cheairs*: of uncertain etymology, possibly from *Croix-de-la-Chaire*, the name of a district of Genis-Terrenoire.

- *Clewell*: Germanized form of French *Clavel*, borne by Huguenot refugees who fled from Dauphiné to Baden in or after 1685, and then brought to Pennsylvania by Frantz Clawell in 1737.
- *Colliflower*: a folk-etymological adaptation of French *Gorenflos*, from the name of a village between Abbeville and Amiens. The name was taken first to Germany; Georg Adam Goranflo came to Philadelphia in 1749 and settled as George Adam Colliflower among the Germans of Hagerstown, Md.
- *Coriell, Coryell*: from French *Carrière* 'quarry'.
- *Corzine*: Dutch form of a Huguenot name the origin of which has not been identified, though perhaps *Corsin*.
- *Crispell*: from French *Crespeau* 'curly-haired'.
- *Curbow*: from French *Corbeau* 'crow'.
- *Debo*: Anglicized spelling of French *Debeau*, a Huguenot name found as such in England and the Netherlands as well as in North America.
- *Degarmo*: French *de Garmeaux*, from Garmeaux in Normandy. The surname was established in the seventeenth century in Beverwijck, New Netherland. Pierre Villeroy de Garmeaux (1641–1739) of Beverwijck had ten children, the first four of whom, born during the 1680s, were baptized as *Villeroy*; the remainder were baptized as *Degarmeaux*, and the rest of the family subsequently adopted this name. The *-o* spelling is recorded from the late seventeenth century (i.e. within Pierre's lifetime), at a time of Dutch rather than English influence.
- *Delano*: Franklin Delano Roosevelt's mother was of Huguenot stock; the French name *Delanoue* comes from *de la noie* 'from the swamp'.
- *Delashmit, Shumate, Shoemate*: southern French *de la Chaumette*, a topographic name for someone who lived on a *chaumette*, a high, arid plateau. Pierre de la Chaumette (born 1673) came from Rochechouart, France, via England to Gloucester, N. J., in about 1698; in New Jersey he came to be known as Peter Delashmet. Later he was joined by his brother Jean de la Chaumette, a wealthy colonist who made his fortune in Martinique and Virginia. Either this Jean or his nephew (Pierre's son) became known as John Shumate.
- *Dewey*: a name of multiple origin. As a Huguenot name, it is probably a habitational name from Douai.
- *Deyo, Deyoe*: Christian Deyo, also known as Christian d'Oiau, was one of the founding settlers in New Palz, N. Y., in 1675–78. New Palz was a Huguenot settlement.

- *Dismukes*: from *Des Meaux*, a French habitational name for someone from Meaux.
- *Ditto, Dittoe*: thought to be Huguenot, although the etymology is unknown.
- *Dobry*: French *Dobrée*, the name of a Huguenot family whose ancestor fled to Guernsey in the Channel Islands after the St. Bartholomew Massacre in 1572.
- *Dragoo*: French *Dragaud*. on 12 November 1699 Pierre Dragaud married Elizabeth Tavaud in Bristol and shortly afterwards they came to America (Staten Island); the name change took place in North America.
- *Dukelow*: most probably an Americanized form of French *Duclos*.
- *Durfee, Durfey*: French *D'Urfé*, a habitational name from the chateau of Urfé in the Loire Valley. Thomas Durfee was born in 1643 and came to Providence, R. I., in 1660.
- *Faniel, Faneuil* (rhyming with "Daniel"): from a diminutive of *fagne* 'quagmire'. A famous Boston name.
- *Florey, Flory*: French *Fleury*. Brought to Philadelphia by Huguenots from the Palatinate in 1733.
- *Gano, Ganoe*: from the medieval French forename *Goneau, Gonot*, or *Guéneau*.
- *Garrigus, Gargus, Gargas, Garges, Gargis, Garriss*: from *Occitan garigue* or *garrigue* 'grove of holm oaks'.
- *Garrick*: yet another English derivative of French *Garrique*; a famous Huguenot name in London, England, brought to Massachusetts and the Carolinas independently in the eighteenth century.
- *Gaskey*, from *Gasque(t)*: a regional name for a *Gascon*.
- *Golladay, Golliday*: from Breton *Galloudec*.
- *Gaylord, Gaylor*: from French *Gaillard* 'robust'.
- *Jerue*: from the Old French personal name *Giroux* (Germanic *Gerwolf* 'spear wolf').
- *Kerbaugh, Kerbo, Kerbow*: from French *Corbeau*.
- *Laffoon*: Americanized form of French *Lafont* 'the well'; probably but not certainly Huguenot.
- *Lumadue*: from French *L'homme(à) dieu* 'the man of god'.
- *Manire*: said by family historians to be of Huguenot origin, but of unexplained etymology.

- *Messick*: from French *Messac*, a habitational name. Julian Messick or Mezeck was a French Huguenot who came to Maryland in 1664.
- *Mozingo*: an American name of unexplained etymology. Family lore points to its origin in the south of France or the Pyrenees, which would be consistent with Huguenot origin.
- *Pershing*: the famous American general was descended from Alsatian Huguenots whose name was originally *Pfoersching*, an occupational name for a peach seller, a derivative of Middle High German *pfersich* 'peach'.
- *Philyaw, Filyaw, Fillyaw*: French *Filiault*, from Occitan *filiol* 'godson'.
- *Piatz*: a Germanized form of the French personal name *Piat*, Latin *Piatus*, taken first to Germany and then to North America by Huguenot refugees.
- *Pineo, Pinneo*: most probably an Americanized form of French *Pineau*, name of a Huguenot family from Lyon.
- *Plybon*: unexplained American family name first recorded in Virginia in the early eighteenth century; it is probably of Huguenot origin.
- *Poindexter*: from Old French *poing destre* 'right fist'; a Virginia family with known Huguenot connections.
- *Poteet*: unexplained name brought to Maryland from England by Francis Poteet in 1667. It is believed that he was a Huguenot.
- *Poythress*: probably an altered form of French *Poitras*.
- *Renew*: Anglicization of French *Reneau*. In this case, the alteration took place in Cork, Ireland, in the seventeenth century, before the name was transported to North America.
- *Revere*: the American patriot Paul Revere, who in April 1775 undertook a famous ride from Boston to Lexington to warn that the British redcoats were coming to arrest American revolutionary leaders, was descended from French Huguenots called *Rivoire*.
- *Semar*: Germanized form of French *Saint Marc*, the name of a Huguenot family that migrated to the Palatinate before coming to North America. The name continues to flourish in this form in Germany.
- *Truax, Truex*: Philip Truax was born in Monmouth County, New Jersey, in 1675 or 1676 (possibly two different people). The father is documented as Jacob DuTrieux, so the name is a French habitational name from Trieux in Meurthe-et-Moselle.
- *Vallandingham*: the immigrant ancestor, Michael van Landeghem, was a Flemish Huguenot, recorded in Stafford County, Va., in 1690.

- *Van Roekel*: Dutch form of *De La Rochelle*, habitational name for someone from the seventeenth-century Huguenot stronghold of La Rochelle, a port in eastern France. This place was vigorously supported by the Dutch and had numerous Dutch connections.

- *Vassar*: from French *Vasseur* 'vassal'. The alteration in form took place in Norfolk, England. Matthew Vassar (1792–1868), brewer and founder of Vassar College, was born at East Tuddingham, Norfolk, England, and came to Dutchess County, N. Y., as a young child in 1796. The same French original surname is also found in the Anglicized form *Vestal*.

- *Verplank*: probably a Dutchified form of French *Le Blanc* 'white'. Abraham Verplanck came to New Amsterdam from the Netherlands in about 1635.

- *Wingo*: Americanized form of French *Vigneau* 'vineyard', a well-known Huguenot name.

Appendix 2. Typical phonetic and orthographic changes to Dutch names, some of them also affecting German names

- Dutch and German *-a-* was often respelled as *-au-*, *-aw-*, or *-ou-*. Thus, Dutch *Haver* 'oat, oats' became American *Hawver*, while Dutch *Ackerman* 'ploughman' became American *Auckerman*.

- Dutch *J-* was generally written as *Y-* in English contexts in eighteenth-century America; thus *Yauger* is from *Jager* 'hunter'. The American surname *Yaun* is from Dutch *Jan* 'John'. This forename was well established in the Hudson Valley from an early date, along with many variants and derivative forms. Its hypocoristic form *Janke* gave rise to *Yankee*, both as a surname and a nickname, which in turn came to be used as a generic term for any northerner, being also shortened to *Yank*, which is likewise a surname as well as a nickname. In British English the meaning of the nickname was widened still further: it came to denote any American, even a southerner. The patronymic form of this name, *Jansz* '(son) of Jan' gave rise to American *Yantz*, *Yonts*, *Yontz*, and *Younts*, along with numerous other spelling variations. *Yancey* is another variation, from a fuller form of the patronymic, *Jansen* or *Janse* (final *-n* being silent in Dutch). The same process generated *Yearous* from the personal name *Joris* (from *Gregorius*), *Yerkey* from *Jerke* 'George', and *Yoast* from the personal name *Joost* (from *Jodocus*). *Yonker* and *Younker* are from *Jonker*, ultimately from *jonkheer* 'young nobleman'.

- The *-uy-* spelling of Dutch names was often simplified to *-i-* or *-u-*, so that for example *Althuyzer* became *Altizer*, *Bruyn* became *Brine*, *Cruyssen* became *Cruzan*, *De Gruyter* became *Grider*, and *Sluyter* 'doorkeeper' is found as American *Sliter*.

- The Dutch spelling *-ijn* was regularly Americanized as *-ine*, so Dutch *Provijn* became *Provine* and *Konijn* 'rabbit' became *Conine*. Both these surnames were already well established in Beverwijck (present-day Albany, N. Y.) in the seventeenth century.

- American *-hoover*, as in *Ridlehoover*, *Risenhoover*, and *Hoover* itself, is generally from Dutch *hoever* 'farmer', though it can also represent the German cognate *-huber*.

- Dutch *-burg* and *-berg* often became American *-berry*. The picture here is complicated by at least two additional factors: 1) the same change in America also affected German and Swedish names: American *Appleberry* is from Swedish *Appelberg*, *Brandeberry* is from German *Brandenburg*, and *Cushenberry* is from German *Kusenberg*, for example; 2) *-berry* is also a regular alternation of English names ending in *-bury* (for example *Canterbury* alternates with *Canterberry*). American *Dusenberry* is from Dutch *Van Doesburg*, a variant spelling of the city of Duisburg in Germany, but also the name of a place in Gelderland. Johannes Hendricksen van Doesburg, born in 1666 in Manhattan, had children recorded as John and Mary *Dosenborrow*, *Dusenbury*, or *Dusenberry*. The story of the American surname *Christenberry* is instructive: at first sight, it looks as if it might be Dutch, German, or Swedish, but in fact it is English, alternating with *Questenbury*. The family genealogists believe that all bearers are descended from Thomas Questenbury (1600–72), who came to Virginia in 1624 from Bromley, Kent, England. The etymology is unknown, although the subject of much speculation. It could be an altered form of *Canterbury*, alternatively it may come from *Glastonbury*, though neither of these etymological speculations can be supported by any evidence.

- Dutch *-bos* and *-bosch* often become American *-bush*; for example, *Quackenbush* is from *Quackenbosch*, the name of a prominent Dutch family of brick makers in Beverwijck in New Netherland (Albany, N. Y.) in the seventeenth century.

More idiosyncratic changes of Dutch names include the following:

- *Ballengee*: from either of two Dutch habitational names, *Van Baelinghem* and *Van Belenghien*. In some cases it may come from

Ballegeer (from French *Boulanger*). *Ballageer* is a family name from Zeeland, the southwestern part of the Netherlands.

- *Brokaw, Broker, Brookhart*: from the personal name *Brokaert* or *Brockhard*. *Brokaar*, a Dutch family name, comes from French *Brocquart*.

- *Conover*: from *Kouwenhoven/Couwenhoven* or *Kuivenhoven/Kuyvenhoven*, a habitational name.

- *Courtland*: Dutch *Van Cortland*, denoting someone from a village called *Cortlandt* near Wijk bij Duurstede. Oloff Stevenszen van Cortland (1600–79), a prominent merchant in New Amsterdam, arrived there in 1638.

- *Courtright, Cortright, Kortright, Cutright*: from Belgian Dutch (Flemish) *Kortrijk*, the name of a place in Flanders; also assimilated to English *Cartwright*. Saxbe (1998) records that Bastiaen van Kortrijk, a Protestant refugee from Catholic Flanders fled north to the Protestant Netherlands in the mid-seventeenth century, and that his sons Jan and Michiel Bastienszoon came to America in 1663. Within two generations, descendants in the male line had acquired the surnames *Michaels*, *Ryers*, and *Low*, as well as *Bastien* and some of the many Anglicizations of *Kortrijk*—a salutary reminder of the instability of surnames.

- *Cronkite, Cronkhite, Cronkright*: Dutch *krankheid*, a nickname meaning 'sickness', 'weakness', established in New Amsterdam from the mid seventeenth century.

- *Crusan, Cruzan, Cruson, Cruzen*: from *Cruyssen*, habitational name for someone from any of numerous places in the Netherlands named with Dutch *cruys*, *kruis* 'cross'.

- *Deaderick, Deatrick*: from the Dutch personal name *Diederik*.

- *Defreece, Defreese*: from Dutch *De Vries* 'the Frisian'. American variants include *Frazee*.

- *Dicus, Dycus, Dykhouse*: from Dutch *Dijkhuis* 'house by the dyke'.

- *Fineout*: most probably from Dutch *Van Hout* 'from the forest'.

- *Goyer* (a common name in New Netherland): from a region called *Gooi* in the Netherlands.

- *Hemstreet*: from Frisian *Heemstra/Hemstra*.

- *Orser*: a much altered form of *Aertse*, a Dutch vernacular pet form of *Arnold*.

- *Outland*: this name may look English, but it is in fact from Dutch *Uitland(er)* 'foreigner', 'stranger' or from *Van den Ouweland* (from *Van den Nouwenland* 'from the new land').

- *Overstreet* and *Overway*: from Dutch *Overstraete* and *Overweg*.

- *Quiggle*: from *Quickel* 'the lively one'.

- *Rewis*: from *Ruijs* 'the noisy one'.

- *Rhett*: most probably an Americanized form of Dutch *De Raedt* 'the counsel'. The name was brought to North America in 1694 by William Rhett (1666–1723).

- *Shaver*: this very common American surname, in some cases at least, is from Dutch *Schouwer*, an occupational name for an inspector of market weights and measures. In other cases, it is from German *Schaefer* 'shepherd'. There is no reason to believe that it is an English occupational name for a barber.

- *Shockey*: from Dutch *Schaake* 'checkerboard', a house name. There are many Dutch and German names in which *Sch-* has been simplified to American *Sh-*. In the case of Dutch names, *-sch-* was also sometimes Americanized as *-sg-*, as in the case of *Visger* from *Visscher*.

- *Upthegrove*: another example of folk etymology at work, this name is in fact from Dutch *Updegraff* 'near the tomb' or 'near the ditch'.

- *Yazzell*: altered form of *Van Ysselstein*, from the village of IJsselstein near Utrecht. Cornelius Martinse van Ysselstein came to New Netherland in 1658, and the name change has been well documented by his descendants.

Appendix 3. Altered forms of German names

- German *-thaler* regularly became American *-dollar*, as in *Cashdollar* (person from *Kirchthal*) and *Helmandollar* (person from *Helmenthal*). The word *dollar* itself traces its etymology to *Joachimsthaler*, the name of a coin minted at the silver mines of Joachimsthal (now Jáchymov in the Czech Republic).

- German *-bach* regularly became *-baugh* in American names, as in *Slabaugh, Slaybaugh, Slaubaugh* (German *Schlabach*), and *Peckenpaugh* (German *Bickenbach*). The latter is also found in other spellings such as *Peckinpah*. The name *Baugh* itself actually has two origins: it is from both German *Bach* 'stream' and Welsh *bach* 'little'.

- German -*brecht* becomes American -*bright*, as in *Argabright* (from *Erkenbrecht*) and *Waybright* (from *Weibrecht*). In eighteenth-century America, German *Albrecht* was assimilated by the pre-existing English name *Albright*.

- German -*ch* often became -*ck* or -*k* in an American English context, involving both a sound and a spelling change. Thus, *Barickman* is from German *Barichmann* (the name of yet another Hessian mercenary). *Ashbrook*, in addition to being English, may be German, in which case it is a translation of *Eschbach*.

- German -*sch*- is normally simplified to -*sh*-, which, as we have already seen, is also the case with Dutch names. *Buschner* became *Bushner*, *Drescher* became *Dresher*, *Schadel* became *Shadle*, *Schönemann* became *Shanaman*.

- German *J*-, like Dutch *J*-, regularly became *Y*-, so that *Joachim* is found as *Yoakum*; *Jürgen* is found as *Yeargin* and *Yeargain*; and *Jäckle* is found as *Yeagley* and *Yeakle*.

- German *Pf*- was usually simplified to *P*- or *B*-, as we saw in the case of the Alsatian Huguenot name *Pfoersching* (*Pershing*). Other examples include *Pfäffle* (*Peffley*), *Pfannebecker* (*Pennypacker*), *Pförtsch* (*Perch*), *Pfaffenberger* (*Poffenberger*), and *Pfaltzbach* (*Balsbaugh*). Sometimes, *Pf*- became *F*-, as in *Faler* (German *Pfähler*) and *Fortney* (German *Pförtner*).

- In dialects of southern German, voiced and unvoiced consonants are not distinguished. Brechenmacher's dictionary (1961) lists *B* and *P* as a single alphabetical position; likewise *D* and *T* and *F* and *V*. With Americanization, *Bäsinger* became *Paysinger*; *Biehlmann* became *Peelman*; *Buschardt* became *Pushard*; *Dietz* became *Teets*; *Diefenthäler* became *Teffeteller*; *Dinkelbach* became *Tinklepaugh*.

- German *W*- is sometimes written as American *V*-, as in *Vertz* (German *Würtz*).

- German -*a*- is often represented in American names by -*au*-. Thus, German *Achenbach* became American *Aughenbaugh*, *Vater* became *Vawter*, *Wachter* became *Vaughter*.

- German -*au*- is represented by American -*ow*-, for example *Clowser* (German *Klauser*), *Downhour* (German *Daunhauer*); *Frownfelter* (German *Frauenfelter*), *Howdyshell* (German *Haudenschild*), *Trumpower* (German *Trumbauer*). In word-final position, however, -*au* is found as American -*aw*, so that German *Holzklau* became American *Holtsclaw*.

- German -*ü*-, representing a sound that was unfamiliar to English ears, became -*e*-, -*ea*-, -*ee*-, or -*i*-, as in *Bedinger* (German *Büdinger*), *Beachler* (German *Büchler*), *Beeler* and *Peeler* (German *Bühler*), *Yingling* (German *Jüngling*). German *Schütz* became *Sheets* and *Sheetz*. The spelling *Shits* is also found in eighteenth-century records but, for obvious reasons, was eventually rejected by its bearers as an American surname.

- German -*ö*-, another sound not heard in English, became -*e*- or -*a*-, as in *Alderfer* (German *Altdörfer*), *Betcher* (German *Böttcher*), *Cleckler* (German *Glöckler*), *Cleckner* (German *Klöckner*), *Esterline* (German *Österling*), *Keplinger* (German *Köpplinger*); *Axley* (German *Öchsle*), *Caler* (German *Köhler*). An exception is German *Schöning*, which became *Chowning* and *Chewning*, but not, as far as I know, **Shening*.

- German -*uh*- often became -*oo*-, as in *Coon* (German *Kuhn*), *Pool* (German *P(f)uhl*), *Rookstool* (German *Ruckstuhl*).

- The American -*ley* ending is most commonly found in English habitational names, but it also often represents the Swiss German hypocoristic -*li* or south German -*le*, as in *Wolfley* (German *Woelfle*), *Beagley* (Swiss German *Büchli*, south German *Büchle*), *Cearley* (German *Zierle*), and *Frensley* (German *Fränzle*). This is a clear case of assimilation to an English form.

- Final -*e* in German names is often respelled as -*ey* or -*y*, for example *Brosey* (German *Brose*), *Geesey* (German *Geese* or *Giese*), *Hagey* (German *Hage*), *Waggy*, *Wagy* (German *Wege*).

- American -*ey* as an ending can also represent German -*er*, as in *Cudney* (German *Kuttner* or *Küttner*), *Kackley* (German *Kächler* 'potter'), and *Remley* (German *Rammler* 'rutting ram').

- Regularization of German -*mann* to American -*man* has resulted in some confusion, since -*man* is also a regular Jewish, Swedish, and Dutch name ending.

- American -*hower* (as in *Boomhower*) may be from Middle High German *Houwer* 'wood cutter' or Dutch *houwere* 'woodsman' or from the same word in the sense 'cutter', as in the case of *Slothower* (from German *Schlotthauer* 'reed cutter'). *Eisenhower* is from German *Eisenhauer* 'iron-ore miner', and is in America also found in the spellings *Icenhour* and *Icenhower*.

Folk etymologies in American English forms of German names are particularly frequent, as in the following examples:

- *Airgood*: from the personal name *Ehrgott* 'honor God'.

- *Catching*: from *Götting* or North German *Gätjen*.
- *Bonesteel*: from German *Bohnestiel* 'beanstalk'.
- *Boomershine*: from *Bommersheim*, the name of a place in Hesse.
- *Dutcher*: an ethnic name for a German (*Deutscher*), not a Dutch person.
- *Eyestone*: from German *Augenstein*, itself a folk-etymological alteration of *Augustin*.
- *Lowmaster*: from German *Lohmeister* 'master tanner'.
- *Porcupine*: from either *Brechbühl* 'Brecht's hill' or *Birckenbühl* 'birch-tree hill'. The same German names have also yielded *Perkapeal* and *Pirkeypile*, as well as *Brackbill* and several other variants.
- *Rainwater*: from *Reinwasser* 'pure water'; nothing to do with rain.
- *Sackrider*: from *Sackreuter* 'cutpurse'.
- *Turnipseed*: translation of *Rübesam*. The same name is also found Americanized phonologically as *Rubsam*, *Reapsam*, and *Reapsome*.

More idiosyncratic changes of German names include the following:

- *Creviston*: from *Gravenstein* or *Greifenstein*.
- *Cutlip*: from *Gottlieb*.
- *Cutshaw*: from *Gottschalk*.
- *Dickensheets*: from *Dickenscheid*.
- *Evilsizor*: from *Ebelshäuser*.
- *Laudermilk*: from *Lautermilch*.
- *Lovengood*: from *Liebengut* or *Leibengut*.
- *Lybrand*: from *Liutbrand*.
- *Vulgamore*: from *Falkheimer*.
- *Utsey* and *Youtsey*: from *Jutze*.
- *Shryock*: from *Schreijöck*.
- *Sickafoose* and *Zickafoose*: from *Ziegenfuss*.

Abbreviations

DAFN: *Dictionary of American family names*. See Hanks 2003.

IGI: *International Genealogical Index*

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