

# CLASS ORIGIN OF SURNAMES AND ACHIEVEMENT

By NATHANIEL WEYL

In the pages that follow, an attempt will be made to discover what relationships exist between achievement, on the one hand, and the class origin and other characteristics of British and Irish surnames, on the other. Here, as in previous articles, the measure of achievement is performance coefficient in *Who's Who in America* 1955-57.

Statistically significant differences are present in the American population bearing Irish surnames. The bearers of Irish names of royal origin have an average performance coefficient 20 points higher than other Irish Americans. Since the sample comprises 1.9 million individuals on Social Security rolls (BOASI) and 945 *Who's Who in America* entries, this difference is not explicable in terms of sampling errors.

TABLE I

*Class Differences in the Performance Coefficients of American Bearers of Irish Names in WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA 1955-57*  
(SMITH equals 94)

CATEGORY	ENTRIES	BOASI (thds)	WWA	P.C.
Royal Names <sup>1</sup>	23	909	482	126
Non-Royal Names <sup>2</sup>	12	1035	463	106
TOTALS AND AVERAGE	35	1944	945	115

<sup>1</sup>The Royal Names are the names of Irish kings as listed in the article "Ireland: History" in the 13th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, except for MORGAN, which is preponderantly Welsh. They are: BRYAN, BRYANT, OBRIEN, COLEMAN, CONNER, CONNOR, McCONNELL, O'CONNELL, O'CONNOR, McCORMACK, DONOVAN, DONNELLY, EGAN, KINLEY, KENNEDY, McKENNA, McLAUGHLIN, McNEIL, O'NEIL, O'NEILL, O'ROURK, McDONALD and O'DONNELL.

<sup>2</sup>The 12 of the Irish names in the sample used to represent the Irish-Americans in previous articles that are not of royal origin: BOYD, BURKE, DUNN, KELLEY, KELLY, MALONEY, McCARTHY, McCOY, MURPHY, RILEY, RYAN and SULLIVAN.

Minority spellings of very common names yield exceptionally high performance coefficients. This applies particularly to the

addition of a terminal "e," which Guppy terms "an affix usually significant of a rise in the social scale, or as it might perhaps be more correctly expressed, of a transference from the Trade to the Court Directory."<sup>1</sup>

The terminal "e" and other unusual spellings are often regarded as evidence of snobbery and pretentiousness. Thus, Abraham Lincoln was fond of remarking that his wife had been one of *the* Todds of Kentucky and that they spelled the name with two d's although one had sufficed for God.

As a rule the differences between the performance coefficients of the two spellings will vary directly with the commonness of the name and inversely with the ratio of unusual to usual spellings of it.

These differences are almost always hereditary, but we cannot estimate the number of generations separating the acquisition of the unusual spelling from the present. Since spelling became stabilized in the United States around 1800, it is safe to assume that the change occurred, in the great majority of cases, more than five generations ago.

The observed differences between the P.C.'s of rare and common spellings are sometimes overstated because of the Negro element in the population of the United States. The emancipated slaves "seem not to have converted any place names into surnames"<sup>2</sup> and there are no known colored MONTICELLO's or MOUNTVERNON's. They avoided place names, animal names and all occupational names except SMITH. Their usual practice was to use the Christian name of their master, a name denoting color, or else the surnames of whites whom they admired.<sup>3</sup> In the large majority of instances, the Negroes chose the commonest spellings of the commonest names. The distortion effect of the Negro is indicated by the case of BROWN. Barker found that, in a list of 13,000 Negro names, 163 per 100,000 bore this name, whereas there were only 60 BROWN's per 100,000 in the Confederate States Army. Since Negroes comprise 11% of the U.S. population, the BROWN per-

<sup>1</sup> Guppy, *The Homes of Family Names*, London, 1890, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Howard F. Barker, "The Family Names of American Negroes," *American Speech*, Vol. 14, pp. 163-174, October 1939.

<sup>3</sup> The choice of heroes is of interest. Four-fifths of all WASHINGTON's in the United States are Negro. Over a third of the HOWARD's are of African descent, this being in honor of General Oliver Otis Howard who was in charge of the Freedmen's Bureau during 1865-74 and hence fed and clothed the emancipated blacks. DAVIS is a very common Negro name in honor of the President of the Confederate States of America, and many are named JEFFERSON, JACKSON and JOHNSON for three Presidents, all of whom had very low opinions of the Negro. By contrast, there are few colored LINCOLN's, SUMNER's or GRANT's.

formance coefficient of 92 is not fairly representative of the achievement of white bearers of that name. In fact, if we assume that the Negro performance coefficient is, for all intents and purposes, zero, the P.C. for white BROWN's would rise to 125.

TABLE II

*Performance Coefficients of Bearers of Common English, Irish and Scottish Surnames as usually and as unusually Spelled*

NAME PAIRS	BOASI (thds)	WWA	P.C.s	RATIOS
Cook	149	52	83	
Cooke	18	19	252	3 : 1
Clark	275	153	132	
Clarke	33	36	262	2 : 1
Green	204	77	90	
Greene	61	41	161	5 : 3
Brown	685	267	92	
Browne	17	33	460	5 : 1
Thompson*	319	145	108	
Thomson*	14	26	448	9 : 2
Johnson*	914	249	65	
Johnston*	77	49	151	5 : 2
McDonald	94	39	97	
MacDonald	31	34	263	3 : 1
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TOTALS				
<i>Common</i>	2640	982	88	
<i>Uncommon</i>	251	238	225	5 : 2

### Color and Type

Considering the fact that the conquering ethnic groups seem to have been lighter in complexion than the conquered in the British Isles and considering the probable positive association of fairness with class, it might have been expected that the bearers

\* In these cases the difference is really between Scots and English. Thomson and Johnston are the Scottish variants of these names. But, while this does not support the author's immediate conclusions, they are consistent with his earlier findings on Scottish performance in America.—EDITOR.

of names meaning *light* would have higher performance coefficients than those of names meaning *dark*. This, however, seems not to be the case.

TABLE III  
*Performance Coefficients of Names Deriving  
from Color of Complexion*

CATEGORY	NAMES	BOASI (thds)	WWA	P.C.s
IRISH:				
Meaning Light <sup>1</sup>	5	173	86	117
Meaning Dark <sup>2</sup>	17	584	297	120
ENGLISH:				
Meaning Dark <sup>3</sup>	4	738	299	97
Meaning Red <sup>4</sup>	3	297	179	142
Meaning Blond <sup>5</sup>	3	352	166	111

<sup>1</sup> BOYD, FINN, FLANAGAN, FLYNN, McGUIRE.

<sup>2</sup> CAREY, COYLE, CRONIN, DOLAN, DONAHUE, DONALD, DONNELLY, DONOVAN, DOLEY, DOUGHERTY, DOYLE, DUFFY, DUNN, DWYER, McDONALD, McDOWELL and SULLIVAN.

<sup>3</sup> BROWN, BROWNE, BROWNING and DOWNING.

<sup>4</sup> REED, REID, RUSSELL.

<sup>5</sup> SNOW, WHITE, WHITMAN. The names BLACK and BLAKE were not included because they may mean either black or white.

In the Irish comparison, the names deriving from dark have a somewhat higher average performance coefficient than those deriving from light, but the difference is too small to be significant. The English comparison is vitiated by the fact that BROWN is a very common Negro name and the probability that there are proportionately many more Negro WHITE's than REED's. Thus, the evidence suggests that color and complexion are not significantly associated with performance coefficients where the bearers of these names are of stock originating in the British Isles.

We find that the bearers of names meaning industrious, strong, smart and, for that matter, stupid or deformed, have considerably higher P.C.'s than average. Names derived from personal characteristics have better scores than trades names and the latter in turn do much better than the bearers of names derived from common Christian names. In the third instance, however, the Negro factor exaggerates the real differences.

TABLE IV

*Performance Coefficients of Bearers of British Names Derived from Characteristics, Occupations and Christian Names*

CATEGORY	ENTRIES	BOASI (thds)	WWA	P.C.
Industrious <sup>1</sup>	2	29	37	301
Smart <sup>2</sup>	6	100	62	147
Stupid, Ugly <sup>3</sup>	3	25	15	142
Strong <sup>4</sup>	4	71	72	171
Large, Fat <sup>5</sup>	5	239	127	129
Short, Fat <sup>6</sup>	5	159	80	119
Handsome, Loved <sup>7</sup>	5	189	93	116
	—	—	—	—
TOTALS	30	811	486	140
52 Occupations	52	4948	2221	111
14 Honorific or high status occupations <sup>8</sup>	14	1021	492	111
61 Christian names <sup>9</sup>	61	7046	2718	91

<sup>1</sup> EMERSON, EMERY.

<sup>2</sup> QUICK, SHARP, SHARPE. SMART, SNELL, SPRAGUE.

<sup>3</sup> PURCELL, DOTSON, GEE.

<sup>4</sup> MAYNARD, STARKEY, STOUT, STRONG.

<sup>5</sup> BATES, BIGGS, GRACE, GRANT, LONG.

<sup>6</sup> BASS, BASSET, LITTLE, SHORT, SMALL.

<sup>7</sup> BELCHER, BELL, CHERRY, DARLING, SWEET.

<sup>8</sup> CLARK, STEWART, REED, PALMER, HARPER, REEVES, BURGESS, FARMER, CLARKE, SEXTON, PROCTOR, BOOKER, CARVER, PIPER.

<sup>9</sup> Derived from DAVID, HENRY, JOHN, RICHARD, ROBERT, THOMAS, WILLIAM.

Finally, we have found no evidence that the performance coefficients of the bearers of English names are correlated, either positively or negatively, with original class status.

TABLE V  
*Performance Coefficients of Names with Different  
Class and Social Origin*

CATEGORY	NAMES	BOASI (thds)	WWA	P.C.
Aristocratic or upper class origin <sup>1*</sup>	5	120	72	142
Feudal officers <sup>2</sup>	12	902	528	140
Low status <sup>3</sup>	23	555	329	140

<sup>1</sup> AVERY (noble), AYERS (heir), CHILDS (young knight), CURTIS (well bred), and GENTRY.

<sup>2</sup> BAILEY, BURGESS, CASTLE, CHAMBERLAIN, FOSTER (forester), PARKER (gamekeeper), WOODRUFF (gamekeeper), WARREN (the same), WOODWARD (the same), STEWART and STUART. The last two names may be regarded as either royal or meaning steward. Their transfer from the second to the first category would not affect the conclusion.

<sup>3</sup> AKERS (farmed one acre), BOND (bondsmen, peasant), COATES (farmed less than 10 acres), COTE (the same), DAY (cowhand), HEARD (tended animals), HIND (domestic servant), HYDE (lived on as much land as one plow could till), LOTT (lived on allotted land), MANN (servant), MANNING (son of a servant), MERRITT (tenant farmer), PADGET (male servant), PAGE (lowest grade servant), PLATT (worked small plot), PORTER, SHEPARD, SHEPHERD, SHEPPARD, SWAIN (servant), TILLMAN (tiller of the soil), WEEKS (dairy farm worker) and WORKMAN (did day labor for his lord).

### Conclusions :

1. The performance coefficients of bearers of royal names are markedly higher than those of non-royal names among Irish Americans.
2. There is a spectacular superiority in achievement of those who use the uncommon, as against those who use the common, spelling of high-frequency British surnames.
3. This is partially, but not mainly, due to the adulterating influence on achievement of Negro name-bearers.
4. English names denoting personal characteristics rank higher

\* These names do not, in fact, indicate aristocratic origin at all. They are, in a large number of cases, nicknames. Consequently, the result which the author has ascertained is what we might expect, for the people concerned are of the same origin as the other classes with whom he compares them. On the whole, Mr Weyl's method is confirmed rather than otherwise by this apparent contradiction.—EDITOR.

than occupational names and the latter are higher than names derived from patronymics.

5. No correlation was found between achievement and the color—or complexion—meaning of British surnames once the Negro element was excluded.
6. Absolutely no association was found, within the general group of English occupational surnames, between performance coefficient and original class status.\*

\* See the preceding editorial note.—EDITOR

### *Professor R. Ruggles Gates' Indian Tour*

Readers will be interested to learn that Professor R. Ruggles Gates is now back in London, having just completed a prolonged visit to India. During the tour he lectured at the University of Calcutta, at Trivandrum Medical College, at Delhi, Gauhati, Shillong and elsewhere. He and his wife were able to include a visit to Iran where he also lectured.

His active research work on tribals and other people included studies of the Lambara—who were formerly dacoits (brigands)—and the Chenchu, both in Hyderabad State. His programme included work on the hybridisation of the Anglo-Khasis and on other crosses ranging from European-Tamil to European-Panjabi. In north-east India he was able to study the Lepchas, Botias and Tibetan refugees.

Professor Gates received considerable collaboration from the Indian Statistical Institute at Calcutta, as a result of which he had adequate research facilities. In return he was able to assist and advise on work being done in India more effectively than would otherwise have been possible.

We look forward to publishing some of the results of his latest research in THE MANKIND QUARTERLY and in the MANKIND MONOGRAPHS series in due course.—EDITOR.

# Notes on a 'Scientific' Controversy

BY A. JAMES GREGOR

The recent controversy which has attended the birth of THE MANKIND QUARTERLY has brought sharply into focus a number of considerations. Had it not been sufficiently evident before this time that human emotions are inextricably involved in questions of race, heredity, nurture, advanced cultural achievement—and their real or presumed interrelationship—the exchanges delivered alternatively by one side and then the other have made that fact manifestly clear. Arguments so loosely formulated, facts so carelessly marshalled, theories so artlessly misrepresented, could only be evidence of a serious impairment of reason—the consequence of intense emotional involvement. So frequently do the disputants violate the most elementary etiquette of academic discourse with the basest innuendoes,<sup>1</sup> the gratuitous ascription of the meanest motives<sup>2</sup> and the most irresponsible assessment of personal integrity,<sup>3</sup> that one finds oneself bewildered in the attempt to discover the real issues being debated.

<sup>1</sup>“ . . . I'd put any first-year student of psychology up against Professor Garrett in a test of general psychological knowledge and bet heavily on the student coming out ahead.” A. Montagu, “Letters to and from the Editor,” *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, Autumn 1961, p. 134. Does Professor Montagu really mean that he would match any first-year student of psychology against a man who is Professor Emeritus of Psychology, Phi Beta Kappa, Past President of the American Psychological Association and the Psychometric Society?

<sup>2</sup>“Professor Garrett appears to be attempting to lay a foundation for the philosophy of segregation in education.” S. Garb, “Letters . . .” *op. cit.*, p. 136. “Why is it that Garrett and others like him are so anxious to prove the Negro inferior? Quite obviously science and truth are not involved here, except as devices behind the screen of which the true motivations of such persons find expression.” A. Montagu, “Comments,” *Current Anthropology*, II, No 4, October 1961, p. 326. “Why are Montagu and other equalitarians so anxious to force amalgamation of American Negroes and American whites? For despite all protestations of virtue, tolerance, kindness and what have you, this is their obsessive goal.” H. E. Garrett, “The Scientific Racism of Juan Comas,” THE MANKIND QUARTERLY, II, No. 2, October 1961, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup>“Garrett has prejudged the evidence; as one who was born and raised in the Black Belt, he knows that the Negro is inferior, and he will distort.