

IN THE SHADOW OF HOGAN'S MOUNTAIN

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What's in a Name?

Have you ever asked how your parents chose your name? If you had been born 75-100 years ago, you likely would have received a traditional family or religious name rather than a name based on current trends. Since religious names dominated, many young people had similar names of biblical origin like John, Mary, Matthew, Solomon, Joshua, Micah, Ruth, Sarah, Deborah, Esther, and Magdalene.

Perhaps because I've passed my "Rubicon" benchmark, an average life expectancy of 76.5 years, I find myself reading obituaries and noting the "old school" names in the epitaphs. Among people my age, I see a clear pattern of older names drawn from earlier generations (Ephram, Claude, Rhoda, Adeline, Maude, Mazie, Bertie). During periods after wars, boys were often named for relatives who died in battle. I was named Warren, one of the oldest French medieval names, after my uncle who was killed in World War II.

During the early and mid twentieth century, parents were encouraged to use family names to maintain family heritage. Many early pastors used scripture to encourage the use of reli-

gious names. Biblical and theological views hold that God know and may assign meaning to our names even before birth (Jeremiah 1:5), a belief echoed in many faiths (Isaiah 43:1).

Over the past two decades, naming has become more individualized and diverse, with a shift toward shorter, less common names. Recent choices often emphasize uniqueness, pop culture inspiration, and gender neutral options. Even so, many parents still favor religious and family names.

A baby's name can shape relationships for a lifetime. As a former school administrator, I held many disciplinary conferences about name calling. Based on that experience and guidance from sources such as BabyCenter and Parent Magazine, expectant parents may find the following naming tips helpful:

- Avoid embarrassing initials and acronyms that may spell out offensive words.
- Names with special meanings or significance can give your child a sense of identity and purpose.
- Say the name out loud with your last name to see how you would feel about using the name for a lifetime.

• While unique spellings can be fun, consider how easy it will be for others to pronounce and spell the name. You want to choose a name that your child will not need to constantly correct.

• Kids can be brutal on the playground with children whose first and last names rhyme or might be ripe for unexpected puns.

• When thinking about a name, remember to check how the name might be shortened or changed to a nickname. Some nicknames become life-long monikers.

• Young people may move or travel to diverse area where a name might have a vulgar or strange meaning in another language.

• Unfortunately, names may be associated with a future negative world event or even someone with a very negative connotation. Names may even be banned in certain areas of the world.

According to the Social Security Administration the newest popular names tend to be more succinct with fewer syllables. (e.g., Noah, Ava Mia, Liam). A massive rise in gender-neutral names (e.g., Charlie, Finley, Skyler, Rowan) have been chosen in the last decade.

In the mid-twentieth century some popular names were Mary, Betty, Barbara, Patricia, Shirley (Girls); Robert, James, John, William, Richard (Boys). In the past decade (2014-2024) parent embraced names like Olivia, Emma, Charlotte, Amelia, Sophia (Girls); Liam, Noah, Oliver, Elijah, James (Boys) (Source: Social Security Administration).

Our constantly changing social norms create a batch of unusual names that are often impacted by the economic levels, education levels and desire to main-

tain generational names. Parents are becoming very creative with the spellings of their children's names. If you really want to dive deep into names the Social Security Administration webpage provides the top 1,000 boy and girl names from 1880 onward and even most popular names by state.

Names are more than just labels; they are reflections of history, culture, and identity. Whether you prefer a classic name with deep roots or a modern, trendy choice, the evolution of baby names over time

shows us that naming is both personal and ever-changing. Naming a child is one of the most fraught experiences of parenthood. Know whatever you name the child; the name will be with them for life.

And finally, don't forget to decide what to call grandparents. They will also be saddled with whatever name is chosen. My wife and I were traditionalists by asking we be called grandma and granddaddy. We're happy that they did not choose Granddude, Ace, Geez, Bubba, Insta-Gram, Moomaw, or Marmee.

COMPLETE EYE EXAMS

Our basic eye exam includes test for:

- Visual Acuity (Near and Far)
- Glaucoma, Cataracts, and other Ocular Pathology
- Refraction for Glasses or contacts
- Visual Field Screening
- Ocular Motility
- Muscle Posture
- Convergence
- Color Vision
- Depth Perception
- And Other Test (all on an as needed basis)



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NEW PATIENTS ACCEPTED

Fifty Years Ago

Among the May 1976 Bethlehem news:

Jerry's Market Opens

The Jerry Palmer family of Bethlehem opened their new business on May 6, 1976, on the lot shared with Bethlehem Restaurant. Jerry's Market offered fresh fruits and vegetables, along with other tasty treats.

West Middle School Open House

The new West Middle School Open House was planned May 20, 1976, with principal, Dr. Roy H. Rowe, Jr., slated to greet families for the event.

Bicentennial plans announced

Rev. Wendell DuBois, pastor of Fellowship Advent Christian Church, was named coordinator of the Bethlehem Community Bicentennial Celebration for the weekend of June 12-13, 1976. Events planned included games, demonstrations of old-timey activities, and displays of old objects.

Essay winners

Donna Dixon, a 12 year old sixth grader, and Cindy Martin, a 13 year old seventh grader, wrote the winning essays in the Bethlehem Jaycette-sponsored "Pride In America" essay contest.

Spirit of '76

Students in Sylvia Sprinkle's class at Bethlehem School performed a Bicentennial observance in May 1976. The students dressed up in old fashioned attire and brought along special items such as colonial weapons. This included students Robert Teague, Mark Weaver, Jody Fox, Matthew Brown, Dale Price, Kelly Hershey, Robin Haynes, Shelly Lail, Kathy Bolick, and Amy Browder.

PTA Officers chosen

The new Bethlehem School PTA Officers were elected on April 26, 1976: Shelton Sebastian, president; Sarah Lail, secretary; Jewel Williams, vice president; and Benny Adams, treasurer.



GRADUATION SPEAKERS — These students at Bethlehem School maintained the highest grade average at the school for the 1975-76 school year and were the speakers at the eighth grade commencement program on June 1, 1976, left to right: Emily Moretz, Todd Thomas, and Ronica Caldwell.



FOOD PANTRY DONATION — Bethlehem Ruritan Vice President Tim Garrison is pictured presenting a check for \$500 to Good Samaritan Food Pantry director Jenn Stafford at Mt. Pisgah Lutheran Church in Bethlehem. The pantry operates Mondays from 3-5 p.m. and Fridays from 1-3 p.m. This ministry, sponsored by Mt. Pisgah Lutheran Church, provides food for individuals and families in need.

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BBA

BETHLEHEM BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Bethlehem Branch Library

The Bethlehem Branch Library is always a busy hub of activity in the Bethlehem community. They offer activities for people of all ages. Preschool story time is set for 10:00 a.m. every Monday and it is always well attended. The little ones enjoy stories, music, crafts and snacks each time



Preschool story time is one of the most popular programs at the Bethlehem Branch Library and is held every Monday at 10:00 a.m. Children enjoy stories, music with movement, crafts, and snacks each week. In this photo, Alexander County Library Director Laura Crooks is engaging the story timers in books about Mother's Day.

they meet. Senior Bingo happens at the Bethlehem Branch on the second Tuesday of each month at 1:00 p.m.

There is a homeschool meetup group that convenes the first Tuesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. with snacks provided. A Pokemon club meets the third Tuesday of each month from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Pokemon enthusiasts enjoy trading cards together and participating in Pokemon themed activities.

There is an NCWorks Career Center representative at the Bethlehem Library every Thursday at 1:30 p.m. to assist with business services, job seeker services, and student scholarship services. A free movie night is offered the second Tuesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. Drinks and popcorn are provided. There is comfortable seating at the library and plenty of books, magazines, newspapers, and DVDs to choose from. Coffee breaks are on Wednesdays from 9-11 a.m. The library hours are Monday 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., Tuesday 12:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., Wednesday 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., Thursday 12:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., and Friday 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

For more information, call the library at 828-495-8753.

BBA

BETHLEHEM BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

The Bethlehem Business Association is dedicated to promoting businesses in the Bethlehem Community, and to achieve goals to help the community thrive.

Please Join Us ...

Next Meeting:

Thursday, July 16th

6:00 PM

Campbell's Berry Farm

27 Tracy Bolick Lane,

Hickory, NC 28601

Current and potential Bethlehem Business Association members are welcome to attend.

Star deadline June 11

The deadline for advertising and correspondence for the next issue of The Bethlehem Star is Thursday, June 11, before 5 p.m.