

## Names: Some of us are Blessed; some of us are Cursed

Most of us have no say in what names we end up with, but parents certainly are the culprits when it comes to first names...and sometimes you just have to wonder. Look at poor ol' Harry Butts, for example. Imagine having to go through your school years with a name like that.

The meaning of words often change over time, however, so, at least in the case of older examples here, the parents may, in fact, be blameless. In my grandfather's time, and for at least most of my father's time as well, for example, 'gay' simply meant happy. Today, although it's still retained its original meaning, it's taken on a completely different implication. So, deciding to name your daughter 'Gay' is going to have definite ramifications that weren't there before.

It was a lot simpler in earlier times when people simply didn't have surnames. You were simply Emily. But, as populations increased, it was rather confusing to have all these Emily's walking around, so eventually there was Emily of Paris, Emily of Frieburg, Emily the smith's daughter, etc. Later, they became Emily Paris, Emily Frieburg, Emily Smith. Look at Leif Ericson, c. 1000 AD. He was Eric's son (Eric the Red, who discovered Greenland). And Leonardo Da Vinci was Leonardo from the town of Vinci.

If I'd had any kind of say in the matter, I certainly wouldn't have picked 'Prero' as a last name. Sometimes I feel as if I've spent half my life explaining to people how it's pronounced. All in all, I think the American Indians had the right of it...names normally after things in nature: Storm Cloud, Raging River, Running Antelope...Now, those are cool names! Of course, what's 'cool' and what's not depends on the culture. In one culture, your name might be spectacular; in another, it might be a joke, an insult, and even an obscenity. *Moral: parents should think ahead!*

