

A COLOR ADO

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Color surnames are a lot more varied than most people would at first expect. Everyone is aware of the color names BLACK, BROWN, GRAY (and GREY), GREEN and WHITE. Elsdon C. Smith, in his book Treasury of Name Lore (Harper & Row, 1967), suggests derivations of these very common color names. He also mentions some other color names: BLUE, LAVENDER, ORANGE, PINK and PURPLE.

We wondered if there were other such color names, and we decided to start a search for them. We cross-checked color names from Webster's Third New International Dictionary with surname entries from the 1967 and 1968 London telephone directories. No doubt a similar examination of American telephone directories would reveal many identical names. Our preliminary list of color names has one hundred examples.

Almond	Clay	Marine	Sable
Amber	Coffee	Meadow	Saffron
Apple	Copen	Morello	Sage
Argent	Copper	Moss	Salmon
Ash	Coral	Mulberry	Sand
Auburn	Cork	Murrey	Sapphire
Bay	Corn	Mustard	Scarlet
Beaver	Cream	Negro	Shamrock
Bister	Currant	Oak	Shell
Blond	Daw	Olive	Sherry
Blood	Doe	Or	Silver
Brass	Drake	Orchid	Sky
Brazil	Eagle	Peach	Smaragd
Briar	Fawn	Peacock	Solferino
Brick	Freestone	Pearl	Starling
Bronze	Garnet	Plum	Stone
Bunny	Gold	Poppy	Straw
Carmine	Grain	Port	Sudan
Castor	Gravel	Primrose	Tan
Champagne	Hunter	Roan	Teal
Cherry	Iron	Rose	Topaz
Ching	Ivory	Rosewood	Vert
Cinnamon	Lake	Royal	Violet
Citron	Leather	Ruby	Wine
Claret	Lemon	Rust	Wood

The surname BLUE, given in Elsdon Smith's book, is the only one

of the three subtractive primary colors (red, yellow, blue) that we have met so far. It is not difficult to track down the name RED in other sources; this is listed in P. H. Reaney's A Dictionary of British Surnames (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958). However, we must admit that YELLOW has been giving us some trouble. We keep running into the surname YELLOWLEES, but that, unfortunately, is not the same as YELLOW. Perhaps the reader can track down this elusive surname for us. Perhaps, even, one of our readers bears the name YELLOW.

We have no doubts at all that our list of color names can be greatly expanded. Perhaps the reader would like to grab the lime-light and supplement our list with a few dozen names of his, or her, own.