

## EVERYBODY COMES FROM SOMEWHERE

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A citizen of Houston is known as a Houstonian. One who lives in Dallas is a Dallasite. If you are from Los Angeles, you are an Angelino. And if you happen to be an inhabitant of New York, you are a New Yorker.

Four cities, four different endings. Are there any rules governing the formation of such names? George R. Stewart tried to codify the nomenclature fifty years ago (see Mencken's The American Language (Alfred A. Knopf, 1937), pp. 548-9):

- 1) if the city ends in -ia, add -n (Philadelphian)
- 2) if the city ends in -on, add -ian (Bostonian)
- 3) if it ends in -i, add -an (Miamian)
- 4) if it ends in -y, change to -i and add -an (Kansas Citian)
- 5) if it ends in -o, add -an (Chicagoan)
- 6) if it ends in a sounded -e, or in -ie or -ee, add -an (Mus-kogean, Guthrieian, Poughkeepsian)
- 7) if it ends in -a not preceded by i, add -n (Tacoman)
- 8) if it ends in -olis, the change is to -olitan (Annapolitan)
- 9) if it ends with consonant -d, -f, -g, -l, -m, -n, -r, or -s, add -ite (Brooklynite, Seattleite, Wheelingite)
- 10) if it ends with consonant -k or -t, add -er (New Yorker)

However, as Stewart noted, there are frequent exceptions to these rules. In at least two cases, the name of the resident depends on which state the town is in: Richmonder in Virginia but Richmondite in Indiana; Springfieldian in Massachusetts but Springfielder in Ohio.

And then there are the lame attempts at humor cited by Mencken: the people of Chicago have been called Chicagorillas, those of Baltimore, Baltimorons, those of Omaha, Omahogs, those of Louisville, Louisvillains, those of Swampscott, Swampskeeters, and those of Cedar Rapids, Bunnies (see der rabbits).

The British are not content with simple endings, but alter the basic word as well: Oxford has Oxonians, Cambridge has Cantabrigians, Liverpool has Liverpooldians, and Glasgow, Glaswegians. Those who live on the Isle of Man are known as Manxmen, though Mananans would be logologically more desirable (see the February 1982 Colloquy).

Among former British colonies, one finds citizens of Sydney, Australia known as Sidneysiders, and those living in Barbados are known as Bajans.

Moving further afield, people from Quebec call themselves Quebecois, and ones from Guam call themselves Guaminain. Canal Zone inhabitants are Zoniacs. Natives of Bologna, Italy are known as Bolognese, and those of Cairo are Cairenes. If your home is in Monaco, you are a Monegasque, or if it is in Madrid, you are a Madrilenian. Dwellers of La Reunion are known as Reunionais, and of Puerto Rico, Puertorriqynes. Originate in Yucatan and you are a Yucatec, whereas a denizen of Moscow is a Muscovite. (But if you live in Moscow, Idaho you are a Moscowite instead.)

I wonder what you would call people from Monahans, Pinsk or Timbuctu?

### A CELEBRATION OF ENGLISH

*Our Marvelous Native Tongue* (Times Books; \$17.25 hardcover) is an unabashed paean to the glories of the English language. Robert Clairborne believes that English's preeminence is a consequence of its exceptionally large vocabulary, but he offers no proofs other than a brief analysis of Chaucer, Shakespeare and the King James Bible. Would a literate (and equally chauvinistic) Frenchman or Spaniard find this argument compelling? The bulk of the book traces the various streams contributing to English, from Indo-European onward, citing etymologies for several hundred words to illustrate his points. He also makes the excellent point that dooms-sayers have been predicting the corruption of English by linguistic barbarians for centuries -- yet this has not come to pass.

I found the final chapter the most stimulating. Here, Clairborne presents his philosophy of language: (1) "good" English is that which communicates clearly and unambiguously, and is not necessarily equivalent to grammatical English; (2) clarity is more important in written than spoken English because of the diversity of the audience and the inability to receive questions and feedback; (3) the less interference with communication (by government or other censors) the better off we will all be; (4) nowadays fewer people can write clear English, probably because of incompetent teachers, multiple-choice Scholastic Aptitude Test scores (instead of written essays), etc.

All very true -- but perhaps good English will prevail if professional writers and speakers (especially those on radio and TV) uphold Clairborne's standards. It is not admissible for a writer or speaker to blame his incompetence upon poor instruction; many others, such as Abraham Lincoln and probably Shakespeare himself, rose above such limitations.