

If your name is Beaumont-you must be a geologist! Well, sometimes...: Funny Stories of the so-called "Nominative determinism". Historical joyous Vignettes

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ABSTRACT

Rather an historical curiosity, not a too serious subject, is the phenomenon of "nominative determinism". Are some persons compelled to take up a line of work and career suggested by their surnames? Are names also hold the secret to success? Was Sigmund Freud joyous ??

(Freud=joy); was another Austrian neurologist and pharmacologist, (1871- 1953), Alfred Fröhlich, a happy person? (Fröhlich=happy)? Well, let us enjoy the stories of some people whose names became their professions.

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INTRODUCTION

- *nomen est omen* - implies that the name is fitting for the object or person. An *apronym* is a name aptly suited to its owner.
- Nominalism—the nominalists deny that universals exist, arguing that the existence of a general word does not imply the existence of a general thing named by it, though indeed there must be some similarity between the particular things to which the general word is applied.

My family name is Ohry, which means in Hebrew "*my skin*". In 1943, sometime after General Wladislaw Anders' Polish Army arrived in Palestine [1] it became clear that the Army will soon join the British Army in the attempt to land in Italy and attack the Germans. My father decided, like many other Jewish soldiers, not to return to burning Europe, where its soil was soaked heavily with Jewish blood. He was hiding in a Kibbutz where his original name, Lederman ("*leather man*", tanner) was changed to Ohry. And today, occasionally, I get a call from a patient who seeks dermatological advice. So I find myself explaining them that Ohry is my name and not my profession.

"Nominative determinism"

The funny term "Nominative determinism" implies that a person's name can have a significant role in determining key aspects of job, profession or even a character. Tom Stoppard named it an *apronym*, a name aptly suited to its owner, the "*cognomen syndrome*" in his 1972 play *Jumpers*. Dr Bones the osteopath changed his name to *Foot* and became a chiroprapist. And then there was Sir Archibald Jumper himself, the acrobat. Auguste and Louis Lumière, pioneering 19th century filmmakers (*lumière* is the French word for "light").

One of my teachers, a neurologist, is Y. Goldhammer, a very suitable name for a neurologist whose reflex-hammer is present in all time. Lord Russell Brain, 1895- 1966, was an eminent leading neurologist. So was Sir Henry Head, FRS (1861-1940) [2].

John Leech, 1817- 64, went to St. Bartholomew's to study medicine. Leech's teachers became aware of Leech's superb anatomical drawings and began commissioning him to draw portraits. Leech abandoned medicine in favor of drawing. Later, Leech's humorous drawings appeared in *The Punch Magazine*, *The London Magazine*, etc. were extremely popular. Leech is an archaic word for a physician [3]. Another John Henry Leech (1862-1900) was an English entomologist who specialized in Lepidoptera and Coleoptera. The "Father of American Surgery" was one of Hunter's pupil, Philip Syng Physick (1768-1837) from Philadelphia. Well, born with the

family name "Physick"- Philip-Syng should be a surgeon [4].

Arzt in German means a *doctor, medicus* or *ἀρχίατρος*. We may recall Dr Leopold Arzt (1883- 1955) an Austrian-Jewish physician, who worked in the pathological institute and the surgical clinic and was an assistant in the dermatological clinic under Gustav Riehl (1855-1943). He was appointed a professor at Innsbruck, and later at Vienna, where he was nominated as the director of the university clinic for skin- and venereal disease [5].

On December 7, 1948, Leopold Arzt was elected president of honour of the Österreichische Gesellschaft. A perfect name for a soldier and a doctor had Louis Anatole La Garde (1849 - 1920), Colonel, Medical Corps U. S. Army, He attended the Louisiana Military Academy at Alexandria (1866–68) and matriculated at Bellevue Hospital Medical College in New York in 1870 and after two years of continuous attendance was graduated in 1872 [6].

The word "beard" reminds us a barber "*barber-surgeon*", or *barbier* but George Miller Beard (1839-1883) [7], was a U.S. neurologist who popularized the term neurasthenia, around 1869, Harold Wordsworth Barber (1886-1955) [8-9], was an English dermatologist, [Barber syndrome] and Carroll Glenn Barber (1895- ?) an American orthopaedic surgeon. When he described the Blount-Barber-Erlacher syndrome in 1942 he was affiliated with the Department of Surgery, Orthopedic Service, Western Reserve University and University Hospitals.

John Armstrong (1709-1779) was a poet and a Scottish physician. It is apparent, that a sound name as "Armstrong", made him a well known doctor as well as poet who published his poem on *The Art of Preserving Health* [10].

Prof. Ludwik Fleck (1896-1961) in Lwow ghetto and Auschwitz camp, pursued microbiological research, developing in extremely primitive conditions a vaccine against typhus exanthematicus (spotted fever, or Fleck in German...).

Pioneer of a new line of thought, the Constructivist theory of knowledge & medical epistemology (the study of the genesis and development of scientific ideas within the scientific community [11].

Ebenezer Emmons (1800- 1863) was an American physician and the Father of American Geology. The Biblical name of Ebenezer means in Hebrew: *eben*=a stone, and *ezer*= helping, assisting. A perfect name for a physician-geologist [12].

It is an amazing fact, that there were, and there are, many geologists named Beaumont ("Beautiful Mountain")! Just a co-incidence? Are there any family ties between them?

John Beaumont (c. 1650-1731) was an English physician-geologist who lived in Ston-Easton in Somerset. He wrote on rock plants, ailments afflicting both cattle and miners, on Mendip caves, Wookey Hole and Lamb Leer Cavern.

Jean-Baptiste Armand Louis Léonce Élie de Beaumont (1798-1874) was a French geologist. He became a famous geologist when he introduced his theory of the origin of mountain ranges, to the Academy of Sciences in 1829, and later published his *Notice sur le système des montagnes* (1852).

William Comyns Beaumont (1873-1956) was Britain's "Most Eccentric and least Known Cosmic Heretic". He was a British journalist, author, and lecturer. Beaumont was a staff writer for the *Daily Mail* and editor of the *Bystander* in 1903 and then *The Graphic* in 1932. He supported the idea of the "British Israelism". Beaumont wrote on meteorite craters and the possibility of a "celestial impact as responsible for the sudden extinction of a pre-Flood civilization".

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The last name, unfortunately, is connected to medicine but not to geology: William Beaumont (1785-1853), was an American assistant army-surgeon during and after the War of 1812. Because one of his patients, a 19-year-old French Canadian trapper, who was accidentally shot on June 6, 1822, Beaumont became very famous: a permanent fistula to his stomach needed routine management. "Beaumont began peering into his patient's stomach, and could actually see how the human stomach behaved at various stages of digestion and under varying circumstances. He was also able to extract and analyze samples of digestive juice." In 1833, he published his findings as *Experiments and Observations on the Gastric Juice and the Physiology of Digestion*, which became a very important textbook on gastric physiology. The patient succeeded to celebrate his 82 birthday...

The Canadian Dr. William Rawlins Beaumont (1803-1875), surgeon and inventor, was born on Beaumont Street in Marylebone, London's West End. He studied at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London, performed eye surgery and created several ophthalmological instruments. In 1841 he immigrated to Canada. He became a famous surgeon, there he invented a gynecological instrument to close fistulae (1836), an instrument for making deep sutures, used in surgery for cleft

palates (1837), an instrument for removing polyps from the uterus, nose, and ear; and tonsils (1837), an umbrella-shaped vaginal speculum with steel blades (1837), and a sliding iris forceps (1863), to enable the surgeon to remove portions of the iris without tearing the cornea upon exit [13].

The last Beaumonts in my list, had nothing to do with medicine: Sir George Howland Beaumont, 7th Baronet (1753-1827) was a British art patron, amateur painter and one of the founders of the London's National Gallery and the brothers, Sir John Beaumont (1582-1627?) and Francis Beaumont, (1584-1616), were British poets. Francis' poem: *The Indifferent*, begins with- "Never more will I protest,

To love a woman but in jest: For as they cannot be true, So, to give each man his due,

When the wooing fit is past Their affection cannot last"....

Finally, nobody, I presume, will consult a physician whose name is "coffin". Fortunately, Albert Isaiah Coffin, (1790/91-1866), turned to be a medical botanist. He was an American medical botanist, who came to Britain in 1838. He may have begun medical training but was influenced by Native American healers, after being successfully treated for tuberculosis. He practiced in Manchester, using key remedies, lobelia (an emetic) and cayenne pepper (for warmth). He wrote "*Botanic Guide to Health*" (1845) and "*Treatise on Midwifery and the Diseases of Women and Children*" (1849). One of Coffin's assistants, John Skelton, had inspired John Boot, the father of Jesse and founder of Boot's pharmaceutical company and high street chemist chain. The institutions of British herbalism, notably the National Institute of Medical Herbalists, can be traced back to Coffin, who was active in London from the late 1840s.

His most famous book was *Botanic guide to health and the natural pathology of disease* [14]. In Russian and Polish "mogila" means a "grave", "tomb", "sepulcher". It is also a village in the south of the Republic of Macedonia. Searching the PubMed site, I found a few physicians with this name: V. Mogila, VV. Mogila, AI., VA., TV. Mogila and more....

Beyond any doubt, I will never visit an office of a doctor named: slaughter. Frank Gill Slaughter (1908-2001), pen-name Frank G. Slaughter, was an American novelist and physician whose books sold more than 60 million copies. His novels reflected his own medical experience and his interest in history. At 17 he attended medical school at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. He began writing fiction in 1935 while a physician at Riverside Hospital in Jacksonville, Florida [15].

Finally, as an amateur jazz drummer, I came across an American drummer called Billy Drummond born in 1959, who learned jazz from his

father, who was a drummer and a jazz enthusiast and whose record collection included many recordings of Miles Davis, Art Blakey, Max Roach, Buddy Rich and Elvin Jones, among others. He teaches jazz drumming at Juilliard School of Music and NYU in New York [16-17].

In a similar way, we may look on various "phenomena" humorously: I recall reading William Bean's article (the editor of Archives of Internal Medicine), on a new variant of psychoanalysis –the logophobic school of atavistic dynamism...[18]. Please read this piece in a similar way.

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