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Caesar, *Jack*, and *Cuffee*: African-American fugitive slave names in the 17th to the 19th century

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***Caesar*, *Jack*, and *Cuffee*: African-American fugitive slave names in the 17th to the 19th century**

Abstract: The history of African-American names strikingly demonstrates the close connection between personal names and the culture that influences naming practices. Thus far, most personal name studies have analyzed names that parents carefully selected for their children. In contrast, this study focuses on names assigned for different purposes: the names of African-American slaves. For centuries, slaves were not allowed to name themselves or their children; the 'White' masters held the naming right.

In short, it will be illustrated which names the slave owners chose for their slaves. For the first time, the characteristics of slave names in general will be contrasted with those of over 3,800 first names of fugitive slaves. It is assumed that focusing on the first names of runaways, that is, slaves whose living conditions were so bad that they dared

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to flee, provides a particularly deep insight into the purpose of slave naming and the attitudes of slave owners towards their slaves.

Keywords: First names, African-American names, slave names, fugitive slave names, "Black" names.

***Caesar*, *Jack* et *Cuffee* : Noms des esclaves afro-américains en fuite du XVIIe au XIXe siècle**

Résumé : L'histoire des noms afro-américains témoigne de manière particulière du lien étroit entre les noms de personnes et la culture dans laquelle ils sont donnés. Alors que la plupart des études se penche sur les noms que les parents ont soigneusement choisis pour leurs enfants, la présente étude se centre sur les prénoms qui ont été donnés dans des conditions différentes. Ce sont les prénoms des esclaves afro-américains. Pendant des siècles, les esclaves n'avaient pas le droit de se nommer ni de nommer leurs enfants ; seuls les maîtres blancs avaient le droit de se nommer.

L'étude analyse les prénoms que les propriétaires ont donnés à leurs esclaves. Pour la première fois, ces données comparent les noms d'esclaves en général avec les prénoms de plus de 3 800 esclaves en fuite. Cette méthode vise à fournir un aperçu particulièrement approfondi des pratiques de dénomination des esclaves et à illustrer ainsi les attitudes personnelles que les propriétaires d'esclaves avaient à l'égard de leurs esclaves.

Mots-clés : Prénoms, noms afro-américains, noms d'esclaves, noms d'esclaves fugitifs, noms « noirs ».

***Caesar*, *Jack* und *Cuffee*: Namen entflohener afro-amerikanischer Sklaven des 17. bis 19. Jahrhunderts**

Zusammenfassung: Die Geschichte der afro-amerikanischen Namen zeugt in besonderer Weise von dem engen Zusammenhang zwischen Personennamen und der Kultur, in der die Namen vergeben werden. Während in den meisten Studien Namen untersucht werden, die Eltern wohl überlegt für ihre Kinder ausgesucht haben, stehen im Fokus vorliegender Studie Vornamen, die unter anderen Bedingungen vergeben wurden. Es sind die Vornamen afro-amerikanischer Sklaven. Jahrhundertelang durften Sklaven sich und ihre Kinder nicht selbst benennen, das Benennungsrecht besaßen allein die weißen Master.

Es wird analysiert, welche Namen die Besitzer für ihre Sklaven auswählten. Zum ersten Mal werden diese Spezifika mit den Namen von über 3.800 entflohenen Sklaven verglichen. Dieses Vorgehen soll einen besonders tiefen Einblick in die Sklavennamengebung ermöglichen und so die persönlichen Einstellungen verdeutlichen, die Sklavenhalter gegenüber ihren Sklaven hatten.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Vornamen, afro-amerikanische Namen, Sklavennamen, Namen entflohener Sklaven.

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Caesar, *Jack*, and *Cuffee*: African-American fugitive slave names in the 17th to the 19th century

ANNA-MARIA BALBACH

1. Introduction

"A name is a document epitomizing personal experiences, historical happenings, attitudes to life, and cultural ideas and values" (Fortes 1955: 347). This quotation of the famous anthropologist Fortes was proved by many others and for names in various societies (for instance, by Gutman 1976; Alford 1988; Nübling et al. 2015; Ainiala & Östman 2017). The naming practices and the history of African-American names have only sporadically moved into the focus of research (e.g. Dillard 1986; Lieberson & Mikelson 1995; Laversuch 2006; Cook et al. 2014). One reason for this is the limited source situation. Since for a long time, slave names had not been recorded, only small corpora of names are available for research.

But even these small collections of names very impressively demonstrate the close connection between personal names and the societal culture and attitudes that influence naming. This connection is particularly evident because African-American name practices do not concern first names carefully selected by parents for their children, as is the case in many other name studies. Until 1864, African-American names were assigned under different circumstances: they were the names of slaves and therefore, the names were chosen by the 'White'[1] masters. For centuries, the masters had the right to name and rename not only adult slaves but also the offspring of their slaves.[2]

This study uses for the first time a new database (Baptist et al. 2016), which enables a large number of over 3,800 first names of runaway slaves to be collected and examined. These results will be complemented by and compared to an older study on slave names of the 18th and 19th centuries from Puckett (1975), who also compared the naming practices of slaves to that of free 'Blacks' and 'Whites'. We will summarize the specifics of slave names

[1] The common American terminology until today uses *White* and *Black* to describe demographic groups (cf. U.S. Census Bureau, http://www.census.gov/topics/population/race.html, accessed 2020-01-08). Since this very terminology stands in stark contrast to the European terminology, and especially the German one, terms like *Black*, *White* and *race* are marked in single quotation marks to emphasize that this is the American technical terminology and not the author's expressions (cf. also Balbach 2018b: 5–9).

[2] Concerning the right of the slavers to name their slaves cf. Burnard (2001: 328ff.), Benson (2006: 180ff.), Balbach (2018b: 13f.).

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that they identify and investigate whether the names of fugitive slaves exhibit any particular differences. We assume that focusing on the first names of runaway slaves, i.e. those slaves whose slavers forced upon them living conditions so bad that they dared to flee, provides a particularly deep insight into the naming of slaves and allows the reconstruction of the culture, the society and the personal attitudes of slavers towards their slaves.

In the following, we will first introduce the beginnings of African-American name history with reference to Puckett (1975) and our own small studies (Balbach 2018b). We will concisely demonstrate respective developments using Top 10 name lists, which will serve as points of comparison in the main section. Next, we will explain methods and materials of the present study. We will then present our results and directly compare them to the results of Puckett (1975) to show similarities and differences. A discussion concludes the essay.

2. The beginning of the African-American name history[3]

Sources indicate that the 'Black' slave names history in the 'New World' begins nameless. Of course, the prisoners had names, but these were of no importance to the slave traders. In the logs of the slave ships, slaves appear not by name, but numbered (Zeuske 2015: 90). They usually received their names upon completion of the sale from a slave trader to a master. The receipts of the traders state the name of the slave for the first time:

> Augusta Sept 20, 1864
>
> Received of G. A. Johnson Severn(!)
> Thousand fivehundred Dollars, being in full for the purchase of Three
> Negro Slaves named Susanah and Two children
> the right and title of said slaves I warrant and defend against
> the claims of all persons whatsoever, and likewise warrant Them
> sound and healthy in mind and body, and Slaves for life.
> As witness my hand
>
> W. B. Davant
> Mrs. M. W. Davant
>
> (Johnson 1864)

Pre-printed receipt forms (cf. Figure 1) contained fields to enter the slave's name and other information, illustrating that the slave's name was an integral part of the receipted sale and was assigned (at the latest) at that time.

[3] This chapter is based on my previous research, published in German in Balbach (2018b), supplemented by further sources and examples and has new focal points.

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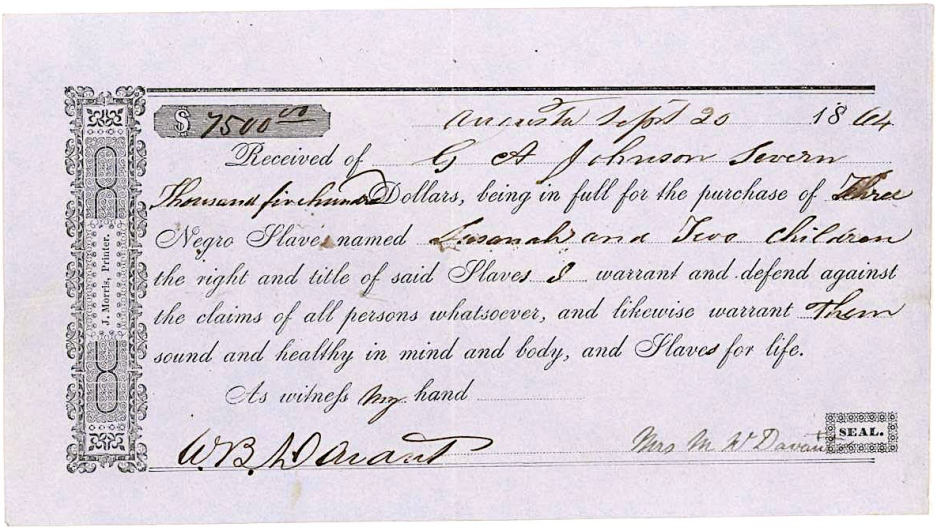


Figure 1: Pre-printed Receipt of W. B. Davant, 1864 (Johnson 1864).

But which names did the slaves receive? Were they their native African names or – if they stemmed from the Christianized regions of Africa (cf. Thornton 1998) – their mostly Portuguese baptismal names? Or did the Anglo-American owners choose names from their well-known English name pool?

Puckett's studies (1975) show that naming varied considerably. The earliest slave names Puckett was able to research date from 1619 to 1699, based on a wealth of historical documents from both public and private writing. All sources revealed the same phenomenon: Slaves were rarely recorded with their names in these sources. Municipal documents and civil registers noted slaves as "one negar" or "a negors woman" (Price 2003: 199), and so did private documents. An inventory list from 1707 lists the slaves in the same form as cattle: "4 negro men, (…) 2 negro boys 14 years old a piece, (…) 5 horses, (…) 2 steers 3 years old a piece, (…)" (Gilson 1707).

Due to the limited sources, Puckett (1975) could only trace 65 slave names from the 17th century. Despite the scant number, these 65 names are valuable name witnesses, since they remain the only known slave names from this period. The 65 names come from what is now Virginia (N=36), New York (N=27) and Maryland (N=2). All three colonies were under British and thus English-speaking rule in the 17th century, whereby the later New York was part of the Dutch crown until 1664 as New Amsterdam (Finzsch et al. 1999: 53f., 66f., 80f.). This is an important indication of the linguistic context in which the following 65 names were used:

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Table 1: 65 slave names from 1619 to 1699. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of occurrences (Puckett 1975: 7). Top, female names[4], bottom, male names. No highlights, English; grey highlights, Spanish/Portuguese[5] origin; italic, Dutch origin; underlines, African origin.

Maria (4)	Angelo	Eliz	Isabella	Mitchaell[6]
Mary (3)	Angeli	Figa	*Juliana*	Susanna
Lucia (2)	Barbara	Gasinte	Madelina	Palassa
	Conchanello[7]	Frances	Margaret	

John (10)	William (2)	Brase	Jacob	Paulo
Anthonio (4)	Andrew	Christopher	Joseph	Sambo[8]
Anthony (3)	Antonio	Diego	Manuel	Tony
Edward (2)	Balthazar	Emanuel	Mookinga	Will
Francisco (2)	*Bastiaen*	Fernando	Phillip	

Only the names *Mookinga* and *Sambo* have African roots (Puckett 1938: 158). Most of the names are – in almost equal parts – Spanish and English first names. In the latter case, Puckett (1975: 7) assumes that they are "Anglicizations of original Spanish names". Of note is the distribution of names within the sexes. The classification of this study shows that more than two thirds (17 of 24) of women's names are Spanish, one name is of Dutch origin, and six names are English. Men's names show an inverse relationship: only 11 of 41 male names are of Spanish origin, the majority (N=27) are English names, two names show African origin, and one name is Dutch.

4 The assignment of the women's and men's names was adopted from Puckett (1975), but was corrected in the case of *Angelo*, who was a female slave. Cf. article "Angela (Angelo)" in: *Encyclopedia Virginia* (https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Angela_fl_1619-1625, accessed 2020-06-12).

5 The assignment of the names was done with the help of different sources. First a name was looked up in name encyclopaedias (Stewart 1986; Hanks et al. 2006; Lansky 2015; Kohlheim & Kohlheim 2016; Bielefeld 2020). If the origin could not be clarified conclusively, research was done to find out whether the name has a tradition in a certain language area. For example, the name *Margaret* was proven to be a traditional woman's name in the British royal house, the name *Juliana* a traditional name in the Dutch royal house. Some names could also be found in other historical documents where they are described in more detail (e.g. "Gasinte, a Spanish Negress, sold in New Netherlands" in Brodhead 1853: 244).

6 Boskin (1988: 23) quotes from a document in which the name listed by Puckett (1975) as *Mitchaell* is listed as *Mitcahell* and refers to a female slave with the Spanish name *Michaela*. However, Boskin made a spelling mistake. The source he quoted mentions the name *Mitchaell* in the same spelling as Puckett. In fact, all sources refer to the inventory of William Stafford of March 3, 1644, in which several slaves are listed as his property, including "one negro woman called Mitchaell".

7 Listed in Puckett (1975: 7) as *Couchazello*, in Puckett (1938: 158) as *Couchaxello*, in an excerpt from the inventory of the late William Stafford of March 3, 1644, the owner of this slave, the name is listed as *Conchanello* (McColley 1986: 247).

8 Listed in Puckett (1975: 7) as *Samba*, in Puckett (1938: 158) as *Sambo*.

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In a next step, Puckett (1975) categorizes the 65 names and reveal a high proportion of biblical and saints' names. They attribute this observation to the desire of the new owners to introduce Christianity to the slaves, who were "pagan" in their eyes, a view largely due to the state of research in the 1970s.[9] More recent research indicates that a majority of the 17th century slaves came from African regions such as Congo and Angola, some of which the Portuguese had Christianized as early as the late 15th century, and also bore Christian names (Thornton 1998: 421–434). In addition, many slaves in the 17th century were brought to the colonies aboard Portuguese slave ships and were thus subject to the Portuguese law, which "required all African slaves to be baptized and made Christian before their arrival in America" (Thornton 1998: 434). Accordingly, today we must assume that these slaves had already been brought to the 'New World' with Christian names (cf. also Balbach 2018b: 14–16). The Portuguese Christian names assigned in their homeland or aboard the slave ships explain the high percentage of Spanish[10] names under the 65 above mentioned slave names. Puckett's (1975) observation that many of the English first names are Anglicized Spanish names suggests that the first names were not changed but merely adapted to the language of the new habitat, for example, *Anthonio* to *Anthony* or *Maria* to *Mary*. However, this Anglicization seems to have been gender-specific. The classification of this study reveals that the names of male slaves were readily adapted to the new language, while the majority of female slaves retained their Spanish names.

With the first generational change of the African slaves brought to the colonies in the 17th century, the Anglicization of slave names seems to have been strongly promoted. Based on different sources it is evident that the children of Spanish named slaves usually received English names. Already "the first child of African ancestry known to have been born in Virginia (ca. 1624)" (Billingsey 2000: 318), the son of *Anthony* and *Isabella*, both among the first 20 Africans in Virginia in 1619, received the English name *William* at his baptism in 1625. A 1644 inventory lists the slaves with their names as "One negroe man called Anthonio (…), One negroe woman called Mitchaell (…), One negroe woeman Conchanello, one negro woeman Palassa" (Records of York County 1914: 247). The names are all of Spanish origin. Their children born in the British colony, however, have English names, as the same inventory records: "One negroe girle Mary 4 yeares old, One negroe called Eliz: 3 yeares old" (Records of York County 1914: 247).

As far as the few name records show, in the 17th century, the Spanish slave names were primarily adapted to the English-speaking environment. Men's

[9] Other researchers long after Puckett (1975) likewise assumed that the first slaves were Christianized by their owners or were given Christian names for missionary purposes. Cf. e.g. Kaplan & Bernays (1996: 74).

[10] In Puckett's (1975) style, we refer to these names as "Spanish", although at this point, they should correctly be called "Portuguese".

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names were anglicized more quickly than women's names in this process, and slave children born in the British colonies were directly named with English names. Since the English names from Puckett's (1975) sample of 65 names do not contain any distinctive names, such as seen in later centuries, slaves at this time seem to have borne names from the usual English name repertoire.

The developments in the 18th century show a radical change. On the basis of 2,740 African-American names from all over America, Puckett (1975) can analyse two different corpora of names: on the one hand, names of slaves, who were usually named by their owners; on the other hand, names of so-called 'free Blacks', who could name themselves and their children.

Both groups (cf. Table 2) show the same trend: Spanish and African names disappear from the Top 10, reflecting an overall sharp decrease, while English names dominate (Puckett 1975: 9f.)

Table 2: Top 10 names of slave men and free African-Americans, 18th century (Puckett 1975: 9). The numbers in parentheses indicate the appearance of each name in this particular source. The percent value specifies the frequency of the name among all names in that category.

Rank	Top 10 Slave men	%	Top 10 Free African-American men	%
1	Jack (57)	5.93%	John (28)	3.67%
2	Tom (47)	4.89%	James (25)	3.27%
3	Harry (34)	3.53%	George (24)	3.15%
4	Sam (30)	3.12%	Sam (24)	3.15%
5	Will (23)	2.39%	William (23)	3.01%
6	Caesar (21)	2.18%	Peter (22)	2.88%
7	Dick (20)	2.08%	Dick (19)	2.49%
8	Peter (20)	2.08%	Jacob (18)	2.36%
9	John (18)	1.87%	Jack (17)	2.23%
10	Robin (18)	1.87%	Tom (17)	2.23%

But the English names of the two groups differ. The most frequently used names among male slaves, *Jack*, *Tom*, and *Harry*, show a connection with the idiom "any Tom, Dick, and Harry" (Puckett 1975: 11), standing for 'a set of nobodies; persons of no note' (Brewer 2001: 1083). Furthermore, the Top 10 and the following ranks contain many names in short forms and mocking names from antiquity (*Caesar*, *Jupiter*, *Cato*). Among the names of the 'free Blacks' in contrast, short names are less common, and ancient names are hardly used (Puckett 1975 11f.). Free Blacks prefer the names of 'White' Americans,[11] such as *James* and *George*, which often originate from the English royal house.

A similar development can also be seen among the women's names (cf. Table 3): African and Spanish names decrease in both groups, and the choices

[11] Puckett (1975: 56f.) also lists the most common 'White' names for the 18th and 19th century.

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of English names diverge, due to the fact that free African-American women avoid slave names but choose popular Anglo-American names. Among the names of female slaves, the abundance of short forms is particularly striking.

Table 3: Top 10 names of slave and free African-American women, 18th century (Puckett 1975: 9).

Rank	Top 10 Slave women	%	Top 10 Free African-American women	%
1	Bet (38)	6.25%	Sarah (24)	5.90%
2	Mary (22)	3.62%	Hannah (19)	4.67%
3	Jane (18)	2.96%	Rachael (19)	4.67%
4	Hannah (16)	2.63%	Bet(t) (12)	2.95%
5	Betty (15)	2.47%	Mary (12)	2.95%
6	Sarah (15)	2.47%	Phillis (12)	2.95%
7	Phillis (14)	2.30%	Jane (10)	2.46%
8	Nan (13)	2.14%	Ann (8)	1.97%
9	Peg (12)	1.97%	Elizabeth (8)	1.97%
10	Sary (12)	1.97%	Nancy (8)	1.97%

It is worth mentioning that Puckett verified an impression they had gained when collecting the male slave names from the slavers' inventories, which listed the slaves with their names next to cows, mules, and other livestock.[12] Some of the animals, mostly mules, were also named. They collected 235 names of mules from the lists and confirmed that the names of the slaves were often the same as the names of the mules: 197 mules (84%) had names also used for slaves. *Cato*, *Pompey*, *Jack*, *John*, *Ned*, and *Tom* are particularly common names for both mules and slaves (Puckett 1975: 11; cf. also Wilson 1998: 309, Burnard 2001: 334).

The approximately 28,000 African-American names from 1800–1864 illustrate important developments for the 19th century. Monosyllabic short forms such as *Sam*, *Dick*, *Jack* and *Tom* are less frequently given to slaves, and the mocking names also decrease. Short names completely disappear from the Top 10 of the 'free Blacks' names (cf. Table 4).

Instead, biblical and saintly names appear in both African-American groups. For slaves, names from the English aristocracy (*Henry*, *George*, *Charles*) now move into the Top 10. Thus, both African-American name lists further approximate to the Top 10 of the Anglo-Americans.

[12] Puckett used various documents to collect the names. Beside census registers, they also had inventories of 'White' masters. Reading those inventories, Puckett noticed that in some cases also the livestock was listed with names (Puckett 1975: 11).

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Table 4: Top 10 names of slave men and free African-Americans, 19th century (Puckett 1975: 44f., 112f.). The Top 10 of the Anglo-American men are presented for comparison.

Rank	Top 10 Slave men	%	Top 10 Free African-American men	%	Top 10 Anglo-American men	%
1	John (295)	3.83%	John (681)	7.86%	John (1610)	13.51%
2	Henry (260)	3.37%	William (562)	6.48%	William (1254)	10.52%
3	George (221)	2.87%	James (449)	5.18%	James (825)	6.92%
4	Sam (162)	2.10%	Thomas (334)	3.85%	Thomas (607)	5.09%
5	Tom (156)	2.02%	George (232)	2.68%	Joseph (313)	2.63%
6	Charles (155)	2.01%	Henry (214)	2.47%	Robert (283)	2.37%
7	Jim (150)	1.95%	Samuel (196)	2.26%	Henry (272)	2.28%
8	Jack (140)	1.82%	David (166)	1.92%	Samuel (261)	2.19%
9	Peter (135)	1.75%	Charles (160)	1.85%	Benjamin (256)	2.15%
10	William (126)	1.64%	Peter (149)	1.72%	Georg (222)	1.86%

19th-century African-American women's names show the same developments. Slave names become more like the names of free Afro-American women, while both groups orient towards the dominant 'White' naming of the time (cf. Table 5). Nevertheless, the female slaves still bear some names (in the Top 10 *Maria* and *Harriet*, on the following ranks up to position 25 numerous further names), which are rarely seen among the frees (Puckett 1975: 18ff.).

Table 5: Top 10 names of slave women and free African-American women, 19th century (Puckett 1975: 46f., 113f.). Anglo-American women's names are shown for comparison.

Rank	Top 10 Slave women	%	Top 10 Free African-American women	%	Top 10 Anglo-American women	%
1	Mary (321)	4.96%	Nancy (285)	6.08%	Mary (90)	13.93%
2	Maria (178)	2.75%	Mary (271)	5.78%	Elizabeth (64)	9.91%
3	Nancy (157)	2.43%	Sally (213)	4.54%	Sarah (49)	7.59%
4	Sarah (150)	2.32%	Betsy (177)	3.78%	Ann (41)	6.35%
5	Lucy (139)	2.15%	Polly (149)	3.18%	Nancy (23)	3.56%
6	Harriet (129)	1.99%	Lucy (136)	2.9%	Eliza (21)	3.25%
7	Elisa (122)	1.89%	Elizabeth (123)	2.62%	Hannah (20)	3.10%
8	Jane (119)	1.84%	Jane (108)	2.30%	Martha (19)	2.94%
9	Hannah (115)	1.78%	Sarah (107)	2.28%	Jane (15)	2.32%
10	Martha (108)	1.67%	Hannah (89)	1.90%	C(K)atherine (14)	2.17%

While in the 18th century there were highly distinctive name pools for slaves, free African-Americans and Anglo-Americans, in the 19th century we

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observe a common tendency for slaves and free Afro-Americans to strongly orient their naming toward the contemporary Anglo-American naming.

The individual analyses of Puckett (1975), however, exhibit that the nature and also the pace of change and assimilation differs between slaves and free African-Americans and between female and male names. Men of both groups strive for name assimilation more strongly and faster than women (cf. Figure 2). Their names remain more distinct and diverse – particularly names for slave women. When comparing the Top 21[13] names, names of female slaves and Anglo-American women are least similar with only 48% conformity (cf. Figure 3).



Figure 2: Conformity of the Top 25 names of free African-Americans (black) and Anglo-Americans (light grey). 22 names (88%) are commonly used by both groups (medium grey). Names from Puckett (1975: 30–60).



Figure 3: Conformity of the Top 21 names of slave women (black) and Anglo-American women (light grey). 10 names (48%) are commonly used by both groups (medium grey). Names from Puckett (1975: 30–60).

3. First names of fugitive slaves

Various historical sources, including autobiographical testimonies testify that some slaves had to suffer such unbearable living conditions that they dared to run away from their owners, despite the well-known dangers to life and limb on the run and the threat of harsh punishment if captured (Moore 2009: 56ff.; Miller 2012: 2076; Montejo & Barnet 2015: 209).[14]

In view of the dangers, 89% of fugitive were men (Moore 2009: 58) and under 35 years of age (Smith & Wojtowicz 1989: 13f.). This means that for the following study, hardly any women's names were available, but most of the collected corpus are men's names.

The names stem from the period 1700 to 1864 and could be gathered

[13] The low numbers of female names preclude compiling a list of Top 25.

[14] The few previous studies on escaped slaves indicate that usually several circumstances had to come together before a slave really escaped. Not only were his living conditions decisive. The formulations of some runaway ads indicate that particularly very strong individuals fled and individuals who could benefit from communal support, such as relatives in other cities or regions to which they could flee. Cf. Smith & Wojtowicz (1989: 13ff.).

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from American newspapers, in which the masters posted advertisements to seek their runaway slaves. In the following, after an introduction into the material and methodology of the study, we will analyse the names of the runaway slaves under the aspects of name frequency, linguistic origin and the categories from which they are chosen. We will then compare the results with the slave names from Puckett's (1975) studies. It should be noted, however, that the two lists are not fully comparable, as the respective name sources are of different size.[15]

3.1. Material and methodology

The creation of the name corpus was possible thanks to the database "Freedom on the Move" published in 2016 by the department of history of the Cornell University, NY (Baptist et al. 2016).

> Freedom on the Move is a database of fugitives from North American slavery. With the advent of newspapers in the American colonies, enslavers posted "runaway ads" to try to locate fugitives (Baptist et al. 2016).

The database contains runaway ads from 27 newspapers from twelve different colonies/states[16], all published in English. The advertisements from the time between 1700 and the end of slavery contain an exact description of the escaped slaves and in many cases also their names. To assemble the names from the advertisements into a research corpus, we chronologically sorted the 22,236 "runaway ads" contained in the database in January 2020, removed duplicate advertisements[17] and grouped them into three time periods: the earliest period covers the advertisements from 1700–1750, the second period ranges from 1751–1800 and the last period includes ads from 1801–1864.

Because runaway ads only emerged gradually in the early 18th century, the first two periods with 252 (1700–1750) and 1,883 (1751–1800) advertisements do not contain as many advertisements as the last period from 1801–1864 with 19,424 advertisements. Therefore, for the 18th century, we extracted the names from the advertisements manually: For the period 1700–1750 there are 241 given names, for the period 1751–1800 twice as many with 481 given names.

For the third period, the vast data volume of 19,424 adverts required a different procedure. For this purpose, we relied on the name function of the

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15 On the problem of the comparability of different sized name corpora, see Balbach (2018a), but due to the lack of other comparable data, only Puckett (1975) can be used.

16 Alabama, Connecticut, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia.

17 Double advertisements were removed if an enslaver had placed the same advertisement in different newspapers or if the advertisement was posted again after some time if the search had been unsuccessful until then.

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database, in which the editors started to extract the names of the runaway slaves from the ads and make them accessible via a separate function. At the present time (January 2020), 3,091 names could be retrieved via the database function. This brings the total number of first names of runaway slaves to 3,813, the largest collection of names of this kind ever investigated.[18]

To be able to compare our results with those of Puckett, we also compiled hit lists based on name frequency. We determined the linguistic origin and particular categories from which the names were drawn, similar to Puckett (1975), who listed categories that could possibly differ from the names of the free 'Blacks' and 'Whites', such as names of African origin, descriptive names or titular names. They also list the category Biblical names, which is characteristic for Anglo-American naming. The category English names of Germanic origin was added for this study, because also names like *Frank* und *Richard* were typical Anglo-American names. Changing frequencies of these selected categories in the studied period may therefore indicate change and possibly an assimilation process. Therefore, we have also analysed the above categories in our study and compared them with the results of Puckett (1975).

3.2. Names of fugitive slaves 1700–1750

From this period, 228 male names and 23 female names could be collected. Given the small number of women's names, we can only draw conclusions about the men's names here.

Table 6: Top 10 names of fugitive slaves, 1700–1750. The numbers in parentheses indicate the appearance of each name in this source.

Rank	Top 10 names of fugitive slaves
1	Caesar (14)
2	Jack (13)
3	Cuffee (12)
4	Tom (9)
5	Cato (7) Harry (7) Peter (7)
8	Pompey (6) Robin (6)
10	John (5)

A look at the Top 10 names of fugitive men between 1700 and 1750 is striking as it includes names such as *Caesar* and *Cato* in first and fifth place,

[18] Other name corpora of fugitive slaves for onomastic analyses have been collected, e.g. by Laversuch (2006): 251 first names from 1736–1776, and Burnard (2001): 2,209 first names from Jamaica from 1753.

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respectively, and *Pompey* in eighth place. These names are familiar from persons of antiquity. Moreover, many of the slaves seem to have been named not with long names but with short names like *Jack*, *Tom*, and *Harry*.

The linguistic origin of the fugitive names is manifold. Among the Top 10 alone, there are names from Latin such as *Caesar* and *Pompey*, but also English (*Jack*, *Harry*) as well as an African name (*Cuffee*). The evidence of an African name among the Top 10 is remarkable because in the 18th century, as seen in Puckett's Top 10 (cf. Table 2), African first names were no longer among the ten most common first names, neither among slaves nor among free African-Americans. On the contrary, their share of all names collected by Puckett (1975: 10f.) was 9.3% among the slaves and only 3% among the free 'Blacks'. In contrast, among the Top 10 names of escaped slaves, there is an African name on the third place. In addition, it is a typical traditional African name (day names, cf. Balbach 2018b: 20ff.).

The categorization of all 228 names gives numbers to what a glance at the Top 10 already indicated: after Biblical names, the category of classical names is the second largest category of names of runaway slaves with 20.2% (Figure 4). Thus, three times more fugitive slaves bear ancient names than Puckett was able to determine for slaves in the 18th century in general (6.1%, Puckett 1975: 13).

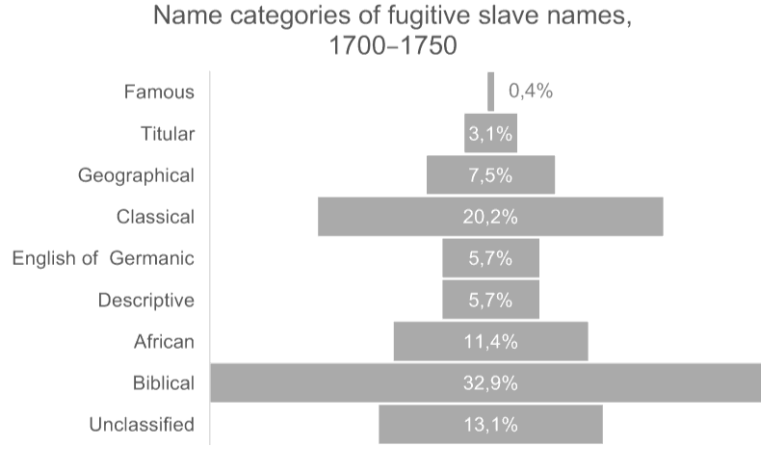


Figure 4: Name categories of fugitive slave names from 1700–1750.

With 11.4%, names of African origin are slightly more common among runaways than among the slaves in Puckett's (1975: 13ff.) name corpus (9.3 %). On the other hand, geographical names and titular names are much more common as runaway names: with 7.5% geographical names and 3.1% titular names, both categories are much more frequent than Puckett found (2.5% and 1.8%, respectively).

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3.3. Names of fugitives 1751–1800

For this time period, 406 male names and 77 female names are available from runaway ads. The numbers of women's names – only few names are found more than once – do not allow statistics, so here we focus again on men's names.

Table 7: Top 10 names of fugitive slaves, 1751–1800. The numbers in parentheses indicate the appearance of each name in this source.

Rank	Top 10 names of fugitive slaves
1	Jack (30)
2	Tom (21)
3	Frank (11)
4	Caesar (10) Cato (10)
6	Cuffee (9) George (9) Joe (9) John (9) Will (9)

In some respects, the Top 10 from the second half of the 18th century have changed considerably compared to the previous Top 10. The ancient name *Caesar* has dropped from first to fourth place, next to *Cato* in fifth place. *Pompey* is no longer among the Top 10. In the first two places are the names *Jack* and *Tom*, which are generally most common among slaves of the 18th century (cf. Table 2). The African name *Cuffee* dropped from third to sixth rank, so that there are no antique or African names on the first three places any longer. Overall, the entire corpus of names from 1751–1800 shows a sharp decline in African names from the previous 11.4% to 5.2%. The classical names have also declined. In turn, English names have gained popularity. These are mainly English forms of Christian names such as *Jack, John, James, George,* and *Tom*, and therefore originally of Hebrew and Greek origin. After the Christian names, the classical names still form the second largest category. The category English names of Germanic origin is the third largest with names like *Frank* (3rd place).

The categories titular and descriptive names remain relatively stable; they increase by only 0.4%. Remarkable is the changing content of descriptive names. Whereas in the first half of the 18th century, in this category fall mainly names which based on colours, referred to days of the week and festivals, or were related to craft materials or activities, respectively,[19] most descriptive names between 1751–1800 are names such as *Hazard*, *Venture*, *Ash*, *Crook*, *Cumber*, *Duff*, *Hardtimes*, *Lank*, *Suck*, or *Ware*. Names like these leave the purely descriptive level. They primarily value respectively devalue their bearers.

[19] Descriptive names were classified according to Puckett (1975: 15f.). Laversuch (2006) sometimes makes different assignments.

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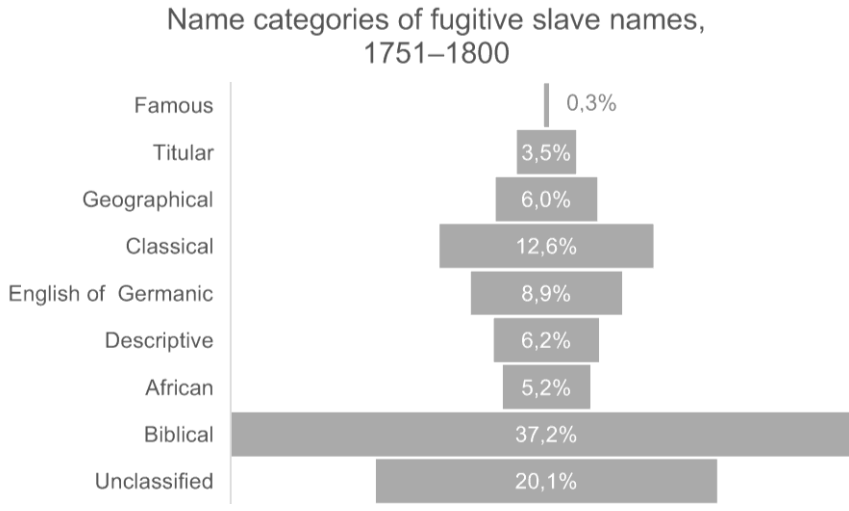


Figure 5: Name categories of fugitive slave names from 1751–1800.

3.4. Names of fugitives 1801–1864

The Top 10 runaway slaves in the 19th century, calculated from all 2,311 male names from this time period, no longer contain Classical names or names of African origin. Rather, English names dominate. While keeping in mind the limited comparability of the two datasets, as discussed above, six of the names also appear in the Top 10 of slaves' names (cf. Table 4), with *John* and *Henry* in the first two ranks in both lists. There are also five matches with the Top 10 of free African-Americans. Although short names are not found among the free African-Americans and only to a lesser extent in Puckett's (1975) Top 10 of slave names, a larger portion of runaway slaves still bears diminutive forms.

At this point, it must be reconsidered whether the number of short forms may be due to the type of source and the way the name is mentioned in this source. It is possible that slavers may have stated the names of their runaway slaves in short form in the runaway ads, as these were the name forms that dominated in daily use. However, the fact that numerous advertisements bear witness to the advertisers' attempt to reproduce the names of the runaways as precisely as possible speaks against this: if a slave bore several names or had only recently been given a new name under a new owner, all these names are listed. If the 'master' had become aware that the fugitive might have changed his name, these possible new names were also mentioned. This effort to give as exact a name as possible makes it likely that the advertised short name matched the real name.[20]

[20] Examples from the runaway ads for the precise name specifications are "(…) a Negro Man Named Dick, but sometimes called Martin" (*Parker's New York Gazette*, 5/18/1759); "(…) a Negro wench named Maria alias Amoritta" (*The New-Jersey Gazette*, 12/25/1780); "(…) a young negro man, named JIM, alias Isaac" (*The City Gazette*, 08/20/1788).

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Table 8: Top 10 names of fugitive slaves, 1801–1864. The numbers in parentheses indicate the appearance of each name in this source.

Rank	Top 10 names of fugitive slave men
1	John (141)
2	Henry (102)
3	Peter (99)
4	George (85)
5	William (77)
6	Joe (71)
7	Isaac (67)
8	Sam (51)
9	Lewis (45)
10	Dick (44)

African names have not only disappeared from the Top 10, they hardly show up in the total name corpus with only 0.2%. English names of Germanic origin, on the other hand, have gained significantly; they now account for 17.6% of all names in the corpus. Geographical and titular names lose influence.

The distribution has changed considerably. After the Christian names, the category English names of Germanic origin now forms the second largest category of names for fugitive slaves. By a large margin, the category of descriptive names takes third rank. Again, there are major changes in content: obviously pejorative names have disappeared almost completely. In the 19th century, the descriptive names degrade more subtly: every second first name indicates the function of the slave: *Squire* and *Cooper* are the most common names, followed by *Parker*, *Mills*, *Butler*, *Carter*, *Doctor*, *Walker*, *Foster*, *Harper*, *Proctor,* and *Tucker*.

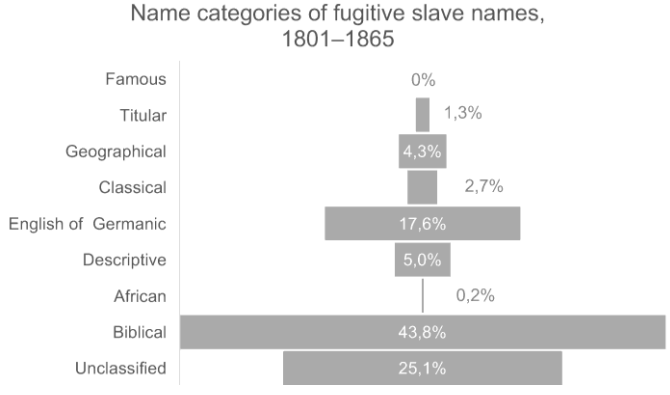


Figure 6: Name categories of fugitive slave names from 1801–1864.

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3.5. Female names

For the 19th century, with 780 first names of escaped slave women, enough names have been recorded to draw conclusions. The first five and the tenth of the most frequent names for fugitive slave women are also found in the Top 10 of all slave women's names (see Table 5). *Mary*, *Hannah*, *Mary*, *Nancy*, *Sarah*, and *Eliza* are popular names of the 19th century and are also most common among free Afro-American and Anglo-American women (cf. Puckett 1975: 13ff.). Even more striking are the four names *Celia*, *Fanny*, *Tenah*, and *Jenny*, which can only be found among the Top 10 names of runaway slave women.

Table 9: Top 10 names of fugitive slave women, 1801–1864. The numbers in parentheses indicate the appearance of each name in this source.

Rank	Top 10 names of fugitive slave women
1	Maria (56)
2	Hannah (48)
3	Mary (43)
4	Nancy (43)
5	Sarah (43)
6	Celia (29)
7	Fanny (28)
8	Tenah (26)
9	Jenny (19)
10	Eliza (15)

Celia is a name from the Portuguese and Spanish area. Since the Spanish and Portuguese were, along with the Dutch, leaders in the transatlantic slave trade, it is likely that slave women with this name belonged to a household of Portuguese or Spanish descent. *Tenah*, on the other hand, is an African women's name. Its meaning is 'cut, saw', and therefore can be viewed as an occupational name (Puckett 1975: 454).

In 18th-century Europe, *Fanny* became a popular woman's name through the female character in Henry Fielding's novel *Joseph Andrews* (1742). However, it attained negative connotations in English-speaking countries. Since 1750, *Fanny* has been documented in British English as a vulgar word for female genitals (Hughes 2006: 157). In the American language it denotes a "person's bottom" (*Cambridge Dictionary* 2014). The name *Fanny* is therefore still not part of the usual name pool in English-speaking countries. The many documents as names for fugitive slave women therefore suggest that it was used in a derogatory way.

The name *Jenny*, ranked ninth, was used in the 19th century as the

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diminutive of *Jane*. A look at Puckett's (1975) lists of names of slave women and free African-Americans at that time shows that only *Jane* is listed there among the ten most common names. Among Anglo-American women, *Jane* is ranked 13th. For *Jenny* there are only single records in all three groups, indicating the rareness of this name.

The predominant use of Christian names for women is even more pronounced than for men. They dominate in Puckett's (1975) female name corpora and among the names of fugitive slave women. Only few names belonged to other categories (cf. Figure 7).

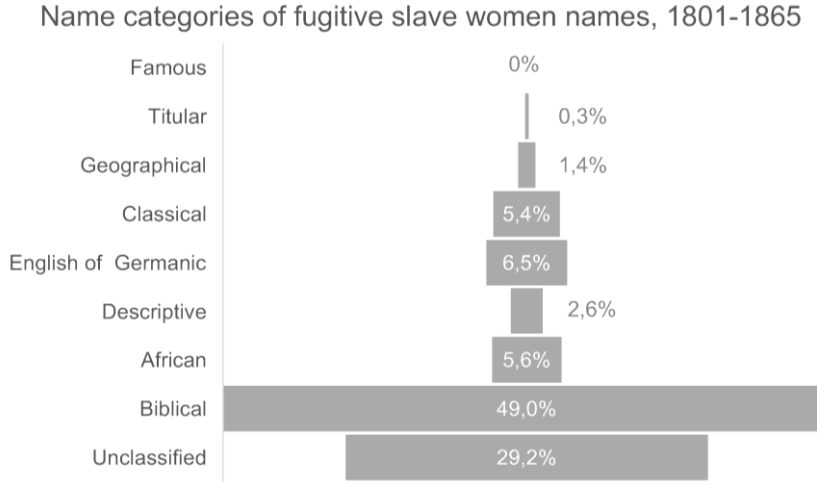


Figure 7: Name categories of fugitive slave women names from 1801–1864.

4. Discussion

The introduction into African-American naming history of the 17th to 19th century impressively shows the change in the first name usage of slaves and free African Americans over the centuries. Particularly the comparison with the names of Anglo-Americans reveals the convergence of name pools during this period. But despite all the processes of approximation, typical slave names can be found in all centuries. In male naming, there are distinctive slave names that free African-Americans avoided and that are not used at all among Anglo-Americans. These distinctive names are, in particular, mocking and pejorative names, names of African origin, descriptive names, names of antiquity, and names like *Tom*, *Dick*, and *Harry*, which since the 16th century have even proverbially stood for "a set of nobodies" (Brewer 2001: 1083), and which show greater similarity with the names of the slavers' livestock than with the names of the slavers themselves. A last category of distinctive slave names are the geographical names: names not even considered as personal names were converted into names for slaves.

Among the female slave names, we find similar tendencies, but they

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seem to be far less pronounced than among the male names. Thus, fewer typical female slave names can be identified – keeping in mind the limitations of the sources. However, names with pejorative connotations continue to be used for female slave names until the 19th century.

This study on the names of runaway slaves shows that among fugitive slaves, distinctive slave names are particularly frequent. Putting it bluntly, at least in the 18th century, runaways bore the worst of the slave names. In the 19th century, these names decrease, and more common names from the Anglo-American name pool are used. However, these names are found more often in their diminutive forms, in contrast to the names of free African-Americans and Anglo-Americans. Particularly for female slaves, the use of short names seems to have been common for a long time.

Moreover, the analyses show a particular use of names of African origin, descriptive names, and antique names for fugitives, much more pronounced than in Puckett's (1975) study. Not only did we find a higher total number of such distinctive names among escaped slaves than among slaves in general. This high concentration also allows – like a lens – to better recognize the subtleties of the distinctive names. For example, the frequent occurrence of certain African day names like *Cof/Coffee* and *Quacco* as well as the conspicuous absence of other day names indicate that they cannot have been used as names in their original meaning (*Cof/Coffee*: "boy born on a Friday", *Quacco*: "boy born on a Wednesday"). Rather, Anglo-Americans seem to no longer use them as African names but as typical slave names.[21]

The same must be assumed for the assignment of ancient names, as these are also found concentrated and over a longer period of time among the fugitive slaves, but at the same time are not used by Anglo-Americans – as shown by Puckett (1975). Furthermore, many of these distinctive slave names could also be proven to be used for animals.

The results on descriptive names are particularly illuminating. Due to their high incidence among fugitives, we can recognise how their content has converted, from devaluing, negatively connoted names in the 18th century to predominantly function-indicating names in the 19th century.

For the female fugitive slave names, the scarce source situation only allows cautious statements. Nevertheless, it is clear that also in this case, distinctive and negatively connoted names persist into the 19th century.

Thus, this study shows that mainly in the 18th but also still in the 19th century, Anglo-Americans reserved names for themselves and chose names from a different name pool for their slaves. This name pool indicated in an onomastic way who was enslaved and who was free. Especially the huge conformity of slave and animal names mirrored the belief of the 'White' masters that 'Blacks' were inferior – "more like animals than Anglo-

[21] Burnard (2001) can also prove this custom for Jamaica.

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Europeans" (Burnard 2001: 328). Therefore, it is not surprising that free Afro-Americans in an onomastic way also separate themselves from their slave contemporaries by avoiding typical slave names and orienting themselves on the naming of the 'Whites'.[22]

Recalling the quote from the beginning of this article, a person's name can convey different ideas, values, and attitudes. By contrasting the naming of slaves with the naming of free African-Americans and Anglo-Americans of the time, it becomes very clear which ideas, values and attitudes Anglo-Americans had when naming their slaves. Particularly the investigation of the names of fugitive slaves, whose names were mostly distinctive slave names, reveals in all clarity the 'White' attitudes towards their 'Black' slaves. Therefore, the African-American naming history enables a reconstruction of the culture and the society of the 17th to 19th centuries in what is today the U.S.A.

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[22] For the development of the African American names after the end of slavery until today cf. Balbach (2018c, 2018d).

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