

# What's in a Name?



All of my grade school life, I never sat in a classroom where there weren't a few other boys who shared my first name. It turns out that there was a very good reason for that. According to the Social Security Administration, from 1954 until 1998, with the exception of one year, Michael was the most popular boy's name in America. The exception came in 1960 where it came in second behind David. That's still an impressive run of 44 years.

But it did cause some confusing moments. In the classroom, I could never figure out if the teacher was talking to me or one of the five other Michaels who sat near me. And at recess, out on the playground, I'd be forever turning around to find out who was calling me only to find out nobody was calling me... just my name. It happened every day...multiple times a day.

So I was tickled by a customer yesterday who had come in to the studio to have some old photos from the early 1900s restored. And as he was sharing with us who these people were that were in the pictures, ticking off their names, I commented on how unfamiliar their names seemed. It turns out it was a thing in their family. Their grandmother didn't appreciate conventional names so she opted for naming her children with words that she would just make up. If it was in the baby book of names... she would simply come up with something else.

Over the years, the family adapted to their unusual monikers

by taking their first and middle names and whittling them down to just the first initials. Thus Jerimillia Crimereo called herself JC; Podifer Amitelik would answer to PA; etc. That worked for most. Unfortunately, no one thought what it would be like for little Ventroy Delwhilm who, once grown, would to the family be forever known as Uncle VD.

*Michael Ondrasik and Home Video Studio specialize in the preservation of family memories through the digitalization of film, videotapes, audio recordings, photos, negatives, and slides. For more information, call 352-735-8550 or visit our [website](#).*