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FOREWORD

The first publication in 1987 was followed by a second edition in 1995 which included Appendix A and B for Dutch and Frisian Baptismal Names and their English equivalents. In 1998 a new edition added Appendix C, truncated/superscripted names, and Appendix D, names used by both males and females. In 2002 Appendix E, an informative article by the eminent Donald Lines Jacobus Ph.D., FASG, joined the other appendixes. In this present new fifth edition not only are there more nicknames, but also Appendix F listing Italian names with their English equivalents, nicknames, and diminutives.

An understanding of nicknames is crucial in evaluating documents. A common scenario: one record mentions six children. Another list for the same couple also with six children doesn't appear to match because a nickname was not recognized. We are left with a supposed "problem" to solve when an understanding of nicknames could explain the differences. Or, an estate names a wife by one name, but the tombstone shows another. Two wives? Or a nickname?

My hope as always is that this volume will save researchers many hours (and perhaps years) of fruitlessly searching for records for non-existent ancestors who were known by their given names in some records, and nicknames in others.

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INTRODUCTION

Often, researchers miss records that are indexed under nicknames, especially in states such as Pennsylvania (and others) where the system of subindexing by first name is prevalent. The researcher who examines the "A" subsection of the "J" surnames for Alexander Jones but overlooks the "S" subsection for Sandy Jones may miss important records. An awareness of nicknames is also of major importance in searching soundex census, indexed by first names.

An unfamiliarity with nicknames can also add years to a search. This compiler recalls that as a novice many years ago, almost two years were lost in attempts to find a supposed second marriage for a man whose wife was called "Martha" in one court document, and "Patsy" in another. It was quite a jolt to discover they were the same person; that Patsy was a common nickname for Martha! In another case, considerable time was expended trying to find a "missing" son by the name of Peter before learning that Peter was a common nickname for Patrick, a known son.

Some nicknames are unique to their surname, for instance, many Rhodes are nicknamed "Dusty," many males with surnames starting with Mac or Mc are nicknamed "Mac," etc. The within lists however reflect mostly nicknames for given names.

Some nicknames are common to certain regions, and are unlikely to be found in other parts of the country. In

other cases, a common nickname in the 18th and 19th century may have fallen into disuse by the 20th century. Conversely, some present day nicknames were unheard of in earlier years. Another consideration is the nickname used commonly for a particular given name in the earlier times, but used for a different given name in present times. An example is Patsy. Used routinely for Martha in the time of our ancestors, it is now usually used for Patricia.

A few initialed given names are included to alert researchers to common shortening of fuller names. For example, L.G.B. for Little GreenBerry, or L.R. for LeRoy. It should also be noted that any of the nicknames listed can be a given name at birth, rather than a nickname.

A final caution. Don't be hasty in assigning a given name. If the record shows "Willie," is it really William? What about Wilfred or Willard or Willis or Wilmer or Wilton or Wiley, or even a female called Wilhelmina??

C.R.