

ABOUT ANNE ONIMOUS' NAME

As anyone can easily determine by searching for it on genealogical websites, the French-origin surname 'Onimous' is extremely rare, about as much so, as it turns out, as the Scottish-origin surname 'Spock'. In French-speaking countries it is roughly pronounced 'OH-nee-moo', so that even when coupled with a first name such as 'Ann' or 'Anne' it will connote nothing beyond the uncommon but otherwise unremarkable name that it is, since the rough pronunciation for the French word for 'anonymous' is 'AHH-no-neem', and since that for the French word for 'anonymity' is 'ahh-no-NEEM-uh'.

In English-speaking countries, on the other hand, the pronunciation of Onimous almost always rhymes with 'anonymous', so that when it is coupled with a first name such as Ann or Anne, the full name that results is often assumed to be a pseudonym.

It is perhaps an unfortunate fact that female children of English-speaking parents who have the surname Onimous are overwhelmingly blessed at the time of their births with 'Ann' or with some similar-sounding variant thereof as their first or middle name. Kinder parents of such daughters, if they cannot pull their tongues out of their cheeks altogether, may couch their attempt at droll humour in a second middle name, which can be, at their daughter's discretion, a secret known only within the family, or they may christen their daughter something like 'Angela' or 'Annetta', so that their little joke can only emerge from the use of a nickname. Theoretically then, such a daughter might end up with a full name as elaborate as, say, Iris Marie Annetta Onimous. Such a daughter might progress through her entire life as Iris Onimous, or as Iris Marie Onimous, or as Marie Onimous, with no one ever the wiser about her parents' ostensible sense of humour.

Obviously there is also the exceedingly rare possibility of a woman with a forename or with a middle name such as Ann or Anne obtaining the surname Onimous through marriage, should she find that option to be somehow more attractive than retaining her maiden name. Alternatively a woman who has a maiden name such as, say, Annetta Onimous, could through marriage become, say, Annetta Morgan, yet occasionally present herself under her maiden name when she feels disposed to do so.

The upshot is that a name such as 'Anne Onimous' may be entirely genuine, although its owner may have the option of presenting herself under one or more other, yet equally genuine names, depending on the circumstances and on the person or persons to whom she is presenting herself.

One of the possibly unexpected *benefits* of presenting oneself as Anne Onimous is the rapid feedback that the name often generates, particularly from chauvinistic males, who are perhaps slightly more inclined than females to think themselves capable of divining the quality of something that has been presented by such a woman from her name alone, without the bother of actually examining what she has presented. This can apprise her of whether she has cast her pearls before swine, which can in turn allow her to avoid the further waste of her time that would result from casting any more of them.

Equally to her advantage, when she uses the name, is that it can quickly apprise her of whether she has cast her pearls before persons who tend to evaluate pearls on their own merits. Given the foibles of human nature, she sometimes wonders if such persons are as rare as her surname. It is one thing to admire the wisdom of Shakespeare, but another to actually internalise the wisdom that his writings attempt to impart, to wit:

*"What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet."*

Naturally there remains the possibility that 'Anne Onimous' is in fact a pseudonym, but if so, what of it? Are the works that were authored by Samuel Langhorne Clemens rubbish, simply because they were presented under the pseudonym 'Mark Twain'? One presumes that the reader can themselves supply a long list of such examples, possibly even including 'Shakespeare', so Anne Onimous will not belabour the point. Is her name 'real', or is it a pseudonym? Yes, ha-ha. Whichever the case, nothing of any relevance or importance can be deduced from it, except that Anne Onimous does not care which case is assumed to be true. Her offerings, like those of everyone else, should be evaluated on their intrinsic qualities alone. Would that we lived in such an ideal world.