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## The Unhappy Hookers; Origin of *Hooker* 'Prostitute'

J. Peter Maher

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## COMMENTS ON ETYMOLOGY

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### THE UNHAPPY HOOKERS; ORIGIN OF *HOOKER* ‘PROSTITUTE’

J. Peter Maher © 2011



### **EVERYONE KNOWS THAT IT GOT STARTED WITH THAT WOMAN AND HER BOOK; --- FAMILY THAT TRACES ITS NAME TO 15<sup>th</sup> CENTURY ENGLAND BLAMES XAVIERA FOR THE FUN THAT’S POKED AT THEM**

“Roger Hooker, an acoustics consultant, traces his surname back to the weaving industry of Kent, England, in the 1400s. There are 5,000 Hookers in Canada, he says, adding that most are tired of having their respectable name applied to strumpets, harlots, floozies and tarts. It’s not even a proper word. It’s slang that originated in the American South. Mr. Hooker traces the notorious use of his name to the publication a few years back of Xaviera Hollander’s celebration of call-girls, *The Happy Hooker*. Everyone knows it got started with that woman and her book, he mutters bitterly.”

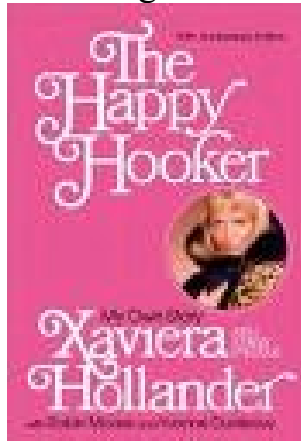
*The Globe and Mail*. Toronto, Canada. Monday. 19 December 1977.

“That woman” was Vera DeVries, a.k.a. Xaviera Hollander, purportedly a consular secretary who turned madam. The H-word was little used in the years before her. That woman made it vernacular for ‘prostitute’.

TIME magazine 26 July 1971 ran an article on Manhattan prostitutes where the H-word was pronounced a novelty:

NEW YORK. Scattering the Pigeons. Once, in a blushing euphemism, they were known as “ladies of the night.” Today they are called hookers...

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,828094,00.html>



In 1975 lexicographer Mary Morris confirms the novelty of it:

“...everyone knows who they are – from the publicity given the *Happy Hooker*” .

Mrs. Morris and husband William enter the H-word in their *Dictionary of Word and Phrase Origins*, but after Xaviera hit the front pages, never in earlier editions.

Before Xaviera, the girls were called street-walkers and – thanks to A. G. Bell – call-girls. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century they’re escorts.

In the roaring twenties TIME magazine printed the word *hooker* 22 times, always for people named *Hooker*, but never in reference to prostitutes. In 1925 *hooker* appears twice, once for a golfer with a clumsy swing and once, oddly, for sandwich men.<sup>1</sup> In the 1930s TIME printed *hooker* just once, for a

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<sup>1</sup> An army of ragged sandwich men was sent into the streets, armed with bundles of red feathers upon which the name of the product was printed in black. Each feather had a hook. The sandwich men hooked them to the backs of passersby. Ribald sandwich men prowled after dainty women, hooked their leering quills into the backs of afternoon frocks, tailored coats. Red feathers depended from Deputies coattails; gamins snickered and the deputies, the fine ladies, not seeing the joke, snickered also. The wastrel hookers did more than they were paid for. Having hooked a feather into the tail of a famed French lawyer, one of them capered at his side, shouting: “Ya been in a henhouse, ya been in a henhouse?” The barrister, embarrassed perhaps by a guilty conscience, pretended to share their mirth. ° <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,721105,00.html>

fishing boat; hooks are used, not nets. In the 1940s the elbow bender's upper limb is described: a brandy is tossed back with elbow hooked. In 1959 *hooker* shows up once, referring to fiendish wording in legislative drafts:

Craftily, Rayburn's strategists laid a booby trap for Southerners who were routinely hunting for civil rights hookers by leaking a phony tip to Columnist Drew Pearson that the hooker was in Section 102. Pearson dutifully printed the news, and the Southerners ... soon relaxed: no civil rights stuff there...  
[www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,864798-2,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,864798-2,00.html)

The urban legend busters who have denied that General Joseph Hooker gave us the eponym hooker for prostitutes merely looked up *hooker* in the dictionaries. Garbage In Garbage Out. Many uses of the noun *hooker* are ignored there.

For the next twenty years the H-word lies dormant. In the 1960s it rises again, in (uncritical) book reviews. The H-word was not yet vernacular, but the trend is starting. TIME reporters latch on to the nascent buzz word and TIME intermittently refers to prostitutes as *hookers*.

12 April 1963... [Rome] near the Piazza di Spagna, the prettiest prostitutes appear, dressed not as professional *hookers* but as sweet little schoolgirls  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,828094,00.html>

12 November 1968... At night, the streets teem with vagrants, homosexuals and brazen *hookers*.  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,712144,00.html>

28 March 1969. ... miniskirted *hookers* are still out in force...  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,839947,00.html>

5 October 1970... [hair] faking and teasing that makes so many women over 21 look like *hookers*.  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,904360,00.html>

1971-1972: All whoredom breaks loose: TIME calls prostitutes *hookers* 31 times. What happened? Xaviera happened, just as Canadian Mr. Hooker and lexicographer Mary Morris said.

26 July 1971. Earlier this year a man was murdered by *hookers* outside the Hilton Hotel when he shunned their advances.

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,877017,00.html>

26 August 1971 ... a judge in the city's criminal court took the unprecedented action of holding two alleged *hookers* without bail...  
[www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,877017,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,877017,00.html)

TIME does an article in April 1979 on words lately 'accepted into the Queen's English:

Happily or not, the indelicate *hooker* has also crossed the Atlantic, although usually in Britain the term refers to rugby players.

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,916743,00.html>

The H-word was not in the guy talk of my young years, the late 1940s to 1960s. Nor was it in the vocabulary of my father [1895-1978], though our town's madam, Dora Warren, was as well known as Mayor Charley Kress. I was ten years old when my grandfather [1865-1943] died, so our conversations never got that advanced. He did tell us though that his dad took him to see William Cody's Wild West show and that he had once witnessed a knife fight in a western saloon.



1916 ca. William Theodore Maher [1865-1943], representative of Newell & Truesdell Wholesale Grocers, Binghamton NY.

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Library shelves all over America in the 1800s groaned under the weight of publications by and about glorious Hookers in the fields of theology, natural history and science. If the H-word was around in their day, it would be curious for the Hookers not to be the butt of uncouth humor. Life was not kinder and gentler a hundred years ago. There were Mick jokes, Coon jokes and Heeb jokes, Wop jokes, Indian jokes and Heinie (Dutch, German) jokes. Polak jokes are a newer name for 1940s “moron jokes”, but hooker jokes are as scarce as hens’ teeth.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Heini, a nickname for Heinrich brought gales of laughter in my child hood because it was a homonym with hiney, affectionate for behind. A Hausfrau buys her little Heinrich an ice cream cone, which he smears all over face and bib. Mutti (mommy) asks the soda-jerk “Can you give me a paper napkin so I can wipe my little Heini?”

Dirty-joke guru Gershon Legman took breakfast with many a prostitute and recorded their lingo. In 1969 he published the *Rationale of the Dirty Joke*. In 816 pages Legman hasn't a single hooker joke.

Harriet Beecher Stowe had a sister who was a Hooker, Mrs. John Hooker, i.e. Isabella Beecher Hooker. These ladies were friends with Mark Twain. Did Mr. Clemens ever tease Mrs. Hooker about the name? He is reputed to have been a humorist.



Harriet and sister Isabella



Thomas Hooker, founder of the Connecticut colony  
in un-Calvinist genuflection

*IN HONOR OF THOMAS HOOKER.*  


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**HIS DESCENDANTS TO HOLD A REUNION  
 IN HARTFORD, CONN.**

HARTFORD, April 30.—The descendants of the Rev. Thomas Hooker, the founder of the Connecticut Colony, will hold a reunion in this city, Friday, May 16, under the auspices of the Thomas Hooker Association of Hartford. Commander Edward B. Hooker of the United States Navy, who is a brother of the Supreme Court reporter of this State, the Hon. John Hooker of Hartford, has compiled an exhaustive genealogy of the Hooker family.

One of the historic treasures in the Connecticut Historical Society of Hartford is an exquisite specimen of needlework, by Mary Hooker, now considerably more than two hundred years old.

The prominent representatives of the families who are expected to be present at the reunion include President Dwight of Yale, Prof. W. S. Tyler of Amherst, the Rev. Edward P. Hooker, President of Rollins College in Florida; Edward E. Hooker of Mount Pocono, Penn., who has in his possession the Bible owned by Thomas Hooker; the Hon. Henry G. Newton of New-Haven, Col. Edward Foster Hooker of Des Moines, Iowa; Frank Brewster Hooker of Chicago, Mrs. Mortimer Fargo, Mrs. Courtland de P. Field, and Miss Mary Hooker Magoffin of New-York City, the Rev. Moseley H. Williams of Philadelphia, J. Evarts Cornelius of Boston, Miss Agnes Hooker of Ithaca, N. Y.; Miss L. L. Hooker of Mohawk, N. Y.; Miss Leonora Hooker of Morristown, N. Y.; Mrs. Robert Day of Springfield, Mass.; Dr. Edward Baxter of Hyde Park, Mass.; Mrs. Sarah E. Little of Newton, Mass., who owns the china bowl which belonged to the noted ancestor of the family, and Mrs. Sarah B. Capron of Boston, Robert Breck Hooker of Elizabeth, N. J.; Harry T. Thomas, Henry C., and De Witt Hooker of Syracuse, N. Y., and Percy H. Hooker of Leroy, N. Y., are also expected.

The reunion will be the first general gathering of the Hooker family in this country, and will be an event of much interest.

**The New York Times**

Published: May 1, 1890

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**The General, by Matthew Brady.**



General Joseph Hooker [1814-1879]. It was years after the Civil War before the snickering and teasing began, so there's no double entendre in the next:

Tell you what, [Captain] Minnie, that Phillenda Hooker's a smart girl, an' a nice one, too (Gallaher 1898:111).

Before the U. S. Civil War, Captain Joseph Hooker saw service under Generals Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott in America's war on Mexico. The ladies south of the border found the Connecticut Yankee "the handsome captain – *el capitán hermoso, un buen mozo* – a boyish, a sexy young guy." Joe Hooker's reputation in his next war suffered for related reasons. But it wasn't all that simple and scandalous. (Hebert 1944:180):

Hooker enjoined strict compliance with the President's orders of November 15, 1862, in regard to observance of the Sabbath, and steps were taken to reduce plundering and pillage. The moral tone of some of the officers at Federal headquarters and of some of the men in the camps was not very high. Women and whisky followed the army as they always have. Lafayette Baker of the Secret Service was incensed over the "large number of obscene books and prints, constantly passing down through the post office to the soldiers of the Army of the Potomac."

On April fifteenth Adam Gurowski wrote to Hooker asking, for the sake of the country and his own good name, that he put an end to carousing in the camps and that he keep out all women.<sup>3</sup> Charles

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<sup>3</sup> Polish nobleman Adam de Gurowski [1805-1866], interpreter for the U. S. State Department, harsh critic of Abraham Lincoln.

Francis Adams Jr, says:

During the winter (1862-63), when Hooker was in command. the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac was a place to which no self-respecting man liked to go, and no decent woman could go. It was a combination of bar-room and brothel.

[Secretary of War] Stanton was to have some correspondence with Hooker on this subject, but the matter ended with Stanton's feeling that it was a hopeless job to keep women out of Hooker's camps if Fighting Joe's officers refused to co-operate...

Here is Secretary Stanton's letter (US War Department 1889):

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
*Washington City, D. C., June 6, 1863—2.55 p. m.*  
Major-General HOOKER, *Falmouth:*

I have been trying hard to keep the women out of your camp, but finding that they were going in troops, under passes, as they said, from your provost-marshal and commanders, I have given up the job. I think no officer or soldier should have his wife in camp or with the army. In other military districts, the order of the Department excludes them. If you will order them away, and keep your provost-marshal and other officers from issuing passes, not one shall be issued here, and all that profess to come from the Department will be forgeries.

EDWIN M. STANTON.

A century and a quarter later a Washington newspaper runs a story: "D.C. hooker area unearthed" with a caption that could have been written only after Xaviera.

Archeologists digging just three blocks from the White House have unearthed thousands of relics from Washington's notorious old red-light district, where Civil War prostitutes earned their nickname entertaining Gen. Joseph Hooker's troops. Shoveling beneath an asphalt parking lot just south of Pennsylvania Avenue in the shadow of the Commerce Department this summer, investigators found perfume bottles, gaudy buttons, costume jewelry, garter hooks and a long-forgotten cellar full of whisky and beer bottles. There was even a tiny, antique Bromo Seltzer bottle for treating a morning-after malaise. A newspaper article from the 1890s declared the area was "the plague spot of Washington" with 109 brothels and 50 saloons. The prostitutes had to pack their bags when Congress outlawed

brothels in the District in 1914, and the site was razed in the late 1920s (Andrews 1989).



Mary Ann Hall's house

[http://www. si. edu/oahp/nmaidig/start. htm#antebellum](http://www.si.edu/oahp/nmaidig/start.htm#antebellum)

At this location today on the Mall projected by Pierre L'Enfant, you'll find the Museum of the American Indian. In advance of its construction a salvage dig was directed in 1989 by archeologist Donna Seifert.

<http://www.si.edu/oahp/nmaidig/start.htm>

Another post-Xaviera article:

Lincoln's Washington. Muddy and Southern. Drunken soldiers, whores and hangers-on filled the streets downtown at all hours. The Star, one of the city's four newspapers, reported that a pre-war population of about 500 prostitutes had grown to 5,000 by 1863, with another 500 working in Georgetown and Alexandria. The Army registered 450 houses of ill repute. Gen. Joseph Hooker established a sort of sin zone south of Pennsylvania Avenue, and in the process lent his name to the ladies of the profession for posterity (Kaiser 2000).

James O. Hall (1989) located a contemporary newspaper piece on Hooker's Division:

Willis C. Rowe was right about Union Gen. Joseph Hooker's connection to the word "hooker" [Free for All, Sept. 30]. During the Civil War most of Washington's bordellos were located in the area known today as the Federal Triangle. . . [which] came to be known derisively as "Hooker's Division. "

The *Washington Evening Star* under the heading of local news frequently reported on the outrageous goings-on in Hooker's Division. The sometimes tongue-in-cheek flavor of this is captured in one account published on 29 March 1865. It involved sailors from the "USS Mohican. "

*The Star* told it this way:

“As usual with tars, after a long cruise, they took on a full cargo of grog, after which they found their way to Hooker’s Division. They had not been long in that notorious locality when the whiskey, which was evidently of the fighting variety, began to take its effect upon them, and they began to take possession of the whole division, with the ranches, women, whiskey and even the men. The police of the Second Ward turned out to capture the tars, who were brandishing their sheath knives and presenting a very formidable front. A merry fight ensued. . . .”

In the previous year, the provost marshal conducted a census of “bawdy houses” in Washington, ranking them on a scale of 1 to 3, with special categories of “low” and “very low. ”

The list included 73 for white patrons and 13 for black patrons. Many of the addresses have long since disappeared, such as Fighting Alley and Tin Cup Alley. House No. 7 on the list, run by Mary Jane Treakle (aka Mollie Turner), is where John Wilkes Booth later kept his mistress, Ellen Starr.

It wasn’t all whiskey and wild, wild women, and General Joe didn’t need to send out scouts to find the women. An eye-witness wrote:

Prostitutes from all the large cities of the North flocked hither in swarms and infested the most respectable streets as well as the filthiest alleys. They ranged from dashing courtesans who entertained in brownstone houses to drunken creatures who were summarily expelled from camp. The ancient gambling and drinking saloons flourished and new ones sprung up everywhere for gold and greenbacks were plentiful and little prized by the volunteers (Doster 1915:64).

These women were not all simply sluts. The sex trade thrives on economic misery. When all else is gone, there’s one thing that still sells and puts clothes on your back, a roof over your head, and buys bread, booze or dope.<sup>4</sup> General Hooker was no pimp. He saw to it that his men got their back pay for a change. On his orders they were better fed than they had been before him. The men especially loved him for providing fresh vegetables and soft bread in place of hard tack.

Hooker, the Union commander defending the capital against

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<sup>4</sup> Hill 1993. <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft8199p209/>

Confederate forces, tried to control the army of prostitutes following his troops by herding the womb fen into Murder Bay, away from his encampment outside the city” (Andrews 1989).

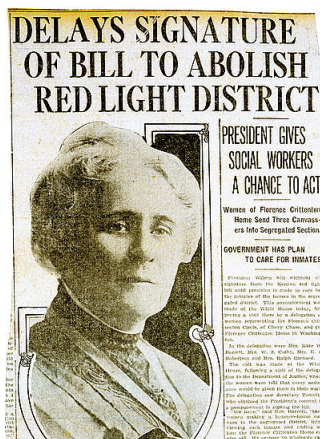
Women in Camp. Just after JFK’s inauguration, President and General of the Army (Ret.) Dwight D. Eisenhower took up residence at his Gettysburg farm.

TIME 22 September 1961:

The guests at the day-long outing were 38 freshmen Republican Congressmen. . . .Ike handled a microphone like a veteran tour guide, broadcast a military man's running estimate of Civil War generals: “Never in the war did Lee establish good staff work . . . One of the biggest problems was keeping women out of Hooker's camp” . . . patting an old cannon, he cited Gettysburg as the first battle in which breech-loading artillery was used. It was not.

TIME’s man was bold enough to criticize Ike’s artillery facts, but he doesn’t tell us if Ike joshed about the H-word. This was a decade before Xaviera.

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,873392,00.html-ixzz1VoP7MTt5>



Almost forty years earlier, do-gooders “cleaned up” the site of Hooker’s Division. Congress passed the Kenyon Act of 1914 “to Enjoin and Abate Houses of Lewdness, Assignation, and Prostitution”.

They did gross damage to poor people, like the Volstead Act (18<sup>th</sup> Amendment) did to the Constitution and the whole American society five years later with Prohibition. The following is from the Library of Congress:

Kate Waller Barrett (1858-1925), physician and leader in the National Florence Crittenton Mission for unwed mothers, was among the delegation of women reformers who successfully lobbied President Woodrow Wilson in January 1914 to postpone enacting a law that would dismantle the capital city's notorious red-light district until arrangements could be made to assist and rehabilitate the many prostitutes who would be displaced from the triangular area that stretched below Pennsylvania Avenue two blocks from the White House to the edge of Capitol Hill. Wilson was sympathetic to the reformers and later supplied Barrett with a letter of support for the Crittenton Mission's work to be used in the organization's fund-raising campaigns. Scrapbooks of newspaper clippings, like this one from the Barrett Papers, are often found in collections of personal papers. They provide access to articles not easily located in unindexed newspapers and provide clues about other sources to consult, in this case, the papers of Woodrow Wilson, which contain scattered letters from Barrett and a case file on the 1914 Kenyon Act to Enjoin and Abate Houses of Lewdness, Assignation, and Prostitution (S. 234).<sup>5</sup>

The victorious generals were much honored after the war. Monuments were raised to their glory and streets were named after them all over the Union (Gura 2007). Hooker Streets in Canada honor a British subject, not the American cousin. In the little railroad town of Whitewater (South Dakota) a grid of streets was laid out in 1877 to honor Generals Grant, Sherman, Meade, Custer, and Hooker. A century later a crisis faced the city fathers when a Lutheran pastor who lives on Hooker Street found the street name embarrassing to him and his wife. He appealed – without success – to City Council to have the name changed. Custer Street was no problem. – This was 36 years after *Happy Hooker*.

In the 19th century were women ever brought up on charges of being “hookers”? Yes, indeed. A case from humor magazine *Punchinello* in 1870:

O GALLANT p'licemen, list to me,  
 I'll sing a mournful ditty  
 About a poor young serving-gal,  
 What lived in this here city.  
 She had a name, and SMITH it was  
 (The rest of it was MARY);

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<sup>5</sup> Library of Congress for Kate Waller Barrett Papers (container 4). Manuscript Division. LCM 11882 4. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awhhtml/awmss5/d06.html>

Her constant duty, at daybreak,  
 Was sweeping out the arey.  
 One evening she went to a jig.  
 (Her missus was attending,  
 A private hop), when there befel  
 What truly was heart-rending.  
 She wore her missus' gayest clothes,  
 Her muslin dress all flinty,<sup>6</sup>  
 Her waterfall<sup>7</sup> and tag-rags all,  
 Which well became her beauty.  
 But missus found poor MARY out,  
 And in a p'liceman took her,  
 And walked her up before the Judge,  
**On charge of being a hooker.**  
 The missus swore the girl a thief  
 Her property as lifted,  
 Which proved beyond all doubt would be  
 When things came to be sifted.  
 The girl said she'd been to a jig;  
 Then out spoke Judge MCCARTY,  
 "You must not wear the fixings of  
 A party to a party."  
 They sent her up for sixteen months,  
 Oh! drop a tear to MARY;  
 Whose missus ne'er shall see her more  
 A-sweeping out the arey.  
 Sic Transit.

"... and while Aunt Polly closed with a happy Scriptural flourish, Tom hooked a doughnut". Mark Twain. *Tom Sawyer*, page 34.

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<sup>6</sup> Emendation. The form *flinty* is printed, but it doesn't rhyme with *beauty*. That makes it a scribal error for *fluty*. Working from hand-written copy, the typesetter seems to have opted for a word he knew – *flinty* vs. *fluty*. Optical Character Recognition computer programs make the same kind of error as medieval copyists. With "fluty muslins" the poetaster is pushing it a stretch here. OED cites "with an indignant flutter of her muslins, [she] brushed past her uncle and out of the room" (1860). Fluting is not only a matter of music; it's also a textural aspect of architectural columns and lengths of cloth etc..

<sup>7</sup> A "neck cloth, scarf, or tie with long pendant ends" (OED).

Thieving with hooks. Cloth and clothing were not cheap before the Industrial Revolution. Enormous labor went into raising and shearing sheep, growing, picking and combing cotton, in cutting flax, retting it and spinning linen. From prehistoric time women's work was consumed in endless spinning, weaving, sewing and tailoring clothes. Even in 1990 I witnessed an old woman in Slovenia sitting in her garden, spinning with distaff, not wheel, like women in scenes on Greek vase paintings. Equipped with hooks, thieves snatched valuable clothes and bed-clothes through open windows and doors. Poor girls and boys of England and Ireland could be sentenced to transportation to Australia for stealing a handkerchief. Shoplifters were termed *hookers* from their modus operandi.<sup>8</sup> Thereupon it's a word for thieves in general. Americans today won't all know these usages. I didn't when I was a young buck, in the late 1940s-1950s.

Dictionaries published after 1960 assert that *hooker* was a common word for whore before the US Civil War, but dictionaries are not primary sources. I browsed hundreds of 19<sup>th</sup> century texts in search of the alleged word *hooker* with possible sexual associations.<sup>9</sup> One passage jumped out at me that seemed at first to fill the bill, in *The Ladies' Repository, a Monthly Periodical, Devoted to Literature, the Arts and Religion*.

**“We will submit.” But it is only those who say,  
“We do submit,” who have learned the happy art of  
escaping this fascinating **hooker**. When the word and  
action pull together, then the sinner leaps from the gun-  
wale of Procrastination, saying, ‘My heart is fixed--**

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<sup>8</sup> Jackson 1914 describes the art under the entry “Hooks”. Current amongst shoplifters, a set of steel hooks shaped like the letter “U,” fastened through the cloth of a heavy “boosting ben” [bin] under the armpits; concealed from the outside view by a pad of cloth similar in pattern to the cloth of the coat and having the inner arm of the hook filed to a needle-like sharpness; upon the hook merchandise may be hung, or slung around the operator's back and suspended from both hooks. When not in use the hooks' sharp points are sheathed in cork to prevent injury to the person. They are instantaneously detachable and may be ‘sloughed’ by an expert without detection. “

<sup>9</sup> “You searched: All Selected Titles for ‘hooker\*’ within full text, not sorted. Results: 11427 matches in 1788 records.” Not once did I find *hooker* used for prostitutes. “One who hooks”, in any case is a circumlocution that is not obscene.



This is “The Sea Fight”, a homily packed with images of nautical warfare and moral navigation, a tub-thumping allegory of vice and Christian virtue “personified” as ships in a high-seas shoot-out. Methodist Reverend Mr. Lorraine’s hooker is one boat in the fray.

The main battle craft, “God’s man o’war”, is christened *The Everlasting Gospel*. She sails against an enemy fleet. First enemy ship to heave to is cardinal sin “*Pride*”. Then there’s

*Despair*, a rickety “old prison ship, captained by *Despondency*; her gunner is *Blasphemy*.

Arch-fiend is the old ship *Infidelity*,

which is commanded by the devil, the admiral of the black, and in company with other mutineers, is convoying the world to hell... Behold, now is the accepted time – now is the day of salvation.

...*Procrastination* swings into action. This vessel is not so formidable and martial in her appearance as *Infidelity*, and not so open in her hostility. She is a remarkably dull sailor and is manned with those who are halting between two opinions. There is not a ship in all the navy of hell that is better calculated to carry souls to perdition... The incessant firing of the *Gospel* often makes a good impression, and many cry out “We will submit”. But it is only those who say “We *do* submit,” who have learned the happy art of escaping this fascinating hooker.

THE  
**LADIES' REPOSITORY,**  
AND  
GATHERINGS OF THE WEST:

MONTHLY PERIODICAL

DEVOTED TO

LITERATURE AND RELIGION.

EDITED BY THE REV. L. L. HAMLINE, A. M.

VOLUME II.

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CINCINNATI:  
PUBLISHED BY J. F. WRIGHT AND L. SWORMSTEDT,  
FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, AT THE WESTERN BOOK CONCERN,  
CORNER OF MAIN AND EIGHTH-STREETS.

R. P. Thompson, Printer.  
1842.

Across the sea in Victoria's realm, Thomas Osborne Davis [1814-1845] composed a lament for a tragic little English colony planted 200 years before in Ireland.

In a calm and sleepy swell . . . the ocean tide is heard.  
The hookers lie upon the beach; the children cease their play. . .  
<http://www.from-ireland.net/ballads/dav/baltimore.htm>

This is not St Tropez 1957. It's County Cork 1631. The hookers lying on this beach are not babes topless or in bikini. They are boats for fishing with hook, rather than net (Davis 1895). Jihad had reached Ireland, Britain and even Iceland. On the morning of 20 June Muslim pirates and Christian "renegadoes" landed to plunder. The old and weak were killed. A hundred infidels were taken alive. Pretty young women, girls and boys were carried off to sex slavery in Turkish Algeria. Fit young men ended as galley slaves or janissaries.<sup>10</sup>



Summer 2008. Heuston Station, Dublin. My train for the West won't leave for a couple hours. I head into the Galway Hooker pub. A Galway hooker is not an Irish tart. This is a family place. Over the bar hangs a big model of a single-masted craft, a hooker. Designed for fishing, the hooker survives as a popular sport craft. The locals may be puzzled by Yankee tourists' attitudes, and vice versa.

[http://www.dublinpubscene.com/thepubs/thegalwayhooker.h](http://www.dublinpubscene.com/thepubs/thegalwayhooker.html)

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Asked what a hooker is, a true Connemara man points to a vessel just offshore and tells his American visitor "it's a boat, about twice the size of that one". In 1979 young American Kevin O'Hara and his ass circumambulate Ireland. Hoof and foot will not carry them to the Aran Islands, so:

I set out for Doolin Pier and boarded *The Happy Hooker* with as much bounce in my step as the bow in the waves (O'Hara 2004).

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<sup>10</sup> Ekin 2008 *The Stolen Village: Baltimore and the Barbary Pirates* is a thorough investigation with up to date parallels and implications for Islamic militancy in our day. In the USA the book is marketed with a different subtitle, since "Baltimore" in America will be understood as the Maryland city, rather than the eponymous English duke and, much less the West Cork village named in his title.

The ferry carrying Kevin and his ass over the waters was not truly a hooker, but a motor craft. Calling prostitutes *hookers* is not an Irish thing. The captain must have heard tell of Xaviera and hoped to attract American tourists. A Scot born in New Zealand also once took the same post-Xaviera ferry.

“The Happy Hooker” . . . Strange name for a boat. He knew not Madam Hollander.

<http://flickr.com/photos/peteredin/2605597610/>.



Galway Hooker

Sight gag. Sassy American girl by a hooker. Galway City.  
<http://www.boatdesign.net/forums/wooden-boat-building-restoration/design-info-galway-hooker-5246.html>

–... a heavy fishing-sloop [is] called in that part of Ireland a “hooker” – a strong, stout sea-boat, well furnished with sprit and foresail.

–The hooker came to their rescue, and took them promptly on board.

In a few moments . . . the hooker was flying across the waves with all sail she could bear clapped on (McCarthy 1869: 120).

–Hooker... A coast or fishing vessel – a small hoy-built craft with one mast, intended for fishing. They are common on our coasts, and greatly used by pilots, especially off the Irish ports. Also, Jack’s name for his vessel, the favourite “old hooker.” (Smyth 1867)

“Jack” is the 19<sup>th</sup> century sailorman.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Like Kipling’s English Tommy, America’s WW II GI Joe, World War I Johnny Doughboy, the Civil War Johnny Reb...

Vessels. *The Weaker Vessel* is Antonia Fraser's book on 17<sup>th</sup> century women (1984).<sup>12</sup> Mark Twain wrote more than *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer*. In *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) old steamboat captain Sam Clemens rhapsodized about the hulls of boat and woman.

We had a perfect love of a sounding-boat – long, trim, graceful... a steamer where no end of 'style' was put on.

A kindred soul wrote endearingly:

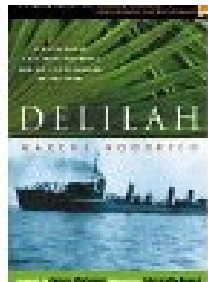
The old hooker actually made two and a half knots, and answered her helm tolerably well. OED. 1883 *Century Magazine*. Oct.

A kayaker circumnavigating Ireland enters in his diary:

I passed a line of Galway hookers spanking along in the fresh and sprightly breeze, the hookers and other classic boats – big bellied, barrelly, buxom hulls flaring out from the water line and with tan red and black sails – were all just wallowing in the dead calm off the pier head (Winn 2004).

<http://www.boatdesign.net/forums/wooden-boat-building-restoration/design-info-galway-hooker-5246.html>

USS Delilah



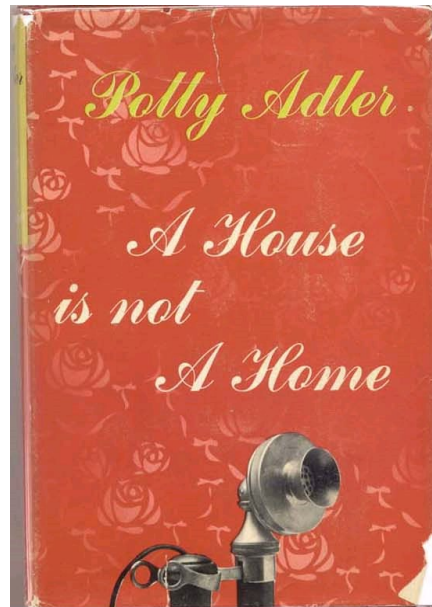
She was very slim and light. She was always tense, often atremble, and never failed to give the impression of almost terrible power wrapped in a thin fragile blue-grey skin. The materials that went into the making of her complete being were more curious and varied than those that

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<sup>12</sup> A choir boy chanting the litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, I thought I understood *Turris Eburnea* 'tower of ivory', all right; but *Vas Spirituale* 'spiritual vessel' threw me. Vessels are boats, receptacles and so on. My epiphany came in college biology class: I learnt about the vas deferens, vas efferens, vasectomies and so on. Anatomical "vessels" receive, transmit and emit fluids. Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, inseminated by the Holy Spirit. Conception is reception of seed.

went to compose her creator, Man –for Man himself formed part of her bowels, heart, and nerve centres. She ate great quantities of hunked black food, and vented streams of great debris. Through her coiled veins pumped vaporous, superheated blood at terrific pressure. She inhaled noisily and violently through four huge nostrils, sent her hot breath pouring through four handsome mouths and sweated delicate, evanescent, white mist. Her function in existence was to carry blasting destruction at high speed to floating islands of men; and her intended destiny, at the opposite pole from that of the male bee, was to die in this act of impregnating her enemy with death. It was, perhaps, for this reason that she carried her distinctly feminine bow, which was high and very sharp, with graceful arrogance and some slight vindictiveness, after the manner of a perfectly controlled martyr selected for spectacular and aristocratic sacrifice. Her name was Delilah.

— Marcus Aurelius Goodrich, 1941:3.  
Sailor aboard US Navy destroyer just before World War II.



The *Xaviera* before *Xaviera* was Pearl “Polly” Adler [1900-1962]. *Hooker* was not yet vernacular. Polly’s clients were the usual mix of crooks, cops, judges, journalists and politicians. Hangers on at Polly’s included the comic Robert Benchley and the naughty Dorothy Parker.



Hirschfeld “The Vicious Circle”. Dotty Parker, left.

Polly’s ghostwriter was Virginia Faulkner [1913-1980], novelist and academic (University of Nebraska). Polly’s book, *A House is Not a Home*, was a smash hit. In our house, which was a home, everybody was kidding about it – even Mom & Dad. All America was chortling. Not once will you find the H-word in Polly’s best-seller.

Then in July, October and November 1971 the H-word hits the *New York Times*. The cable (that sounds old now, doesn’t it?) from London still sizzled from yesteryear’s buzz word, *call-girl*. On the *Lexis-Nexis* search engine press citations of the H-word before Xaviera are nil.

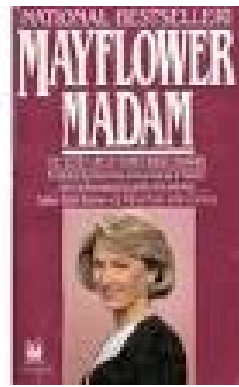
In 1971 Xaviera Hollander was arrested. She protests that the police are harassing “hookers” who were servicing clients from the Nixon administration. (The whistle-blowers were probably Democrats.) Until then the H-word had been lurking in the shadows of Civil War gossip and low-life and trendy novels.

Xaviera is deported. Fame, fortune and academia follow. Feminist Julia Stanley chimes in, citing *Happy Hooker* within months (1972). In 1985 scholarly books from the University of California press begin to employ it, e.g. Irwin (1985), Bloch (1989), Fee (1988), Taylor (1989). In 1993 social worker Jasmin Aquan-Assee seems to take *hooker* for a staid and proper sociological term.

There were Xavieras after Xaviera. One was Heidi Fleiss. Another was a proper Yankee girl, Sydney Biddle Barrows [1952-].



Departure of the Mayflower 1620



Sydney Biddle Barrows [1952-]

Her title alliterates, too: *Mayflower Madam: The Secret Life of Sydney Biddle Barrows* (1987). There the term *hooker(s)* occurs in the singular just once and six times in the plural (good sociology). The Pilgrim maid also had a good ghostwriter, a literary hand with a stellar clientele, William Novak.<sup>13</sup>

As Toronto's Roger Hooker lamented, Xaviera had unleashed a torrent of wink-wink, nudge-nudge gags even for non-sexual products and services among both men and women. Late night TV hosts and entertainment page scribblers keep stoking the fires. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nudge\\_Nudge](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nudge_Nudge).

A new industry boomed, using the rebus principle, aka sight gag.



From a Kiwi in the know:

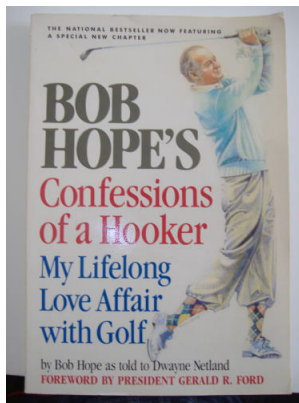
Happy hookers can catch a fat bream for dinner here, or jump in the tender and dash across to Church Point to Magnums – its breakfast bacon and egg rolls are even better (Lockwood 1997).

In the 1970s honest women taunted and flaunted with buttons and T-shirts lettered “I’m a hooker”. A folk etymology was cooked up that female garment workers once supplemented their meager sewing income with night work.

<http://hookandi.blogspot.com/2006/04/first-hookers-were-really-hookers.html>

<sup>13</sup> Nancy Reagan, Lee Iacocca, Earvin Magic Johnson, Oliver North, Tip O’Neill, Comcast Corp.





I inquired of the Library of Congress when Hope first joked about hookers:

— “The earliest references to hookers in the Bob Hope Joke File are from 1973.” I Answer to Library of Congress Question #6843463. mpref@loc.gov.<sup>14</sup>

Say, if you’re planning a trip around the world, PanAm just put out a fascinating book how to find the hookers. I think it’s called “Hustling around the world”.<sup>15</sup>

An impudent little crochet shop opened near my university in the 1970s under the shingle “Hooker Haven”. – English *crochet* is a French word meaning ‘little hook’; in boxing *le crochet* is a hook, too. Search Google-France for “crochet” and you’ll get a load of their puns, verbal and visual.



v

Amish hooker. Once upon a time no puns were suffered by hookers or Hookers:

The Amish Mennonites are sometimes called Hookers, because they substitute hooks for buttons on their clothes. ” – 1880 *Library of Universal Knowledge*. IX. 700.

<sup>14</sup> Library of Congress Archive of Bob Hope jokes. HOPE MONO York PA 13 September CIRCLES LoC..

<sup>15</sup> *Hustling* in White English had always meant entrepreneurial energy. In the sense of street-walkers doing business it migrated from Black English around 1960. I first learned of this in the mid 1960s from Tom Kochman.

A hundred years on, Amish women still gather round to hook quilts. Now after Xaviera come the puns:

Hear about the Amish Hooker? – She has two Mennonite (men a night).  
Where can we find Amish hookers? We want to buy a quilt.

Before TV arrived at the end of the 1940s, America’s great radio audience was not in the know about any H-word. A popular 1940s radio comedy show was “The Great Gildersleeve”. One persona dramatis, Judge Hooker, had his name modified to enable a pun. In his first appearances he had been Judge Parker, but Parker wasn’t joke material. Judge Hooker certainly was, and in 1942 the audience enjoyed Gildersleeve’s line: “That crook Hooker has hooked our cook!” Censors found nothing of prurient interest in the moniker of Judge Hooker.<sup>16</sup>

Pre-Xaviera. The earliest whore pun on *hooker* that I’ve found dates from just before World War II: the job of foreman on a logging yard crew is to set the hook to load or unload a log is called the hooker. Workers turned history on its head for a laugh: Northwest Pacific loggers called the boss *whore* instead of *hooker* (Carranco 1963:264).<sup>17</sup>

Post-Xaviera. I’m driving on the New York Thruway near Niagara Falls; in the car passing me a young couple is enjoying a good laugh. The driver had just called his lady’s attention to the name HOOKER emblazoned on a building of a chemical company. Before long the logo was changed to Occidental. It took generations after the US Civil War for all this to happen.



<sup>16</sup> “The Great Gildersleeve: Dinner for Judge Horace Hooker”. Episode GG420531” [1942]. Testimonial Dinner for Judge Hooker was re-broadcast on Old Time Radio over station WBBM in Chicago at midnight of 8-9 August 2011.

<sup>17</sup> “There were many varieties of hooks used in logging to make quick couplings, especially in yarding logs. ... The hard-working lonely loggers in the lumber camps invented or borrowed new words for objects that fitted their needs. A *schoolmarm* in the woods has always been a tree with an inverted crotch or two trees growing from a single trunk. The loggers wear corks or shoes with short, heavy spikes in their soles to give sure footing on logs. Any smooth surface on which a logger’s corks will not hold is the popular ‘slicker than a schoolmarm’s leg’.”



Hooker Eponym. Historian Shelby Foote retold the old story of Commander of the Army of the Potomac General Joseph Hooker lending his name to ladies of the evening.

During the Civil War, Gen. Joseph Hooker rounded up 3,900 prostitutes to limit business to a triangle near Pennsylvania Avenue. It was dubbed Joe Hooker's division, and the women, hookers (Dowd 2000).



The antedater legion strikes:

The term hooker 'prostitute', for example, is frequently derived from the name of a Civil War general. The fact that the *Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary* records the use of hooker in this sense as early as 1845, long before General Hooker came on the scene, has had little impact on the popularity of this tale. It is unlikely ever to die as long as would-be etymologists ignore the existence of historical dictionaries (Shapiro 1987).

Virtually the same wording, presumably from the same unacknowledged source, appears in Wilton's *Word Myths*:

In the second volume of his famous history of the Civil War, historian Shelby Foote tells us that General Hooker gave us the word *hooker* meaning a prostitute. Foote is a superb and well-respected historian. He, not unexpectedly to those of us who study these

things, gets it wrong. Foote will examine the official documents, maps, letters, and diaries to find out what happened in a particular battle, but he is not likely to start looking in dictionaries from the 1840s to look for early appearances of the word *hooker* (Wilton 2004).

Professor Foote could not have found what didn't exist. You won't find the H-word in Webster's 1828 and 1913 dictionaries. The immediate source for Shapiro and Wilton must be a dictionary that appeared after Eliason published his book *Tarheel Talk* in 1956. They don't mention Eliason's remarkable comment that Miss Betsy's surname was *Abovethefishdam*. Meet Betsy Who, not Betsy where?<sup>18</sup>

There is no entry *hooker* 'prostitute' in the H-fascicle of the NED (*New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* 1901). This was based on 19<sup>th</sup> century files. The Oxford scriptorium should have netted the H-word if it really existed. No entry for it in is to be found in the Oxford English Dictionary I (1933).

OED's source is Norman Eliason's book *Tarheel Talk* (1956). Eliason's sources must be the entry *hooker* 'prostitute' in Farmer & Henley (1890) and their source, Bartlett's *Dictionary of Americanisms*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 1848. Bartlett's DOA was published in four editions – 1848, 1859, 1860 and 1877. Bartlett's *hooker* is from the full syntagma "strumpet, trull of Corlear's Hook".

Hooker ... a strumpet, a sailor's trull, so called from the number of houses of ill-fame frequented by sailors at the Hook (i. e. Corlear's Hook) in the city of New York.

The added information is a parenthesis, not an intrinsic part of the gloss of the word *hooker*.<sup>19</sup> Anyone-prostitute resident in or hanging around "the Hook" was a *hooker*. Bartlett does not say that Manhattan prostitutes outside Corlear's Hook were called *hookers*. Anyone living elsewhere, including prostitutes, were by definition, not "hookers". He does not tell us how cops

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<sup>18</sup> At the end of each radio show and, later, TV show comedian George Burns and sidekick wife Gracey Allen used the catch line "Say good night, Gracey". Her line; "Good night, Gracey."

<sup>19</sup> Compare the logical fallacy in "All Chinese are mortal; John is mortal, therefore John is Chinese." The unclarity here is in the English syntax and would be avoided if expressed in syllogisms, or in symbolic logic or in the French language: Les prostituées de quartier sont des habitants de "Corlear's Hook".

referred to whores of other neighborhoods. He doesn't say that Americans in general, and not just New Yorkers, called prostitutes *hookers*. Bartlett did not interpret *hookers* as "those who hook".

Hook (Dutch, *hoek*, a corner, a cape.) This name is given, in New York, to several angular points in the North and East Rivers; as Corlear's Hook, Powles's Hook, Sandy Hook...

Ghost word. Bartlett silently discarded the entry on *hookers* as sailors' trulls from his 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> editions.<sup>20</sup> The only source left for Eliason is his own anachronism.

Right after Eliason published *Tarheel Talk* (1956), positive if uncritical reviews appeared. Reviewers rubber-stamped his reading, i.e. misreading, of the Haughton-Grimes letter. The H-word pops up on Burchfield's watch in the *OED Appendix* (1957ff.) to the second edition. Not only the reviewers, but Burchfield too neglected to check Eliason's primary source, a student letter from 1845. Norman Eliason published this letter, from one college boy to another.<sup>21</sup> The envelope is post-marked: EDENTON NC 1845.

Edenton was a seaport before the harbor silted up. The communication reads:

...tell Boz if he comes by the way of Norfolk he will find any number of pretty Hookers in the Brick row not far from French's Hotel<sup>22</sup>... Bryan, there is a lot of the good stuff floating up and down the street every night, it is cheap too. We don't have to pay a damn cent for it; now you may think that it is not of much account as it is

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<sup>20</sup> "Not all [words] ... should be designated Americanisms... a sifting of material is necessary". Felix Flügel 1848, in Crowell 1972.

[www.lohorealty.com/cgi-bin/Go.cgi?x\\_action=search&q\\_openHouses](http://www.lohorealty.com/cgi-bin/Go.cgi?x_action=search&q_openHouses)

<sup>21</sup> The letter writer was Tipu Sahib Haughton, who would go on to become a judge. He was born 1824 ca. Haughton, I surmise, received his exotic name out of anti-British sentiments of his father, not so long after the Revolutionary War, in admiration for "The Tiger Of Mysore," a.k.a. Tipu Sahib, Tipu Sultan, Fateh Ali Tipu, sultan of Mysore [1749-1799]. At turns he was an ally of and a rebel against the British in India. Recipient was Bryan Grimes [1828-1880] went on to an eventful life in war and politics. He met a violent end. A dozen years after young Haughton wrote to Grimes the Sepoy rebellion broke out (1857-58).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bryan\\_Grimes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bryan_Grimes).

<sup>22</sup> The hotel was opened in Norfolk in April 1837 and one of its first guests was future emperor Louis Bonaparte. This passage is found twice in Eliason 1956, page 71 and page 124, where he omits the article *the*, apparently misreading as a strike-out the writer's penmanship in crossing the letter T. All commentators since Eliason copy the error. "Brick row" would refer to Georgian rowhouses in a town otherwise built of wood. Capitalization of the initial letter of Brick does not indicate a proper noun in the MS, but is a frequent feature even in the spelling of common nouns.

to be had without pay – allow me to say to you that it is the best sort of mulatto meat and if you come to Edenton you shall have surely have a good supply.

Doing it for free and for fun is the opposite of prostitution. After recommending the promiscuous “pretty hookers” who floated up and down the streets as safe – and free – sex, our letter-writer expressly warns his correspondent to shun paid sex with women infected with VD. What does he call prostitutes? He calls them prostitutes:

Take my advice and touch nothing in the shape of a prostitute when you come through Raleigh, for in honest truth the clap is there of luxuriant growth.

#### GRADUATES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA 1798-1851

1848

Victor Clay BARRINGER  
 George T. BASKERVILLE  
 John B. BYNUM  
 Richard A. CALDWELL  
 John W. CAMERON  
 John Xavier CAMPBELL  
 Belfield William CAVE  
 Oliver H. DOCKERY  
 Seaton GALES  
 Bryan GRIMES, JR.  
 Benjamin S. GUION  
 Thomas H. HOLMES  
 Erasmus A. Roscoe HOOKER  
 James J. IREDELL  
 Robert W. WILSON

William A. JENKINS  
 Peter H. McEACHIN  
 Willie P. MANGUN, JR.  
 Oliver P. MEARES  
 James N. MONTGOMERY  
 Hardy MURFREE  
 Hazell NORWOOD  
 Lorenzo Dow PENDER  
 Thomas P. PERSON  
 Nathan A. RAMSEY  
 John K. STRANGE  
 Rufus S. TUCKER  
 George WASHINGTON  
 John WILSON

...

Taken from Historical Sketches of NC by Col. John H. Wheeler  
 published 1851 and re-printed 1925.

<http://www.USGENNET.Org>

In Terrence Rattigan’s tony set, a smitten woman speaks her lines:

Nora. Darling, it’s too wonderful to meet you at last. I’ve heard so much about you from Mark.

Oscar. Oh, you mustn’t believe all that Mark says, you know.

Nora. My God, no. You're so right. I mean from what he said, I thought you must be quite old and staid and ordinary, and look at you, a positive dream boat, my dear —

Oscar. (Delighted) A dream boat? Oh, do you really think so —

Nora. An absolute Gondola, my dear... (Rattigan 1951. II). . [33]

Less posh GIs documented the same affective value of vehicles in *American Speech*.

...in Italy shortly after Germany surrendered in May, 1945, ... some jeeps ... had formerly been named for women, magic, diminutiveness, power, music, food, and so forth Watkins 1956:137).

...in at least one division (the 8<sup>th</sup> Armored) all vehicles regularly bore names long before we shipped overseas. It was an everyday matter to hear in the motor pool such orders as 'Wash Barbara,' 'Grease Gracie,' or 'Clean Connie's spark plugs.' (Sonkin 1954).

At classic car rallies "a trailer queen" is a show car whose owner transports her in trailer rather than drive her on the open road. In the case of old and fragile machines this is to avoid break-downs; in the case of drivable machines, she's too pampered to be exposed to dings, grime or road damage. Irreverent fly-boys dubbed the fuel-guzzling Boeing 707 used for JFK's Air Force 1, "the kerosene queen".



Fatherless Fanny. Bartlett's primary source in a penny paper from 1835, *The New York Transcript*, also discovered by George A. Thompson:

Reported for the Transcript. Police Office. Fatherless Fanny.

— Soon after the Magistrate took his seat, he found that out of seven Prisoners, a majority were women; four of them being brought up for being drunk, the rest consisting of two men for passing counterfeit money, and one fellow named Collins Cummings, for insulting and making too free with a female named Jane Finley. These three were

very soon disposed of, being sent over to Bridewell until they could procure bail. After this the Magistrate called up a Miss Fanny Freeman. A young lady walked leisurely up to the bar, and with a contemptuous toss of the head and a scornful curl of the lip gave the Magistrate a nod of recognition.

Pris. – That happens to be my name, Mr. Magistrate, that you’re making so free with.

Mag. – Then if you don’t like to have me make do free with your name, you shouldn’t make so free with the rum bottle. How came you to get so drunk last night?

Pris. – Me, drink!

Mag. – No, not *me* drink, but you drunk. Is Terence Scroll here a Witness? [A poor looking lump of mortality who looked like a parched scroll that had been curled up by the frosts of forty winters, walked up to the side of Miss. Fanny Freeman, and drew an enormously long and sorrowful face.] Well, Scroll, what did this woman do to you?

Wit. – Why, Judge, she used me shamefully ill.

Mag. – How do you mean that she used you ill? That’s a very loose definition.

Wit. – Oh, no, sir: I don’t mean that as anything loose passed between us.

Mag. – I didn’t say there was, but I want to know what you mean by using you ill. There are so many methods of using a man ill: for instance, she might have promised to marry you, and then declared the match off, Without paying you “forfeit”; that would have been using you ill.

Wit. – Oh, no, sir; I never should have thought of hooking on to the likes of her, no how; she’s got too many nails on her fingers for me, and they’re all of them as hooked as a cat’s claws, and she came very near hooking my eye out with ’em, and I got but one eye; ’tother was blowed out by a gun barrel bursting; and ven a feller has got but one eye, I don’t call that no kind of behavior, no how, to try to hook out both on ‘em, so as to make him totumly blind on both sides of his head. That’s what I calls using a feller ill.



Mag. – What did you try to hook out his eye for?

Pris. – 'Cause he called me a hooker, and so I thought I might as well earn my name as well.

Mag. – What did he call you hooker for?

Wit. – 'Cause she allers hangs round the hook, your honner.

Mag. – What do you always hang round the hook for?

Pris. – 'Cause I likes it; blow me if I think I be obliged to be bothered by all them there questions. . .

Being a “hooker” covers a multitude of senses. *Transcript’s* reporter played with all the senses he knew for the words *loose* and *hook*. Prostitution was not one of them. Fanny and Scroll and the Magistrate bypass thieving, golf, fishing, and boxing. The woman is a prostitute, all right. That’s what she is, but not what she is being called. Witness Scroll insults her for her lineage, scolds her for her shrewish temper, and he calls her a “hooker” for her hooks – that is, her sharp finger nails. Fanny says she’s a hooker ’cause she tried to use her “hooks” to claw Scroll’s eyes out. Scroll disparages Fanny’s part of town, the vice-ridden Corlear’s Hook. Nothing about a whore “hooking” a john.

Fatherless Fanny’s means of support, or its apparent lack, went without saying. For that matter, prostitutes were routinely booked not for prostitution directly, but under subterfuges like theft, drunkenness and loitering “without visible means of support”.<sup>23</sup>

<http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft8199p209;chunk.id=0;doc.view=print>

We don’t know when Bartlett’s 1877 edition went to bed, but by then he had discarded his H-word. It is a full century after Fatherless Fanny of Corlear’s Hook that American novelists directly began calling prostitutes “hookers”.

Besides Bartlett 1859 and before, where else might Eliason have dug up the word *hooker* that he defines as prostitute? He left a clue. In November 1956, the same year as *Tarheel Talk* appeared, he read a paper before the

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<sup>23</sup> My brother Bill, a Boeing B-17 pilot in WW II, told me that USAAF airmen called the Martin B-26 Marauder the “flying prostitute” for her lack of visible means of support. Her wingspan, contrary to the orthodox design of aircraft then, was not much greater than the fuselage length.

South Atlantic Modern Language Association in Atlanta: “American English in Europe” in which he says:

Hemingway, Steinbeck, and Faulkner are being avidly read.

Steinbeck, Dos Passos, and Wolfe all used the word *hooker* as a word for prostitutes. Consular secretary and polyglot Xaviera may or may not have read Steinbeck or seen the movie version of his *East of Eden*. What matters is that her ghost-writer did. Robin Moore was up on his American novelists.<sup>24</sup> John Steinbeck has a whoring hooker in *East of Eden*, a saga that had been in the works for a dozen years before appearing in 1952:

Joe could find any hooker in any town in a few hours.

Here is Dos Passos in his novel *1919*, published in 1932:

Suzy, the hooker of quintessential innocence ...

Europeans storming the bookstores and libraries to look up this word would not have found it in the bilingual dictionaries until the American lit fad hit following World War II. In its 1960 edition the Kosciuszko Foundation Dictionary, in preparation for some years, has a lemma *hooker*, but no Polish gloss ‘kurwa’ or ‘prostytutka’. This one is for company agents out to entrap union organizers. In the same time frame Spanish dictionaries have no *puta* as a gloss for *hooker*. In the Russian market no *blyad’*, no German *Hure* or *Nutte*, no French *pute* ~ *putain*; no Italian *puttana*, Slovene or Serbian *kurva* etc. etc. It’s not in Armenian-English dictionaries, nor – I wager—in any bilingual dictionary before Xaviera.

In monoglot English dictionaries the H-word is not registered either, not because it was “slangy” or tabu, but because, like *laser*, it wasn’t there to register. Only after Xaviera, as Roger Hooker and Mary Morris and TIME mag say, does the H-word become vernacular.

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<sup>24</sup> Robert Lowell (Robin) Moore [1925- 2008]. In WW II he served as a B-17 nose gunner. Besides the Xaviera book, his titles have enriched the general vocabulary. He became a veritable book factory, with deep roots in the spook world. He recorded that “the CIA had set up clandestine cameras in Xaviera’s bedroom, in order to get blackmail material on Washington pols and visiting Arab potentates.” Watergate figure gets involved in the action. Moore was a classmate of Bobby Kennedy, son of the founder of the Sheraton hotel chain, scion of the old Boston Lowell family. He has written about Fidel Castro, Pope John Paul II, Marilyn Monroe and Joe DiMaggio, the CIA, the Mafia, Watergate, Pearl Harbor and produced the books *The French Connection*, *Hunting Down Saddam Hussein*, *The Hunt for Osama bin Laden*, *the Green Berets* and seventy-some other titles.

<http://www.paperbackswap.com/book/author/Robin+Moore>  
[http://cannonfire.blogspot.com/2006\\_04\\_01\\_archive.html](http://cannonfire.blogspot.com/2006_04_01_archive.html)

Glossing a word in English is the same as translating it into another language. The check list for translating *hooker* includes whoring, cloth making, thievery, bovines, rugby football, golfing, logging, Mennonite attire, bar-tending, labor union provocateurs, lawyerly trick phrases, fishing boats and the very devil's fleet.

Where did Steinbeck and Dos Passos and Wolfe pick up their H-word? They were born around the turn of the century, their young buck years overlapping the twilight of the Civil War veterans. Old soldiers never stop talking about youthful shenanigans or using their generation's slang. Those veterans were still around, numerous and celebrated, ideally, as heroes. Some were on skid row or in jail. Steinbeck makes no mention of General Hooker. For Steinbeck the H-word was simply the verb *hook* plus the suffix *-er*, to judge from his fisherman's metaphor in *Cannery Row* (page 18):

It was evening and the juke box was playing *Harvest Moon* and William remembered the first hooker that ever gaffed him used to like that song before she ran away and got married and disappeared.<sup>25</sup>

Hooking. Prostitutes hook a john. Honest women hook a husband. That's called matrimony. Mencken wrote *In Defense of Women*:

Even the most lowly prostitute ... there was actually one who ended as the wife of the town's richest banker—that is, one who bagged the best catch in the whole community.

<http://www.ibiblio.org/eldritch/hlm/defense.htm>

Calling the prostitute's work *hooking* comes almost a century later than the Civil War:

She's been in the city for almost a year, Pete. Hooking mostly...

— McBain a. k. a. Evan Hunter, born Salvatore Albert Lombino. 1961)

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<sup>25</sup> In textual criticism the *lectio facillior*, i.e. the deceptively simpler reading, is discarded in favor of the more difficult, and the likelier to be the right solution, *lectio difficilior*. That is *Hooker girls* is better than *hook + -er*.



Words of apparent similarity are especially vexing when they are homographs. Homework reveals that the similarity results from a collision or convergence of unrelated words.

As for the written word *hooker*, things are more subtle. *Hooker* is an old name, from the common noun *hook*. Of old this was not ‘one who hooks’. The old stuff is from nouns, not verbs. A thousand years ago in England *án writere* was not ‘one who writes’, but a scribe who prepared writs (noun).<sup>26</sup> “The present is saturated with the past and pregnant with the future.” – Leibniz.

... such words as *fisher*, OE *fiscere*, which is derived from the noun *fish*, Anglo-Saxon *fisc*, might just as well be analyzed as derived from the corresponding verb *to fish*, OE *fiscian*; it became usual to form new agent-denoting nouns in *-er* from verbs ... Now we do not hesitate to make new words in *-er* from any verb ...”

— Jespersen (1905, paragraphs 97, 166).

The Anglo-Saxon nickname *hócere* ‘hooker’ was of the old type, derived from the noun *hóc* ‘hook’. *Hooker* could name householders who lived *atte hoke* ‘at the hook’, in Middle English; by a hill spur or a bend in the road, or

<sup>26</sup> *Drovers* herded droves of cattle. Families named *Wheeler*, *Carter* and *Keeler* descend from an ancestor, respectively, who was a maker of and dealer in wheels, carts and keel boats. *Parkers* oversaw the care of a lord’s park, a walled game preserve.

on the coast by a hook of land (Reaney 1899/1997). Hookers could also be specialists at making and using hooks – for pruning, fishing, for cloth and rug making and more. The verb *to hook* came centuries later, as *to elbow*, *to finger*, *to knee*, *to neck*, *toe the line*.

senile presbyopia. Why? Because the clinical phrase *senile dementia* has made the adjective *senile* a folk synonym of *dementia*. Just so, *hooker*: Only the syntax *Hooker girls* supplies the matrix of the H-word. It is one blunder to chop this word into a verb form + suffix. It is another to overlook the syntax, where “hookers” = “Hooker girls”.



Hookers and Bloomers & the fate of eponyms in *-er*. When we decode words there’s many a slippery patch. It’s an anachronism, for example, to take for a striptease the text “... the Bloomers removed again ...”. It’s a reference to a change of address by Mr. and Mrs. Dexter Bloomer. Mrs. *Amelia Bloomer* [1818-1894] was not their designer, but became the eponym for pantaloons that liberated upper class ladies from their corsets and sweeping gowns for garb that would let them ride the fashionable new safety bicycles without indecently hiking their skirts up or getting them tangled in the spokes.<sup>27</sup> When we were kids my generation fancied that the voluminous old-fashioned underpants for ampler-bottomed old ladies were so called because they billowed or “bloomed”. But bloomers are not

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<http://books.google.com/books?id=xCwZAAAAYAAJ&dq=amelia%20bloomer&pg=PA680#v=onepage&q=bloomers&f=false>

underpants that billow and bloom, nor were 19<sup>th</sup> century hookers yet women who hook.<sup>28</sup>

It is naive to chop the H-word into a simple linking of a verb to *hook* + suffix. *-er*. It is another blunder to overlook the syntax: “hookers” = “Hooker girls”. The reference to females stems from the second term. The H-word is a case of Transferred Epithet.

In her chatty newspaper column Mary Morris had broached the vexing question of a link between Xaviera’s H-word and the name of Civil War General Joseph Hooker. She adopts mock Victorian phrases as a pre-emptive strike against lurking blue-noses:

A few weeks ago a gentleman of probity and prominence in our community approached us on the street and said: “Would you be good enough to settle an argument about hookers?” That was what showbiz people call a “real grabber”, but William rallied to the challenge. It seems the argument had to do with whether the first hookers ... were camp followers of Gen. Joseph Hooker in the Civil War. ...so we wrote our old friend Bruce Catton, certainly the nation’s foremost authority on the Civil War... Here is Catton’s comment: “That business about Joe Hooker and the soiled doves of Civil War Washington pops up every so often. ... Washington developed a large and segregated district ... south of Constitution Ave. This became known as Hooker’s Division in tribute to the proclivities of General Hooker, and the name has stuck ever since. (Morris 1975).

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<sup>28</sup> Suprasummativity. We do not think full phrases, then chop them. No, we leave out words when the things are present, or when similar memories come back. (Langhoff 1977, 1979, Maher 1976). We always mean more than we say. “In all speech activity there are three things to be distinguished: expression, suppression, impression. Expression is what the speaker gives, suppression is what he does not give, though he might have given it, and impression is what the hearer receives.” – Jespersen, in various places, e.g. 1931. Today I say *a jet*. When I was seven or eight years old, that was a part on the kitchen gas stove or Bunsen burner. When I was twelve we called a new kind of aircraft, not *a jet*, but *a jet-propelled airplane, a jet plane, a jet job*, as opposed to the old familiar propeller-driven planes, which we retro-named as *prop-jobs*. Today’s *summits* were *summit conferences* in 1958. – Once created, compound nouns and heavily used phrases are truncated without loss of information. What’s missing from expression may be in memory. It used to be in the syntax.

“Vexing” means Mrs. Morris didn’t know, so she deferred to historian Catton. He confirmed that Washington’s prostitutes were segregated on orders of General Hooker and were jocularly called *hookers* in local slang. Catton is right on the political fact, but not on the language side. He seems to depend on the Eliason’s misreading of Bartlett 1859.

Another slippery patch: The western *hook joint* or *hook-shop* for whorehouse might seem to support the claim of a pre-Civil H-word

In the Redwood Country [of the Pacific Northwest US] a whorehouse was a HOOK SHOP or a HOOK JOINT (Carranco 1963).

China 1830s-1850s. Britannia was battling the Middle Kingdom to make opium peddling safe for Queen and country. Barrère & Leland recorded that Brit expatriates there called a whorehouse a *hook-shop*. This matches a morsel from Rabelais, who called a whorehouse – *une boucherie*... ‘a butcher shop’. Barrère and Leland did not connect this *hook* with America’s H-word, except alphabetically.

The H-word in *hook shop* above belongs with the Scots words *hock* and *huk*. From the same Indo-European source come *haunch* and *ham-hocks*. Squatting or sitting back on your *haunches* is to *hunker* down or rest on your *hunkers*. *hunker* down. In Scots you can also rest on your *hookers*.<sup>29</sup>

My lascivious women students called a certain strapping young man in one class “Dennis the *hunk*.” – Poor, objectified Dennis was just raw meat to these female chauvinist sows.

In novels of the Old South and the Wild West euphemism bloomed. English writers of the 17<sup>th</sup> century had already adopted *bagnio* for the Turkish harem, itself a borrowing of Italian *bagno* ‘bath’. Morris mentioned the popular euphemism *soiled doves*. Soldiers joshed about “horizontal refreshment”. Whores are facetiously but not unsympathetically named “fair soiled doves, doves of the roost, daughters of sin, fast women, fast girls, occupants of bed houses...”

Professor Jay Moynahan has gleaned a big corpus of monikers for prostitutes, some quite literary, from diaries, letters, newspapers, photographs, books, magazines, census data, interviews, personal records, police, prison and court records, but Moynahan noted in a letter to me the

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.dsl.ac.uk>. German *Höker* means (bar) stool. In dialect (Göttingen) the verb *hökern* ‘to hunker down, squat, get down on the haunches’; this is said of dogs humping, or copulating (Grimm *Deutsches Wörterbuch*). Cf. Black English “git down, git funky”.

absence of *hooker* in his citations from the years – 1863 to the 1920s.  
<http://prairiemary.blogspot.com/2010/07/everybody-loves-soiled-dove.html>

Calico Queens	Lady of the Evening
Camp Followers	Lady of Pleasure
Chippy	Lost Hope
Courtesan	Mary Magdalena
Cyprians	Member(s) of the Demi Monde
Demi Mondes	Nymph
Dinah or (Black prostitute)	Nymph du Prairie
Fair But Frail	Nymph of Easy Virtue
Fair Dolcinas (Dulcineas)	Nymph du pavé
Fairs	Our Girl
Fallen Angels	Painted Cats
Fallen Flowers	Practitioner of a Personal Service
Fallen Women	Prairie Dove
Fancies	Proprietress of a Hotel de Refresque
Fancy Lady	Prostitute of the Lowest Order
Fille de Joie	Red Light Lady
Frail Sisters	Scarlet Lady
Girls of the Night	Soiled Doves
Girls of the Period	Spanish Fair (Spanish Prostitute)
Harlot	Sportin' Woman
Hussie	Those Who Are Led Astray
Ladies of Easy Virtue	Whore
Ladies of Ill Fame	Women of Easy Virtue
Ladies of Ill Repute	
Ladies of Negotiable Virtue	



# MY DIARY IN AMERICA

IN

## THE MIDST OF WAR.

BY

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON :

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE ST., STRAND.

1865.

[The Right of Translation is reserved.]

The first time we find a prostitute unequivocally called *hooker* is in the years 1863-1864, in war-torn America. Matthew Brady was snapping his pictures. Fighting Joe Hooker was battling the rebs. Roving war correspondent George Augustus Sala was roving. This English gentleman, on arrival in New York, shared a hackney cab with a succession of New Yorkers.

...my third and last fellow passenger was a lady, who rode a considerable distance with the subscriber. She was young; not pretty, but passably good-looking; and very neatly and becomingly dressed. In particular I remember that she had a velvet bonnet, an ermine tippet, and a warm merino dress. Few as the hours of my stay in the States had been, I had already become aware, from my first railway journey, and from my first voyage in a steamboat, that the stories so frequently told of the cross-questioning and generally inquisitive characteristics of the

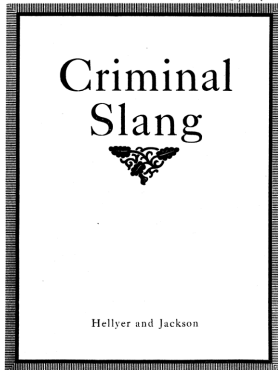
people, were mere exaggerations, and that they are, on the contrary, extremely taciturn, and averse from colloquy with strangers.

But the young lady in the ermine tippet and velvet dress was, to my surprise, extremely communicative. She asked me where I came from, and when I told her that I was an Englishman just arrived, informed me that she had been twice, to Canada, and that she had “royal blood in her veins.” I have not the least idea of what she meant by this; but I know she told me so. Finally she said that she would be very pleased if I would call upon her. I could not do less than tender her my card. She remarked that she had no cards of her own about her, but that she resided at number something or another East Such-and-Such a Street. She was perfectly calm, self-possessed, and well-behaved, and she left me in a maze of utter bewilderment. Was this, I asked myself, another *costumbre del país*?

The first American friend to whom I related this anecdote laughed, shook his head, and opined that the lady in ermine was a “hooker”—that is to say, an improper person. I don’t believe she was. I believe this country to be so eccentric and so abnormal, that this and a hundred similar adventures might happen to a stranger during the first week of his stay; only, and *per contra*, it is quite feasible that he might remain five-and twenty years in America without experiencing so queer a rencontre. Whoever and whatever the lady was I never found out. I forgot the number in the street she gave me, but I ascertained that the street itself was a perfectly respectable one. I tell the story as it occurred, with a full foreknowledge that many unthinking persons will laugh at me for having told it; but of this I am certain, that, all man of the world as I vainly imagined myself to be, I was as completely perplexed and nonplussed by the lady in ermine as Peter Simple was by the obliging damsel he met at the Common Hard at Portsmouth. It is a luxury in the midst of a life full of very hard and cruel realisms to find that for once, if only for five minutes, you have been as innocent as a sucking-dove.

The American slang *hooker* remained a mystery for the English Mr. Sala. (His queen on hearing the whispers, had refused to believe there was such a thing as prostitution.) The American’s laugh and head-shake are the 1860s version of the “nudge-nudge—wink-wink” made vernacular by the Monty Python Flying Circus. If not for double-entendre, *hooker* wouldn’t have

gotten a laugh. After Mr. Sala and his velvet and ermine-wrapped chatterbox, the next sure record we have for people calling prostitutes “hookers” is some 30 years after the Civil War just across the Potomac in Bennett Wood Green’s *Word-book of Virginia folk-speech* (1897/1912/1913). He simply glosses *hooker* as ‘prostitute’ but doesn’t go into its etymology.<sup>30</sup>



Another sure thing is Jackson and Hellyer’s booklet *Vocabulary of Criminal Slang, With Some Examples of Common Usages* (1914). Common usage among criminals, that is, is not the law-abiding. A compendium of underworld slang for police trainees won’t include what is already known to rookies and civilians.

By “unconditionally sure” reference I mean that the source says flat out “*hooker* means prostitute”. Besides Green, *A Prison Dictionary* by Simons (1933) is one such.

After the War of the Secession, the H-word lurked among Civil War reprobates and companions in hotels, brothels and jails. In *Hotel Slang* (1939) Cornyn has an entry *kite*, which he glosses ‘hooker’. David Maurer, habitué of low dives, found the H-word in criminal argot, not general parlance (1931 and 1935). So it is in the following.

In “conditionally sure” cases, implication makes clear what the word *hooker* means:

Ain’t you got the sense to tell a good girl from a hooker? – Thomas Clayton Wolfe 1929 – *Look Homeward, Angel*.

A decade later:

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<sup>30</sup> The references Sala and Green I owe to Douglas Wilson.

So he went out again and walked into the hooker district, where he found the lowest dive in the place, where the vilest kind of degeneracy was the order of the day. – Goodrich. *Delilah* 1941:74.

After the War of the Secession veterans took Horace Greeley's advice and looked for job opportunities as Indian fighters. General Custer found his at Little Bighorn in 1876. Farther west, young Texas Spaniard Andrew Garcia found the love of his life, a beautiful young squaw, a word he used with deep affection for her. He was living among Indian tribes in 1878-1879, when the US Army was destroying the Nez Perce people. Garcia wrote up his adventures and kept the notes in a trunk, one day to publish, he hoped, but death came – in 1942 – before he got around to it. Garcia's trunk was opened in 1948, his MS edited and published by Bennet H. Stein in 1967. Twice Garcia writes the Civil War H-word:

You keep them damn hookers of yours at home at work tanning robes and not let them run wild through the trees and brush in the creek bottoms (Garcia 1967:290).

Garcia proves here that *hooker* is a new word since readers have to be clued in when a new word is dropped on them. Writing for Americans in the 1920s and 1930s, Garcia had to gloss the H-word the first time around:

Their scheme was to get a hooker, or harlot, of the town ...to coax the young man ... uptown with her (Garcia 1967:50).

H. L. Mencken didn't include the H-word in *The American Language* (1919). In *Supplement I* (1945), he enters *hooker* undefined, noting that it is not in Bartlett's *Dictionary of American English* (DAE). He means the 1877 edition.

In *Supplement II* (1948) Mencken enters the word, crediting David Maurer, who was always poking around whore houses, prisons and saloons. Maurer was to edit the re-issue of Mencken's *American Language*, where he entered *hooker* 'prostitute'. Before that he published the following note, with dates and the specification "modern". H-antedaters, again, didn't bother to check out primary sources.

HOOKER 'prostitute' (1931:109)

BUG. A prostitute. (Obs.) Modern hustler, hooker (1935:13).

KITE... A prostitute. Modern hooker, hustler, quiff, muff... (1935:17).

In World War II novels and right after the war the H-word does not occur. Ex-GI Norman Mailer, in *The Naked and the Dead* (1948) has *whore* 10

times and the proto-PC *fug* 59 times; *hooker* zero. In *Armies of the Night* (1968) he used *whore* twice. *Hooker*: Zero.

*Catch-22*. Joseph Heller has *prostitute* 7 times, *whore* 32 times; *hooker* zero (1961).

*Catcher in the Rye*. J. D. Salinger boldly had *fuck* 6 times: *hooker* zero (1951).

In the Hemingway years Mailer caught up much later. He covered the 1964 GOP convention at the San Francisco Cow Palace for *Esquire Magazine*. Mailer was a Hemingway reader, even if not a fan. Here's his caricature of the Goldwater girls, togged out like cowgirls.

They were attractive but not very imaginative, they looked like hookers on horses.

Korean War (1950-1953) and Cold War veterans. Writers of my generation have left not a jot or tittle of evidence in literature written before the 1970s.<sup>31</sup>



Viet Nam War. In his collection of 10,000 terms covering the period 1961 to 1975, there's no-H-word in Clark (1990). Yet, Nam vets did use *hooker* and *sky hook* – for helicopters.

Hello! all you hookers out there past and present. Best wishes to you all. I will always remember the experiences I've had with many of you some good some bad, but that's life.

<http://www.army.mil/factfiles/equipment/aircraft/chinook.html>

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<sup>31</sup> Young bucks of the 1950s didn't yet use Black English *ho* for *whore*. Our slang term was Noo Yawk's *hooah* ~ *hoo-er* R-less).

On the other side of the testosterone divide, but only after Xaviera, horny troops dubbed Boeing's CH-47 Chinook twin-rotor heavy-lift helicopter *The Happy Hooker*.

Down home in Alabama 1920s-1960s.

The steel cable rod - think of a Slinky that is a mile-long, uncoiled, and hot enough to burn a man in half - would glide over rollers at speeds up to 120 mph.<sup>32</sup> The hooker's job was to catch the end of the rod in his tongs and loop it back around so that it would feed into another set of rollers going a different direction. If the hooker missed, red-hot steel would get loose on the floor and tear up men and machines (Jacobs 1998).

<http://www.southerncurrents.com/misc/steel.htm>

Up North – Marm Hooker. Writing at the same time as Californian Steinbeck, a Yankee up in cold old New England hadn't heard about "the" H-word. He did a droll sketch about a Madam Hooker – "Marm Hooker".<sup>33</sup>

Besides providing accommodations for man and beast in the function of tavern keeper, Marm Hooker would arrange once a month or so during the winter for a public dance in the old-fashioned hall at her hotel. Patrons who attended these dances were not exclusive in their social ideas. In a remote corner of the second floor of the tavern, there was a small room and when the dance was well under way, Marm Hooker would withdraw to this little sanctum of hers, while those who she regarded as trustworthy would one by one secure admission for two or three minutes.

It was not for a quickie, but a fleeting chance to negotiate a bottle of

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<sup>32</sup> [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slinky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slinky)

<sup>33</sup> The spelling *marm* has to be read in R-less dialect, with a "flat a", as in northern New England, Australia or some British English dialects, where the spelling <ar> is the digraph for the "flat a", just as <er> serves for schwa. To achieve the flat-a pronunciation of the city name *Bath* as heard in America outside New England, or some English parts, a BBC interviewer said this would be written "B-a-r-th". Mark Twain wrote *labbard* and *stabbard* for *larboard* and *starboard* in *Life on the Mississippi*. In early December 2011 comic Jay Leno found it hilarious when he displayed a cup emblazoned "I love you, mam". He read it as a variant of *madam*. The error was really that the little mug was marketed in the urban USA. In Al Jolson's Dixie or Al Capp's Dogpatch, it would have been read as meaning "Mom". I was as provincial as Leno when I first encountered *man & mammy* in letters from my pen-pal cousin in Ireland. You'll still hear it there.

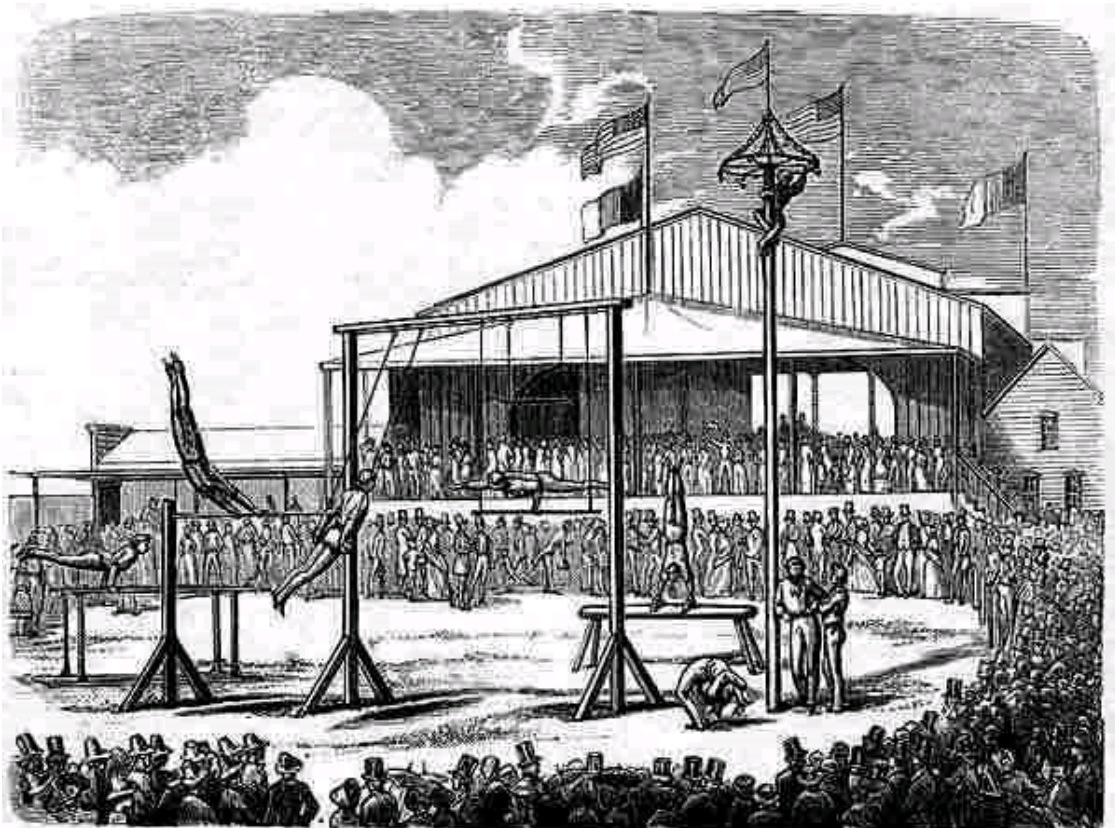
bootleg whiskey (Crandall 1922). This was Prohibition times. Madams don't all run whore-houses. This madam ran a speak-easy.

Down South, in Arkansas in the 1940s hillbilly kids asked the riddle:

What has Two hookers, Two snookers, Two lookers, Four dilly-danders, Four stiff-standers, Two flip-flops, One fling-by?

Answer. – A cow: she has horns, nostrils, eyes, teats, legs, ears, and tail. –  
Randolph & Parler 1954: 253-259.

### Turnverein-Halle, San Francisco 1856



THE MAY FESTIVAL OF THE TURNVEREIN ASSOCIATION, SAN FRANCISCO.



General Joe Hooker seemed definitively unhorsed as eponym when tireless researcher George A. Thompson dug up another stunning headline and text in *The California Police Gazette* for 6 March 1859. Unlike the lot of netymologists he excavates primary sources, but his reading of *hookers* here is also anachronistic. He is unaware of macho non-prostituting men called *hookers*. The article was printed four full years before Fort Sumter.

Antedaters were transported with glee to debunk another urban legend. Instead, they have created one, that hookers have no connection with the biography of General Hooker.

The article was about a rumble at a German athletic club hall, a Turnvereinhalle. Before the Lusitania went down in 1916 and sparked a rage against Germans, the Turnverein was a familiar feature of the American cityscape. – *Verein* is German for ‘association’. *Turnen* means to do gymnastics. Turnverein members are into the manly arts, including wrestling. The most skilled catch-wrestlers are called “hookers”.

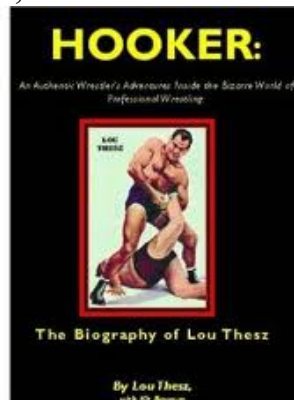
### PROSTITUTES BRAWL AT A MASQUERADE DANCE Free Fight among the Hookers

Sunday morning, March 6, 1859. Last Saturday night, Turnverein Hall on Bush Street was the scene of a most disgraceful riot. A masquerade ball was given at the place. And among the company assembled were the notorious prostitutes Belle Cora, Sal Erving, Sue Batchelor and Mary Robinson. A newly made strumpet named Fanny Howard, formerly Fanny Carrigue, was present, and two young gentlemen



engaged in a quarrel regarding their right of precedence in her affections, or rather her favors. From words they came to blows. All of the above named “Ladies” were more or less engaged in it. And the officers had much difficulty in preventing bloodshed. One policeman had a knife drawn on him, another was gently pushed outside of the door. The police were very particular this week in attempting to prevent a riot in the street on the sailing of the steamers, but we have heard of no extra exertions being made to stop such proceedings as occurred on Saturday night last at Turnverein Hall. We wonder where the fault is.

The hookers were the lads, not lasses.



Anachronistic post-Xaviera readers since the 1970s will read the headline as a reference to prostitutes, but nobody in 1859 read it that way.<sup>34</sup> At the Turnverein Hall bash the young gentlemen disputing over rights of precedence were the wrestlers, the hookers. In some languages, for example, Armenian, one single word serves to translate the two English words *wrestling* and *catching*. The most celebrated hookers in recent history were Lou Thesz [1916-2002] and Tony Cecchine. – Thesz 2000.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> “Abraham Lincoln was killed at Ford’s Theater while watching a movie.” A 1990s schoolgirl reported this to her mom about the day’s history class on events of 1865.

<sup>35</sup> Stanislaw Zbyszko and Lou Thesz were legends. Tony Cecchine, trained by professional wrestler and famed Cleveland-area strong man Stanley Radwan, re-introduced catch-wrestling into the realm of competitive ground fighting. His 1999 DVD series, *The Lost Art of Hooking*, remains among the most influential instructional DVD on catch-wrestling and hooking ever produced. In a 1999 interview Lou Thesz noted that there were only four remaining hookers in the world: himself, Karl Gotch, Billy Robinson, and Tony Cecchine. Cecchine is all over Youtube. Thanks to Ken Grabowski and Bill Sullivan for the wrestling lead. YouTube – Lou Thesz on Hooking. Tony Cecchine’s Catch-Wrestling. Dec. 15, 2008  
 ... [www.youtube.com/watch?v=utgKgoHjfXg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utgKgoHjfXg);  
<http://www.ftatalk.com/where-they-now/330029-lou-thesz.html>

Post-script. As I write this I'm a geezer though still ambulatory. My Cold War army hitch was over fifty years ago now, but it seems like yesterday. I can still see it, hear it, smell it, taste it. None of us in the ranks called a prostitute a hooker then.

Novelists Wolfe and DosPassos and Steinbeck, born between 1898 and 1902, were now in early middle age. They were writing their novels in the twilight years of the Civil War veterans. Some sixty years after the end of the Civil War Bonnie and Clyde were on the road. I was a baby. In this span of time the H-word spawned and spread. Maurer, Cornyn et al. were collecting the words of that generation.





At Gettysburg a grand reunion of Civil War veterans was held in 1938. They were old geezers now. Back in the war the youngest were drummer boys in the signal corps.<sup>36</sup>

Until the 1970s Roger Hooker of Toronto lived his life unmolested for his name. It all started up with that woman Xaviera, all right. Her moniker “hooker” started with the surname of General, Joseph Hooker, Commander of the Army of the Potomac. The honored Major-General Joseph Hooker rode at the head of the funeral procession of President Abraham Lincoln on 4 May 1865.




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<sup>36</sup> As a boy in the late 1930s and early 1940s in Binghamton NY, I loved to see and hear the parades on Decoration Day and the Fourth of July. World War I vets, still hale and hearty stepped along in formation to John Philip Sousa marches. The Spanish-American War rode in buses; they weren't so spry any more. The few ancient Civil War vets rode in open cars. They had been bugler and drummer boys at eleven years of age. After the parades, elderly Yankee (Protestant) ladies decorated the graves of their fallen men with new little flags.

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