

East Egg vs. West Egg : chapter 4.

Think about names and how important they are in high society. In an early part of the novel, F. Scott Fitzgerald listed the names of guests at one of Mr. Gatsby's soirees*. Some of the names signified wealth and status (Chester Becker, Daisy and Tom Buchanan, Dr. Webster Civet, S.B. Whitebait, the Hammerheads and the Belugas, Stonewall Jackson Abram and the Chrystie family). These people were all residents of the more fashionable East Egg. (Gatsby and Nick Carraway lived in West Egg which was mostly new money.) The names listed all have cache. Chester Becker sounds refined and catchy. Daisy Buchanan is the perfect name for a woman of beauty and wealth. Dr. Webster Civet is well educated and sophisticated (Civet is French). Stonewall Jackson Abram is obviously named after the Southern Civil War hero. S.B. Whitebait, the Hammerheads and the Belugas have strong ties to the sea. Those that were familiar with the ocean were considered of a higher social class than the average American, as ocean travel reflected culture and common beach trips, in many cases, reflected wealth. And anyone who is anyone enjoys Beluga caviar on a Ritz cracker. Notice even the Chrystie family, with a seemingly average name, decided to jazz it up a bit with a "y" spelling.

On the other side of the spectrum, the novel is filled with less tony sounding names. Myrtle Wilson (the woman that Daisy ran over in Gatsby's flashy Rolls Royce) sounds downright homely in the same way that her working-class husband's name, George Wilson, sounds. Mr. P. Jewett, despite the first initial in lieu of a full name, is clearly Semitic as is Clyde Cohen. The Catlip family doesn't sound particularly highfalutin and neither does S.W. Belcher (despite the initials), George Duckweed (may as well be Dickweed) and Miss Haag. All of these people are obviously West Eggers with the exception of the Wilsons. They lived somewhere around Flushing, Queens altogether.

Jay Gatsby was born as James Gatz into a poor Midwestern family. Little Jimmy Gatz was determined to make it big...