

Buncombe ^[1]

Buncombe

by Ronnie W. Faulkner, 2006

The word "Buncombe" has, along with its variations of "bunk" and "bunkum," entered American [slang](#) ^[2] as a term synonymous with meaningless speech. The popular term for pretentious and nonsensical talk originated with [Felix Walker](#) ^[3], a U.S. congressman (1817-23) who represented a region in western North Carolina that included [Buncombe County](#) ^[4]. Walker gave a high-sounding speech on a [militia](#) ^[5] pension bill to a nearly empty congressional chamber. Afterward, when questioned about his reasons for the verbiage, he reportedly stated that he was "speaking . . . to Buncombe." This elicited the response: "And buncombe your talk certainly was." Thereafter the term was used to refer to insincere political speech but was later expanded to include any trivial and overblown application of language.

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Additional Resources:

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Subjects:

[Early Statehood \(1789-1820\)](#) ^[12]

[Slogans, slang, and sayings](#) ^[2]

Authors:

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Origin - location:

[Buncombe County](#) ^[14]

From:

[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press](#).^[15]

1 January 2006 | Faulkner, Ronnie W.

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