

Buncombe ^[1]

Buncombe

by Ronnie W. Faulkner, 2006

The word "Buncombe" has, along with its variations of "bunk" and "bunkum," entered Americanslang ^[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:

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[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]

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18 [7] <http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/ref/nchistory/feb2004/feb.html> [8] <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=W000050> [9] <http://robertson-ancestry.com/1265-02.htm> [10] <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llac&fileName=036/llac036.db&recNum=131> [11] http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Missouri_Question:_Speech_of_Mr._Walker_of_N.C. [12] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/early-statehood-1> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/faulkner-ronnie-w> [14] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/mountain-8> [15] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/encyclopedia->