

The Hidden History of Everyday Language

Intent isn't the same as impact. Some common phrases actually have a harmful past, shaping how messages are received. Awareness helps us communicate with greater care and accuracy.

FUZZY WUZZY

originated as a disparaging way to refer to the natural hair texture of a person of color

GYPPED

derived from "gypsy," a slur for the nomadic Romani people

HOOLIGAN

was originally used to describe Irish immigrants in a derogatory manner



PEANUT GALLERY

dates back to the vaudeville era, named for the cheapest seats, typically reserved for Black patrons

HYSTERICAL

began as a medical diagnosis, with the prefix "hyster" alluding to a uterus as the cause of mental illness



OFF THE RESERVATION

refers to the forced migration of Indigenous Americans

SOLD DOWN THE RIVER

a reference to the route enslaved people would take once they were sold to slave owners in the Deep South