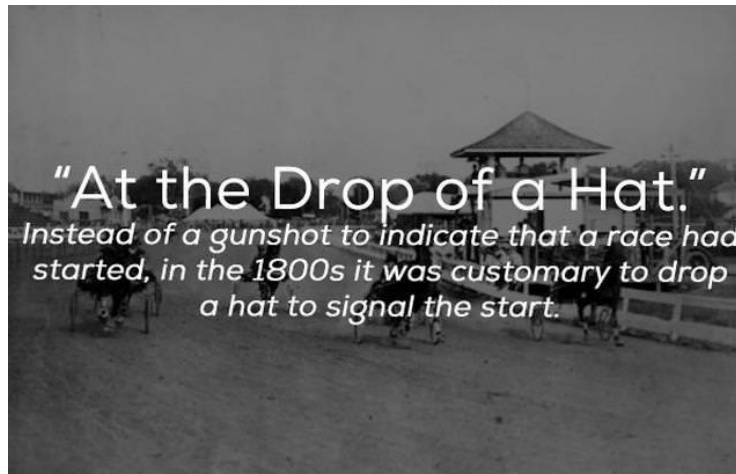


Where do these phrases come from?



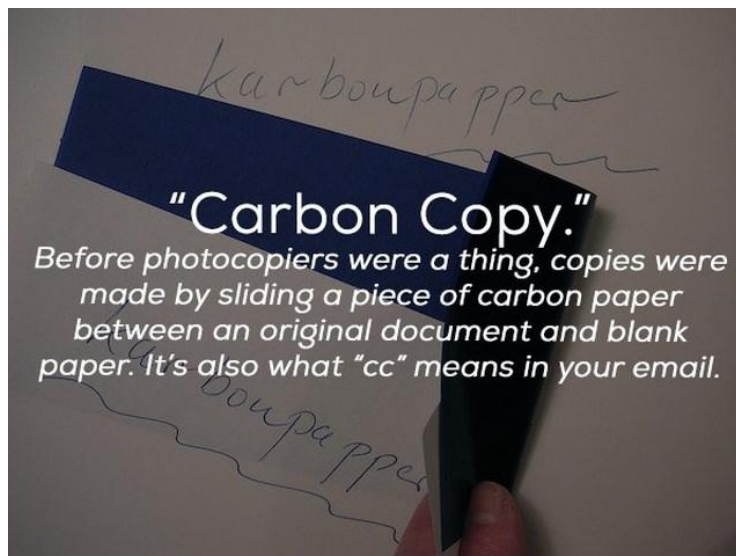
"Close, but no cigar."

During carnivals in the 1800s, cigars were rewarded as prizes for winning carnival games.



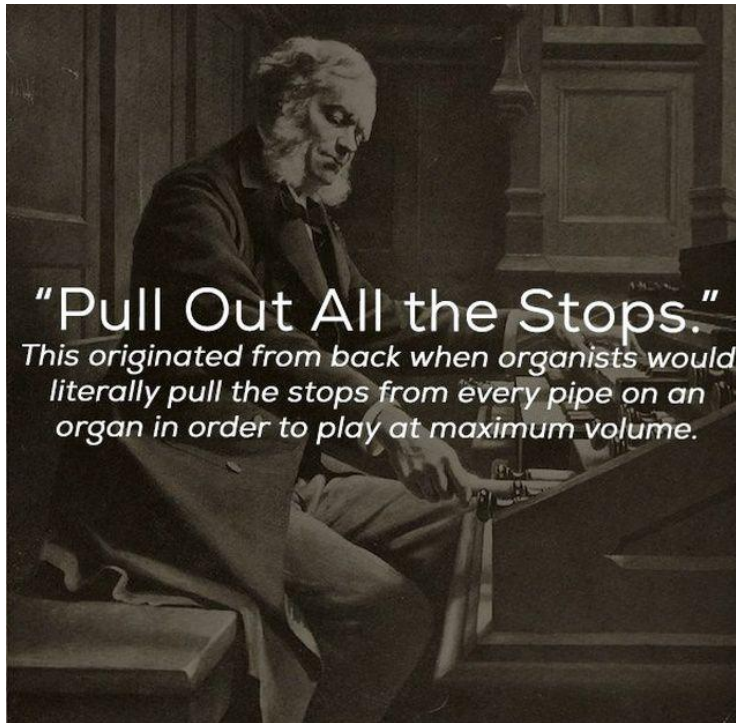
"At the Drop of a Hat."

Instead of a gunshot to indicate that a race had started, in the 1800s it was customary to drop a hat to signal the start.



"Carbon Copy."

Before photocopiers were a thing, copies were made by sliding a piece of carbon paper between an original document and blank paper. It's also what "cc" means in your email.



"Pull Out All the Stops."

This originated from back when organists would literally pull the stops from every pipe on an organ in order to play at maximum volume.



"Best Foot Forward."

When bowing to nobility, a gentleman would literally put his best foot forward, extending his leg to take the bow.

"In the Nick of Time."

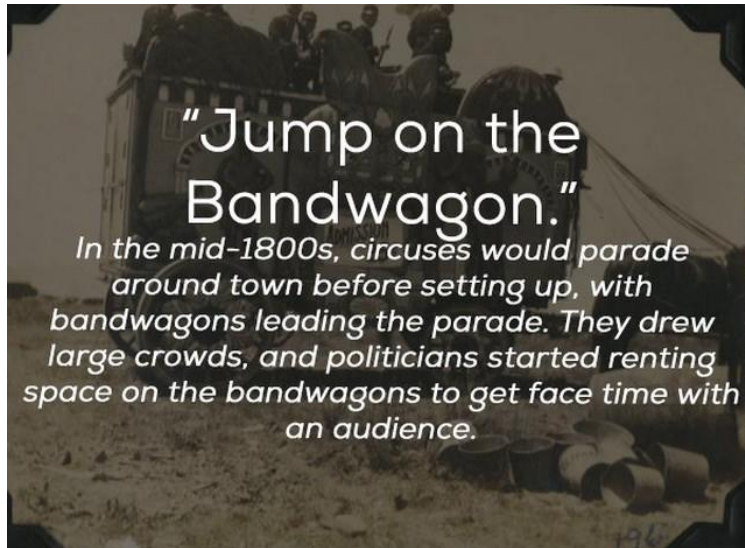
Through the 18th century, businessmen often kept track of debts owed (and interest that built on loans) by carving nicks on a "tally stick." When someone arrived to pay off their debt before the next nick was carved, they'd save that day's worth of interest - hence, 'nick of time.'

"In the Nick of Time."

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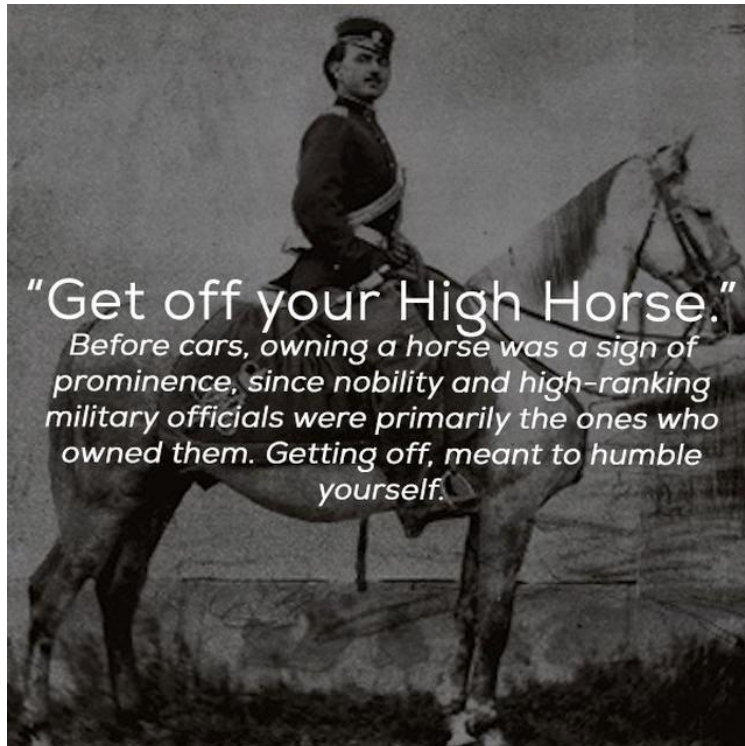
"Burning the Midnight Oil."

In a time before electricity, candlelight or lamp oil was used for lighting. When you stayed up late to work, you literally burned the lamp oil at midnight.



"Jump on the Bandwagon."

In the mid-1800s, circuses would parade around town before setting up, with bandwagons leading the parade. They drew large crowds, and politicians started renting space on the bandwagons to get face time with an audience.



"Get off your High Horse."

Before cars, owning a horse was a sign of prominence, since nobility and high-ranking military officials were primarily the ones who owned them. Getting off, meant to humble yourself.



"Mad as a Hatter."

In the 17th and 18th centuries, hat-makers (hatters) often went insane as a result of mercury poisoning, a side-effect of manufacturing felt hats.



"Dressed to the Nines."

Dressed to the nines meant that you were rich enough to literally purchase the entire nine yards it took to make a tailor-fit outfit (including a vest, jacket, etc.).