Notes

Row in Some English Placenames (With an Excursus on Yiddish gas 'street' and Hebrew rechov 'street')

Sense 4 of *row* in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is "a number of houses standing in a line; a street (especially a narrow one) formed by two continuous lines of houses." A note at this sense is "Chiefly Scottish and northern English, being common in local names of particular streets in various towns." For this sense, the *OED* gives citations from c1450, c1470, 1531, 1564, 1663, 1753, 1807, 1832, and 1900. It also enters *The Row* "used elliptically for Goldsmith's Row (?), Paternoster Row and Rotten Row, in London," with citations from 1607, 1812, 1822, and 1844. *Rotten Row* is a folk etymology of French *Route du Roi* "King's Way." The new supplement to the *OED* adds *death row* "the part of a prison where condemned prisoners are kept" and labels it as "Chiefly US" (it was originally wholly US; that is, this lexeme was coined in American English).

M.M. Mathews' *A Dictionary of Americanisms* (1951) does not list *row* in any relevant sense, but earlier, in 1944, William A. Craigie's *A Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles* had entered *row* "a number of buildings or lots in a line; a particular street in a town." This usage cannot have arisen in American English, as comparison with the *OED* entry shows. Craigie's 1715 citation shows the word as part of a place-name: *Merchants-Row* (in Boston).

The first dictionary to distinguish proper and figurative senses of *row* may have been *Webster's Third* (1961), which has "a way for passage: alley, street" (sense 4b) and "a street or area dominated by a specific kind of enterprise or occupancy" (sense 4c). *W3*'s examples of the former sense are *Catfish Row* (a fictitious name, from *Porgy and Bess*) and *Coconut Row*, and of the latter sense, *automobile row*, *diplomatic row*, and *whiskey row*. In point of fact, *row* has five meanings: (1) the word can be part of an official hodonym indicating an enterprise or occupancy (like *Goldsmith's Row*); (2) it can be part of an official hodonym but which does not name any enterprise or occupancy (like *Park Row*); (3) it can be part of an unofficial hodonym indicating an enterprise or occupancy (like *Book Row*); (4) it can be part of an unofficial name indicating an area (larger than a street) where an enterprise is carried on or some occupation is pursued (like *Tobacco Row*); and (5) it can be part of an unofficial common noun referring, not to a locality, but to a certain group of people ("The treaty caused considerable surprise along embassy row," for instance). Naturally, any term with *row* may be used in more than one sense. In *The New York Times* for July 5, 1981, *publishers row* is used in sense (5).

W. H. F. Nicolaisen has stressed the need to study the geographical distribution of generic words like *creek, brook,* and *kill* in American English placenames (see his "Onomastic Dialects," *American Speech* 55, 1980, pp. 36–45), to which I would add that the distribution of words like *row* and *alley* should be studied too.[1] Some information of this kind has been gathered for the as-yet unpublished *Dictionary of American Regional English* and it is available in Frederic G. Cassidy's "Notes on Nicknames for Places in the United States" (*American Speech* 52, 1977, pp. 19–28). He writes that "though the generic *row* can be found in a few rural names, our list shows it to be

regularly urban. It spans the range of many types already mentioned [in Cassidy's article]: *Bean, Bogus, Houseboat, Irish, Martini, Molasses, Mortgage, Murder's, Shotgun, Skid* (which is metaphorical), *Smoky,* and *Tobacco Row*" (p. 27). Other such nicknames mentioned in Cassidy's article are *Silk Stocking Row* (in New York City, only *Silk Stocking District,* which refers to a certain part of Manhattan's Upper East Side, is used), *Striver's Row* and *Bedbug Row.* On the history of *skid row* see Peter Tamony's "Skid-road's Skidway to Inner City," *Western Folklore* 35, 2, April 1976, pp. 141–148, which touches on *Rotten Row* too.

In light of the chief meanings of *row* (street, row of buildings), one is not surprised at *DARE*'s finding that *row* in names is more urban than rural: rural areas are far less likely to have rows of houses. I surmise that *Tobacco Row* (= *Tobacco Belt*) was coined by an urbanite and at a late date, when *row* was already being used in senses 4 and 5, where the tie with a line of buildings is absent altogether. In general, official names with *row* tend to be high-toned, whereas unofficial ones are neutral (like *fraternity row*) or negative (like *Bedbug Row*). This is in accord with a general principle of name-giving (there are probably exceptions), which we can see in personal names: parents give their children positive names (*Hope, Faith,* etc., etc.), not negative ones (i.e., nicknames are unofficial names).

This brief note cannot pretend to list all the official and unofficial names with *Row* and *row,* but here are a few which I have gathered over the years. New York City has a *Park Row* (an unofficial name designating a street along one side of City Hall Park; when many of the city's newspapers had their offices there in the nineteenth century, *Park Row* was figuratively used in the sense of "the New York City press"; when many newspapers later moved to Nassau Street, it was nicknamed *Newspaper Row* around 1900). *Newspaper row* appears in *The New York Times* for April 8, 1983: "One block south is the old Yiddish newspaper row, between Jefferson and Pike Streets (on East Broadway)" (p. C1; reference is to Manhattan's Lower East Side). Incidentally, Brooklyn's newspaper row used to be Washington St. (now called Cadman Plaza East); today this borough has no newspapers to speak of.

Segments of some New York City streets have nicknames with *Row* (= sense 3): Forty-Second St. between Ninth and Tenth Aves. is known as *Theater Row* (this is probably a public relation person's confection and was intended to be a pun on *row of seats* in a theater); Fourth Ave. between Eighth and Fourteenth Sts. used to be known as *Book Row* (there were once more than thirty used-book stores there but few remain today); West Forty-Sixth St. is known as *Steak Row* or *Restaurant Row* (because of the numerous restaurants there, many of them steakhouses), West Forty-Seventh St. is known as *Diamond Row* because most of the city's diamond dealers are located there (because the dealers have been moving into West Forty-Sixth and Forty-Eighth Sts. too, the sense of the term is changing from 3 to 4); Fifth Avenue between Seventy-Eighth and Ninety-First Sts. is sometimes known as *Millionaires' Row* because of the mansions built on its east side in the years before World War I (although most of the mansions have been torn down, the name lingers on since the new high-rises which have replaced them are accessible only to the wealthy); and what is officially now known as the St. Nicholas Historic District (West 138 and West 139 Streets between Seventh and Eighth Aves., where the facades of the old homes here have been declared landmarks) has long been known as *Striver's Row* because Black doctors, lawyers and other professionals, striving for social advancement and respectability, built or bought expensive homes there. Striver's Row consists of two blocks which do not form one line; hence the meaning of this term is virtually, though not quite, sense 4. A ninth New York City name is *Schermer-*

horn Row, an unofficial but old and widely known name for a row of twelve buildings erected in 1811 on the south side of Fulton St. A now obsolete unofficial name is *Steamship Row:* because of a row of handsome town houses on the south side of Bowling Green, this side of the park was nicknamed *Nob's Hill* around 1820, but when these buildings later became offices of steamship and shipping companies, it was renicknamed *Steamship Row.*

Two nicknames elsewhere are *Whale Oil Row* in New London, CT, so named because captains of whaling ships built mansions there in the 1830's (the name is heard even today), and Reno's *Casino Row,* because of the many casinos there (it is more familiarly known as *The Strip,* which may be based on Los Angeles's *Sunset Strip; Casino Row* could be merely a journalistic term).

A third one is *Rum Row.* During Prohibition, certain parts of the coastal waters off Long Island just beyond the three-mile limit of Federal jurisdiction were known as *Rum Row* because this was where liquor from various Caribbean islands and from St. Pierre and Miquelon was transferred to American bootleggers (on Shelter Island there is still a *Bootlegger's Alley,* one of the places where the liquor was unloaded from the ships returning from Rum Row). *Rum Row* is the only example I know of *row* being used in a hydronym; naturally, it could have arisen only after the word was well advanced in its semantic development (i.e., had reached sense 4).

One name with *row* is unusual in that it does not belong to any of the aforementioned categories. In the 1920's, when the New York Yankees baseball team was under the management of Miller Huggins, it was humorously known as *Murderer's Row* ((see p. 29 of Lloyd Ultan's *The Beautiful Bronx (1920–1950)*), New Rochelle, Arlington House, 1979, where we also learn that in the 1930's, under the management of Joe McCarthy, the team was called *the Bronx Bombers;* both nicknames were based on the Yankees' excellence at the time.

Western Yiddish *yidngas* (literally 'Jews' street') and Eastern Yiddish *di yidishe gas* (literally 'the Jewish street') originally designated the street in otherwise non-Jewish towns and cities in which Jews lived. Later this expression came to designate the entire Jewish quarter of a town or city, even if it extended over more than one street (see sense 4 of *row*); and, still later, the Eastern Yiddish variant came to have the figurative meaning of ''Jewish circles, Jewish society, among Jews'') (as in *af der yidisher gas* 'in Jewish circles, in Jewish society, among Jews'; see sense 5 of *row*).

Af der yidisher gas in its figurative sense is the etymon of Israeli Hebrew *barechov hayehudi* ''in Jewish circles, in Jewish society, among Jews'' (literally ''on the Jewish street''). However, whereas the Yiddish idiom has not been productivized, the Hebrew one has, so that today one finds *barechov haaravi* ''in Arab circles, in Arab society, among Arabs,'' *barechov hadruzi* (*druzi* ''Druze''), *barechov hamitsri* (*mitsri* ''Egyptian''), etc.

David L. Gold

University of Haifa

Notes

[1]*Mile* should be studied too. Fifth Avenue (in New York City) between 79 and 106 Sts. is unofficially known as *Museum Mile* because of the many museums there; and Nassau County, NY, has a *Miracle Mile,* an area of expensive shops.

Minsk and Pinsk and Chelyabinsk: Linguistic and anecdotal remarks on Russian place-names ending in -sk.

This article will not be concerned with all the types of Russian place-names, but, intending to drive home a certain point – admittedly of a somewhat anecdotal nature – concentrate on place-names ending in *-sk,* which, due to the iron-clad rules of Russian grammar may not be as easily identified in a cursory text as on the map or in the gazetteer, as shall be shown further below.

As is well known, or can be learned from one glance at the map of the Soviet Union, this type of place-name is extremely frequent, the naming device, obviously, prolific. *-sk* – names range, geographically, from, say, *Minsk* in the West to *Petropavlovsk Kamchatskiy* in the Far East, from *Murmansk* in the Northwest to *Ussuriysk* in the Southeast, chronologically from ancient town foundations like *Smolensk* and *Polotsk* to Soviet urbanizations "in the middle of nowhere" like *Magnitogorsk*. They abound in the vast areas of Russian colonization, ranging from, say *Arkhangel'sk* to *Khabarovsk,* and they occur as replacements of pre-revolutionary names of other types, such as *Sverdlovsk* (replacing *Ekaterinburg*), *Dnepropetrovsk* (*Ekaterinoslav*), *Dzerzhinsk* (*Rastyapino*), or of the same type, for that matter, e. g., *Ul'yanovsk* (*Simbirsk*).

(To "Westerners" *-sk* – names appear to be the prototype of Russian place-names: Valentin Kiparsky (*Russische Historische Grammatik,* III, Heidelberg 1975) registers an "*Imsk,*" invented by the author of an American espionage comic strip; prospective participants in the forthcoming Sixth International Congress of Finno-Ugrists to be held in *Syktyvkar* spontaneously nicknamed the city "*Fin-Ugorsk*"; some student, trying to be witty, invented a "*Proletarsk,*" only to find out it really existed . . . at least three times).

With loving care, it seems, *-sk* – names were created in great quantity to replace Finnish names in former Finnish Carelia, and German names in the Königsberg (*Kaliningrad*) area, which were annexed to the RSFSR after World War II. On the map of these areas we find at one glance:

> *Kamennogorsk* (for Finnish *Antrea*), *Primorsk* (*Koivisto*), *Priozersk* (*Käkisalmi*), *Svetogorsk* (*Enso*), *Zelenogorsk* (*Terijoki*), *Bagritionovsk* (German *Preussisch Eylau*), *Baltiysk* (*Pillau*), *Chernyakhovsk* (*Insterburg*), *Dobrovol'sk* (*Pillkallen / Schlossberg*), *Guryevsk* (*Neuhausen*), *Gvardeysk* (*Tapiau*), *Krasnoznamensk* (*Haselberg*), *Polessk* (*Labiau*), *Pravdinsk* (*Friedland*), *Primorsk* (*Fischhausen*),[1] *Slavsk* (*Heinrichswalde*), *Svetlogorsk* (*Rauschen*), *Sovetsk* (*Tilsit*), *Znamensk* (*Wehlau*).

Place-names derived on *-sk* belong to the inflectional class of substantives.[2] This substantival name type, however, competes with an adjectival name type derived on a compound morpheme (with three allomorphs) *-skiy* (masc.)/ *-skaya* (fem.)/ *-skoye* (neutr.). This, now, creates some puzzles and problems for the user of Russian place-names, as will be shown in the following:

By means of the afore-mentioned compound suffix, to begin with, propria (e.g., *Sovet*) are transformed into adjectives (e.g., *Sovetskaya*), which determine appellatives of the register of geographical terms (e.g., *gavan'* "port, harbour, haven") yielding place-names like:

> *Sovetskaya Gavan'* ("Soviet Haven")
> *Kuybyshevskiy Zaton* ("Kuybyshev Anchorage")
> *Ladozhskoye Ozero* ("Lake Ladoga" – a village)

This type of place-name, however, does not occur frequently on the map; instead, the map abounds with elliptic place-names such as *Krasnoostrovskiy, Leninskiy, Nizhne-*

kamskiy, Aleksandrovskaya, Berezovskaya, Krasnoarmeyskaya, Ivanskoye, Kazachins-koye, Ramenskoye, and what have you, in which the geographical term, e.g., *gorod/ grad* (masc.) "town, city", *gavan'* (fem.) "port, harbour, haven", *selo* (neutr.) "village" is "understood."[3]

Frequently, now, one and the same proprium may yield both a substantival place-name and one to three adjectival elliptic place-names. The perusal of a gazetteer will supply the reader with "nice" lists such as:

Sovetsk	*Aleksandrovsk*	*Krasnoarmeysk*
Sovetskaya	*Aleksandrovskaya*	*Krasnoarmeyskaya*
Sovetskiy	*Aleksandrovskiy*	*Krasnoarmeyskiy*
Sovetskoye	*Aleksandrovskoye*	*Krasnoarmeyskoye*
Arkhangel'sk	*Komsomol'sk*	*Oktyabr'sk*
Arkhangel'skaya		
	Komsomol'skiy	*Oktyabr'skiy*
Arkhangel'skoye	*Komsomol'skoye*	*Oktyabr'skoye*[4]

As quite a few cities bear the name of their patron in an underived form we even find lists like:

Kalinin	*Kirov*
Kalininsk	*Kirovsk*
Kalininskaya	
Kalininskiy	*Kirovskiy*
Kalininskoye	*Kirovskoye*

These three types of place-names, viz. the Zero type (*Kalinin*), the *-sk* – type (*Kalininsk*), and the elliptic adjectival type (*Kalininskiy,* etc.) will, in texts – not necessarily of geographic content – occur in phrases like (Engl.) "the Baltimore area," "a Washington park," "some London pub," (Germ.) "*der Hamburger Hafen,*" "*die Berliner S-Bahn,*" "*eine Düsseldorfer Kneipe,*" etc.

In this syntagm Russian grammar requires an adjective form of the name, derived on . . . *-skiy /-skaya/ -skoye*! Hence:

    Kalinin: Kalininskiy rayon "the Kalinin area"

    Tambov: Tambovskaya babushka "a Tambov peasant woman"

    Moskva: Moskovskoye Metro "the Moscow Subway"

In the case of *-sk* – names, now, *-sk* is replaced[5] by the afore-mentioned adjectival morpheme. Hence:

    Sverdlovsk: Sverdlovskiy kray "the Sverdlovsk district"

    Arkhangel'sk: Arkhangel'skaya gazeta "an Arkhangel'sk newspaper"

    Murmansk: Murmanskoye sudno "a Murmansk water craft"

In the case of elliptic adjectival place names the adjectival morpheme, agreeing with the appellative "understood" is replaced by one of its allomorphs to agree with the appellative in the phrase. Hence:

    Aleksandrovskiy: Aleksandrovskaya kofeyn'ya

              "an Aleksandrovskiy coffee house"

              Aleksandrovskoye ushchilishche

              "an Aleksandrovskiy school"

              Aleksandrovskiy avtomobil'

              "an Aleksandrovskiy car"

   Aleksandrovskaya: Aleksandrovskiy avtomobil'

              "an Aleksandrovskaya car" . . . and so forth ad infinitum.

Establishing the place name from its adjective in the phrase, therefore, can be a puzzle:

Is a *Kalininskiy* something-or-other pertaining to the city of *Kalinin*, or the town of *Kalininsk*, the town of *Kalininskiy*, or *Kalininskaya*, or *Kalininskoye*? Is a *Sovetskiy avtomobil'* a car registered in *Sovetsk, Sovetskiy, Sovetskaya, Sovetskoye*? Or is the adjective not derived from a place-name at all? *Sovetskiy avtomobil'* might as well be a Soviet car, a Russian made automobile. The other way around: some *Oktyabr'skiy komitet* could be some "October – i.e., Revolutionary-committee" in a historical context, but it could be some administrative committee of the town of *Oktyabr'sk, Oktyabr'-skiy*, or *Oktyabr'skoye*.

True, context analysis will usually solve the problem if there is any, but the following anecdote will show how capricious the whole matter can be:

A German colleague of ours, who reported the story to me, was, not long ago, doing onomastic field work in the Soviet Union. Off duty one day, dismissing his research subject from his mind for a while, just out for souvenir hunting and shopping, he picked up in a food market a fine dairy product, a cheese labeled *Sovetskiy syr*. According to his off-hand constituent analysis, *Sovet – skiy syr* "Soviet cheese" (German: "Sowjetischer Käse"), the labeling seemed to indicate that the product was domestic. (Cf. American vs. foreign – French, Swiss, Dutch – cheese.)

We, however, should take another possibility into account: Fine cheeses like wines and other delicacies are preferably named after their area or town of provenance, and exactly this is true with our Russian dairy product: cheese from *Sovetsk* – "Sovetsk cheese" (German: "*Sovetsker Käse*")!

Our German colleague found this out in a less complicated way, by extra-linguistic information: the taste of the Russian dairy goody reminded him at the first bite of one of the most popular of German cheeses – *Tilsiter Käse*. And now our student of names woke up: Tilsit, situated in the afore-mentioned Königsberg area was renamed by the Soviet authorities into *Sovetsk*.

The message we hope to convey in this article is: Onomastics is not only scholarly work, but also a lot of fun.

<div align="right">Ulrich A. Groenke</div>

University of Cologne

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[1] Note the doublet *Primorsk (Koivisto)* in former Finnish Carelia. Such doublets – or even triplets – are not at all rare.

[2] They are of masc. grammatical gender and belong to one and the same inflectional sub-group, e.g., *Sverdlovsk* + ø : Nominative; + *a* : Genitive; + *u* : Dative; + ø : Accusative; + *om* : Instrumental; + *e* / *u* : Locative (Prepositive).

[3] In linguistic reality, however, i.e., in the practice of name using, we can hardly maintain that these forms are elliptic, as the user will not reflect upon the "missing link", and, upon reflection, may have to guess. Pragmatically seen the adjectival name differs from substantival names just by inflection – requiring no reflection on the part of the user.

[4] By and large the substantival -*sk* type is applied to naming major cities, the adjectival -*skiy* / *skaya* / *skoye* type to naming smaller towns.

[5] In other descriptive terms: -*sk* is compounded with the adjectival morpheme -*iy* / *aya* / *oye*. Historically -*sk* and the compound morpheme were both adjectival morphemes, their distribution semantically – syntactically conditioned. Conveniently labeled by grammarians "the short form" and "the long form" resp., the former survived only in place names (our -*sk* type), their inflection coalescing with the substantival inflection, whereas the latter is extant as an adjectival morpheme.