

## Names *Not* on the Map

RAVEN I. MCDAVID, JR., RAYMOND K. O'CAIN,  
GEORGE T. DORRILL and DAVID FISCHER.

Revised by WILLIAM A. KRETZSCHMAR, JR., and MARTHA RATLIFF\*

To the national survey of place names, scholars working on related projects, such as the regional linguistic atlases, have a dual responsibility: 1) to provide all the information they can gather that might be useful to the survey; 2) to reveal the problems they have encountered, so that any temporary embarrassments are not replicated. The steps we have taken, on the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States, to rid ourselves of such embarrassments — necessarily ad hoc operations — may be transferred into systematic procedures for the survey.

In the regional atlases, we have sought information about three groups of place names:

1) In each atlas a number of geographical names — regions, states, cities and foreign countries — was systematically elicited. These names were recorded primarily for their pronunciation, but occasionally lexical variants turn up: *Eastern States* for *New England*, *York State* for *New York*, *Baltimore City* for *Baltimore*. Nicknames and various obiter dicta (such as *bluebellied Yankees* for the inhabitants of New England) were not systematically sought, but were often recorded. Most of these names will appear in *LAMSAS* fascicles 5 and 6.

2) From each informant the field worker elicited names important for his background: present residence (locality, postoffice and township or comparable civil division), birthplace, where he was educated, and similar information for his forebears. The amount of this information varies from interview to interview, according to the interest of the informant and the field worker, the health and memory of the informant, the pace of the interview, and the line of questioning followed.

3) In each interview the field worker sought to discover the local hierarchy of stream generics (*river, creek, brook/run/branch*) and examples of streams of each size; incidentally, field workers often recorded the names of specific mountains, hills, meadows, swamps, and marshes.

In addition to the responses systematically elicited, field workers often recorded other information from the free conversation of the informants. Interviews recorded on tape, like those in the Gulf States and Oklahoma, generally yield more names — McDavid can testify to hundreds on the Oklahoma tapes — but from the beginning of field work in 1931, alert investigators such as Rachel Harris, Hans Kurath, Bernard Bloch and Miles Hanley picked up many conversational forms which were added to those obtained by direct interviewing.

Since the *Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States* is being published in tabular form, the editors are not constricted, as were their predecessors in New England, by the map format. Only a few names of New England streams — principally those of American Indian origin — were published; for the rest, one must consult the field records. LAMSAS is publishing every recorded name the editors can verify.

The problem of verification, though, is not simple. Like all forms elicited, place names were set down in phonetics as the informant gave them. This is indispensable for linguistic analysis, but for other uses a conventional spelling must be found. The search for such a spelling may involve several operations and take a great deal of time.

1) Many names can be verified from general knowledge. The major rivers, embayments and mountains are tolerably well known; even if there is disagreement about which conventional spelling to use — the Board of Geographical Names prefers *Pee Dee River*, but many South Carolinians cling to *Peedee* or *Pedee* — the choices are clear. Names slightly less familiar can be verified through standard reference works, such as *Webster's Geographical Dictionary*, large scale atlases (the *Rand McNally Commercial Atlas* is especially useful), and the *Columbia-Lippincott Gazetteer*. These we exploited first.

For lesser streams we then went to the South Carolina map library, for the USGS quads of 1:100,000 scale. Although these drastically reduced our residue, we found ourselves with unverified names from almost every state in our area. (See Appendix 2.)

The next operation was to search state and county atlases and gazetteers. As with county and local histories, these are unevenly distributed. The Southern States have relatively few: in the 1870s, both scholars and dollars were in short supply in the South, and recent visitors, somewhat careless with matches, had left many county archives in disarray. Nor were actual publications as helpful as they could have been. Though the township maps in the county atlases of New York and Ontario meticulously show the bends and branchings of streams, they supply names for only the largest.<sup>1</sup> Of the state gazetteers, some are restricted to populated places (as was also the

place name study of the Western Reserve); others are spotty, and Powell's for North Carolina, in many ways the best in the territory we cover, lacks many of the smaller streams. Nevertheless, names of similar shape often provide clues as to how stream names might be spelled.

There were two final operations we pursued simultaneously: 1) personal contacts; 2) other publications. In each state or section of a state where there were unsolved problems, we tried to find someone who either had, or could acquire, personal knowledge. Thus for a New Jersey stream south of Princeton, recorded by Lowman as [hɛgɔnz] *Ditch* but not named on the largest maps accessible, we wrote Clarence Brown of Princeton, a Slavist but also a native South Carolinian interested in local dialects; for names in Maryland and in Jefferson County, West Virginia, we consulted Dick Trask of Frostburg; for Virginia names, Mike Miller of Virginia Commonwealth; for a stream (*Line Creek*) in the McDavids' part of Greenville County, South Carolina, we wrote Elizabeth McDavid, a librarian and local historian who still lives on her grandfather's land; for Indian names in the South Carolina Low Country, we consulted James Meriwether, of the Southern Studies program of the University of South Carolina; for a stream near Doraville, Georgia, we asked Sally Jackson of Georgia Tech.

The written and printed sources we consulted were various. First, we examined the 1:10,000 quads in the map collection of the Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago. Then we returned to the county and local histories examined for the LAMSAS Handbook. Regrettably, many of these lacked maps and indexes, and the indexes we found — especially those added later, for the benefit of genealogists — were often limited to the names of persons. But most of the county histories, especially those following the rubrics for the 1876 Centennial, have information about the topography of the county, and often of each civil division as well; and all of them generously list the early settlers and later citizens of prominence. This last fact is of particular importance to us since many of our informants told us that the smallest streams — *brook*, *run* and *branch* — are named after the families on whose land they rise.<sup>2</sup> One Florida informant added that sometimes the name changes with ownership.

Following up this line of investigation, we examined the census records for relevant surnames. We first checked the printed records, where they were available. Finally we looked at accessible microfilms of manuscript censuses. As we worked, we still found it necessary to make decisions. In Elk County, Pennsylvania, [bɔ:nz] *Run* could represent either *Burns* or *Byrnes* — local contacts helped us decide on the latter. For [kɑrɔrəl] *Fork* in West Virginia there were seven possible spellings attested in the census records; we chose *Cotterell* as the one with local identification. In Florida

[rɒ'hɛrə] *Branch*, for which not even the largest quads offered a hint, suggested *Rogero*, a Spanish surname borne by a colonial family. *Beiser* for a creek in Welland County, Ontario, was suggested by a surname in the Toronto telephone book, though the original field record also gives evidence for *Beaver*. We vainly searched several hundred pages of the published records of Jones County, North Carolina, for *Roman Branch*, finally settling on the surname of a local Revolutionary hero.

As we reached our decisions, we lost any illusions we might have had about a field worker's infallibility. The branch near Doraville, Georgia, turned out to be *Oscar Cowans*; Raven McDavid, in the heat of interviewing a lively nonagenarian, had omitted an *s*. Similarly, Lowman's cursive schwa led one of us to interpret *Bacon Run* in New Jersey as a nonexistent *Bakeson*. Knowing that the spellings of the *Combahee* ['kʌm,bɪ] and *Salkehatchie* ['sɔlkɛtʃə] Rivers in South Carolina cannot be deduced from their pronunciations, we took a tolerant view of the New York informants from whom Lowman recorded ['rʌn,bɑuts rʌn] for *Roundout Creek*, and [pɜt'mɔkə] for *Premaker Brook*, the last, near the village of Hurley, named for a Seventeenth Century Indian chief, or of the Georgian from whom McDavid recorded [o'hɪkɪ] for a river usually called *Ohoopee*. Knowing that Lowman's informant in Effingham County, Georgia, has [o:] in *room*, *broom* and the like, we knew we had hit upon the spelling of [glo:nə] *Branch* when we found a *Glooner* family in the 1850 Census. Occasionally we may have chosen a wrong spelling: knowing that in the North and North Midland [ɪgɫ] and [ɪg] are not uncommon for *eagle* and *league*, we were about to infer *Teague* from [tɪgz] *Run*, near Shepardstown, West Virginia, when Dick Trask found it was *Tiegs*, like Charlie's sometime angel. But each decision was based on the best evidence at our disposal.

Nor were we surprised that names have changed. It took a local surveyor in New Jersey to inform Clarence Brown's secretary that *Heggens Ditch*, as recorded by Lowman, is now *The Pump Branch* (the surveyor's name is *Heggens*).

In our hunt for these spellings we learned a great deal about American genealogy, geography and history. We also learned a lesson that we are happy to share with those directing the national survey of place names. If it is to be a truly comprehensive survey, of the kind that the Italians envisaged in 1946 — we cannot stop with published maps. They are only the beginning. Several of the names we sought in North Carolina, as we have indicated, were not to be found in Powell's gazetteer, one of the best. He was happy to suggest lines of inquiry, often fruitful, but admitted that he had restricted himself to what the maps yielded. Apparently *Graveyard Gap*, where U.S. 25 crosses the state line as one drives north from Greenville, South Carolina,

to Hendersonville, was not set down by any mapmaker, state or federal; yet McDavids have known it and traveled through it since 1921. As we vainly searched the Jones County records for *Roman Branch*, we encountered hundreds of stream names; random sampling disclosed that about a fourth were not in Powell's *Gazetteer* — including several spellings of a *Holstein River*. What we have said is not to disparage the work of Powell or the mapmakers, only to urge that our survey be both as comprehensive as possible and a continuing operation. It will never be complete: we will keep discovering old names as well as making new ones.

## University of Chicago

### Notes

\*Raven I. McDavid, Jr., University of Chicago; editor-in-chief, *Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States*. William A. Kretschmar, Jr., University of Wisconsin, Whitewater; assistant editor, *LAMSAS*. Martha Ratliff, senior research associate, *LAMSAS*. Raymond K. O'Cain, formerly University of South Carolina; associate editor, *LAMSAS*, 1973-80. George T. Dorrill, formerly University of South Carolina; assistant editor, *LAMSAS*, to 1981. David Fischer, formerly University of South Carolina.

Work for this paper was shared by all members of the *LAMSAS* staff, both in 1979-80 when the principal editorial site was the Thomas Cooper Library of the University of South Carolina under O'Cain as associate editor and since 1981, when the dispersal of the editorial staff threw all editorial responsibilities on McDavid and the new staff he assembled at the University of Chicago. Individual contributions are almost impossible to distinguish, but the general lines of operation are clear: staff members discovered problems chiefly in preparing the lists of streams which will appear in *LAMSAS* fascicles 5 and 6, and described them and tentative solutions to McDavid, who made extensive use of the research facilities of the Newberry and the Regenstein, and suggested personal lines of investigation. The same procedures have been followed in subsequent work at Chicago. As editor-in-chief, McDavid bears all responsibility for final decisions.

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If we have overlooked others who should have been listed, we deeply regret it and ask to be forgiven.

<sup>1</sup>My Chicago colleague Michael Conzen points out that since the county atlases were devices for real estate promotion, the compilers were less meticulous about toponymics than about landowners.

<sup>2</sup>Eric Hamp points out that the hierarchy of stream names often reflects cultural history. In his travels

west of the Mississippi he has observed that on the Great Plains the largest streams bear American Indian names; the next largest are predominantly French, from the *voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois*; the smallest are overwhelmingly of English (or other colonial) origin, testifying to the permanent settlement.

## Appendix 1

### North Carolina Place Names *Not* in Powell

Henderson County, N.C. – Greenville County, S.C.

Graveyard Gap

Jones County

Antwine's Creek (Antoine's?)

Arent Branch

Amels Branch

Ash Branch

Ballahuck(s) Branch

Grapevine Island

Graveyard Branch

Gum Branch

He(r)itage Branch

Holstein Creek

Holstone Creek

Holystone Creek

Hoophole Branch

Horn Branch

Houston's Creek

Lovick's Prong

Mir(e)y Branch

Rock Hill Branch

Westminster Branch

Woods Branch

## Appendix 2

### Unidentified LAMSAS Place Names

Ontario

Glengarry County

[rōs+z]

Ross's Creek

[wēs+z]

Westleys Creek

Leeds County

[gænenakw+]

Gananoque Water

[wiltz+]

Wiltse Creek

Welland County

[bizə]

Beiser (Beaver?) Creek

[hēləmz]

Hellems Creek

New York

Chataqua County

[æd+z]

Addis (?) Cove

[kəʊnz]

Cones Hollow Creek

[strʌkə]

Strucker (?) Creek

Chemung County

[kristʃənələ]

Christian Hollow Creek

Delaware County	[ʃi·ən]	Sheehan Creek
Essex County	[taɪ]	Ticonderoga Creek
Herkimer County	[koumz]	Combs Brook
Jefferson County	[tʃi·zmənz]	Cheesemans Cove
Lewis County	['kɛɪp,tɛʊn]	Capidon Creek
	[kæpətən]	Capidon Creek
	[kæptɛʊn]	Capidon Creek
Monroe County	[ə'wɒtkə]	Oatka Creek
Ontario County	[ʃɑ·n]	Kashong Creek
Orange County	['rʌn,bauts]	Rondout Run
Seneca County	['dɑɪ,sɪŋə]	Disinger Brook
	[kɛɪnɪz]	Kendig Creek
	[kɛɪnɪdʒ]	Kendig Creek
	[rɪtsɪnbɜːgə]	Ritzenberger Brook
Tioga County	[kɛɪtsɪ]	Kelsey
Tompkins County	[bɛnfi·t]	Banfield Gulf
	[ʃɛɪfə]	Shaffer Creek
Ulster County	[pɜːt'məkə]	Premaker Brook
Wyoming County	['eɪfə,weɪ]	Ischua Creek
New Jersey		
Camden County	[hɛgənz]	Heggens Ditch
Warren County	[beɪkən]	Bacon Run
Pennsylvania		
Carbon County	[pɒk]	Buck Run
Elk County	[bənz]	Byrnes Run
Schuylkill County	[di·f]	Dief Creek
Wayne County	[,bɒt <sup>d</sup> z 'ɛdɪ]	Balls Eddy Creek
Westmoreland County	[dʒɪnɪ]	Jenny Run
Wyoming County	[kæ·sn]	Cassin Brook
West Virginia		
Clay County	[kɑrərɪ]	Cotterell Fork
Fayette County	[flɛɪfmən]	Fleshman Branch
Jefferson County	[tɪgz]	Tiegs Run
Mason County	[beɪə]	Beller Branch
Pocahontas County	[wɑɪɪks]	Warwicks Run
Wyoming County	[swɪnɪ]	Swinney Branch
Ohio		
Guernsey County	[hɛɪg]	Hague Run
Morgan County	[tʃɛɪnɪ]	Chaney Run
	[grɑɪst]	Griste Run
Maryland		
Charles County	[mɒləz]	Mallows Creek
St. Marys County	[kɪltənz]	Chiltons Run
Virginia		
Cumberland County	['tɑ·ə,wɒlɪ <sup>d</sup> ]	Tear Wallet Branch
Dinwiddie County	[hɛwɪl]	[Little] Howell Run
Pittsylvania County	[rɒ <sup>u</sup> ɪn]	Roaring Creek
Rockbridge County	[brætnz]	Brattons Creek
North Carolina		
Anson County	[gu·lɪz]	Goulds Fork(s) Branch
Brunswick County	[kæəm]	Cam Branch
Caldwell County	[kɪɑ>·ɛn]	Cline Creek
Camden County	pouɪɪ'hɑŋk]	Portohonk Creek

Chowan County	[tʰ'lae>əs+z]	Elias's Branch
Craven County	[leɪnz]	Lanes Branch
Dare County	[blas+z]	Blossies Creek
	[krouɪ'tæn]	Croatan Sound
Guilford County	[raʃt mi <sup>ə</sup> t]	Russell Mill Branch
Iredell County	[leðə'mənz]	Leathermans Fork
Jones County	[roumən]	Roman Branch
Macon County	[,hænts 'kwijn]	Hants Queen Branch
McDowell County	[pækstən]	Paxton Branch
Pamlico County	[tʃæɪ+k]	Chadwick Branch
Pasquotank County	[sæmənz]	Symonds Creek
Perquimans County	[vəs+z]	Wests Creek
Sampson County	[stjəʊts]	Stewarts Creek
Scotland County	[swɛ <sup>ə</sup> ts]	Sweats Branch
Surry County	[skɛə+z]	Scary Branch
Swain County	[,i:kə'ni:tɪ]	Ekaneetlee Branch
Transylvania County	[mə'gæ <sup>ə</sup> θɪ]	McCathe Branch
South Carolina		
Aiken County	[kokə]	Coker Spring
	[ 'dʒu,æk]	Juac Creek
Allendale County	[dʒɔʊs+z]	Joycey Branch
	[wi:də]	Weeder (Fork) Branch
	[we^də]	Weeder (Fork) Branch
Bamberg County	[kóks]	Cox Branch
	[ 'haɪ,dɪ <sup>ə</sup> gə]	Heidigger Branch
Barnwell County	[pɪ <sup>ə</sup> n]	Penn Branch
Berkeley County	[ 'bi:,dɔ <sup>ə</sup> ]	Betaw Creek
	[ 'wɛb,dɔ <sup>ə</sup> ]	Webdo (Wedboo) Creek
Charleston County	[,bak 'sɔ:mɪl]	Back Sawmill Branch
	[wɔʃoː]	Washoe Creek
Chesterfield County	kruː+z]	Kruiys Branch
Clarendon County	[ 'waɪ,buː]	Wyboo Creek
Fairfield County	[bærə]	Barrow Branch
Georgetown County	[tʃɔːpi]	Choppee Creek
Greenville County	[ 'bɛːə,wɔlə]	Bear Wallow Branch
	[laːən]	Line Creek
Richland County	[ra:wəɪ]	Rowell Branch
Spartanburg County	[hɔːləɪ'z]	Harleys Little Branch
Sumter County	[ 'ʃɔt,p'ɑ:ʊtʃ]	Shot Pouch Branch
York County	[keɪnɪ]	Caney Spring
	[stɜə'dʒɪs]	Sturgis Creek
Georgia		
Baldwin County	[pijvi]	Peavey Creek
Bibb County	[va:ənvɪ]	Vineville Branch
Bryan County	[tɔ <sup>ə</sup> nɪ]	Tawny Branch
	[o'hɪkɪ]	Ohoopce River
Camden County	[tɑːə kiː <sup>ə</sup> ]	Tar Kilm Branch
Clarke County	[mægbɪz]	McBees Creek
DeKalb County	[ 'ðkə 'kæːoʊnz]	Oscar Cowans Branch
Effingham County	[glɔː <sup>ə</sup> nə]	Glooner Branch
	[ni:s]	Nease Creek
Fannin County	[p'ɪntʃ+n kæ <sup>m</sup> p]	Puncheon Camp Creek
Glynn County	[gu <sup>l</sup> ɪz]	Goulds Inlet



Lincoln County	[lɪʔ]	Little Inlet
Lumpkin County	[sɛlzɪz]	Sayles Mill Creek
McIntosh County	[rɔʔstɪn]	Ralston Branch
Rabun County	[mə'ɪæʔtə ,gɔʔ]	Mulatto Gall Creek
	[lɪ·wɪn]	Louing Creek
Wayne County	['no·u ,po·un]	No Pone Creek
Florida	[glɛʔndaə]	Glendower (?) Bluff
Alachua County	['ɔkləwə,hɔʔ]	Oklawaha River
Duval County	[ro'hɛrə]	Rogero Branch

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