NAMES, Vol. 37, No. 3 (September 1989)

Book Reviews

A Dictionary of Surnames. By Patrick Hanks and Flavia Hodges. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. liv + 880. $75.00.

First, this dictionary of surnames is the best one ever published in English, or perhaps anywhere else. It contains explanations of about 70,000 names in the English-speaking areas and countries of the world; but, unlike previous compilations, the entries are not sparse guesses at the language or origin and a short fragment of a gloss as to meaning. On the contrary, the text is a very scholarly attempt at ferreting out the derivation, the etymology, cognates in other languages, and incidental information, usually historical.

Rather than a dictionary based on historical principles, it probably should be considered a comparative survey of common (and not so common) surnames found in the Western World and deriving mostly from the western Indo-European languages, particularly the Germanic, Romance, and Slavic. In addition, Jewish names are covered rather extensively, but only within the context of European surnames. The editors note that the Jewish names are mostly Ashkenazic ("Yiddish-speaking Jews and their descendants"), although some Sephardic names from the Iberian Peninsula have been included.

The introduction is standard, with the scope of the work described, along with notations on names of non-Indo-European origin (Finnish, Hungarian, Basque, Jewish). An editorial decision caused the elimination of names from Middle Eastern and Far Eastern countries, despite the large number of such names now being used in English-speaking countries, especially England and the United States. Omitted also are American Indian, African, Polynesian, and native Australian and New Zealander names. Other problems included the form of the entry, the matter of transcriptions and transliterations (Russian, for instance), and Anglicization. The decision was to use the closest form from the language of origin as the entry, with spellings that are known to be in common usage. Russian and Hungarian presented difficulties in form and entry that were solved by reference to Boris Ottokar Unbegaun, *Russian Surnames*, 1972, listed in the bibliography, and Holman (for Hungarian), not

listed. Furthermore, spellings were used from adoptions by immigrants who had Anglicized their own names or were Anglicized for them by immigration officials.

Other front matter includes a survey of the time scope of the origin of surnames, which differed from area to area. The conclusion is that "the origin of surnames is associated with the emergence of bureaucracies." In England and France, surnames did not exist before the eleventh century but by the fifteenth century they did, with the bulk of them formed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In Ireland, they developed from clan and sept names. The Scandinavian countries were the last to accept hereditary names. Names in Iceland still remain strongly patronymic. Now, surnames are so acceptable in European and American countries that even a name with a ridiculous connotation will generally be retained and borne uncomplainingly.

The editors explain the organization of entries, their selection, distribution, typology, and origin. The survey of national and cultural groups of surnames overviews surnames in the British Isles (England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, and Breton), France, Iberian Peninsula, Italy, Germany (and German-speaking areas), the Low Countries, Scandinavia, Russia, Eastern Europe, and Greece. The Jewish family names are included in the overview but noted in a different section, since Jewish names appear in all the countries.

The acknowledgments and bibliography round out the front matter, with some note of the shortcomings of previous dictionaries, primarily those of better ones, including George F. Black, *The Surnames of Scotland* (1972), P. H. Reaney, *A Dictionary of British Surnames* (2nd ed., 1976), and Edward MacLysaght, *The Surnames of Ireland* (3rd ed., 1978). A longish list of contributors to their personal names (Hugh Cave on *Cave*, for instance) appears among the acknowledgments. Because of the scarcity of good texts on surnames, claim the editors, few studies are listed in the two-page bibliography, about seventy-five items, including Mencken's *The American Language*, ed. Raven I. McDavid, Jr.

The power of the work exists in its entries, and here the editors exhibit careful scholarship, intense and exhaustive research, and comprehensiveness. They also show how to manage the compilation of a text through calling on specialists in many languages to contribute accurate and essential information and then incorporating it into a rather complicated entry. Also, every name that appears with an entry is also listed in

the index (pages 527-826) of the some 70,000 surnames. Hence, a name that does not appear as the head name for an entry may be found in the index with a reference to the entry. *Orth* is referred to *Ort* (the entry); *Harder* to the entry *Hard*; *Finke* is not listed, but *Fink* and many variant spellings are; the spelling form *Gasque* does not appear, but *Gasquet*, under entry for *Gascoigne* does. *Ashley* has a clear headname, with no variants; *Payne* rather obviously appears under *Pain* (meaning either "pagan" or "baker"); *Miller* has a long entry, as does *Smith*; *Jackson* appears under *Jack*; *Lapierre* in the entry for *Pierre*; and *Callary* does not have an entry or an appearance in the index.

An entry contains the headname; information about the language and region in which it originated; a comparative survey of the name; any peculiarities of regional distribution with the form, date, and location of early instances of the name; the etymology; any major events in its history; variants, derivatives from variants, cognate names in other languages, diminutives; and patronymic forms. A typical example of an entry follows:

> **Nightingale** English: nickname for someone with a good voice, from ME *nichti(n)gale* (OE *nihtegal*, from *niht* night and *galan* to sing; cogn. with Ger. *Nachtigall*). Var.: **Nightingall.** Cogns.: Ger. **Nachtigall.** Flem.: **Nachtergael, Achtergael.** Du.: **Nagtegaal.** Jewish (Ashkenazic): **Nachtigal** (1) (Ornamental name, from Ger. vocab. word).
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> *Florence* **Nightingale** *(1820-1910), the pioneering English nurse who transformed the nursing profession, came from a Derby family originally named* Shore. *Her father changed his name to* Nightingale *on inheriting the fortune of an uncle of that name.*

Most of the notes, as above, are oriented to the British Isles, usually to England. An exception occurs as a note to the entry *Pain* (Robert Treat Pain was a signer of the Declaration of Independence). The entry for *Hancock* does not contain information about John Hancock.

While quibbles may be in order for omission of some names and some objections can certainly be made to the arbitrariness and quirkiness of the historical notes, these are minor in view of the great contribution the dictionary makes to the study of names. It will be many years before a replacement is needed for this outstanding resource and reference work.

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Die Entlebucher Namenlandschaft. By Erika Waser. Luzerner Historische Veröffentlichungen 23. Luzern/Stuttgart: Rex-Verlag, 1988. Pp. 454. Illustrations, bibliography, index. SFR 69.00.

As a result of the fragmented pursuit of name studies in this country, it is still a rarity for a graduate student in an American university to choose an onomastic topic for his or her dissertation. Insufficient preparation and encouragement, the peripheral status of name research in academe, and the lack of employment prospects for someone with this kind of specialization all contribute to the dearth of theses in this field and consequently account for the very small number of young academics who look upon this branch of intellectual endeavor as challenging, absorbing, and ultimately satisfying. That things should and could be otherwise is demonstrated again and again by the theses that come out of European universities in connection with the fulfillment of requirements for graduate and post-graduate degrees.

Erika Waser's *Die Entlebucher Namenlandschaft* is a case in point. Stimulated by the teaching and publications of her academic mentors, Professors Stefan Sonderegger and Arnold Niederer, she decided to collect from both historical and contemporary sources, i. e., documentary evidence and field-work, all the placenames of one *Amt* in the Swiss Canton of Luzern, an area covering a little over 150 square miles. In this undertaking she received support and guidance from other experts in the field and, as a result, compiled a file of about 5,000 living names with 22,000 historical references. While engaged in the project, she became an assistant at the Onomastic Research Center at the University of Berne, and the resulting dissertation not only earned her the degree of Ph. D. in the academic year 1986-87 but also produced a handsome book in 1988. Thus the felicitous combination of classroom instruction, professional publication, research initiative, personal direction and support, and paid employment in the area of name studies has been an effective pointer to what can be done when onomastics is not accorded *Cinderella* status but is treated as an acceptable, rigorous academic pursuit. There may be no fame or fortune at the end of the road but there is certainly the possibility of a sense of accomplishment. May we learn a lesson from this.

The published volume, reflecting the intentions of the dissertation, is almost exclusively concerned with name typology and settlement history, often combining the two approaches. After a detailed introduction sketching the historical background and topographical setting of the *Amt Entlebuch* and outlining the methodological aspects of the study, four major chapters deal with the most important name categories: river names, settlement names, clearing names, and names containing loanwords. For me, who well over thirty years ago earned my own doctorate with a dissertation on the hydronomy of the British mainland, it is particularly gratifying to see how in this small corner of a Swiss canton, too, the names of the main water-courses—*Emme*, *Entle*, *Fontanne*, and *Ilfis*—are pre-German and therefore older than any of the settlement names. Indeed, the name *Emme*, and possibly one or two of the others, may well go back to an early Western Indo-European stratum which has been dubbed "Old European." All other stream names and all settlement names are German in origin which in this part of the world, of course, means Alemannic. This is also true of a considerable number of names, such as *Alpigle*, *Balm*, *Barge*, *Chlus*, *Chrinne*, etc., which are onomastic derivations from non-German loanwords. The author considers and discusses but dismisses the possibility that these and other names in this category may have been coined by speakers of the languages to which the loanwords in question belong. This is, of course, a difficult distinction to make but Dr. Waser musters her arguments well.

The settlement names proper are, as one would expect, formed with such generics as *-ingen*, *-husen*, *-wil*, *-heim*, and *- berg*, and their variants, and in an area once rich in trees, names containing *rüti/grüt*, *schwand/schwändi*, and several terms referring to the creation of clearings through fire (*brand*, *sang*) and to the exploitation of forests (*hack*, *hau*, *schlag*, etc.), form a significant subcategory and reminder of earlier techniques in secondary settlement. From the point of view of historical stratification, it is worth reiterating that not one of these is pre-German. While some of them are recorded in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, most of them have no written record until later. It is a well-known tenet in the evaluation of documentary evidence in historical placename research that a name may well have been in existence for quite a while before it is recorded in writing or before the date of the earliest surviving written record, but Dr. Waser also reminds us (124) that linguistic

presence in any given area may considerably antedate toponymic presence.

This is a very satisfying book insofar as it examines intensively the complete place-nomenclature of a comparatively small region. This is not to say that it presents and analyzes the whole toponymicon; many of the microtoponymic features are not included. One does, however, get an excellent impression of the notion of *Namenlandschaft*, of "onomastic landscape," of how such a landscape is gradually molded out of a nameless wilderness, of how it is maintained and managed, and of the relationship between "onomastic landscape" and topography and history. Although etymologies are attempted for all names presented, these are fortunately not the be-all-and-end-all of this particular inquiry.

I have found it a pleasure to handle and evaluate this book. For a dissertation it is quite a remarkable achievement, and I would expect it to be the authoritative resource in things toponymic for the region for many years to come. The only minor regret which I have is that the author decided against using the tape recorder in her many interviews with, often elderly, informants. The presence of such a device may have proved an inconvenient nuisance at the time but the subsequent loss of an opportunity to hear the very voices whose pronunciations have been transcribed and transliterated is not to be underestimated, as is the lack of a chance to verify the field-worker's transcriptions. As students of names, we must use the available technical resources to the full in order to satisfy the most demanding critics.

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Yosemite Place Names. By Peter Browning. Lafayette, CA: Great West Books, 1988. Pp. xiv + 241. $12.95.

Tahoe Place Names. By Barbara Lekisch. Lafayette, CA: Great West Books, 1988. Pp. xviii + 173. $11.95.

The best placename books are those written by people so in love with their area that they lose a sense of proportionality, that they are willing to spend the hours needed to track down the obscure reference in the out-of-the-way library, read the yellowed newspaper clippings, interview

the old-timers, pore over the old maps—far beyond the reasonable demands of scholarship and with no reward but to learn something new.

Peter Browning and Barbara Lekisch are such people.

Yosemite Place Names is an extension of Browning's *Place Names of the Sierra Nevada* (Berkeley, CA: Wilderness Press, 1986), and much information in that work is repeated in the new book. But in *Yosemite Place Names* Browning has included *everything else*—not only the names of places too small or obscure to include in the more encompassing work but also additional information about the larger places. When the names first appeared on maps. Who did the naming. Geographical and natural descriptions. Historical background. References. Photographs. *Everything.*

Each entry is keyed to a USGS 15-minute quadrangle. Each mountain entry contains its elevation. All entries include references for the information, and a list of abbreviations used frequently is provided, as is a bibliography. Browning even included at the end reprints of fascinating accounts by the first tourists to visit Yosemite.

Indeed, so detailed is Browning's research that he created a separate and lengthy section of the book that he calls "Old names, fanciful names, names that won't be missed." He intended this section to be like an attic, a place to dump stuff that doesn't seem to belong in the main section. Unfortunately, to retrieve something from an attic you must know it's there, and having this section results either in information missing from main section entries or else duplication of information.

Browning also created a separate section for Indian names. Again, having the Indian names in the main section would avoid duplication of information and also make it more accessible to the casual reader not likely to search beyond the main section. On the other hand, factoring out Indian names into a separate section is a service to persons with more than a casual interest in the standard names.

Yosemite Place Names is attractive and well-designed, and the numerous maps and historical photos are an excellent complement to Browning's exhaustive research.

All the strengths of Browning's books are echoed in *Tahoe Place Names* by Barbara Lekisch—and not by coincidence; acknowledging Browning's help, Lekisch lists him as a "veritable co-author." Not that Lekisch is without her own skills: she has been head librarian at the

California Historical Society and librarian at the Sierra Club. She, like her mentor, is a researcher; this project took ten years.

Yet like many placename scholars, Lekisch's interest began with a single intriguing, mysterious name—*Jabu*, on a lake—that piqued an interest that grew, avalance-like, into a consuming passion. *Jabu* now is in her book (it's from the first two letters in the first and last names of one Jack Butler), as are the other names, large and small, of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Each feature is identified as to whether it's in California or Nevada and also which USGS or Forest Service map includes it. Curiously, mountain elevations are not included. Most information is referenced, and there is a substantial bibliography and a source-list for the numerous illustrations. Lekisch sensibly solves the problem of what to do with obsolete names by simply listing them in an appendix, cross-referencing each to the current name in the main section.

And Lekisch, like Browning, has a passion for historical detail. The *Lake Tahoe* entry, for example, spans fifteen pages and includes seven maps! Many entries often are two or more pages. And like Browning she included as an appendix an account by an early explorer to give still more historical background. That's what makes a good placename book—digging names down to their tiniest root-hairs.

The casual tourist who simply wants an attractive glove-compartment guide will be satisfied by both these books from Great West Press. And the scholar with a lust for historical detail will be satisfied as well. Yosemite and Lake Tahoe are among Earth's special places; they deserve books such as these.

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The Many Names of Country People: An Historical Dictionary from the Twelfth Century Onward. By John T. Schlebecker. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989. Pp. 325. $49.95.

John T. Schlebecker is secretary-treasurer of the Association for Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums. He has also written *Whereby We Thrive: A History of American Farming, 1607-1972*; *The Use*

of the Land: Essays on the History of American Agriculture; and other works. He brought to this investigation twenty-five years of research.

The main section of *The Many Names of Country People* contains almost 1,800 terms that have been applied to people in some phase of agriculture—farming, ranching, lumbering, and many occupations associated with these. This section represents an enormous amount of work. Apparently, Schlebecker read everything he could get his hands on in preparation for the task. The entries are not only from Britain and the United States but also from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, and the West Indies. Many entries specify the region in the country as well. Each reference gives the meaning of the name, the occupational groups that used them, dates of use, and location. One additional feature used in some entries is connotation. This is an indication of how the term was used, such as derogatory, pejorative, respectful, etc. The term *Fire Boss* below in the example is "respectful," but a term like *Mavericker* is "derogatory."

Two entries are quoted as samples:

> **Flax-Wench.** *Britain, farmworker, female.* Breaks flax stalks, separates (hackles) flax fibers, and does other work processing flax fibers for thread making. May or may not work at growing and harvesting flax; may or may not spin flax thread. Often a Hired Hand, but sometimes a member of the family. 16th to 19th centuries, inclusive.

> **Fire Boss.** *U S. lumber term, supervisor.* Decides how to fight a forest fire, and directs others in the work of extinguishing or containing the fire. Has experience in fighting forest fires and knows how to command. *Respectful.* 20th century.

Among the items that caught my eye (only a key idea is taken from each entry) were:

Gossard, a girl gooseherder.
Jonathan, one who does not follow good farming practices.
Lactarie, a woman who sells milk, usually door-to-door.
Lizard, Australian term for a man who crawls on his back while repairing fences on a sheep station.
Nighthawk, one who watches and cares for the horses of other cowboys when they are asleep.
Pitt Street Farmer, Australian, absentee landlord.
Tiger, an Australian sheepshearer.

The next section is the Thesaurus. Here there are approximately one hundred major categories, such as Animals, Backwoods, Birds, Breeders, etc. For each of these categories, the appropriate occupational terms in the main section are listed. The final section, Bibliography, has three sections, Dictionaries, Linguistics, and History. The Dictionaries section lists the fifty dictionaries that Schlebecker consulted in his research. The two other sections total about a hundred items.

In *The Many Names of Country People*, Schlebecker has made two important contributions: (1) he has brought together in one place all of these terms, and (2) he has given the approximate dates of usage for the terms. In doing these two things he has done a great deal to make us aware of the richness of the English language, and for this we should be most grateful to him.

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GALE RESEARCH COMPANY PUBLICATIONS

This survey of recent publications by Gale Research Co., Book Tower, Detroit, MI 48226, serves as prominent notice of books of interest to readers of *Names*. Bibliographical information is noted below.

Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, and other Word-Related Books, Edited by Annie M. Brewer. 4th ed. 2 vols. Pp. xiv + 1,333. $495.00/set.

World Guide to Abbreviations of Organizations. Edited by F. A. Buttress. 8th ed. Pp. 777. $125.00.

Biography and Geneology Master Index 1988. Edited by Barbara McNeil. Pp. xx + 1,105. $220.00.

Similes Dictionary. Edited by Elyse Sommer and Mile Sommer. Pp. xlviii + 950. $68.00.

Acronyms, Initialisms & Abbreviations Dictionary 1988. Edited by Julie E. Towell and Helen E. Sheppard, ed. Pp. 3,112, three vols. $190/set.

The Boswell to America's fetish for efficiency in saving time and space in language has to be Gale Research Company's assiduous and careful recording of just about all the shortened forms of words that can be found. The 1988 edition contains 420,000 items, a bit up from the 12,000 recorded in the first edition in 1960. One still has not been accepted, the acronym for the Free Speech Movement begun in Berkeley, California, when the University of California students carried placards showing the acronym for "Freedom Under Clark Kerr", and were duly arrested for displaying their rebellious sign. Perhaps a future editor will not go blind printing the acronym, which is certainly a part of the change that took place in American life after the students began to demonstrate during the 1960s. But the point here is not to belabor *AIAD*, a monumental work and a much needed one.

Several reasons exist for the rapid expansion of the numbers of such items in American English. First is the efficiency syndrome, the idea that "saving time is saving money," a myth about time being a wasted commodity, but a myth that governs our lives. Given this perception of time, the next reasons follow. The editors note the "breakneck progress in electronics, space exploration, and data processing" that brought new concepts, new words and expressions, and a need to abbreviate forms "to save precious inches of newsprint and precious seconds of broadcast time." The aspect of secrecy surely is involved in the near-codes that occur when initialisms and abbreviations are used, for generally they are used by in-groups, persons familiar with the subjects so that when the initialisms begin to be used as communicative devices no one in the privileged groups is at a loss, while the outsider cannot grasp the drift of conversation and its meaning. Recently, this was demonstrated to me to my embarrassment. In a committee meeting, the ones in attendance began to use such initialisms as SEAS, PACES, OTPS, PSR, PAC, SLD, FTE, and several others. Not having been properly initiated, I found myself silent. After the meeting, I made it a point to find out what these meant. Also, the three true acronyms—PACES, SEAS, and PAC—mixed in with the initialisms caused further difficulty; but once all were deciphered, I began to use them like one of the in-group members.

The fast growing fields of data processing, the military, aerospace, and science have furnished the largest number of abbreviated forms, but they are also found in all fields and organizations. They have become so ingrained in Americans that persons now invent acronyms and then fit

words to the letters. Sometimes one acronym will have spinoffs to others: MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) led to SADD (Students Against Drunk Drivers) and conversely to DAMM (Drivers Against Mad Mothers), but the latter has not caught on very well in face of the ethical righteousness and legalities of the others. Another trend "involves the creation of alternative translations to existing acronyms." These are facetious and deserve an article written about them. The editors list several: IBM (I Buy Money), PBS (Petroleum Broadcasting Service), and the old standby PhD (Piled Higher and Deeper, which has been around at least fifty years). Proper names have also been turned into facetious translation: Ford (Fix or Repair Daily) and Lee Iacocca (I am Chairman of the Chrysler Corporation of America).

Since the metalanguage of abbreviations will continue to grow unabated, just as the editors claim, Gale Research is performing a great service by recording them and making them available to those who need to translate the terms into whatever language they were derived from in the first place. In addition, they are raw material for name researchers and commentators. Many studies need to be made from the collections: facetious names, true acronyms and their derivations, spinoffs, duplicatives and their effect, incidence of duplicatives, stock exchange symbols, airport symbols and their reasons for existing, library symbols, and many, many more. These are valuable reference books, printed in excellent format and in long-lasting paper. They deserve to be available in libraries.

Similes Dictionary contains more than 16,000 similes and other comparisons. Perhaps such a dictionary is needed, since surely everyone who has taken a course in 9th grade literature (masquerading under the guise of English) or an introduction to literature course in the sophomore year in college had had to learn the name of at least one figure of speech, the simile, with its *like* or *as* comparison functions. Sometimes, under the leadership of a good teacher, students learned something about metaphor, but not much. Sometimes, if the text was a good one, the student might learn something about tenor and vehicle. But with the ability to form comparisons seemingly innate, like language, students did not need to study them or language, seeing that they already have both as a part of their cognitive structure. Most of us have grown up hearing and probably saying "hail big as hen eggs," "bleeding like a stuck pig" (whether or not we have even seen a pig butchered), "quick as lightning,"

"smart as a whip" (this one needs analyzing), "sweet as sugar," and on to the whole 16,000 listed here.

The similes are listed under some 500 thematic categories, such as abandonment, passion, noses, and fog. Each simile has attribution, but many are *Anon.* Also, many cross references are given, so that actually a persistent searcher will have relatively no trouble finding a category that will fit the needs. More than 2,000 sources are listed in the bibliography of sources, and more than 2,000 authors are listed, keyed to the similes that they wrote. In the latter, some curious omissions and inclusions occur. For instance, Edmund Spenser has no attributions; T. S. Eliot only one; John Milton has eleven; Margaret Miller has 61; Eugene McCarthy has two; the Elizabethans, with the exception of Shakespeare (a bit more than one column), are scantily represented. Emphasis is on the modern novelists, with the young T. Coraghessan Boyle represented by all his books, except the recently published *World's End*, and two full columns of attributions. But then Boyle is an outstanding stylist with a sense of metaphor as good as any modern writer—or ancient one, for that matter.

What is the need for such a compilation? First, because someone decided to collect the similes. That had to be "a labor of love," which has its own right to exist. No doubt, it is much like the thrill of collecting that a placename enthusiast feels. But the user is another matter. First, entertainment has to be major. Besides being interesting, the similes are informational (perhaps educational), and it is definitely difficult to stop reading them—simply one after another, like munching a finger food, but less fattening. Even here, the temptation to quote some of my favorites is a bit overpowering: "Temptation leapt on him like a stab of a knife—Edith Wharton." But remember, "Temptations, like misfortunes, are sent to test our moral strength—Marguerite de Valois." So then, I confess, they are a joy to read.

Second, writers, journalists especially, and persons who have to speak often may need such a collection to ransack for their own purposes, seldom giving attribution, although, as one presidential aspirant learned, such plagiarism can terminate hopes to live in the White House. Still, an apt simile can enliven a dull speech, a ragged feature story, or a martini klatsch. Even teachers might plagiarize a few to gain attention during soporific lectures when students are as comfortable as a toothache. Then, too, "Similes are like songs on love: they much describe, they nothing prove—Matthew Prior."

World Guide to Abbreviations of Organizations contains 45,000 entries, many of them also listed in *Acronyms*. This collection, however, is specialized in that it lists only abbreviations for organizations (*American Name Society* is entered under *ANS*, along with seven others). The proliferation of organizations somehow seems related to the same phenomenon taking place in the astounding increase in the use of initialisms, abbreviations, and acronyms. Also, the entries contain abbreviations or organizations in all the continents, except Antarctica. Country of origin is given if it is not the United States. An attractive and useful book, it needs to be in major reference libraries.

Given time and computer space, Gale Research Company editors will list the name of every person in the world. But world enough and time probably will not be granted to Gale, since only a fraction of the humans living and dead have biographical sketches anywhere. Those who do, however, will be caught in Gale's *Biography and Genealogy Master Index*, which now contains more than 415,000 entries in its one-volume format. Each citation contains the name, birth year and death year (if the person is dead), and biographical source where the sketch or biography can be found. The latter is keyed to the bibliographic key to source codes in the front matter.

The *Master Index* is of great value for finding source material for relatively unknown persons whose names surface in a text which contains no other information on them. A quick search in the alphabetically arranged *Index* will give the source in a matter of seconds. For persons whose names have been transliterated from a non-Roman alphabet, some patience will be required. Spellings do differ, but these should give no great trouble. Sometimes, too, the name of the same person may be entered more than once because it may appear in one biographical source under one name and in another source under another: *T. S. Eliot/Thomas Stearns Eliot; Gerald Ford/Gerald Rudolph Ford.* The volumes also deserve to be in the reference sections of all libraries.

The dictionary of *Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, and Other Word-Related Books* has been fully revised and contains 35,000 entries "taken from a newly created machine-readable database." All entries "have been combined into a single sequence arranged according to the Library of Congress subject classification system." Most important as an aid, however, is the "Subject/ Index," which makes access to the card catalog classification very easy. For instance, I immediately thumbed to *Names*

in the subject index and found approximately 500 titles, many that I had not known. Since these are listed under several different Library of Congress catalog numbers, I would have spent hours chasing them down and still not have found all of them. Here, they are conveniently listed, keyed to the facsimile of the catalog card.

Not many, if any, members of the American Name Society specialize in the names of Chinese dogs; but if a need arises to find out the method of naming dogs in Chinese, then a book is listed in the index that might help: "Names, Chinese/Chinese names for oriental dogs./ *SF422.3 .M66.*" Turn to the *SF* section, "Animal Culture," and finger down to the card number and stop. The information on the catalog card notes that the book is by Will C. Mooney, published in Fairfax, VA, by Denlinger's, *c1975*, 63 pages, illustrated, printed in Wade-Giles romanization. Within the same category, a book on Gaelic names for Celtic dogs is listed, along with many texts that probably have names of breeds and champion dog names. And also nearby are entries on dictionaries of horse and breed names. Researchers in names should be aware of *Dictionaries* and use it for reference when the need arises. In addition, anyone working in any area of language will find this resource a valuable saver of time, as well as a further check on available materials.

This set of reference books probably is typical of the excellent formatting and printing by Gale Research Company. But beyond the aesthetics of the texts is the value of all as references, sometimes as a repository of raw material for the researcher. They are worthy examples of careful and profitable work.

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The Baby Name Countdown: Popularity and Meanings of Today's Baby Names. Compiled and edited by Janet Schwegel. Edmonton, Alberta: Personal Publishing, 4319 38th St., Edmonton, Alta. T6L 5A6 Canada. Pp. 224. Price $7.95 (Canadian).

Most of the baby name books on sale in the bookstores in the malls contain little relatively new information of use to onomasticians. This one is an exception. Schwegel has focused attention on the popularity

aspect. While studies such as those by Evans have brought together information on regional popularity of American first names, Schwegel has gone further and brought together much of interest.

First, she has defined as *popular* any name which occurs twice or more per 1,000; *unpopular*, a name occurring once or less. To carry out her investigation, she obtained data from seven Canadian provinces and twenty-one American states. While not all of the data are complete (some returns were for the top 150 names or some other number), I do think the returns are relatively complete overall and are the best we have ever seen so far.

After the description of the popularity procedure, the book contains sections on the names which are top in popularity, popularity ratings of names in general, unusual names, and meanings and origins of names.

The **Tops** section contains data on 1,217 male and 1,756 female names. Generally the top 100 names are given although in some cases there are fewer than 100 where the authorities did not furnish the data. Thus, we find that *Jessica* has the highest overall rating, 27.7, meaning that it occurred over 27 times per 1,000. In Alberta, it didn't rank quite so high, reaching only 18.5, still a respectable ranking. Among men's names overall, *Michael* ranked the highest with a frequency of 32.4; 25.4 in Alberta.

The second results section, **Popular Names**, shows the overall popularity of names. To be included in this section, a name had to have a frequency of at least 2 per 1,000. In this section, names which might not have appeared in the top 100 overall or in a particular jurisdiction are listed.

The third section, **Unusual Names**, lists 17,591 male names and 26,631 female names which occurred less than 1 per 1,000. Many of these appear to be spelling variants rather than true variants due to language or local custom, such as *Kelie*, *Kelle*, or *Kellee*. Among the men we find *Kirt*, *Klint*, and *Klinton*, hard for me to see as other than spelling variants. Other unusual names included in the women's list include: *Iliana* (a combination of *Illinois* and *Indiana*?), *Ilona*, *Iraida*, and *Misti-Jo*.

For men, included are *Alfonse*, *Adair*, *Algernon*, and, surprisingly, *Tristen* and *Tristram*. Among the variants for *Alexander*, at least some are due to culture and language. These include *Ale Jandro*, *Aleck*, *Aleks*, *Aleksandar*, *Alexandras*, *Aleksey*, *Aleksi*, *Aleksis*, *Aleksy*, *Alelandro*, *Alexandar*, and others. There are at least thirty-five variants altogether.

For women, we find *Alesandra*, *Alesandrea*, *Alexsandra*, *Alexandrina*, *Alexande*, and many others including *Alexis* and variants.

Examination of the list of women's unusual names shows the shift to the use of male names or surnames. Included are *Ashley*, *Aubrey*, and *Ellice*. Are *Alfred*, *Anthony*, *Gary*, *George*, *Isaiah*, and *James* really female names? Or is there a clerical error somewhere? Similarly, I find it hard to believe that *Alia*, *Ava*, *Cathryn*, *Catherine*, *Deborah*, *Eva*, *Mina*, and *Stephanie* are really male names. (My own research with the New York State Health Department records has caused me to be somewhat suspicious about how carefully birth returns are filled out by local officials.)

The final section, **Meanings and Origins**, is meant to be helpful. Here the user will have to be on guard. For a future edition, this section definitely needs more work. Here are a few examples: *Aisha* may be from Africa and it does mean "living" but it probably owes most of its popularity to Aisha's being the wife of the Prophet Muhammad; *Beth* does come from Hebrew, and *Beth* by itself does mean "house." In this case, however, *Beth* comes from *Elizabeth*, which is derived from the Hebrew *Elisheva* 'God is my oath.' In this case the *sheva* root means "oath." *Carmen* does not come from the Hebrew meaning "vineyard." *Carmela* does mean "vineyard of the Lord"; *Eva* means "life" but comes from Hebrew, not Latin.

The men's names are more accurate. Without checking all entries, I found two that appear to be at variance with the usual sources. *Fraser*, while used in England, is more associated with Scotland and is traced ultimately to the French *fraise*, meaning "strawberry," not "charcoal." I find nothing on *Jesse* being from Greek and meaning "wealthy"; the meaning "God exists" is correct but it is from Hebrew.

While I do have difficulty with some of names possibly being in the incorrect sex group and with the meanings of some of the names, I can say that Schwegel does make a substantial contribution to onomastics in collecting the statistics on the frequencies of the names. A great deal of work must have gone into the compilation and we should be quite grateful. We will look forward to further work.

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Work Cited

Evans, Cleveland Kent. "Adam and Andre, Lindsay and Lekeisha: Racial Differences in First Names, 1987." *Bulletin of the North Central Name Society* (Spring 1989): 43-65.

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