
Book Reviews

Streetwise Chicago: A History of Chicago Street Names. By Don Hayner and Tom McNamee. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1988. Pp. xv + 153. Cloth \$22.50, paper \$14.95.

Did you know that Sunnyside Avenue in Chicago was named for a hotel which served as a brothel? Are you aware that the name of George Street is said to commemorate Sam George, who in 1834 shot the last wild bear in downtown Chicago? Or that Balbo Street honors General Italo Balbo of the Italian Air Force, who was sent by Mussolini to Chicago in 1933 with a fleet of planes to greet the Century of Progress Exposition, and who two years later was sent to Africa to bomb the Ethiopians? Could you imagine that Caldwell Avenue is named for a Potawatomi Indian chief whose native appellation was *Sauganash* (Englishman)? And who could guess that a half block long street named Kennison is named for the last survivor of the Boston Tea Party, who lived 115 years and is buried in Lincoln Park? These are just a few morsels of information about some of Chicago's 1,145 street names which are explained by Don Hayner and Tom McNamee in *Streetwise Chicago*.

In a rough sort of way, the authors assure us, we can read Chicago's history through its street names. Indians (Black Hawk, Wabansia, Winemac), Indian fighters (Wells, Clark), and early Frenchmen (Champlain, Marquette, LaSalle) are among the honored figures of the area's history whose names are preserved in street names, as well as both prominent and obscure political leaders from aldermen and governors to presidents. However, the authors caution us, there is lopsided representation of "people of fame, stature, clout, and power." Among the striking observations of the authors are that the city has over 170 streets named after local real estate developers and their relatives and that it "has forty-four streets named for aldermen and mayors, but fewer than a dozen for blacks and Puerto Ricans." Only recently has the name of Chicago's first non-Indian settler, a black man named *Jean Baptiste Pointe du Sable*, been given in altered spelling to a couple of obscure streets. Of course, there is nothing to recall the first white settler, either, a Frenchman named *Antoine Ouilmette*, although his name in anglicized

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form appears in the suburb of Wilmette, which is named for his Potawatomi wife, Archange.

It is also interesting that no Chicago street bears the name of a labor leader, except McFetridge Drive, named for a man who was more prominent in politics as head of the park district. However, Bonfield Street preserves the name of a police captain who has been blamed by some for the Haymarket battle of May 4, 1886, which led to several deaths, including four men who were hanged. On the other hand, Altgeld Street bears the name of the governor who pardoned three of the accused who were not hanged.

There are some surprises in this book. Wilson Avenue is not named for the president, but for John P. Wilson, a lawyer and philanthropist. Rosehill Drive and its namesake, a cemetery, are allegedly not named for roses but for Roe's Hill. But where is the hill? Another supposed oddity is more likely a fable: the claim that Canfield Avenue is named for milk cans standing in a field.

In this book we learn that politics and ethnic pride play a role in the choice of street names. Pulaski Road honors a Polish hero of the American Revolution, but his name replaced that of an obscure early settler only after a twenty-year court battle. In some suburbs through which it passes, it is still called *Crawford*. Name changes are upsetting to business men who may have to change their advertising and stationery. The city has tried to eliminate varying names for the same street in different parts of the city, but with incomplete success. *Peoria Street* changes to *Lituanica* in Bridgeport, a largely Lithuanian community. Elsewhere, Komensky Avenue honors a Czech educator, while Cabrini honors an Italian born American saint. Oddly, one of the main streets occupied by Italian-Americans in Chicago, Taylor Street, is named for an American president. Steuben Street recalls a German officer who aided Washington at Valley Forge, and Goethe Street preserves the memory of the German poet. These two are survivors of the hysteria of World War I, which caused five other German street names to be abolished. Despite a large Hispanic population, both Mexican and Puerto Rican, Spanish names are scarce. One of them is *Las Casas*, for a half block long street named for a sixteenth-century South American priest.

There are numerous street names for which several possible origins are given. Three possible origins are given for *Justine Street*, *Pearson*

Street, and *Paxton Avenue*, respectively. The authors are not to blame for this. They correctly point out that the reason for many of these names, or their meaning, is lost to history. The name givers often gave no thought to the curiosity of a later day, and did not record the information we now seek. Consequently much guesswork creeps into place-name study, and tale spinners have their day.

The authors can be held responsible, however, for clear errors of fact and for not checking some information given in their main source, the street name file of the city of Chicago's Bureau of Maps and Plats. For example, they say that Kasson Avenue "was named either for Mary Kasson or for the Kasson Indians of Minnesota." A simple check of Indian references would have shown that there are no Kasson Indians. The authors cling to the story that Wabash Avenue may be named for the Sioux chief Wabasha, instead of the Wabash River in Indiana. The chances appear slim that a little known Indian in Minnesota would be a more likely name source than a nearby river. Moreover, Milo M. Quaife's story that *Chicago* means "something powerful or big" has no foundation. Court Place, as any map shows, does not run to City Hall, and it was Chrysler-Dodge, not the Ford Motor Co., which manufactured aircraft engines during World War II on the site of the shopping center now called *Ford City*. Moreover, George Rogers Clark was not a general, and Martin Luther King led a demonstration in Marquette Park, not Gage Park.

Hayner and McNamee are journalists, and say they hold to the professional adage: "If your mother says she loves you, check it out." If they had been more diligent in following that advice, they would have found that *Minnetonka* is a Sioux name, not Algonquian, and that the Siouan speaking Winnebago could not have called Jean Nicolet the "Great Manitou." Their most numerous errors are found in their treatment of Indian names, which compose nearly 10% of Chicago's named streets. The city file, partly compiled during the depression by WPA workers, contains most of these mistakes, and I also relied heavily upon it when writing an article on Indian street names for the *Chicago Schools Journal* in 1955. After reading some of the articles on Chicago street names which Hayner and McNamee published in the *Chicago Sun-Times* three years ago, I sent them a copy of that article and checked those parts of it which further study seemed to invalidate. They credit me for the

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use of this article but I'm afraid they overlooked some of my caveats, and so some old errors are given new life.

On balance, this is a worthwhile book, profusely illustrated. The authors have tried to dig up an interesting story behind each name. It is written for the average person, not the specialist. It ought to be widely read not only by Chicagoans but by others, since so many Chicago street names are the names of people and places in other states which contributed to Chicago's growth.

The authors have included a foreword by talk show host John Calaway as well as a preface and introduction written by themselves. These give information on the development of Chicago's partly rational system of street naming and numbering, with a short list of name changes, besides some account of the difficulties of tracking down information about the names. Unfortunately, they provide no bibliography or reference notes.

This is an uncommon book. Robert Alotta's *Street Names of Philadelphia* (Temple, 1975) is the only comparable one that I know of. It deserves our attention, but such a book, no matter how well done, seldom sells well. That seems to me to be a reflection on the public taste rather than on the intrinsic interest and value of the subject or the skill of the authors. It is to be hoped that this book can be more successful than some others dealing with state and local geographic names.

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Street People. Helga Dudman. Jerusalem, Israel: Jerusalem Post/Carta, 1982. Pp. 200. Maps, photos. \$16.45.

This is a somewhat unusual book about street names. It is about the people for whom over one hundred streets, boulevards, thoroughfares, circles, and parks have been named in Israel. While the emphasis is on Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa, the names are recurrent in other communities throughout the country as well. There are seventeen chapters; each is organized around some theme. Many of the names, such as those of Herzl, Baron de Hirsch, and Ben Gurion are well-known, but many others are not. What Dudman does is to tell stories about the people for

whom the streets were named. This she does in a very imaginative, creative way which demonstrates her familiarity with history and the streets themselves.

It is difficult to pick favorites since there are so many fine stories. I liked the background material for Sir Moses Montefiore (1784–1885) who made seven visits to Israel, the last at the age of ninety-one; for George Eliot, author of *Daniel Deronda*, whose theme of return to Zion was a strong influence on early Zionists; and Doña Garcia, the sixteenth century Marrano, who set up an escape route for Jewish victims of the Inquisition and helped set up a settlement in Tiberias. However, the best one is about the Chelouche family of Tel Aviv and the incident where Aharon Chelouche helped an Arab boy who had been robbed. Then, many years later, the Arab boy, now a sheikh, on hearing of the dire straits of the Chelouches during WWI, came to their aid with a caravan of five camels laden with food.

Other chapters are devoted to cultural and political leaders who were important before the formation of the State and during its early years. Among those for whom there are major emphases are: Max Nordau, Zionist leader and philosopher; Saul Tchernikowsky, poet; Bronislaw Huberman and Arturo Toscanini, musicians; and Judah Halevi, poet and philosopher.

One of the extra little touches that Dudman gives is to mention throughout the book where one named street links with another and to compare size and relationship. She points out that Bailik and Tchernikowsky streets in Tel-Aviv start together at Allenby (named for the British general who liberated Palestine from the Turks in 1917–18) and run parallel for some time. In Haifa, Nordau and Herzl are parallel one-way streets which go in opposite directions. Dudman leaves it up to the reader to ponder these relationships. The excellent maps make it easy for the reader to follow.

Street People will appeal to those interested in street names and especially those interested in Israel. Dudman shows what can be done with street names by someone with imagination and experience. The one lack that should be corrected in the next printing is an index.

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Hawaiian Street Names: The Complete Guide to O'ahu Street Name Translations. Compiled by Rich Budnick. Translated by Duke Kalani Wise. Honolulu: Aloha Publishing, 1989. P. O. Box 4183, Honolulu, HI 96812. Pp. 170. Illustrations. \$7.00 plus 1.50 postage and handling.

Hawai'i is unique among our states in having a living native language with enough status to keep its placenames always before both residents and visitors. Few people who visit these islands, however, and apparently few residents, are aware of the language as much more than mellifluous sounds, since probably not more than a few hundred people speak Hawaiian as a home language. In this little book, Rich Burdick, a public information officer for the state, and Duke Kalani Wise, an authority on the Hawaiian language who teaches a class in O'ahu placenames at the University of Hawai'i, have compiled and translated four thousand names of streets and nearly one hundred names of towns and communities.

The main title is slightly misleading, for the book is limited to the island of O'ahu. Planned are future volumes on street names on Maui, Kauai, Lana'i, Moloka'i, and Hawai'i, the Big Island. The subtitle sets us straight and also alerts us that this book does not cover all of the street names to be found on O'ahu, only those that are in the Hawaiian language. Missing, for example, are the names of such Honolulu streets as Bishop or Diamond Head Road. *King, Queen, Mission, Victoria*, and a few others are mentioned in the introduction as names that have been around since the nineteenth century. Some English names have been "Hawaiianized." *Beretania*, the name of a major Honolulu thoroughfare, comes from "Britain, Britannia," because the "British Consul Office was located here in the 1800s." *Beretania* is also the only name in the list that begins with the letter *B*.

One of the intents of *Hawaiian Street Names* is to preserve and disseminate knowledge of the Hawaiian language, and we learn as much about that as we do about the streets. The relatively small number of phonemes in this Polynesian language is graphically illustrated by the list: no street names appear under the letters *D, F, J, Q, R, S, T, V, X, Y*, or *Z*. The one entry under *G*—*Gilipake*—defers to the usual spelling—*Kilipake*—and offers the tentative suggestion that the name commemorates Leopold Gilbert Blackman, a military aide to several governors. Another street name, *Palakamanna*, probably is the Hawaiianized

form of his surname. Both streets are in the town of Wai‘anae, where Blackman owned land.

While the use of consonantal phonemes in Hawaiian seems limited, the phonemic importance of the glottal stop and of the macron indicating vowel length is given substantial emphasis here. Most maps simply omit these marks, and the U. S. Board on Geographic Names has ruled that the official names of features will not include them. In a foreword to the book, Samuel H. Elbert, who has written extensively on Hawaiian placenames, makes the point vividly with such pairs of words as *a‘i* and *ai*. The first, with the glottal stop, means “sexual intercourse”; the second, “to eat.” Similarly, *kāne* ‘male’ is distinguished from *kane* ‘a skin disease’ by vowel length alone. These distinctions can be quite subtle, but embarrassing. Kūhiō (with two macrons) Avenue in Honolulu is named for Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana‘ole, prince and territorial representative. Drop the second macron, and the word *Kūhio* means “to fart silently.”

Honolulu authorities in 1954 signaled their belief in the importance of the language by insisting that all Hawaiian names be written with the diacritical marks. They also insisted that the names be “‘appropriate’ to cultural, scenic, and topographic features” of the locality. This means that speakers of the language must be consulted to assure that the words actually mean what developers and others claim. While this would seem to lead to hundreds of streets with tree, flower, and bird names, this is not the case. At least 120 streets are named for the people who were granted land in the 1848 Great Mahele, when one third of the land was turned over to individuals. The king, who formerly owned *all* the land, kept one third, the government another third. Many names come from geographic and topographic locations, foliage, people, heavenly bodies, fish, birds, mythological gods and goddesses, and winds and rain. A very large number of streets bear names which translate into English as infinitive phrases: *Ho‘okala* ‘to sharpen,’ *Ho‘oko* ‘to fulfill,’ *Ho‘ole‘a* ‘to praise,’ just to name a few.

Hawaiian Street Names is a treasure-chest of information about this fascinating state. but as a placename book it has limitations. There are no maps, for instance, and, while the town or towns in which the streets are found are identified, the individual entries give little information about either the importance of the streets or the reasons why those particular streets have those particular names.

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The book is attractively printed and well made. For visitors, it is an excellent introduction to one aspect of Hawaiian life; for residents, it is a useful reminder of their heritage, and those who are at all curious about that heritage would be well advised to heed the advice on the cover: "Keep a copy in your car!"

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Call Me Adirondack: Names and Their Stories. By Murray Heller. Saranac Lake, NY 12983: The Chauncy Press, 1989. Pp. 162. \$17.95 cloth; \$10.95 paper.

The Adirondack Mountains in Upstate New York in the area known as the North Country have a long, colorful, and varied history. Not only is the area very beautiful and wild, but it is also known for its fierce winters and its sometimes bloody past. More to our purpose here is that more than 30,000 names are recorded, among them *Mount Pisgah*, which Murray Heller singles out as a symbol of human courage and perseverance, or perhaps plain human stubbornness in confronting implacable nature.

The two Mount Pisgahs in the Adirondacks provoked Heller to claim that the people who came to the Adirondacks "must have come from a place worse than Hell to call this the Promised Land." No doubt, a winter day in the Adirondacks with the temperature moving onto minus forty degrees Fahrenheit and low hovering dark clouds blackening the day can bring out the frustration, rashness, and sarcasm so necessary to question the motives of anyone who would name a couple of smallish peaks in the Adirondacks for the vision of Moses. But the namers had their reasons, the day perhaps being just right, the moment propitious, and the biblical sensibility in order; and prepared for a vision, they came upon their Mount Pisgah. Heller analyzes why the name exists in a place that has only two seasons: "Summer Black Fly" and "Winter Snow Fly," or where the inhabitants know ten months of winter and two months of a mild spring.

The author also knows that the Adirondack "summer" can be and is romantically idyllic — and real — when lakes are covered in lily pads, the

grebe dives and surfaces and searches, the heron circles for its lunch, and the tamarack gives a fragrance of green. Such paradisaical land can influence a namer at the right time of the year. And Heller also knows better than any other person on earth the names on the landscape, their reasons for being, their echoes of Mount Pisgah, if we may, and their stories.

Dr. Heller, whose portrait on the book jacket has the aura of an Old Testament prophet, brings his enormous and extensive scholarship in literature, folklore, onomastics, and history, as well as years of exploring the wilderness of the Adirondacks, to bear on the names found in the region. His capsuling of the history of the region points up its attraction and remarkableness, a place where the Iroquois created a confederacy, where England and France confronted each other, where Champlain explored, where bloody battles were fought during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, and where the actors of the Adirondack stage included Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, George Washington, Ralph Waldo Emerson, James Fenimore Cooper, Theodore Roosevelt, John Brown, and many wealthy families and modern personalities. In its rather small area geographically, the Dutch, Amerindians (many different tribes), English, and French mixed and fought, the events and struggles represented in surviving (and some not surviving) placenames.

Some of the names of the region reflect the attitudes of the namers: *Prima Vista*, *The Brown's Tract* (for John Brown, the abolitionist), *Northern Wilderness*, *The North Country*, *Siberia of North America*, *Peruvian Mountains*, *The Dismal Wilderness*, and *The Dark and Bloody Ground*, among some twenty other "very informal ones." The early "informal" names included French (*Avacal*, part of *Nova Francia*), Dutch (*Nova Belgii*), Amerindian (*Iroquoisia*, *Hodensauneege*, *Konoshion*), and English (*The Macomb Mountains*, *The Brown's Tract*). The French explorers, anticipating the finding of gold, named the rough land *Peru* and the range *Peruvian* after the country in South America where the Spanish discovered the precious metal. The French found beavers instead and called at least part of the land *Castorland*.

Heller organizes his text in chapters that focus on features, personalities, or theory. In passing, he covers categories of names and the language of origin. "Pleasure names" include *Up The River*, *Sobriety*, *Easy Street*, *Grizzle Ocean Pond*, and a host of other yeasty ones. *Adirondacks*, *Saratoga*, *Tahawus*, *Schenectady*, *Ticonderoga*, *Akwesasne*, *Os-*

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wegatchie, and *Onchiota* represent Amerindian survivals. The French left *Racquette* (perhaps in spelling only), *Champlain*, *Shoon Lake* (which sounds Dutch but isn't), as well as some noted before. Dutch names are scarce this far north, but *Watervliet* (partially English), *Half Moon* (memorializing Hudson's ship), *Schuyler Falls*, and *Rensselaer* are representative. The Scots stake a claim with *Loch Bonnie* and the *-burgh* in *Plattsburgh*. Heroes and leaders are commemorated in *Lake Champlain*, *Rooseveltown*, *Washington County*, *Franklin County*, *Mount Marcy*, and *Lake George*, among many others. Incident names include *Sunday Creek*, *Bloody Pond*, and *Calamity Pond*. *Mount Pisgah*, *Pharaoh Lake*, *Balm of Gilead Mountain*, *Jerico*, *Sodom*, and *Jerusalem* indicate biblical influence. The usual possessives (*Bolton's Landing*, *Hogansburg*) appear, as do a few thousand descriptives (*Mud Pond*, *Long Lake*, *Whiteface Mountain*).

Besides the informative chapters, Heller wrote one that will provoke attention and perhaps controversy. In the theoretical chapter, "There is Nothing Like a Name," he lists name-laws and how he derives them. Using *Racquette* as a base name, one whose origin is most doubtful, probably never to be known, Heller wrote the first law: "*The Racket*: as words become names they become more opaque." To develop his second law, he uses *Stink Hole*, the translation from an Amerindian language, the name of the stinking salt swamps where Syracuse now sits. The second law: "*The Stink Hole*: as names become opaque they lose their emotional charge." The third law is easy: wherever humans are found, names are found; hence, "*The Domestic*: as with love and marriage, humans and names go together." The fourth law derives from archaeology, with names being artifacts: "*Digs*: names are languages' dinosaur bones."

The fifth law is translucent: "*Marcy's Mantle*: show me a commemorative name and I'll show you who or what was important to the namers of their times." Here, the dates of the naming and by whom are known. *Mount Marcy* was named after Governor William L. Marcy of New York by Ebenezer Emmons in 1837. The sixth is "*The Non-Ditto Law*: another name is necessary when one name is used over and over again." Heller's concern here is the proliferation of *Mud Ponds*, *Clear Lakes*, *Long Lakes*, *Long Ponds*, and *Lily Pad Ponds*. He postulates three theories for the existence of so many duplications: "No Imagination," "Translation" (from another language), and "Migration." None ac-

count fully for the multifarious existence of “dittoed” names. The seventh law is “*One Man’s Meat*: the fashion of the generations vary, and what seems strange to one generation may be perfectly normal to another.” For instance, we do not like to live on *Regularity Boulevard*, *Chastity Road*, or *Pig Lane*. We are accustomed to other types of names. Nor can we allow some of the names to become ethnic slurs.

Narrative accounts of the origins and influences of placenames have an interest and informative value that a gazetteer or dictionary does not. Both the historical and the psychological blend when an author with the stylistic ability of a Murray Heller writes about geographical names. Unfortunately, onomasticians in general are more interested in words and names than in style; perhaps some of us have no writing style to the pen or word processor born. Heller manages to combine both information and style to clothe the narrative, making this one of the better books about names that we have. He brings a good novelist’s sensibility to bear on descriptions and an understanding of plot development to make the narrative move and, as the book jacket blurb reads, “enthral.” And when Heller writes, “It all began on a cold and wintry day near the tail end of a cold and seemingly endless wintry winter,” then the reader is on warning that a professional teller of tales is moving into a good story about names: *Grizzle Ocean Mountain*, maybe! *Mount Pisgah*, of course!

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Naming Ourselves, Naming Our Children: Resolving the Last Name Dilemma. By Sharon Lebell. Freedom, CA 95019: Crossing Press, 1988. P.O. Box 1048. Pp. 102. \$19.95 cloth; \$6.95 paper.

Sharon Lebell reviews the history of women’s surnames involving patronymy and change of surname at marriage and discusses the problems of identity in modern women. She considers alternatives to the surname problem for children, including (1) the couple’s using hyphenated names combining surnames of husband and wife; (2) the woman’s keeping her birth surname (her father’s) at marriage (a “Lucy Stoner”); (3) the woman’s keeping her birth name for business or profes-

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sional activities and her husband's surname for social activities (a "double agent"); (4) the couple's picking a new surname for their marriage ("customizing"); (5) the couple's giving the child a surname representing a combination of each of the parent's surnames, as Mary Miller and John Brown giving their child the surname of Millbrown ("amalgam"); and (6) the husband's taking the wife's surname.

The main thrust of the book is what Lebell calls the *Bilineal Solution*. There are six steps.

1. Establishment of a *Source Name*. For this each parent selects the birth name, a family name, or some other name.
2. People who marry keep their own last name.
3. Girls take mother's last name.
4. Boys take father's last name.
5. Girls take father's last name as middle name.
6. Boys take mother's last name as a middle name.

In her 1983 book, *Our Names, Our Selves*, Mary Lassiter set up a somewhat similar proposal, in that sons would bear the father's surname and daughters the mother's. (See my review, *Names* 33 [1985]: 286-87.) Lebell's suggestion goes further. First, she would have the wife and husband in the initial naming generation each select his or her own source name. Secondly, she brings in the surname of the parents as a middle name. This is somewhat reminiscent of a pattern that Alice Rossi found at least partially in some American families (*American Sociological Review* 30 [1965]: 499-513).

Lebell's point that the maternal side of the family is neglected in naming makes sense. It would also mean that some family names are less likely to die out. Genealogists might also find it easier to trace families.

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