
Virgil J. Vogel

Virgil J. Vogel, a long-time member of the American Name Society, died on January 10, 1994 in Northbrook, Illinois. Vogel was a distinguished historian and onomast. He received numerous citations and awards, primarily for his work on Native American history and culture and on names. Among many honors, he was recipient of the Wisconsin State Historical Society's Award of Merit and recipient of the first Shinkle Prize for Native American Studies. The North Central Names Institute published a *Festschrift* in his honor in 1984. He was listed in *Who's Who in the Midwest*, *Directory of American Scholars*, and *Contemporary Authors*. He received the American Name Society's lifetime achievement award, presented at the 1990 meeting in Chicago. At that ceremony Vogel was recognized as the 'Dean of American Indian Place Name Research' and cited for 'flawless scholarship.'

Vogel was born in Keota, in Keokuk County, Iowa, on February 25, 1918. He was educated at Chicago State University, graduating with a B.E. degree in 1942, and the University of Chicago, where he received his M.A. in 1949 and Ph.D. in 1966. His dissertation, *American Indian Medicine and its Influence on White Medicine and Pharmacology*, was published by the University of Oklahoma Press in 1970. He taught in the Chicago Public Schools and the City Colleges of Chicago, retiring from Truman College in 1980.

Vogel had a long and influential scholarly career. He was at his best when he blended his two intellectual loves, Native American history and names, as he did in *Indian Place Names in Illinois* (1963), *Iowa Place Names of Indian Origin* (1983), *Indian Names in Michigan* (1986), *Indian Names on Wisconsin's Map* (1991), and in dozens of journal articles and convention papers.

Even though Vogel participated regularly at large, prestigious gatherings such as those of the American Society for Ethnohistory and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, he was just as regularly found at the annual meetings of the Illinois Name Society in Sugar Grove, where his papers were presented to smaller audiences, but were prepared with equal care, and were greeted with equal appreciation. It was at one of the Illinois Name

Society meetings that I first met Virgil Vogel. Over the years we maintained a professional correspondence; he was always willing to help serious scholars regardless of their stage of development and to share the results of his scholarship. I first wrote to him regarding variant spellings of the name *Chicago*. He responded not only with a generous answer to my question, but with photocopies of his files on the subject, which at that time listed just under 50 variants (there are surely more now), all sorted and each documented, most with more than one citation. Most of these were subsequently published in an early issue of the *Bulletin* of the North Central Name Society.

At least as far as onomastics is concerned, Vogel's major contributions are toward our understanding of the tremendous impact, the scope and dimensions of which we have not yet fully realized, of ethno-history on the American namescape, in particular the implications of the legacies of names left by the relationships between Indians and Whites. Early, I questioned Vogel's criteria for defining an Indian name. How, for instance, could the Germanic morpheme *flint* possibly be an *Indian* name? (It is in fact a loan translation of Iowa *Shokokon*). It was only later that I realized that Vogel was not doing a linguistic analysis of names but rather an ethnographic one. Considering his work in this light revealed its richness and created an appreciation of the understanding it brings to the social relationships which are the reason for names in the first place.

In the Introduction to his book on Iowa names Vogel wrote "...as we learn the history and meaning of the names of our communities and their environmental features, we are culturally enriched." Our discipline, too, has been enriched by the onomastic contributions of Virgil Vogel.

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