
In Memoriam

Clarence L. Barnhart, 1900-1993

On Sunday the 24th of October, 1993, after a lifetime of linguistic, lexicographical and onomastic achievement, Clarence L. Barnhart, a special friend of the American Name Society, died in Peekskill, N.Y. He was 92 years old.

In 1967 Clarence (as we all called him) served as President of ANS. In the same year he compiled a much-needed 95-page index which covered the first fifteen years of *Names*. Other details of his remarkable record of achievement are so numerous that I will mention only a few. Anyone wishing more information has but to look in such standard biographical references as *Who's Who in U.S. Writers, Editors & Poets* and *Who's Who in America*.

Born December 30, 1900 near Plattsburg, Missouri, Clarence Lewis Barnhart graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1930 with a Bachelor of Philosophy (PhB) degree from the University of Chicago, where he also did three years of post-graduate study. He was an editor for Scott, Foresman (1929-45), the War Department (1943) and Random House (1945-48). For the War Department, he produced the *Dictionary of U.S. Army Terms*, for which he was awarded the War Department Certificate of Appreciation. As it happened his staff included Allen Walker Read, an accomplished lexicographer in his own right and also a future President of ANS (1969).

Later, Clarence founded a corporation in his own name and collaborated with his sons Robert and David on numerous lexicographical endeavors, including the *Barnhart Dictionary Companion*, intended to continuously update the evolving English language. He also collaborated with the educational psychologist and fellow lexicographer Edward L. Thorndike on the junior, senior and high school editions of the Thorndike-Barnhart school dictionaries, which

202 Names 42.3 (September 1994)

influenced several generations of American school children in the middle years of this century. A major reference work appeared in 1954, the three-volume *New Century Cyclopedia of Names* (with William Halsey), published by Appleton.

Perhaps Barnhart's most significant single contribution to lexicography was the *American College Dictionary*, which appeared in 1947. The *ACD* introduced a number of innovations, including the notion that meaning sequences within an entry could usefully be listed so that the most common and most recent usages would appear first and less frequently usages could subsequently be given in decreasing order of importance to contemporary users. This was quite an innovation since previous lexicographers (including the editors of the *OED*) had first recorded the earliest historical occurrence of a term, and then gave the later meanings chronologically. Users in search of modern meanings often abandoned the search since they had to plow through a great deal of material before arriving at the more recent uses. While the historical method of entry is fine for scholars and specialists, it is frustrating for general users. As a result of this fundamental change in the organization of entries, it became much easier for users of the *ACD* to find the current meanings of words.

Furthermore, in the *ACD*, and probably for the first time anywhere, the index letters which were cut into the side or edge of the text were arranged two at a time so that, rather than having to depend merely on the first page location of each single letter, under "M-N," for instance, users could quickly turn to the first page of the "M" entries or immediately to the last page of "N," or even guess somewhere in between. Such improvements have made life a great deal simpler for countless students of the English language in America, and also for the multitudes whose use of the dictionary may have been less systematic.

Clarence Barnhart always had a great many friends, and he was known for his generosity toward anyone and everyone. No doubt one reason was that he must have been grateful for having survived the Great Depression. In 1952, when the World War II veterans' educational bubble burst and many a college English teacher sought other ways to make a living, I approached Clarence regarding a job on his lexicographical staff. He spoke kindly but frankly to me.

"There are times," he told me on that particular occasion, "when I can't meet a payroll."

I remember one occasion — probably 25 years ago — when Clarence invited all living ANS officers (including the Board of Managers, of which I was one at the time) to dinner at Keen's Chop House on 36th Street and 7th Avenue in New York where we were all treated to prime mutton, the specialty of the house. Of course, he picked up the tab. Perhaps he was generous to a fault; as Kelsie Harder once said, "Aw, if Clarence has it, you have it!"

At another time, perhaps a decade later, several members attended a special United Nations session where the problems of translation were vividly demonstrated. Even simple translations could — and no doubt still can — be troublesome since they are of such critical importance. Not long after that session, in his quest for a successor to himself as the ANS representative to the U.N., Clarence invited me to his exclusive club on Fifth Avenue somewhere in the Fifties. Apparently the club served no other purpose than to provide a quiet retreat where one could dine lavishly and play chess, chat, or go to sleep in the easy chairs, far from the noisy competition of the streets of New York several stories below.

"You wouldn't believe what I had to go through in order to become a member here," he said. He had been compelled to submit not only his full personal pedigree, but also letters of recommendation from as many influential social friends and powerful business acquaintances as he could find. In short, he was thoroughly investigated. (How many social organizations take one look at an interested candidate and accept the person forthwith?) All of his credentials had to be screened and carefully reviewed. Originally, he said, he had been interested in the place for business reasons, yet later doubted that membership would be of any great advantage to him. He assured me that he had had no idea of how much trouble it would be for him to obtain approval of his application for the elite membership.

One another occasion Clarence and I were attending MLA in Washington and both of us happened to be staying at the Hay-Adams hotel (across the street from the White House), which, incidently, had the cheapest rates for academic visitors, probably because the convention headquarters were a good distance away at the Sheraton. As usual, Clarence insisted on paying for dinner. I agreed, but only

on condition that he allow me to pay for the drinks. He did, and I did.

Clarence was a great and distinguished scholar, linguist and publisher. He was a most congenial companion and a real friend. His passing is a great loss to onomastics and to the academic world at large.

E. Wallace McMullen
Madison, NJ

Donald Thomas Clark, 1911-1993

Gentleman, Scholar, Friend

When I first met Don Clark, I was already familiar with his *Santa Cruz County Place Names: A Geographical Dictionary*. I was walking with a cane and he slowed his pace in order to walk with me. I was struck by his kindness and his concern. In Santa Fe, New Mexico, at the Western States Geographic Names Conference in 1991, Don really surprised me. When he handed me an official letter bequeathing his onomastic library to the Lurline H. Coltharp Collection of Onomastics at the University of Texas at El Paso, I was speechless. His generosity was overwhelming. I was, and am, deeply grateful.

Don Clark was born in Seattle, Washington on March 13, 1911. In spite of battling polio twice, by 1934 he had earned a degree from the University of California at Berkeley. Two years later he received a bachelors degree in Library Science from Columbia University and in 1943 a masters from Harvard.

Don had become head librarian at Harvard Business School's Baker Library when he was offered a position at the University of California at Santa Cruz. One of his first tasks there was to assist in the planning of the library that was being constructed. Computers were not an established feature of libraries at that time, but Don insisted that the library be wired for a computerized catalog. He