

BOOK REVIEWS

High Country Names: Rocky Mountain National Park and Indian Peaks. By Louisa Ward Arps and Elinor Eppich Kingery, assisted by Hugh E. Kingery. Rocky Mountain Nature Association; Boulder, CO: Johnson Books, Pp. 198. \$12.95 paper. 1994.

This book is a readable compendium of the origin of the topographical and cultural names of Rocky Mountain National Park and the adjoining Indian Peaks (since 1978, a Wilderness area). The editors' demurrer, in the first of four editions (1966), that they were not writing "a scholarly opus," still holds for this account of the easternmost crest of the Continental Divide: the onomastic information is often presented discursively and anecdotally.

In an historical introduction, the authors explain the development of the naming process for the area. During a climactic surge of interest between 1912 and 1914, under the leadership of the Colorado Mountain Club, two aged Arapahos, along with an interpreter from the tribe, were brought down from the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming to act as informants on Indian names. By 1915, a Colorado Geologic Board, appointed by the governor, had assembled and adjusted the names bestowed by earlier explorers, surveyors, and mapmakers. Significant revisions of the names were made in 1942 and 1961.

The 428 entries in *High Country Names* are accompanied by altitude figures for the mountains and keys to the topo maps in the back of the book. (The map for the Indian Peaks was missing from my copy of the volume and unlisted in the contents). Many of the shorter entries, such as those for *Lulu City*, *Mount Cairns*, *Calyпсо S Cascades*, *Little Matterhorn*, *Kawuneeche Valley* and *Never Summer Mountains*, are specific as to the who and when of naming. The more informative of the longer entries include *Colorado River* (called the *Grand River* within Colorado until 1921 and thus the source for *Grand Lake* and *Grand Ditch*), *Estes Park*, and *Lone Eagle Peak* (named for Charles A. Lindbergh).

Even the best entries are not systematically related to the process of Colorado place naming described in the introduction. (The cross-references among entries are more satisfactory). To acquire a sense of the importance of a number of the interesting figures involved in the history and naming of Rocky Mountain National Park since the middle of the nineteenth century, such as the biologist William S. Cooper, the hotel-keeper Enos Mills, and the park superintendent Roger Toll, the reader must wade through an extensive index independent of the main entries. (Unfortunately the excellent pictures of people and mountains in earlier versions have been removed from the 1994 edition.) Although many of the sources, particularly newspaper articles, are described in the text, some are identified only partially, and there is no bibliography to supply centralized and consistent references.

A number of chatty — but admittedly entertaining — entries stray a great distance from the origin of names. The entry for Mount Dunraven in the Mummy Range recounts at length the high-handed activities and illegal homesteading of the Irish Earl of Dunraven in the last third of the nineteenth century. The reader learns that the east summit of Mount Dunraven was re-named for Anna Dickinson, the first woman to climb Longs Peak. The entry for *Mount Dickinson* tells the story (without sources) of the “small but shapely” suffragette and her influential “beaux,” who had a part in the naming of two nearby mountains, Mount Meeker and Mount Lady Washington.

The appeal of *High Country Names* is essentially to outdoor enthusiasts in general, as well as to what the publisher’s flyer calls “armchair travelers.” It leaves to the more specialized reader the task of ferreting out the onomastic facts and tracking down further sources. It is probably true, however, that the high country of north central Colorado, as interpreted by the authors — a melange of mountains, lakes, rivers, and above all people, lodges, hotels, railroads, and logging camps long since gone — does not suit itself to a rigorous approach to the process of naming, say of mountains alone. One need only to compare this book with Robert Hixson Julyan’s *Mountain Names*, where, in a brilliant introductory essay, Julyan categorizes the many different processes by which mountains of the world (from which he selects 300) have been named. A special

interest in mountains — for climbing — motivates the terse and systematic descriptive methods of *Mountain Names*; the armchair pleasure is only incidental.

It follows that a rigorous account of the origins of the names of the Colorado mountains (throughout the whole state) would differ from and serve a different purpose than *High Country Names*. Thus far the only significant effort in this area has been Francis P. Farquhar's "Naming America's Mountains — The Colorado Rockies," of 1962 (which the authors of *High Country Names* apparently did not consult). Farquhar discusses, with detailed references, 21 peaks, 17 of them over 14,000 feet. Climber-scholars in Colorado now have the opportunity not only to extend Farquhar's efforts by research into the names of the rest of the state's high mountains, but also to take part themselves in the naming of an ample selection. Of the 637 Colorado peaks of more than 13,000 feet, more than 30 are named only by letters and/or numbers, and 221 have no names at all (Garratt and Martin 203-219). Here the authors of *High Country Names* might have offered assistance, but regretfully a gracefully written section called "How to Name a Mountain" is among the publisher's omissions from the current edition. Onomastically-minded mountaineers will have to rely on *Principles, Policies and Procedures: Domestic Geographic Names*, from the U. S. Geological Survey.

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Works Cited

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Place Names of Alberta, Volume III (Central Alberta). Edited and Introduced by Tracey Harrison. University of Calgary Press, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Pp. xxv + 288 pages. Paper, \$29.95CDN. 1994.

This is the third of a four-volume series on Alberta's official geographical place names, a joint project of Alberta Community Development, the University of Calgary Press, and the Friends of Geographical Names of Alberta Society. Volumes I *Mountains, Mountain Parks and Foothills* (1991) and II *Southern Alberta* (1992), both by Aphrodite Karamitsanis, have already appeared. Volume IV, *Northern Alberta*, is expected in 1995. Each volume begins with an introduction, and ends with a bibliography and color photographs of places (landscapes) referred to in the text. Also, there are small historic black-and-white landscape photographs scattered throughout the text.

The introduction begins with a brief general survey of names, toponymy, and the formalities of geographical naming processes in Canada, followed by a concise history of central Alberta (defined as "south of the Athabasca River, north of Drumheller, along the Saskatchewan boundary, and as far west as Rocky Mountain House" [xiv]). The history of the region, and thus also the toponymy, reflects many influences: aboriginal (Cree, Blackfoot, Sarcee, Stoney), American and European (British, French, Slavic, German, Scandinavian, even Finnish), colonial (names of royalty, governors, traders, explorers), and missionaries (Catholic, Anglican, Methodist), as well as the influence of the railways, the military, and the North West Mounted Police. Next is an explanation of how to read each entry, a list of photographs with credits, and then two maps, each of which shows the appropriate part of the National Topographic System Grid: the first a general map of Alberta showing the division into four regions for the purposes of this series, with the region of this particular volume shaded, and the second a map showing this region in more detail (marking the major communities, roads, and rivers).

The main part of the text (as for each volume) consists of an alphabetical listing of the official placenames of that region, with three columns per page. The entries themselves are generally excellent and very clearly laid out. Each contains the following information:

- 1) The name itself, and the type of feature 'generic' regardless of whether the generic is part of the official name or not,
- 2) The National Topographic System Grid Reference,
- 3) A legal description, specifying section, range, township, and meridian,
- 4) The latitude and longitude,
- 5) The approximate distance to the nearest populated community "as the crow flies,"
- 6) Anywhere from a sentence to a lengthy paragraph describing the feature, the origin of its name, and other noteworthy facts. Cross-referencing to other features may also be given (the cross-references are an outstanding aspect of this work). In cases where several features share the same name, the information is only given once, and cross-referencing handles the other features.

It would obviously be unnecessary for me to repeat what I have said about the first two volumes, almost all of which applies here again. In my earlier reviews, I noted many of the general uses to which the books could be put, as well as their overall quality and accessibility and some of the surprises that await the reader; for example, how even in such a recently settled area, a locality may have changed names several times. There are two further surprises here. First, a considerable number of places, even those established fairly recently, have names for which the "precise origin is unknown." Second, a significant number of the listed names were approved only very recently. These include several dozen approved only in the 1990s (the most recent I noted were January 22, 1992, although one name change was given without detail as 1993 (61).

Compared to the two previous volumes, however, I find many minor quibbles, which I will now list in the order in which they occur in the book. The lake names *Alpha*, *Beta*, *Gamma*, *Delta*, *Eta* and *Zeta* all occur with separate alphabetical entries (as expected), but there is no cross-referencing or other type of linking statement in the entries themselves. Thus each lake has a statement of the form "[t]he name for this lake has been official since at least 1958. *Alpha* is the first letter of the Greek alphabet; however, its connection to this lake is not clear" (4). However, there *is* a linking statement, but not found where somebody merely looking up one of the lake names

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would ever find it. It is under *Cosmo*, a locality name ("*cosmo* is the Greek word for the world or universe. Six lakes in the general area also have names connected to the Greek alphabet; however, the precise references are not known" (60). An additional quibble here is that *eta* is listed as being the fifth letter of the Greek alphabet, whereas in fact it is the seventh.

It seems impossible that *Billos* ("originally named after J. O. Billos who arrived in the area from Italy in 1902" [24]) and *Biollo Lake* ("named in honor of Oliver John Biollo (1883-?)," apparently from Venice [24]), two toponyms no more than 10 km apart, could be named *other* than after the same person; thus some comment on the divergent spellings of the names would have been appropriate. The entry for *Bleriot Ferry Provincial Recreation Area* refers the reader to the entry for *Bleriot Ferry*, but there is no such entry. *Blumenau* means "flowering meadow" rather than just "flowering" in German (29). It would have been more helpful and convenient to give the specific date for the naming of the village of *Consort*, rather than saying it was "named in the year of the coronation of King George V and his consort Queen Mary in honor of the occasion" (57). Readers either have to rely on their own knowledge of British history or glean the date of 1911 from a later entry, *Coronation*.

Perhaps the connection is considered obvious, but an extra sentence of comment in the entry for *Ferrybank* would have been in order. That entry in its entirety is "A post office operated here from December 1905 through February 1927. There was a ferry in operation nearby on the Battle River. It was known previously as 'Fairy Bank,' from the odd shape of the ravine" (91). No mention is made of the (probable) role of homophony (or near homophony, depending on your dialect) in the change from "fairy" to "ferry". The entry for *Five Kill Hill* doesn't explain why the possible origin from a Cree expression meaning "the place where five were killed" is in competition with a local legend that "at one time five North West Mounted Police were killed on or near the site" (92), since the two explanations at least appear to be compatible. It is not clear what the relevance of the statement "[i]n Cree *simaganis arilamik* means 'soldier house'" (95) is to the entry for *Fort Saskatchewan*, unless that is the Cree name for the city. The entry for *Garth*, a former post office, says that it "has the same name as the Old

English term for 'garden'" (99); it is not clear what, if any, connection is supposed to be implied here. *Garth* is of course also a male first name, and occasionally a surname as well (the next entry, for a locality named *Garth*, is apparently named after a railway official). The entries for *Gooseberry Lake* (a name, "likely descriptive," "in use since at least 1884" [104]) and *Gooseberry Lake Provincial Park* (1 km away; "named before 1886," "probably... descriptive of a local food resource" [104]) do have a cross-reference, and yet partly repeat each other and partly do not quite coincide. *Granada* "may be named after the Moorish kingdom of southern Spain" (105). *Alhambra*, approximately 100 km distant, is "named after the ancient fortress of the Moorish Kings in Spain. It is thought that the name was given by John T. Moore, president of the Alberta Central Railway, in a light-hearted attempt to connect his family with the Moors in Spain and their palace" (3). It would be interesting to try to ascertain, or even just speculate, on whether the motivation for naming *Granada* was the same as that for *Alhambra*.

For *Gull Lake*, we are told the Cree name, its Stoney equivalent, and that it was *Long Lake* before becoming *Gull Lake*, without ever being told whether the Cree/Stoney names mean 'long,' or 'gull,' or something else. For *Kapasiwin*, the entry states that it "is a translation of the Cree Indian word for 'camp,'" without telling us from which (other Amerindian) language the translation is derived. Under the entry for *Kuusamo*, it would have added significantly to have also been told that this is an important placename in Finland itself. The entry for the town of *Lac La Biche* does not give an origin for the name, but refers one instead to *Lac La Biche* (with no explicit statement that it is a lake). One might be forgiven for thinking that this would be somewhere nearby on the page, but it is not. Instead, this entry is filed under "Biche, Lac La," all the way back on p. 22; a cross-reference that included the page number would have been very useful. *Lobstick River* is said to be "known to the Cree as *misticipikwam-akesot*" (151), with no translation given. *Lumni* is said to mean 'enlightenment' (155), but we are not told in which language, nor given any reason for the name. The question of language is far from obvious, since the word is close, but not necessarily close enough to stand alone without further explanation,

to Latin *lumen*, *luminis* 'light.' *Medicine River* is said to be "a translation of a native name" (164), but we are not told which language; it is evidently not Cree (we are given the form and told it means 'Sundance River') nor Stoney (again, we are given the form and told it means 'Mussel River'). Similarly, we are not told which native language provides the descriptive name 'good' for *Mewassin*. The word *use* is missing from the entry for *Mudspring Lake* (174). Given that the settlers are claimed to be of Ukrainian origin (177), it is more likely that *Myrnam* 'peace to us' is from Ukrainian than Russian (the forms in the two languages are identical). *Navarre* is named after the Spanish province, said to be Spanish *Nava* and *erri* 'hills and valleys' (178). This is Basque, thence into Spanish as the province name *Navara*. *In* should be deleted from the entry for *Papineau Hill* (192). An *of* is missing from the entry for *Perryvale* (196). Although we are given the Cree and Stoney names for *Prairie Creek* (201), we are not told the meaning in either language. Likewise, we are given the Cree name for *Rivière Qui Barre* (203), but not its meaning; and we are given the Blackfoot, Stoney, and Cree names for *Rocky Mountain House* (211), but not their meanings. For *Tail Creek* (243), we are told that the French name is *La Que*, but given no explanation for why the spelling is not the normal French one *La Queue* (is it a typographical error or a folk misspelling?). *Westerose* is said to come from Wästerås, Sweden, "now part of the outer eastern suburban area of Stockholm" (263). This is the older spelling for Västerås, a city on Lake Malaren, approximately 100 km west-northwest of Stockholm, at the western limit of the outer Stockholm area. The entry for *Whitford* has *family* for *families* (266).

Most of these problems are indeed minor, can easily be corrected in a second edition, and do not diminish the overall value of the book. The only area that shows any particular clustering of these minor problems is in the treatment of the aboriginal names. Perhaps the editor of the fourth and final volume of this series could be urged to pay special attention to this issue.

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