

## Editor's Page

The *ANS* and *Names* were discussed again on the Columbia Network in April and July from stations west of the Rockies. These broadcasts naturally have a high publicity value and it would be very desirable if we could also establish this means of communication with the public in the East and Middle West.

The reaction of such a radio program is threefold: first we get new members; second, we get a lot of fan mail not only because of the interesting subject but because of the excellent delivery of the "University Explorer" Hale Sparks; third, we always get some onomatological information from enthusiastic name researchers. While we are, of course, most pleased when radio broadcasts bring in new members we also appreciate receiving fan mail, as this shows that interest in name study is widespread. The onomatological information we receive is, unfortunately, often not very productive. Too many of our correspondents are dictionary etymologists who roam through foreign language dictionaries and never fail to find a word that is at least similar to the name they are investigating. To quote a few examples: Europe means 'evening valley,' Italy, 'antiquity,' Greece, 'slum,' Egypt, 'rustic'; the Azores are a corruption of Assyria, Arizona one of 'arid zone,' and so forth.

It is also interesting to observe from the letters received in answer to program broadcasts a certain chauvinism or hyper-patriotism on the part of some listeners. There are many nationalistic minorities, some already extinct and absorbed by more powerful neighbors and often only recognized by the names they have left. To study the extent of disappeared cultures on the basis of place and family names is one of the most important and most interesting phases of onomastics. Unfortunately, our friends (with whom we naturally sympathize) often go beyond the bounds of sound scholarship and in their patriotic fervor claim that mountains and rivers and countries derive the names from roots in their language, when as a matter of fact there is no relationship, except accidental similarity in sound or spelling.

On the other hand, there are Anglo-Americans who refuse to believe that other nations besides England might have something to do with the culture and development of our continent and especially of America in the narrowed sense—the United States. They can not accept the fact that America was named after an Italian, and that the root of his name was Germanic. Or they believe that the name California originated in England because in the 1880's an inn in Devonshire was called "California."

It is one of the functions of the *ANS* to educate as well as to encourage the public in the field of name research. Our organization does not aim to be purely academic or antiquarian. Even now, still in its infancy, the membership of the *ANS* represents a cross section of Americans in various walks of life, united in a common interest in one particular phase of humanistic research. To be sure, there is a preponderance of college teachers in the Society because most academic subjects are in one way or the other connected with the use and application of names. *Names*, I believe, has shown that nonacademic members can make interesting and valuable contributions and yet adhere to the principles of scholarship: Objectivity, impartiality, thoroughness, absence of prejudice and pre-conceived ideas.

The article by James E. Alatis is part of the master's thesis written under the supervision of our sponsor and charter member, Francis L. Utley of Ohio State University. It received the Mary Glide Goethe Prize for 1954. Mr. Alatis has in the meantime received a Fulbright fellowship and will be a lecturer of English at the University of Athens from September 1955 to July 1956. We expect to publish other parts of Mr. Alatis' thesis, especially his interesting lists of names, in the near future.

Mr. Straubinger's article is essentially the paper which he read at the annual meeting of the *ANS* in December, 1954. Mr. Straubinger's field, or rather one of his fields, is the use of names in proverbs and popular sayings. He is professor and university marshal at the Riverside campus of the University of California.

Louisiana is one of the most productive regions for a student in anthroponymy. British, French, German, and Spanish elements have created a veritable onomatological melting pot. Mr. Johnson's article is the first contribution to this area. The author is connected with the Southwestern Louisiana Institute in Lafayette.

Hamil Kenny is the author of a standard work on the geographical names of one of our states: *The Place Names of West Virginia*.

Allen B. Kellogg, Madison Beeler, R. D. Roberts, and Charles Edgar Gilliam are already known to our readers by previous contributions.