

Book Notices

The Place Names of New Mexico. By Robert Julyan. U of New Mexico P, 1720 Lomas Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87131-1591. 1996. Pp. xxviii-385. \$39.95 (cloth), \$19.95 (paper).

Robert Julyan has written a truly wonderful book, one which should become a model for future placename studies. It is packed full with the history, geography, sociology and anthropology of New Mexico, which makes this not only a book on placenames but a pocket companion to the wonderful mosaic that is The Land of Enchantment. It is everything a placename book should be and nothing which it should not.

Julyan had available to him information and organizational opportunities either not available to previous placename researchers or used sparingly by them. And he exploits these resources thoroughly and creatively. Julyan is chair of the New Mexico Geographic Names Committee, so he has at hand the most current local information from the latest geographic names data bases and he has relied upon the decisions of the USBNG and on the digital gazetteers provided by GNIS. He is thus able to consider and deal with problems which have been out of the range of previous researchers. In addition to the sheer mass of material which he is able to consider (even though New Mexico is less heavily slathered with geographic names per square mile than many other states), Julyan deals informatively with many of the issues which eluded previous researchers who were limited by their resources. He is able, for example, to query the GNIS database for what he calls "general" names and to determine their number and distribution. Thus he is able to determine (from GNIS to date) that New Mexico has at least 127 places with "cottonwood" as part of their name; furthermore cottonwood collocates most commonly with "canyon" and "springs."

The entries themselves are remarkable epitomes of names and their associated geography, history, sociology, and folklore. The entries range from nearly two pages for Albuquerque and one for Santa Fe to single sentences, but in each one Julyan demonstrates his mastery of the forces which have shaped the name and the state: native peoples and languages, Europeans and languages, history, topography, culture, industry, and on and on.

As with most placename books, this one could have an improved pronunciation guide. Julyan does take the most sensible route, aiming to

indicate only those pronunciations which might differ from the expected. Few would mispronounce Eunice, but there is the particularly sticky problem of Spanish vs. English pronunciations of many names, with all their sociolinguistic implications. I remember distinctly when I taught school in the then-tiny town of Moriarty, NM being struck by the fact that (especially) older Anglos tended to say Espanola rather than Española. But even with “simplier” names how is a non-New Mexican to know how to pronounce Hachita or Gallo or Tiguex or Naschitti or Onava or Tequesquite? And what about that NM placename most frequently mispronounced by outsiders, Acoma (Ácoma, not Acóma)? Julyan would have done well to at least mention pronunciations and pronunciation problems such as these.

Trifles aside, this is a wonderful book, a brilliant example of placename writing. It should be in every library in the land and should have a prominent place on the shelves of everyone interested in placenames. Would that we all could come close to this outstanding example of the art and science of placename research.

Oh, yes, I did find one printing error. On p. 83, right column, the “t” is left off “thought.”

Edward Callary

Lake Superior Place Names. By Bernard C. Peters. Northern Michigan UP. 1401 Presque Isle Ave., Marquette, MI 49855. Pp ix-111. 1996. \$21.95 (Hardcover), \$11.95 (Paper).

This is a reprinting, by a revitalized Northern Michigan University Press and the Center for Upper Peninsula Studies, of 11 articles published by Peters over a decade and a half; the earliest was originally published in 1980, the most recent in 1994. To these the author has added an introduction and a bibliography.

In the introduction, Peters recounts the effects on names of the three major culture groups which contributed to naming the Lake Superior shoreline where it touches the UP: Natives, French and English-Americans. Peters gives a good overview of the types of names given by each group and how these were adopted, modified or replaced by succeeding groups. Thus, Ojibwa Kagwadjiw became French Montagne du Porc épïc which in turn became English Porcupine Mountain.

These essays are filled with the fruits of good onomastic research; Peters draws familiarly upon the reports of early traders, trappers and voyageurs, agents and ethnographers such as Schoolcraft, and the surveyors and miners who invaded the UP in the middle of the last century, as well as on his own original research and substantial knowledge of the geography of the region. The results are solid and reliable and contribute a great deal to our knowledge of naming in the area and naming in the context of social and cultural conflict in general.

Placename research, especially that on disputed names or names of "uncertain" origin, is largely detective work, where the investigator not only does not know the answer to a question but is unsure where to seek it. Peters is the leading detective of Lake Superior placenames, as he demonstrates throughout this book, from the earliest essay, "The Origin and Meaning of the Term 'Marais' as Used on the Lake Superior Shoreline of Michigan," (1980), to the most recent, "The Origin and Meaning of Place Names Along Michigan's Lake Superior Shoreline Between Sault Ste. Marie and Grand Marais," (1994). Linguistic, ethnographic, historical and geographic evidence combine to produce definitive etymologies. (Flora and fauna find a place as well, as in the discussion of "carp" rivers).

These essays appear to have been reprinted verbatim; they have not been revised or updated, except that all references have been brought together in the bibliography. Since they have not been edited, there is some redundancy, especially when Peters tells us, in the introductory paragraphs to several of the articles, in effect, that we take placenames for granted, but they have not always been with us and they are the result of a particular culture's interacting with the landscape. Some name stories are also repeated in different articles. It would have been interesting to know how Peters sees these articles in retrospect; a brief introduction or postscript setting each article in a contemporary context would have been welcome and it would have given Peters an opportunity to mention recent research.

It also would have been helpful to include a comprehensive index to the placenames and also a glossary of the names included, along with their derivations. These would make the book much easier to use.

Edward Callary

First Name Reverse Dictionary. By Yvonne Navarro. McFarland & Company. Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640. Pp. vii-206. Hardcover, \$29.95. 1993. Pp. ix-206.

This is the only reverse dictionary of names that I know of. Navarro has arranged the names by their etymological meaning, primarily for two audiences: prospective parents, who have a general meaning in mind and want to know the available names with this meaning and writers who presumably have physical and/or personal attributes of a character in mind and would like an appropriate name. One could choose from 30 or so male names meaning 'fair' and from more than 100 female names associated with 'flower.'

The book has three main sections: the list of female name meanings and the names which carry this meaning; the meanings and related male names, and an index combining the names in these two sections along with their meanings; in other words a traditional name dictionary. Here each entry lists the name, its particular semantic association, and its language of origin. Navarro is concerned with ultimate origins only; Guadalupe is said (correctly) to be Arabic and there is no mention of its being spread through Spanish. There are no footnotes, no bibliography, nor any indication of where or how the information was obtained.

The book has several useful features. Semantically-related names can be accessed easily; at the entry for 'wolf,' we find the standards: Welk, Volkov, Ralph, and we also learn that Hungarian Farkas and even English Woolsey are semantically cognate. Furthermore, some (not many) non-Western names are included. In the entry for 'lion,' we find Kosey, unfortunately identified only as "African." Under 'righteous' for females we find Rashida, again from "Africa" and Michiko, from Japanese. Some names from Arabic are included (Leila), some from Sanskrit (Chandra), some from Hawaiian (Leilani), some from native American languages (Nahtanha, Leotie, Lomasi, all having to do with 'flower'), and even some names from Chinese and Vietnamese.

This book contains a great deal of useful information, helpful to both the researcher and the general reader. Navarro has pulled together information from varied and scattered sources, including names from long-ignored languages. But ultimately I wonder just how many people really choose their children's (or their characters') names on the basis of their etymological meaning? Would you really name your child Cato just because it means 'wise'?

Edward Callary