

her research in names, and into the middle 1990s, when her health began to deteriorate, she wrote a regular column on South Carolina names for the statewide magazine *The Sandlapper*.

—Thomas J. Gasque, Columbia, South Carolina

Arthur Berliner

Arthur “Art” Berliner, one of the most influential though underrated students of American placenames, passed away on October 16, 2004, at age 77. In a varied career of over fifty years as a taxi driver, English and history teacher, vocal coach, telemarketer, editor, licensed paralegal, and theatrical performer, Art was, in the words of his neighbor and colleague, Millie Willis, “truly an American Renaissance man.”

Yes, as a taxi driver in his native New York City for seven years, he worked his way through college, acquiring an impressive firsthand knowledge of the city’s places and their names. With two famed “Macs” (Wallace McMullen and John McNamara) as his mentors, he parlayed his knowledge of named places in The Bronx into a series of papers for Wallace McMullen’s newly inaugurated American Names Institute at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison, New Jersey. Under McMullen’s guidance he produced a master’s thesis on Bronx County’s street names and helped John McNamara compile his definitive work on Bronx placenames, *History in Asphalt* (1978), which was dedicated to him. At McMullen’s invitation Art joined the American Name Society in 1961 and spent the next forty or so years proofing and co-editing onomastics publications for McMullen and other lights in the onomastics establishment.

In 1967 Art and his wife Gina moved to eastern Connecticut and continued his interest in street and locality names with research in Willimantic, the seat of Eastern Connecticut State University. In 1974 he helped launch the

Connecticut Onomastic Symposium at Eastern and, in 1979, edited the first compilation of its papers as the *Connecticut Onomastic Review*.

For family health reasons Art and Gina moved to Roanoke, Virginia, in 1985, and within months initiated the Blue Ridge Onomastic Symposium, with the first session on May 24, 1986. He kept the Symposium going in Roanoke for four years until (in 1990) it was moved to Greensboro, North Carolina. Art brought it back to Roanoke in 1995 but, for an apparent lack of any broad-based area interest and with little encouragement from ANS, it failed to continue.

For much of the late 1980s and into the 1990s, working with local maps and area and state histories, Art continued his own active pursuit of city and county names, hoping to produce a book, which, unfortunately, never materialized. He also began what he hoped would be a lifelong commitment to a revitalized Virginia Place Name Survey that may materialize with other leadership.

Several years after his move to Virginia, Art returned to his other lifelong passion, theatrical performer. For over half a century he had participated in choruses, Broadway musicals, operettas, and even occasionally grand operas. From the late 1990s almost until his death he appeared in dozens of theatrical productions in the Roanoke area and served as a vocal coach and teacher-mentor to area youth on Shakespeare, the theatre, and opera.

Art was diagnosed with non-Hodgkins lymphoma in 1995, just before the return of the Symposium to Roanoke. Chemotherapy and daily radiation treatments led to a brief remission, but then the cancer returned, accompanied by a gallbladder attack and congestive heart and kidney failure which finally took his life.

—Robert Rennick, Prestonsburg, Kentucky