A Dictionary of Iowa Place-Names. By Tom Savage. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press. 2007. Pp. xxiv-349. Paperback. $19.95. ISBN 1587295318

The best thing I can say about this book is that it has a pretty cover. Other than that, there is little to recommend it. The University of Iowa Press should reconsider its vetting process in light of this featherweight volume.

At first I thought this would be a welcome updating of Harold E. Dilts' *From Ackley to Zwingle* (1975, 1993), currently the best available general book on Iowa placenames but now quite dated. Instead, *A Dictionary of Iowa Place-Names* is its own mishmash of poor scholarship, repetition of unreliable accounts, guesswork, and factual errors.

Superficially the book appears to be a genuine contribution to onomastics; there are nearly 1300 entries (100 more than Dilts) and nearly 600 references (327 more than Dilts), and it has the imprimatur of the University of Iowa Press. But appearances are deceiving. Size may not be that important after all. Savage relies heavily (too heavily as it turns out) on local web sites and local histories. There is nothing wrong with this, of course; those of us who have ventured into the thickets of placenames have relied on these as well. But we quickly come to realize that their value is limited and whatever they have to say must be verified. Savage, however, tends to accept them at face value. Furthermore, for some inexplicable reason (other than naivety), he has missed a number of important resources. George R. Stewart, especially *American Place-Names,* is never mentioned, nor is Bill Bright's comprehensive *Native American Placenames of the United States,* nor is Kelsie Harder's *Illustrated Dictionary of Placenames.* Especially perplexing is the absence of the studies of Iowa placenames by Allen Walker Read, especially his pioneering 1926 Iowa State University master's thesis on the placenames of 36 Iowa counties. (Several entries for Read are in Dilts, which Savage ignores.) If this were not

enough, Savage seems to be unaware of GNIS and other major databases and how these can suggest such things as routes of transfer and likely immediate sources of placenames.

There are so many errors of fact as to call into question the general reliability of the book. Several examples among many: *(North) Buena Vista* "is of Spanish origin, meaning 'beautiful view,' reflecting the view from the town." Nonsense. This is a Mexican War name. *Mondamin* is "an Indian word for corn and since the town was located in a corn-growing region, the word was selected as the town's name." Really? I can imagine a group of settlers discussing a name for their town. One says, "We grow lots of corn here, so the name should be associated with corn." Another says, "Well, *Mondamin* is an Indian word for corn." And all readily agree. Rather, the name is from Longfellow's *Hiawatha* and appears as such in Dilts. Didn't Savage even read his predecessor? *Altoona* is not, as Savage claims, from Latin *altus* 'high'; *Festina* does not mean 'make haste slowly'; and *Algonquin* is not "the name of a Canadian Indian tribe."

The book suffers from the lack of even elementary scholarship. Savage has simply not done his homework. He dutifully copies from the local histories but fails to go beyond them. We are told that *Emmettsburg* was "named in honor of the Irish hero, Robert Emmett," but we are told nothing of Emmett. Why was he heroic? When did he live and die? Information such as this is easy to find and would serve to put flesh on the bones of the bald statement "named for Robert Emmett." But Savage is silent on these matters. Schuyler Colfax is simply "a prominent politician," Stephen Decatur is only a "naval hero," and Lajos Kossuth is "a Hungarian patriot." Nothing about how or why these became namesakes of Iowa communities. (Lajos Kossuth was a leader of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution and was received as a hero in the U.S. in 1851 after being ousted by Austrian and Russian troops. Kossuth County, Iowa, was formed in 1851. Coincidence? Savage would have us think so.) Of *Pella* Savage says: "named

from the Hebrew word signifying 'city of refuge.'" True, but more interesting is the fact that the name was chosen by Dutch immigrants who were fleeing religious persecution at the time.

When a name origin does not come readily to hand, Savage makes a general comment or two and then moves on. Of Newburg he says: "possibly just a practical name for a new town. Another possibility is that it was a transfer name. There are Newburgs in Indiana, Ohio, and New York . . . . It could also possibly be a transfer name from England or Scotland." And of Nashville: "named after a man named Nash."

The book is rife with folk etymologies reported as fact: *Minburn,* from Scots *burn* 'stream' and *min* 'small'; *Mineola,* so named "because of the small population of the town." There are also a number of impenetrable statements, among them: *Camanche* was "named for the Comanche Indian tribe. The spelling of the name was altered so that it would, in the view of those christening the town, sound better when spoken." Decipherment, anyone?

As I was reading this book the remark of a professor of one of my first research design and statistics classes came to mind on a number of occasions: "There is no such thing as useless research; it can always be used as a bad example." He must have had this book in mind.

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Placenames of the Isle of Man. By George Broderick. Seven volumes. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1994–2005. Vol. I: "Sheading of Glenfaba" (1994); Vol. II "Sheading of Michael" (1995); Vol. III "Sheading of Ayre" (1997); Vol. IV "Sheading of Garff" (1999); Vol. V "Sheading of Middle" (2000); Vol. VI "Sheading of Rushen" (2002); Vol. VII "Douglas and Appendices" (2005). ISBN (for the complete set) 3 484 40138 9.

Ever since 1994, I have kept an adequate but gradually diminishing space, on my shelf for books awaiting review, for the anticipated seven volumes of George Broderick's *Placenames of the Isle of Man*, the final volume of which was published in 2005. As Vol. VII was intended to contain important background information concerning the whole enterprise, any assessment of this remarkable work could not be realistically attempted until it had appeared. Any potential reviewer or reader will not likely be disappointed, however, for that volume, published eleven years after the initial one, provides a number of appendices which are designed to act as keys to all individual volumes while at the same time tying them all together. They are: an overview of "Place-Names and the Physical and Human Geography of the Isle of Man" by Peter J. Davey (325–36); an account of "Pre-Scandinavian Place-Names of the Isle of Man" by George Broderick (337–56); a survey of "The Scandinavian Element in the Place-Names of the Isle of Man" by Gillian Fellows-Jensen (357–70); an annotated list of "Common Elements in Manx Place-Names" by George Broderick (371–83); an "Index of Place-Name Elements" arranged by language (385–462); an "Index of Place-Names" (463–631); an "Index of Field-Names" (632–96); an "Index of Personal Names" (697–729); and a group of "Parish Maps" (731–50). Included are also some placename and field name addenda (236–54 and 255–332, respectively) filling gaps left in the previous volumes.

A major purpose of the final volume is the rounding off of the geographical coverage of the island, by an account of the placenames of the "Town of Douglas," including the capital Douglas, which inherited that status from Castletown in 1869. The other volumes are each devoted to one of the six major administrative units, the *sheadings* (from Old Norse *séttungr* 'sixth part'; spelling influenced by Middle English *sheading* 'division'). Each sheading incorporates three *parishes*, each parish is divided into a varying number of *treens* (possibly from Gaelic *tír uinge* 'ounce land'), and the treen

contains an average of four quarterlands. Within each volume, the placenames are arranged alphabetically by parishes; field names are listed under the name of the place with which they are associated. Researching a work of over 3000 pages, containing over 10,000 placenames and more than 4000 field-names requires physical stamina and intellectual dedication, as well as linguistic expertise and local knowledge, especially since much of the information has been collected in fieldwork from oral tradition.

Historically, the linguistic stratification of the island includes Early Celtic (only a handful of names), Gaelic, Scandinavian and English. Although most of the placenames in Man are either Scandinavian or post-Scandinavian, Broderick draws attention to some names which are now considered pre-Scandinavian. In the first place, there is the name of the island itself, which has been on record since Roman times, in a variety of spellings—*Monapia* 23-79 A.D., *Monaoeda c.* 150 A.D., *Mevania* 5th century A.D.—its original form being something like **Menaua* 'mountainous island' or 'high island,' cognate with Welsh *mynydd* 'mountain.' The name *Douglas* is derived from a river name, **duboglassio* 'black water' *(dufglas* 1257, *Duglas* 1317*)*, that is common in Scotland, Ireland, Wales and England, with both Brittonic and Goidelic antecedents. Other names in this early stratum are Rushen, Hentre and Airds. Gaelic elements with apparently pre-Scandinavian roots are *sliabh* (Manx *slieau* 'mountain'), *carraig* 'rock,' *cill* (Manx *keeill* 'church, churchyard'), *baile* (Manx *balley* 'permanent settlement'), *magher*, originally 'open field' but having undergone a semantic change to 'enclosed field,' similar to Scottish Gaelic *achadh*. All these elements remained productive for some considerable time; there are, for instance, a few late *slieau* names which contain Scandinavian or even post-Scandinavian personal or placenames, like *Slieau Earystane* "Stie:nn's shieling". Otherwise there seems to be a small but sufficient amount of evidence that the language

spoken in Man before the arrival of the Scandinavians was a Celtic one, possibly Brittonic first and then Gaelic.

The maximum period of Norse linguist derivation can probably be placed between the arrival of the Scandinavians at the end of the ninth century and the transference of Manx to Scottish sovereignty in 1266, but it is likely that the Norse element in the Manx population had been gaelicized before that date. Among the names of Scandinavian origin are quite a few designations of topographic features: *Cornaa* < **kvern-á* 'mill river'; *Sandwick* < *sand-vík* 'sand bay'; *Beary* < *berg* 'mountain'; *Greeba* < **gnípa* 'projecting rock or hill'; *Rigg* < **hryggr* 'ridge'; *Tynwald* < **þingvöllr* 'assembly place'; and *(N)ormode* < **ár-mót* 'confluence of rivers.' The initial arrival of the Norse in Man is probably to be dated to the tenth or early eleventh century, but it is not clear how many of them came directly from Norway and how many from Orkney, Shetland, or the Western Isles of Scotland. Broderick lists two dozen Norse terms among the most common elements in Manx placenames, whereas his list contains more than eighty Gaelic ones; the total of either category is, of course, much larger and exceeds the number of English elements by far, as English influence did not emerge until the beginning of the fifteenth century.

Considering this multi-layered linguistic background, combined with the readers' expectations and needs, what kind of information is the prospective user of this compendium likely to find in the presentation of the actual evidence? The following examples, selected from three different volumes, i.e., *sheadings*, are representative of the contents and layout of individual entries:

Vol. II (1995, 84-85), Lerghyvreck, a quarterland in the treen of Dromrevagh (Pronunciation): [løgi□vr□k] or [l□gi□vr□k] (84-85). Eighteen early references with sources and dates in chronological order as, for instance, *Largey-breck* LC [Libri Cancellarii] 1680–92/14, *Largybrack* LC 1693/53, *Largybracke, Largybrecke* OD [Old Deeds in the Manx Museum]

1698. The Ordnance Survey Object Books (ONB) spelling as on the six-inch map of 1957, and the additional information that the name applies to three farms, with grid reference. The meaning of the name 'speckled hill-slope,' its spelling in standard Manx *liargeevreck* and its Scottish Gaelic cognate *leargaidh + bhreac*. This is followed by a large number of associated field names, with early spellings if available.

For the relevant treen name *Dromrevagh*, the following details are provided under its entry in Vol. II (1995, 67): *Dromrewagh* LA [Libri Assedationis] 1650–1702, etc. "The area referred to is centred around Ballakinnag and Upper Glen Wyllin". The first element is Manx *druym*, Gaelic *druim* 'ridge, back.' Second element obscure, possibly derived from Gaelic *riabhach* 'brindled.' Dromrevagh is in the parish of Kirk Michael, first recorded as Kirk Michaell in 1422 and as Parochia Scti Michaelis in LA 1515 and 1526. Its Manx form is *Skylley Mayl*. This entry has a full discussion of the development of *Michael = Mayl*. The Sheading of Michael, in which the parish is situated, derives its name from the parish, which is dedicated to St. Michael, the Archangel.

Vol. IV (1999, 221-23): Baldhoon, a quarterland in the treen of Alia Colby. [bal□du:n] and variants. Balladoyne LC 1654/1, Baldoyne 1682/35, Baldowin LA 1703, Balldoon LA 1750, numerous other spelling variations. Earlier forms suggest the personal name O' Doyne, Gaelic Ó Dubháin 'Doyne's or O' Doyne's farm'; Gaelic *baile Uí Dhubháin*. ONB has references for the farmhouse and small district.

Vol. IV (1999, 218): The relevant treen name Alia Colby; Alia Colby LA 1507, and variations. 'Other Colby.'

Vol. IV (1999, 274-75): Colby, a quarterland in the treen of Colby, on record since LC 1631/35. 'Koll's farm,' from Old Norse *Koll-bør*. A few associated field names.

Vol. IV (1999, 216-17): Baldhoon, etc. are located in the parish of Kirk Lonan: Poche Sct Lonan LA 1507, Kirke Lonan LA 1593. The Manx Gaelic name is *Skyll Lonan*, Gaelic *sgíre* and *Adomhnáin* 'Adomnan's Church.'

Vol. IV (1999, 20): The Sheading of Garff takes its name probably from an oblique case of Gaelic *garbh* 'rough,' 'rough area or ground,' or from Old Norse *gr ff,* genitive *grafar* 'a dug hole.'

Vol. VI (2002, 99): Cronk Renny (pt. Abbeyland – Quarterland Ballakew), the Cronk Renny DO [Deed of Sale] 1794 (59). [krχ□k –r□ni] 'hill of fern or bracken,' Manx *Cronk rhennee,* Gaelic *raineach, -ich* 'fern, ferny.'

Vol. VI (1999, 46): Ballakew, Abbey Quarterland ACB [Abbey Composition Book] 1616 'McKewe's farm,' Manx balley y Kew. Two associated names.

Vol. VI (199, 165): Rushen Abbeyland Treen. Rushen LA 1540 'little promontory, wood, copse, etc.' Manx Gaelic *roisean,* diminutive of *ros,* or Welsh *rhos.*

Vol. VI (1999, 166): Rushen Abbey abbatie sancti marie de russin CM [Chronicle of Man] 1257. S.A. 1176.

Vol. VI (1999, 25): The name of the Sheading of Rushen is probably derived from the area around Knock Rushen, particularly from the association and influence of Rushen Abbey.

In order to avoid the alphabet as a basic sorting principle, I have re-arranged the three sets of associated names according to their usage in the administrative hierarchy in Manx land management, starting with the least important (quarterland), followed by the others in increasing order of importance: treen, parish, sheading. This may give a better insight into the place-nomenclature of the island. It is, of course, understood that many or even most prospective readers may want to consult the seven volumes for the meaning of individual names, and the various indices and other apparatus in the final volume are well equipped to assist readers in such quests. Broderick's multi-volume *Placenames of the Isle of Man* is a very satisfactory, modern replacement of J. J. Kneen's *The Place-Names of the Isle of Man with Their Origin and History* (1925–8) which has been our main guide to Manx

placenames for so many years now. The compiler/editor is certainly to be congratulated on his achievement.

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A Dictionary of Manx Place-Names. By George Broderick. Nottingham: English Place-Name Society Popular Series 4, 2006. Pp. xlviii + 234. Maps, illustrations, bibliography. ISBN 0 904889 71 8.

It is convenient that George Broderick's *Dictionary of Manx Place-Names* (2006) be reviewed immediately after the same author's seven-volume compendium of *Placenames of the Isle of Man* (1994–2005), but it would be inappropriate to regard the more recent publication simply as a derivative sequel to the earlier one. That this seems to have been also the author's and publishers' view appears to be implied in the editorial decision to keep mention in the *Dictionary* of its predecessor as low-key as possible, except for its minimal inclusion in the *Bibliography* and the sparse use of the abbreviation PNIM as a cross-reference (as, for instance, under Ballahasney and Stockfield).

It is self-evident that a one-volume *Dictionary* will contain fewer names than a seven-volume compendium. In actual numbers this means that the later publication has approximately 2000 entries in its three inventories: (1) "General Placenames" (1–172); (2) "Treen Names" (173–89); (3) "Parish Names" (191–96). The introductory section is correspondingly more compact, too. The loss in numbers is, in fact, compensated for by this very compactness, and the fact that the *Dictionary* was published after the comprehensive account has given it certain, unmistakable advantages, the chief of which is that, accepting the factor of selectivity, everything is combined in one volume and does not require a search for individual placenames in seven volumes with the

help of an index in the last of these. Another advantage stems from the arrangement of the indices, which, like the placename inventories themselves, are in alphabetical order without any linguistic or geographical subdivision. This approach eliminates the necessity for a separate placename index, since this is now identical with the corpus of placenames itself, and both the index of elements and the list of personal names include actual examples of placenames in which they are to be found. There is, of course, no index of field names since these are excluded from the *Dictionary*.

The overall user-friendliness also applies to the manner in which the actual entries are displayed. A typical example would be the quarterland Lhergyvreck (138):

LHERGYVRECK Michael SC 3290
[lurgie – **vrekk**]
Largy breck 1690, *Largie Vreck* 1770
Lhergey Vreck 1841, *Lhergyvreck* 1957
♦'speckled hillslope' Mx *liargee vreck*
G. *leargaidh bhreac*
QL (TR Dromrewagh).

The entry for the name of the treen in which the quarterland is situated looks like this (181):

DROMREWAGH Michael
Dromrewagh 1515–1702, *Drimrewagh*
1716–1797, *Dromrewagh* 1858–1911.
The area referred to is centred around
Ballakinnag and Upper Glen Wyllin
♦ 'brindled ridge' Mx; G. *riabhach*
'brindled, greyish, striped, brown,
yellow-grey (Arran)', viz. *druim riabhach*

Regular features are therefore (in this order): the official modern name, the parish, the national grid reference (where appropriate), the pronunciation, the early spellings, the meaning, the Manx and Gaelic versions, the administrative status, and a brief explanation if necessary. What are not

included are the sources of the early spellings. This omission can be regarded as controversial but is well justified in view of the existence of the seven-volume compendium as a back-up. The lack of a transcription of the pronunciation of the treen name(s) is more problematic but apparently not always available. It is worth mentioning in passing that, apart from Jurby, all parish names, like Kirkmichael, are what are often called "inversion compounds," a thirteenth-century development in which Old Norse *kirkja* replaced Gaelic *cill* but retained the Gaelic word order.

A consistent feature of practically all entries is the lateness of the written documentation. Only in a small number is there any "early" spelling before the sixteenth century; otherwise their written record began in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries or, in some cases, even as late as the twentieth century. Apparently this does not hinder the establishment of reliable etymologies too severely, and the identification of both generics and specifics can be achieved satisfactorily.

This reviewer has therefore consulted the *Dictionary of Manx Placenames* with benefit and pleasure, especially since the two brief outlines of the linguistic stratification of Manx toponymy (pre-Scandinavian, Goidelic, Scandinavian, English) and of the land division and tenure in the island provide the necessary setting. Whereas the multi-volume compendium of *Placenames of the Isle of Man* will primarily find a useful home in institutional libraries of all kind, the *Dictionary* is destined to be in the hands of individual owners who are looking for a competently illuminating treatment of the subject. Nothing is perfect but the work can be very highly recommended.

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