

## Book Review

**Place Names of Illinois.** By EDWARD CALLARY. Pp. xxvii + 425. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 2009

Illinois' very topography dictates that the names on its land should be far too numerous to be covered in a single book. As the artifacts of mound builders and woodland peoples show (the latter having an economic network which reached the Rockies), Illinois' richly fertile prairies, drained by several navigable rivers, has spawned human civilization since well before written history. Within the few centuries of its recorded history — beginning with the arrival of French *voyageurs* in the seventeenth century — a diversity of peoples, with a wide variety of spoken languages and dialect, have settled here and given names. At least as long as books continue to appear on paper, a comprehensive account of all of Illinois' place names is logistically impossible. The entire toponymic inventory of this state must be done piecemeal, and Edward Callary's *Place Names of Illinois* offers an extremely significant piece of this puzzle. *PNI* will be a valuable tool for historians, geographers, genealogists and linguists, as this review will show.

In a welcome part of the front matter, "What Is and What Is Not Included in this Book," Callary discusses the rationale for confining the contents to the names of populated places, with the emphasis on "current Illinois communities" (xix). Besides the community names are added "counties, townships and precincts" and others which "are of historical or cultural importance," or which can explain the presence of other names. Well over 3500 names are included.

Each entry includes a headword, pronunciation (if necessary), county location, and type of feature. Dates of original settlement are included if available, then the corporation status of the place and the date of incorporation, followed by dates of name changes, if needed, and post office information. Texts of entries usually describe the source of the name. Smaller communities (populations of less than 2500) are located in relation to larger towns or cities.

The sources Callary consults for name origins are extensive. In addition to scholarly books and articles, the many county histories published in the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth were consulted, as were dozens of accounts published locally in books or newspaper articles. Particularly important sources include Virgil Vogel's (1963) *Indian Place Names in Illinois*, and Barge and Caldwell (1936–1937) "Illinois Place Names," which drew on the archives of the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad. Post Office names figure prominently in many instances, and many of these names are supplied by Adams (1968) *Illinois Place Names*, based on a thorough Illinois postal history. With these and other sources, Callary's bibliography alone takes up thirty-three pages of text.

Callary's "Introduction" provides a valuable historical perspective. Illinois' history gives us five layers of names: Native American, French settlers, names transferred from Europe or from older states, patriotic/historical names, and "self-memorializing" names given by community founders. Of Native American names, most of those used by Indians who actually lived here have been lost; those that appear on contemporary maps, as Vogel has shown, are less likely to be of Native origin than they are to be given by White settlers who transferred the names from elsewhere or borrowed them from literature (e.g., *Hiawatha*).

However, Callary's exhaustive examination of name origins reveals that even these categories can be tricky. Some of Illinois's French place names — like the state name itself — do indeed

date from the period of French exploration and colonization. The first Europeans to explore what became Illinois were French, arriving in the seventeenth century. French settlements in the Mississippi Valley, although sparsely populated, established a French culture which persisted until the arrival of Americans after the Revolution, the French language persisting in isolated places well into the twentieth century. And French names do come from this period, but others do not. *Creve Coeur*, for example, originates from LaSalle's explorations in 1680–1681 and *Prairie du Rocher* was a French settlement founded in 1720. However, *Marseilles* was chosen by an American industrial developer who laid out the town by that name in 1835, while *Versailles* is a transfer name from Versailles, Kentucky (itself named for the French birthplace of Lafayette). Several “French” transfers come from Vermont, which is the closest American state to Montréal, Québec. One example of the latter is *Lamoille*, which was “laid out in 1836 as Greenfield by Tracy Reeve and John Kendall . . ., changed in 1839 by Kendall for his former home in Vermont, where Lamoille is the name of a county, a river, and several other geographic features” (192). Vermont was a source both for names of French origin and for numerous New England settlers in northern Illinois. *Massilon* is a French name but does not date from Illinois' French period either; rather, it is a transfer from Massillon, Ohio.

Transfer names coming from other states or countries are valuable for corroborating both demographic and linguistic history. One example would be *Elizabethtown* on the Ohio River, “possibly a transfer by settlers from Elizabethtown, Hardin County, Kentucky” (109), while Massachusetts examples would include *Harvard*, in McHenry County, or *Cambridge*, in Henry County. A map of transfer names from sources of settlement would yield a good illustration of the state's settlement history.

I had this in mind when I tried a comparative mapping of dialect isoglosses and transfer place name distribution (Frazer 1985). In general, I found that Inland Northern dialect prevailed in parts of the state where settlement came from New England or New York. We thus find Northern dialect to prevail in northeastern Illinois, where we find place names like *Harvard* or *Lockport*. Place names transferred from the South are less frequent, but in general their patterns are a rough predictor of the prevalence of what linguists call South Midland or Upland Southern speech. The latter is common in much of southern Illinois, where we also find place names like *Nashville* (Tennessee) or *Elizabethtown* (Kentucky). German settlement also affected language patterns, and Callary notes that “Germans in particular brought their place names with them. There have been at least ten Hanovers in Illinois, nine Berlins, nine Hamburgs, and nine Bremens” (xvii). (Other names, like *German Valley* or *Germantown*, are not transfer names but indicate the presence of German settlers as well.) Although parts of southern Illinois maintain a strong use of southern dialects, this pattern is broken in areas with German place names, since Germans preferred to learn English from Yankee schoolteachers and businessmen (Frazer 1979).

However, I made assumptions in that dialect paper which Callary's book would have prevented. I counted *Addieville* as a southern (North Carolina) transfer name but find from Callary that the town was actually named for Adele (“Addie”) Morrison, whose husband James was the town's founder. And *Lynchburg*, an apparent transfer name from Virginia, was in truth named for W. H. Lynch, who laid out the town in 1853. (Despite these caveats, in general there remains a strong relationship between dialects and the sources of transfer names.)

Commemorative naming is still another layer of Illinois' onomastic history, especially names given for patriotic reasons. The names of early presidents (Washington, Jefferson, Adams, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, and of course Lincoln) are prominent as county and town names, as are those of other Revolutionary figures like John Hancock or Charles Carroll. Other names commemorate battles in wars fought up through the end of the nineteenth century. The Civil War monuments which dominate many Illinois small towns are matched by place names from that same war, like *Corinth* and *Iuka*. Spanish place names come from both the Mexican War and the Spanish American War.

A more prosaic source of names comes simply from the founders of or prominent figures in communities. A random check of names on pages 130 and 131 revealed *Fullerton* (for David Fullerton, original site owner), *Fulls* (for founder Nicholas Fulls), *Funkhouser* (for founders John and William Funkhouser), *Galesburg* (for Rev. George Washington Gale, founder), *Galesville* (named by site owner Rufus Calef for his mother, whose maiden name was Gale), and *Gallagher* (for postmaster James M. Gallagher). *Future City* was actually named for founder Richard Futrell, forgotten by boosterish public myth which changed its name to "Future."

Of additional value to linguists of this place name study is the examination of the patterns by which foreign names are Anglicized. Although publishers of works of this sort are reluctant to print true renditions in the International Phonetic Alphabet (a problem encountered by Rennick in preparing *Kentucky Place Names*), Callary partially skirts this problem by employing the sorts of phonetic spellings used by journalists. We thus learn that *Creve Coeur* is [KREEV KOR] to people who live there, and *Prairie du Rocher* is [PREHR ee duh RO cher]. Meanwhile, *Marseilles* and *Versailles* are Anglicized to [mar SAYLES] and [ver SAYLES]. Spanish placenames also get Anglicized: the first word of *Buena Vista* is [BYOO nuh], while the final vowel in both words of *Cerro Gordo* is not the rounded /o/ of Spanish, but rather a lax [uh]. It would appear from onomastic evidence that tense final vowels from Romance languages usually relax in English — I have heard a final [uh] for *Cinnimati* — but for a contrary example see *Cuba*, below.

These changes in vowels and stress accents appear in other French names for which Callary does not provide pronunciation: *La Harpe*, another name probably originating from LaSalle's expeditions, to residents is [LAY harp], while nearby *Terre Haute* (a transfer name from Indiana) sounds like "Terry hut." Still other local pronunciations that did not make it into *PNI* illustrate treatment of lax, unstressed vowels. I have heard *Bernadotte*, for example, pronounced as "burny-dot," and "Cuba" as [kjubi], both examples rendered by a farmer who was president of the Fulton County Historical Society. In the best of all possible worlds, which is not the one we live in, it would be possible to ascertain all the pronunciations which are not completely obvious.

But trying to do the fieldwork that would find all these local pronunciations would make a state-wide survey like this logistically impossible. One response to this problem which might be especially interesting to readers of *Names* would be a survey of place name pronunciations recorded in fieldwork for the various Linguistic Atlas projects (microfilm records for the Linguistic Atlas of the North Central States are available at the University of Chicago's Regenstein Library) or for the *Dictionary of American Regional English*.

## References

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