

Sixty Years of *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics*

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This succinct history of *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics* discusses its founding in Detroit, Michigan, December 29 1951 and the subsequent creation and publication of its academic journal *NAMES* in 1953. It provides an enumeration of the Society's founders and officers, the contents of the first issue, and a listing of famous and frequent contributors to the journal. Maney Publishing is now digitizing all of the contents of *NAMES* from the first issue (March 1953) to date, which will make these valuable research articles available to the scholars and to the public. A selection of eight important articles published in the journal since 2009 will be available *gratis* to the public.

KEYWORDS American Name Society, article access, digitization, history of *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics*, Maney Publishing

Introduction

NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics has been published continuously since its first issue appeared in March 1953, a scant fifteen months after the founding of the American Name Society in Detroit, Michigan, on December 29 1951. Originally titled *NAMES*, a subtitle “*A Journal of Onomastics*” was added to volume 44, number 1 (March 1996). Several accounts and recollections of the history of the American Name Society are available (Bryant, 1976; Gasque, 2010; Ashley, 2002). Furthermore, the fourth issue of volume 49 (2001) of *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics* contains a collection of essays and recollections about the American Name Society in honor of its fiftieth anniversary. The contributors to that issue (in order) read like a *Who's Who* of onomastic scholars: Thomas E. Murray, Leonard R. N. Ashley, William Bright, Donald M. Lance, Edwin D. Lawson, Paul Rich, D. K. Tucker, Emma Woo Louie, Kelsie B. Harder, John Algeo, Don and Alleen Nilsen, Herbert Barry, III, and Aylene S. Harper, D. Allen Carroll, Ronald L. Baker, Sarah Evelyn Jackson, Michael McGoff, E. Wallace McMullen, Fred Tarpley, Alan Rayburn, Robert Julian, Roger L. Payne, Thomas J. Gasque, William Kirwin, Grant Smith, and Lewis L. McArthur.

At present, indices of the contents of the *NAMES* have appeared in three special issues edited by Clarence L. Barnhart (1967, volumes 1–15), Kelsie B. Harder (1982,

volumes 16–30), and Michael F. McGoff (1997, volumes 31–45). Plans for a fourth index for volumes 46–60 are now in the works.

A brief history of the American Name Society and *NAMES*

Thomas J. Gasque, Professor Emeritus of English at the University of South Dakota, wrote a history of the American Name Society entitled “Six Decades of the American Name Society, 1951–2009,” which was originally presented at the American Name Society Meeting held in Baltimore, Maryland, on January 8 2010. A slightly revised version of his talk is available at the American Name Society website: <<http://www.wtsn.binghamton.edu/ans>> in downloadable format on the first page of the ANS portal under the rubric “A History of the American Name Society by Thomas Gasque.” It is a remarkable piece of scholarship, which provides a useful and informative history of the American Name Society. Thomas Gasque, in fact, is a significant part of that history since he himself served as Editor of *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics* for volumes 36–40 (1988–1992) as well as President of the Society (2001–2002). Thomas Gasque’s history of the American Name Society includes a complete list of past Presidents as well as a complete list of the past Editors of *NAMES*. In this essay, references to the history of the American Name Society rely on Thomas Gasque’s history of the organization.

The founding members of the American Name Society met at the end of 1951. They included Erwin Gudde (University of California, Berkeley) and Elsdon Smith (Chicago attorney). Several other people present at this historic meeting were Harold B. Allen (University of Minnesota), Harold W. Bentley (University of Utah), Margaret M. Bryant (Brooklyn College), Karl W. Dykema (Columbia University), E. C. Ehrensperger (University of South Dakota), E. E. Ericson (University of North Carolina), Robert L. Ramsay (University of Missouri), William F. Mockler (West Virginia University), and A. H. Fuchs and Elsie Mag (both of G&C Merriam Dictionaries). Elsdon Smith, a lawyer, arranged to charter the Society under the laws of the state of Illinois, which remains in effect today.

As Gasque aptly observes, the founding members of the American Name Society are easy to identify. Nevertheless, because of imprecise records, it is more problematic to ascertain the charter members of the Society, but the early members include such prominent scholars as H. L. Mencken, Frederic Cassidy, and George R. Stewart. In fact, the authors whose research articles appear in *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics* constitute an impressive list indeed.

By 1952, the ANS had established itself as a viable society and it published the first issue of its new journal in March 1953. Volume 1, No. 1 (March 1953) included the following articles:

- “America — The Story of a Name” by Madison S. Beeler
- “Poets and Place Names” by Marshall Smelser
- “Irish Pioneer Onomatologists” by Robert L. Ramsay
- “Slavic Names on Cyprus” by Demetrius J. Georgacas
- “Bacteriological Nomenclature” by Aileen E. Bonestell
- “Los Angeles: A Noble Fight Nobly Lost” by David Allen Stein
- “Brooklyn from *Breukelen* and *Bruijkleen*” by Carl M. Weisman
- “Names and Trains” by Erwin G. Gudde

On the inside front cover of the first issue of *NAMES*, the purpose of names was stated in the following way:

Names is devoted to the dissemination of the results of study and research in the etymology origin, meaning, and application of all classes of names — geographical, personal, scientific, commercial, popular.

Names will publish general, regional, and topical articles as well as the results of specialized research in the fields of onomatology. Contributions of non-members of the Society will be accepted if space permits.

Names will follow the rules of the *MLA Style Sheet*. All contributions to *Names* must be typewritten and double spaced (including footnotes and quotations) on standard letter size white paper. In indicating pronunciations the key in *Webster's International Dictionary* and/or symbols of the International Phonetic Association should be used.

Names will furnish gratis to authors twenty-five reprints of all longer articles and between two and five copies of the sections "Names in Brief," "News, Queries, Comments," "Book Reviews." Larger quantities of the reprints may be obtained at cost.

To be sure, the way in which submissions to *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics* are now processed has changed significantly since 1953. No one then could have imagined the technological revolution that has taken place over the past sixty years — one which continues to this very day with ever-increasing frequency.

The cost of annual membership in 1953 was \$5.00. Today it is \$45.00. With inflation factored in, this price of membership remains a bargain given the continuing excellent quality of the scholarship that appears in every issue.

The original officers of the American Name Society were:

- Elsdon C. Smith, President
- Vilhjalmur Stefansson, First Vice President
- Meredith F. Burrill, Second Vice President
- Kemp Malone, Third Vice President
- Henry Karpenstein, Treasurer
- Erwin G. Gudde, Executive Secretary and Editor of *Names*

On its current website (<<http://www.wtsn.binghamton.edu/ans>>), the American Name Society states its purposes as follows:

The American Name Society was founded in 1951 to promote onomastics, the study of names and naming practices, both in the United States and abroad. It is a non-profit organization that seeks to find out what really is in a name, and to investigate cultural insights, settlement history, and linguistic characteristics revealed in names.

Maney Publishing's digitization of the complete contents of *NAMES*

In a forthcoming article entitled "A Note on the Names in *NAMES*," and scheduled to appear in volume 61 (2013) of the Journal, author Ernest L. Able (2013 forthcoming) analyzes the names of authors of articles that appeared in *NAMES* in the period 1980 to 2009. Professor Abel's note provides an interpretation of the names of authors who have published in the Journal. For purposes of this note, I would like to cite selectively the authors included in that Abel's (2013) forthcoming essay since many

of them are major scholars in the field of onomastics, namely, George R. Stewart, Elsdon Smith, Erwin G. Gudde, Jack Autrey Debbs, Assar Janzen, W. L. McAtee, C. Grant Loomis, Nils M. Holmer, Demetrius Georgacas, Thomas E. Murray, Edwin D. Lawson, Leonard R. N. Ashley, Thomas J. Gasque, John Algeo, Robert F. Fleissner, D. Kenneth Tucker, Herbert Barry III, Gerald Leonard Cohen, Aylene Harper, Alan Rayburn, Robert M. Rennick, James Skipper, Grant W. Smith, Ernest L. Abel, Richard R. Randall, and Wilbur Zelinsky. This impressive list indicates the wealth of excellent scholarly articles that will soon be accessible through Maney Publishing once the digitization process is complete. As a part of a new contract with the American Name Society, Maney will be digitizing all back issues of the journal *Names: A Journal of Onomastics*, and making them available on Ingentaconnect, just as the current Journal issues are presently accessible by members of ANS. Once again, these gems of onomastic scholarship will be readily available to people for whom access to these articles was difficult or problematic, thanks to the marvels of modern technology. The fact that these invaluable academic essays will not be lost to future generations is of monumental importance.

Access to selected articles from *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics*

Maney is allowing limited access to some of the recent articles on names as a part of its project to celebrate the digitization of the complete contents of the Journal. Here is a list of eight articles that will be available. The articles written by the first three recipients of the annual Award for Best Article in *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics* for 2009, 2010, and 2011 will be available.

- “Naming Differences in Divided Germany” by Denis Huschka, Jürgen Gerhards, and Gert G. Wagner (2009). [Winner of the first Award for Best Article in *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics*]
- “Proper Names in the Polish Global Reality” by Małgorzata Rutkiewicz-Hanczewska (2010). [Winner of the second Award for Best Article in *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics*]
- “The Sociocultural Significance of *Niitsitapi* Personal Names: An Ethnographic Analysis” by Carol G. Lombard (2011). [Winner of the third Award for Best Article in *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics*]

In addition to the above award-winning articles, the following noteworthy articles are available for free download:

- “What’s in a Brand Name? A Note on the Onomastics of Brand Naming” by Marcel Danesi (2011)
- “Influence of Names on the Career Choice in Medicine” by Ernest L. Abel (2010)
- “Teratonomy: The Weird and Monstrous Names of H. P. Lovecraft” by Christopher L. Robinson (2010)
- “Power, Politeness, and the Pragmatics of Nicknames” by Michael Adams (2009)
- “Descriptive Zulu Placenames of San Origin” by Peter E. Raper (2009)

Concluding remarks

The first sixty years of *NAMES: A Journal of Onomastics* have provided onomastic scholars with a wealth of high quality scholarship and research on the multiple facets of name research. We expect to continue this noteworthy tradition as we forge ahead with the journal. The fact that all of the contents of the journal will now be available in digital form from Maney Publishing means that all of *NAMES* scholarship since 1953 will now be available and accessible to the scholars and the public at large through Ingentaconnect. This is indeed a boon to onomastics.

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Notes on contributor

Frank Nuessel is Editor of *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* (2008–). He served as President of the Semiotic Society of America (2011), and he is President of the American Association of Teachers of Italian (2012), and Chief Reader of AP Italian (2006–2009, 2011–).

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