

## Review

**The Name Is the Game: Onomatology and the Genealogist.** By LLOYD DE WITT BOCKSTRUCK. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company and Clearfield Company. 2013. Pp. 88. \$16.95. ISBN 9780806356273.

Bockstruck's title, *The Name Is the Game: Onomatology and the Genealogist*, is a clever introduction for an equally appealing book, one that traces the origin of names back to ancient times and provides an overview of the formation of forenames, surnames, and toponyms. Shakespeare once asked: "What's in a name?" Bockstruck would answer that there is much to be learned and inferred about an individual simply from their name.

The book is slim, yet packed with information. It is divided into five chapters. The first is filled with personal anecdotes, for instance, where his fascination with genealogy began. He writes that his own interest in the study began as a college student trying to locate the gravestone of a close relative, Barbara Baker. He had been given the name by his grandmother. He traveled to the cemetery in the adjoining county, but his trip yielded no results. Bockstruck returned to his grandmother only to be informed that Barbara's last name was actually spelled "Becker" instead of "Baker." Such confusion, what Bockstruck calls an oral pitfall, arose because he had failed to recognize the German form.

It would seem that, in writing *The Name Is the Game*, Bockstruck has attempted to remedy any further complication for others by offering an analysis of the origin and formation of names. It is fair to consider this a reference book, covering such topics as forenames, surnames, diminutives, nicknames, naming patterns, and explaining naming customs from multiple cultures around the world. In "Chapter 2: Forenames" Bockstruck discusses the ancestral roots of names going back to Ancient Greece. Ancient beliefs, such as that the seventh son would have a knowledge of medicine and therefore be given the nickname "doctor," led to certain naming habits.

A particularly fascinating chapter, "Chapter 3: Surnames," details how names can give hints toward birthplace, lineage, and occupation, all information useful for a genealogist. He elaborates on how secondary titles were often derived from one of five sources: (1) The landscape (i.e. *Field*); (2) an individual's trade or occupation (i.e. *Turner*); (3) a role (i.e. *Sheriff*); (4) a relationship (i.e. *Johnson*); or (5) a physical/personality trait (i.e. *Black* or *Goodfellow*).

Having degrees in biology, history, and library science, Bockstruck proves his authority on the subject throughout the book. He received a certificate from the Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research from Samford University in 1973, where he later joined as a faculty member. Bockstruck obviously wrote *The Name Is the Game* for a niche audience of genealogists, as a guide for experienced researchers. The general population could find the writing style confusing and difficult to follow, the chapters packed with information but little interpretation, and minor typographical and mechanical errors which are sometimes distracting. Short and compact, the book still proves its usefulness to an audience of genealogists who are focusing on what a name can reveal about the subjects they study.

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