

Names in Brief

THE NAME LUXEMBURG — *Webster's Geographical Dictionary* (G. and C. Merriam Co., Springfield, Mass., 1949) gives the French spelling *Luxembourg*, in preference to the German *Luxemburg*, for the name of both the grand duchy and the adjacent Belgian province. The French spelling seems to be secondary, as it is in the names *Fribourg* (= Alemannic *Friburg*, standard German *Freiburg*) and *Wissembourg* (= Middle High German *Wissenburg*, standard German *Weissenburg*). However, even the German form *Luxemburg* is in disagreement with the form actually used in the spoken language of the Luxemburgers, which is *Letzeburg*. The earliest book in the Luxemburg language (originally a German dialect), a small volume of poems by Anton Meyer, published in 1829, was entitled *E Schreck op de Letzeburger Parnassus* (A Step onto the Luxemburg Parnassus) which, translated into German, would be *Ein Schritt auf den Luxemburger Parnass*.

The name appears for the first time in a record of the year 963 A. D. and is written *Lucilinburhuc*. This is a correct Old High German nominal compound meaning 'Little burgh' or 'Little borough'. In regular literary Old High German, the first compound is usually spelled *luzzil* (Middle High German *lützel*) which agrees in every detail with English *little*, through ME *lītel* *lütel* and OE *lȳtel* 'small.' While the independent adjective *lützel* has disappeared completely in the New High German standard language and almost completely in the Upper German dialects, it is preserved in numerous place names, e. g., *Lützelflüh* in the Emmental (Switzerland). If the same phonetic development as in Alemannic Switzerland had taken place in Middle Franconian Luxemburg, its name would now sound *Lützelburg*. The actual form *Letzeburg* shows the mark of two phonetic changes: (1) *ü* > *e* with "unrounding", (2) dissimilatory loss of the second *l*.

The official form *Luxemburg* came into existence in medieval chancelleries through Latinization. This Latinized form has inspired modern Luxemburg patriots and amateur etymologists. In the 10th century, the country was a county of the Holy Roman

Empire, and we read of a Count Siegfried whom enthusiastic Luxemburgers would like to identify with Siegfried, the "Hero of Light" in the Middle High German *Nibelungenlied*. They see the Latin noun *lux* 'light' in the name *Luxemburg*, as is shown in an article by the Luxemburger Norbert Jacques in *Der kleine Bund* (literary supplement to the daily newspaper *Bund* of Bern, Switzerland) of February 20, 1938.

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Some Names Around Juneau. By R. N. DeArmond. (Sitka, Alaska, Sitka Printing Company. 48pp. \$ 1.00). The geographical names of Alaska are of great interest and will some day form an interesting and important volume in the encyclopedia of United States place names — one of the long range projects of the *ANS*. In the December, 1956, issue of *NAMES* George R. Stewart contributed an essay on the name of the territory and future state itself, and now another of our members has published the first systematic account of the place names of a limited region of the vast territory. Of the 123 names featured more than one-half were named for persons, mostly miners and settlers of the 1880's; twenty-four names are descriptive, twelve derived from the flora and fauna, nine are transfer names. Among the names of various origins DeArmond discovered only three names of Indian derivation. As it is usual with publications dealing with names of a certain locality the book contains a great deal of interesting local history. This book will be a building stone for the edifice of Alaskan geographical nomenclature.

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