

## Book Reviews

*Acronyms Dictionary*. 1st Edition. By Gale Research Company, Book Tower, Detroit 26, Michigan, 1960. Pp. 211 \$10.00.

Alphabet-soup agencies and groups have multiplied so rapidly since, say, 1932, that such a work as *Acronyms Dictionary* produced by F. G. Ruffner of Gale Research Company has become a necessity. Even the most erudite now needs aid to learn what CIA means when he sees the acronym in a national newspaper or magazine. Sometimes the context will supply an explanation, but we find listed under CIA such organizations as Cigar Institute of America, Correctional Industries Association, Central Intelligence Agency, and five others. ASA, with thirty-three entries, has the largest listing, followed by ACA, 18, and APA, 15. ANS has three: American Name Society, American Nuclear Society, and American Numismatic Society. In all, there are more than 12,000 acronyms listed, surely enough to satisfy all except the most meticulous and curious.

Many of the acronyms have become a part of the wordstock of English: CARE (Cooperative for American Remittances to Everywhere); JEEP, now written as "jeep" without any awareness that the word is an acronym (General Purpose  $\frac{1}{4}$ -ton Military Utility Vehicle); WREN (Member of British Women's Reserve Naval Service); WAVES (Women accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service); WAC (Women's Army Corps); VEEP (Jeep Equipped with Very High Frequency Radio; Vice President); SPAR (Coast Guard Women's Reserve: *Semper Paratus* — Always Ready, USCG Motto); SNAFU (Situation Normal, All Fouled Up); and possibly SCUBA (Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus), now a part of every skindiver's equipment.

Some are not without humor. SNAFU is written with its euphemism "fouled," but another term obviously can be, and usually is, substituted for "fouled." SEABEE and SPAR might not pass muster with local censors who recognize the salty — if corny — humor hidden in the acronyms. ICBM, known to practically everyone who reads, almost qualifies as a "sick" acronym. MUTT (Military Utility Tactical Truck), the obsolete acronym CINCUS (Commander-in-Chief, US Fleet), SOFT (Status of Forces Treaty), SOAP (Symbolic

Optimum Assembly Programming), SNORT (Supersonic Naval Ordnance Research Track), PEP (Promoting Eternal Peace Association), and TEA (Technical Engineers Association) are among many that seem to be amusing, whether their creators intended them to be or not. On the whole, taboo and pejorative words formed from acronyms, CINCUS, for instance, must be avoided, especially if sensitive feelings are involved.

An adequate introduction gives the historical background, the development of the word "acronym," and how acronyms came about, along with a discussion of definition, style, and pronunciation. Pedantically, one would wish for a better introduction and a representative bibliography. Perhaps some of the more obsolete acronyms — AAA (Agricultural Adjustment Administration) and CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) come to mind immediately — could be listed in the promised future editions. Since *Acronyms Dictionary* will be used primarily as a reference book, historical acronyms would be a valuable and welcome addition. These desires, however, may be merely a greediness for more icing on an already substantially decorated cake.

*Acronyms Dictionary* should become the standard reference to alphabetical designations. It will certainly be expanded in future editions, and readers can submit recommendations for new listings on forms provided in the back of the book. This work deserves an important place on the special dictionary reference shelf of any institutional or personal library.

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*Baby Name Finder*. By J. E. Schmidt. Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, Illinois. 1960. Pp. xx, 390. \$10.50.

Dr. J. E. Schmidt, the compiler of a number of dictionaries pertaining to medicine, among them the *Dictionary of Medical Slang and Related Esoteric Expressions*, *Medical Discoveries: Who and When*, *Reversion: A Medical Word Finder*, and one of the terms of narcotic slang, has now compiled a list of 4,200 living names for boys and girls so that parents may select a suitable name for the

new arrival. Every one knows individuals with unfortunate names, a cross which is often borne throughout life, as Ima Hogg, Ura Hogg, and Fancy Collar.

Each name has its own meaning and history, but few persons understand the meaning of their names and few realize the importance of naming. Writers, particularly of novels, plays, and short stories, often put a great deal of thought on the designations of their characters, for they have become cognizant of the connotation of a name. Consider, for example, Dickens' umble Uriah Heep, the incurable optimist, Wilkins Micawber, and David Copperfield himself in the novel by the same name; or the clever, unprincipled intriguer Becky Sharp of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*; or Meredith's beauty of wit and charm, Diana of the Crossways, whose impulsiveness often placed her in conflict with convention; or Hawthorne's Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, the father of Hester Prynne's illegitimate daughter Pearl, in *Scarlet Letter*. One can go on and on, but these few should suffice to show the significance of naming.

At the beginning of the book there is a short history of naming as it grew up in society, showing how physical characteristics, occupations, and places of birth or residence were important influences in giving appellations to individuals. The volume, however, consists principally of two parts, the first of which lists alphabetically the names. Each name is followed by its etymological derivation and wherever possible by historical background. For instance, the meaning given for Agnes is "the chaste one" from the Greek *hagne* "chaste." Diminutives, variants, and equivalents also follow, as Aggie for Agnes; or Dorothy, Doll, Dollie, Dolly, Dora, Dot, Dotty for Dorothea, "the gift of God," from the Greek *Δωροθέα* (*δῶρον* [*dōron*] "gift" and *θεός* [*theós*] "god"); or the French Pierre, the Italian Pietro, the Spanish Pedro for Peter, "the rock," from the Greek *pétra* (*πέτρα*) "rock." The historical background is illustrated in the brief description given for Noah from the Hebrew *nahem*, "to comfort": "In the Bible, the patriarch who built an ark and saved all living species from the flood."

The second part gives in alphabetical order for easy reference the various qualities and ideas expressed by the names. If a parent wishes to select a name for the expected baby on the basis of some desirable characteristic implied in the name, as courage, loyalty,

leadership, constancy, he may without difficulty find a name which he may hope will serve as a guide to the child when its meaning is later explained. For example, the quality of faithfulness is to be found in Cordelia (symbol of faithfulness in Shakespeare's *King Lear*), Penelope (personification of wifely loyalty to Ulysses), Enid (a model of marital faithfulness in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*), names for girls; and in Durwin (a faithful friend), Aylwin (a faithful friend of many years), Dillon (the faithful, staunch, incorruptible, from the Celtic), Caleb (the faithful and constant, from the Hebrew *kelev*, "a dog," in reference to its faithfulness), names for boys.

Along with the many suggested names are 200 pictures of babies, some being full page illustrations. Three-fourths of these could have well been omitted. The book would then have been less expensive and served its purpose better for those seriously interested in selecting a name. One often wonders about the interpretation of the name, but for those seeking a name for a baby, it will open many suggestions and give the parents some knowledge of the name chosen. Those seriously interested in onomastics will undoubtedly turn to another volume.

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Ellis Davies, *Flintshire Place-Names*. Published on behalf of the Board of Celtic Studies of the University of Wales. Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1959. Pp. 184.

This book contains a collection of approximately 1300 place names of Flintshire (northeast Wales) with a preface by the author, a bibliography, and an appendix of nine additional names. These names are not classified in any way, but are listed in alphabetical order. With only a few exceptions, they are old names still in use, or which have disappeared from use, and which have been found recorded in various manuscripts, lists, deeds, Church records, etc. All types of place names have been included, ranging from names of villages, parishes, and rivers to those of brooks, fields, and mounds which may long since have disappeared. The location within the

county for each place is given, along with earlier forms of the name when found, and an etymology. It was the author's aim not only to find an etymology for each name, but a reason for its adoption as well. Some names have defied explanation and in such cases they are merely listed with whatever information was found.

It is unfortunate that the compiler has generally excluded from his work names given in modern times. The few modern names that do appear are those which apparently were meaningful to him. For example, he lists *Wal Goch* (p. 184) as the present name of a farmstead, so called because of a red brick wall which bounds it on the road side. *Forest* is also listed as the name given by the owner of a house built in 1937, because his family hailed from "Forest," a farm in Llansannan parish. Today it is spelled *For Rest*, because it was acquired by the present occupant "for rest" after retirement. Yet the modern form *Cadole*, given under the entry *Cat Hole*, *Cathole Mine*, is dismissed as meaningless. Might it not be possible that the original meaning of the word *cathole* "a hole in a ship for a hawser or chain to pass through," for which the mine was originally named, was forgotten in time? The modern spelling *Cadole* might simply represent someone's studied attempt to avoid a word whose real meaning was unknown to him and which was distasteful as well, and to represent in the spelling a common pronunciation of the name. At any rate, an explanation for the modern form should be found, since without it the history of the name is not complete. The author deplores the fact that old names are changed and fears that interesting ones might be lost in the process. In reply it might be said that modern names also have their place in the study of onomastics and from them as well as from the old, much information can be gleaned. The exclusion of modern names from this volume is, however, a relatively unimportant shortcoming. It is the complete listing of the old names gathered from all sources available to the author that will be welcomed by future investigators of this field. A more regrettable omission, perhaps, is an adequate guide to the pronunciation of the Welsh names.

The task of compiling these names was the more difficult not only because Flintshire contains names of English, Norman, and Welsh origin, but also because English names were not infrequently assimilated to the Welsh language. The many years of devoted and

painstaking scholarship by the author, who has already twice been awarded the National Eisteddfod Prize, have resulted in a valuable contribution to the study of Welsh place names.

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*Fryske Stúdzjes oanbean oan Prof. Dr. J. H. Brouwer op syn sechstichste jierdei 23 augustus 1960.* Assen (Netherlands), Van Gorcum & Co., 1960. Pp. 495.

"Frisian Studies presented to Prof. J. H. Brouwer on his sixtieth birthday, August 23, 1960" is an English translation of the original Frisian title of this volume. Near the end of the work (pp. 475 to 479) a chronological listing is given of the writings of the (University of) Groningen Frisianist to whom the volume is dedicated. Contributions made by him to Frisian name research are not found wanting. It is therefore not unfitting that a given number of the "studies" be in the field of onomastics. The eight articles classified under *Nammekunde* (Frisian for onomastics) were written in four languages.

The first article, in German, is by H. Kuhn (Laboe-Kiel), "Vorgermanische Personennamen bei den Friesen" (= Pre-Germanic Personal Names among the Frisians), pp. 379–388. The article following is also in German: W. Laur (Schleswig), "Nordseegermanische lautliche Merkmale in den niederdeutschen Ortsnamen Schleswig-Holsteins" (= North Sea Germanic Sound Traits in the Low German Place Names of Schleswig-Holstein), pp. 389–398. Next comes a study written in Dutch: K. Roelandts (Herent-Leuven), "De Antwerpse ingweonismen" (The Antwerp [Area] Ingvaeonisms) (with a map), pp. 399–412. Fourth among our onomastic contributions is one in English: G. Droege (Chicago), "Frisian Given Names in French Flanders?," pp. 413–418. The fifth contribution is in Dutch: D. P. Blok (Amsterdam), "*Oud* in Holland" (*Old* in Holland), pp. 419–423. Article no. 6 is also in Dutch: H. Halbertsma (Amersfoort), "Taalkunde in het licht der Oudheidkunde" (Language Science in the Light of the Study of [Medieval] History). "Weyn-britzera auld deel" (with a map and an aerial photograph), pp. 425 to 460. The 7th article appears in Frisian (a separate literary language spoken by an estimated 460,000 citizens of the Netherlands): J. J. Spahr van der Hoek (Beestersweach), "Praeposysjes

by inkelde skiften delsettingsnammen yn Westerlauwersk Fryslân” (Prepositions [used] with a Few Categories of Settlement Names in Westerlauwers Friesland), pp. 461–465. The eighth and last contribution to onomastics, in German, is: A. Johannsen (Handewitt), “Ove. Personennamenstudie aus Nordfriesland” (*Ove. North Frisian Personal Name Study*), pp. 467–471.

Only a word can be said about the above studies. Professor Kuhn (of Kiel) notes that Frisian personal names beginning with *p*, or ending in the unshifted diminutive *-k*-suffix and in *-s* or *-st*, hark back to borrowings made by the Germanic world in general and partially preserved only by the Frisian world in particular. Laur and Professor Roelandts (of Louvain) concern themselves with “North Sea Germanic” or “Ingvaeonic,” that is to say, with English- and Frisian-like place name forms in a (true) Saxon and in a Southwest Netherlands region, respectively. Laur observes that Frisian [ts] assibilated *k*/palatals represents a further palatalization beyond English [tʃ] (contrast Frisian *tsjernje* with English *churn*). In Low German place names, where the original Germanic *k* has not re-established itself, the *t* of the Frisian-like [ts] has in initial position been assimilated by the [s]. Hence *Sarlinghusen* was *Tzerlinghusen* in 1465 but *Sernehusen* in 1522. As reading supplementary to the article in Frisian the writer recommends another article in that language in *Ûs Wurk* (1960, pp. 51–67), the “Communications” (*Meidielingen*) of the Frisian Institute of the University of Groningen: M. Oosterhout, “It gebrûk fan preposysjes by plaknammen” (The Use of Prepositions in Place Names).

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