

Notes and Queries

During 1960, when news in the United States was often dominated by the presidential election and the activities surrounding it, names, both personal and topographic, came in for their share of publicity. The nominations were scarcely over when the papers found themselves in a quandary over whether the location of the Kennedy summer home on Cape Cod should be written *Hyannis Port* or *Hyannisport*. The subsequent official resolution — in favor of the two-word form — may have come as a surprise to those who were unaware of the abiding concern of the United States government with the names of the land. After the Board of Geographic Names had clarified the matter, most publications which had previously split their usages or written the name solid dutifully switched to *Hyannis Port*; at least one exception is the Springfield, Massachusetts *Union*, a paper that has shown vigorous independence on certain other issues, which goes right on writing *Hyannisport*.

The question of whether or not there will be any significance in the decisions of the nation's papers and periodicals on which spelling to use might be amusing. *Names* readers are invited to submit their tallies and observations to this column where a non-partisan report may then appear.

Another sortie along similar lines might be a survey of press reactions, both editorial and practical, to the new president's request that headline writers who are hard up for space refrain from calling him "Jack" and write JFK instead. *Mr. K.*, since it has already been widely used for Khrushchev, would be confusing to say the least; plain *K*, also used for Khrushchev, was, in addition, the name by which his fellow students at Harvard called the present Aga Khan. Mr. Eisenhower's apparent willingness to be "Ike" solved the problem of what to do with a ten-letter name in a headline; Mr. Kennedy's proposed solution is shorter than the "Jack" which he dislikes, but it remains to be seen whether all the papers will accede to his request. In the jargon of the election analysts themselves, it is presumably still too early to discern a trend, but it would seem that some of the papers which have conscientiously

made the switch to JFK are still referring to Mrs. Kennedy as "Jackie." Perhaps some *Names* reader with a flair for history as well as onomastics might offer us a report on the names and nicknames of White House tenants over the years?

* * *

The press is, of course, free to make its own choices; the official forms, to be used in government publications and generally adopted elsewhere, are established by the United States Board of Geographic Names. The BGN has representatives from eleven different government agencies, but operates as a part of the Office of Geography, whose director is ANS Past President Meredith F. Burrill. In addition to settling questions of the *Hyannis Port/Hyannisport* variety, the Board, which is ultimately part of the Department of the Interior, also standardizes forms and orthography for domestic and foreign toponyms.

Some of the Board's problems in the transcription and transliteration of foreign toponyms, and the manner in which these problems are approached and solved by professional linguists, are described in an article "Linguists Police Place Name Spelling" by Raleigh Morgan, jr. in the October, 1960 issue of the *Linguistic Reporter*. (The *Linguistic Reporter* may be of interest to some readers of *Names*. It is published bi-monthly by the Center for Applied Linguistics of the Modern Language Association of America, and is available without charge by writing to Miss Nora M. Walker at the Center's headquarters, 1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.)

* * *

Though individuals may have firm opinions and preferences on the use or non-use of their nicknames, the era of the Chamber of Commerce has made a good nickname virtually a *sine qua non* of success for an American city. Last spring, Norwalk, Connecticut set about to find a replacement for *Clamtown* (*New York Times*, July 26, 1960) or *Clam Town* (*ibid.*, September 15, 1960!) which Mayor John Shostak had declared was neither accurate nor complimentary. As the summer wore on, the suggestions poured in. Toward the end of July, a committee which the Mayor had appointed to help in the sifting and winnowing process announced

nine names which would be put up for consideration of the town's voters: *Marina City*, *Boating City*, *Scenic Seashore City*, *City of Resources*, *City of Promise*, *Commercial Center City*, *City of Diversity*, *Old Well*, and *Friendly City*. And the winner? Why, *Clam Town* (or *Clamtown*), of course, the easy victor in a campaign deftly managed by traditionalists who pointed out not only a valid historical basis for the name, but the added value of its individualistic nature.

* * *

From the University of South Carolina, Department of English, comes *Names in South Carolina*, volume VII, edited by Professor Claude H. Neuffer. The twenty mimeographed pages of the winter, 1960 issue contain a variety of notes and articles by several contributors as well as requests for information about certain South Carolina place names. *Names* is much interested in such publications, and would welcome news of any others.

Audrey R. Duckert