

Names in Brief

Amerycke.—Dr. Madison S. Beeler in his interesting article on the origin and etymology of the name “America” could have mentioned another and most persistent theory of the origin of the name of our continent. The Sheriff of Bristol, Richard Amerycke, was the official who paid to Cabot the pension granted to him by King Henry VII for the discoveries in North America. Many Americans, more Englishmen, and probably all the citizens of Bristol believe that in Amerycke we have the true source of the name “America.” The latest reference I saw only a few weeks ago in the June issue of the *National Geographic*.

RALPH W. KELLER

The Name Dante.—The common interpretation of Dante as a contraction of Durante, “the constant,” because of the identity of *durante* with the present participle of the verb *durare* (to endure) is no longer acceptable. Durante, Durand in French, Duran in Provençal and in Spanish, is a Germanic name like Bertrand, Gondrand, Jorand (Paul Lebel, *Les noms de personnes en France*, Paris, 1946, page 59). The second element is easily recognizable: *-ramn*, *-hramn*, “raven”; it could also be *rand*, “shield.” In the first element, *dur*, the name Thur (Thor, god of thunder) may be perceived. *Thur-ramn* or Durand or Durante, is “Thors raven.” For the mutation Thur dur, cf. *Theudric* Dietrich Diedrich; Fr. Thierry Dierry (Albert Dauzat, *Les noms de famille de France*, Paris, 1949, page 85).

GUTIERRE TIBÓN

Halicz in Manitoba.—Halicz in the province of Manitoba took its name from a town on the right bank of the Dnister river, 70 miles south-east of L'viv-Lemberg. Halicz was (1141–1255) the residence of the West Ukrainian princess and the capital of the former Kingdom of Galicia. From the Latin form of this city, Galicz, the former Galicia derived its name. In the 13th century the capital of Galicia was transferred from Halicz to Lemberg.

The spelling of the name Γαλημ is on most geographical maps of West Ukraine according to the Polish orthography. The correct English form for Ukrainian Γαλημ should be *Halych*.

Ukrainian Γαλυμ as a place name has over 10 etymologies. (Cf. J. Pasternak: "Zvidkilja nazva Halych?" *Studentskyj Prapor*, Vol. II, L'viv 1944, pp. 9-15.) The most convincing explanation of this name is the identification of it with the Ukrainian *halych*, a collective of *halycya* "crow," *Corvus Monadulá*. This etymology was recently supported by the author in a special paper The Names "Galicia" and "Volynia" (*Onomastica* UVAN No. 3, Winnipeg, 1952).

J. B. RUDNYČKYJ

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Mercedes.—In the issue of June 8, 1953, *Time, The Weekly Newsmagazine*, reveals the origin of the name Mercedes for the famous German automobile. To autobuilder Karl Benz's tiny plant one day in 1902 came Austria-Hungary's wealthy Consul General Emile Jellinek. He promised to order 30 of Benz's famous racers to enter in the Nice road race "if you'll name them for my daughter Mercedes." Consul Jellinek got his cars (they won the first 30 places in the race) and his daughter Mercedes' name became a world-famous symbol of automotive quality and speed.

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T. B.—T. B., Prince George's County, Maryland, is believed to be the only place in the world named with two CAPITAL letters. It is just west of U. S. 301. The name was derived from a boundary stone, with T on its west side and B on its east side, marking the boundary between the extensive acreage of my great-grandfather William Townshend (1768-1849) and that of Thomas Brooke.

FRANCIS T. MONROE

Naming a Town.—As the Union Pacific Railroad built westward in the late 1860's to finally join the rails of the Central Pacific at Promontory, Utah, on May 10, 1869, the engineers of the company platted towns approximately every six to ten miles through the level country of Nebraska. Freight cars were shunted in on the sidings, providing temporary quarters for the station agents and section foremen until permanent and adequate structures could be built.

Patrick (Paddy) Walsh was both postmaster and section foreman at a new station designated as Wood River Center. He was irked

by the fact a town six miles distant had been previously named Wood River, after a small nearby stream, and the similarity was, in the least, rather confusing. The more he thought of it, the higher his temperature ran—the idea of playing second fiddle to any one was more than his Irish blood could stand. The upshot of the matter was that he dipped his pen deep into the ink and wrote a letter that was brief and much to the point:

Post Master General,
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

This is to inform you that this post office that has been known as Wood River Center, Nebraska, has this day been changed to Shelton. Please govern yourself accordingly.

Respectfully,
Patrick Walsh, Postmaster

After the letter had been opened in Washington, it caused both astonishment and amusement. The Post Office Department evidently thought well of the idea and shortly afterward a new cancellation stamp was received by Postmaster Walsh with the name as he had suggested. Later it was learned that Walsh was an admirer of a certain Mr. Shelton, chief auditor of the Union Pacific in the main offices in Omaha, and that he had thought it fitting to name a station in honor of so fine a gentleman.

RALPH EMERSON WOODS

Sequoia Notes.—With reference to the article "The Two Sequoias" in the June issue of *Names* the following remarks may be appropriate.

In the 1920's, going to San Francisco via ferry, I saw a queer naval vessel in dock. When it landed I walked over to it, boarded her and was greeted by a GPO with, "Do you wish a guide to look her over." Yes, indeed. He went to an open hatch and yelled down, "Sequoyah." I was amazed and expected a huge specimen to come up the ladder. He was indeed tall, perhaps 6'2", but slender and dark complexioned. He was evidently an American Indian. He proudly showed me around the ship—a mine layer—and patted his favorite gun. Then I asked him, "Why do they call you Sequoyah?" He replied, "That's my name." It developed that he was a direct descendant of old Chief Sequoyah, and he told me, "I have visited the old man's statue in Washington, but I have never seen a redwood tree." He was a very modest and likeable chap.

Did Endlicher name the Sierra species? He could not have done so, because it was not then known. Endlicher merely corrected Lambert's classification of the Coast redwood, which was well known in Endlicher's time and many years before the Sierra species was discovered. Perhaps Endlicher felt that the Coast species, being a gigantic tree in its own right, deserved the appellation *gigantea*.

Buchholtz added some new concepts for setting up a genus. If his view is accepted then our botanists will have another field day re-shuffling the oaks, roses, etc., and setting up additional genera.

Our man-made rules permit of exceptions when consideration is given to all extenuating circumstances. Thus, our civil and criminal laws permit exceptions. Why not botanical laws? To insist upon changing *S. gigantea* would bring a storm of disapproval and damnation on botanical purists, would tag them as "screwballs." Moreover, a change would bring about confusion, since our literature is already replete with *S. gigantea*. If scientific classification is for orderly presentation, for simplification and the like then nomenclature also should adhere to simplicity and should prevent, not compound, confusion. Such confusion was brought about when a purist found a sheet in Kew Herbarium labelled *Quercus rubra*. Forthwith, on the basis of this one sheet, and no other evidence, we had to drop this name from one tree that had borne it for several generations and apply it to what had been long called *Q. digitalis*. The purists are not interested in making life simple.

EMANUEL FRITZ

STILL MORE NAMES AND TRAINS

Comments from a Kansas Cityan.—It is not surprising that the Santa Fe named a de luxe passenger train *Kansas Cityan*. Kansas City is the most railroad-minded city in the United States, from which even fifty years ago more trains departed than from any other city. If we discount commuter trains and multiply the number of trains by the distance they run Kansas City is undoubtedly still far ahead.—The *Dixie Flagler* could have been listed under trains commemorating business men. Flagler had a monopoly on transportation in the days before the Florida boom, ran the shipline

from Miami to Nassau, and indeed did more than any other person to make Florida and the Bahamas winter resorts.—The *Flying Crow* of the Kansas City Southern was certainly named by someone who had seen crows migrating. The millions of crows that infested Kansas cornfields were a sight never to be forgotten. I remember seeing crows fly from dawn to dark in a great band from horizon to horizon, the landscape echoing with their crows. There was a bounty of five cents per head.—Hiawatha's corn spirit *Mondamin* has given his name not only to the train of the Chicago and Northwestern. It is a widely known trade name and for instance in the German language became the noun for cornstarch. The *Del-Mar-Va* express is likewise no original coinage, and the *F. F. V.* of the Pennsylvania most people will associate with "First Families of Virginia" and not with "Fast Flying Virginian."

TAYLOR STARCK

Mr. Champion.—The *East Coast Champion* which runs from New York to Miami was not named because it was thought to be the champion of trains but because the name of the president of one of the four companies which operate the train was Champion Davis.

W. H. PATTERSON

The Best Friend of Charleston was the name of a locomotive which operated regularly in South Carolina beginning in 1829. I think, therefore, it precedes the *DeWitt Clinton* as the first named North American passenger train. "The Best Friend," as I recall, was actually manufactured in the United States, I think at a foundry in New York.

HENNING COHEN

Chasing the Deer.—When the first Alaska Railroad streamliner was taken North it was christened, with great pomp and circumstance and solemnity, *The Aurora*. That was a bit too stuffy for the Alaskans. They saw the animals trapped in the right-of-way that cut through the snow banks, and how they were chased by the trains, and promptly named the streamlined beauty *The Moose Gooser*.

ROBERT HITCHMAN