

## Notes and Queries

Unusual names are, in a sense, not really unusual to *Names* readers. Many *ANS* members collect them — from maps and phone books, from birth records and atlases, newspapers and mailing lists. But when a man needs an alias, he generally chooses an extremely “usual” name, one that will be easy to spell and pronounce, will attract little attention and readily be lost in the crowd. Hoaxers who must provide names in the course of their pranks sometimes follow this example. For instance, according to the *New York Times* for November 19, 1961, Dr. Laban Lacy Rice, who is 91 years old and retired president of Cumberland College in Lebanon, Tennessee, invented out of the whole cloth — and strictly for fun — a major new discovery at Mycenae by an archaeologist called “Christopher Wakefield.” At least two practicing archaeologists were apparently taken in by it, and Dr. Rice, who said this was his first attempt at a hoax, must have felt rather pleased to hear that one man had said oh yes he’d heard of Christopher Wakefield and another added the information that he ran an antique shop in Athens.

From *ANS* Past President George R. Stewart comes news of another good-natured hoax that may have taken in many more academicians than did Dr. Rice’s Mr. Wakefield. The information, says Mr. Stewart, was relayed to him by a colleague at Berkeley, Professor Howard Hugo, who had, in turn, been alerted to it by a graduate student. In the annual directory issue of the *Publications of the Modern Language Association* (September, 1961) on page 117, among the “Chairmen of Modern Language Departments,” appears the following entry:

Mt St Swithin’s C, Wiwiantic, Conn — Eng, A Federal Case; Rom Lang (Fr, Ital, Port, Sp), Ettore Prosciutto; Ger, Manfred Reipeisen; Russ, Niklaus Trolaugawicz.

MLA is said to have admitted to the hoaxing, though the full story has apparently not yet been told. An exegesis of the joke should not be necessary, though Mr. Stewart — and your correspondent — are still not sure how much there is to be gleaned from the names of Messrs. Reipeisen and Trolaugawicz. Perhaps some reader will be able to help. At any rate, it is interesting to note that this hoaxer, whoever he was, took the daring step of hoaxing with un-

usual names; the bilingual puns and the allusions, as well as the locale of the joke, indicate that it was intended for a sophisticated audience, presumably one willing to accept as credible names that would seem less so to others. On the other hand, a hoaxer's fun must needs be diminished if his joke goes entirely undiscovered, so perhaps a hint of the ridiculous is imperative.

An interesting and entertaining study could be made on names involved in hoaxes. A ridiculous name, for instance, may be used successfully if all other circumstances seem plausible; legend has it that a young man whose appearance and manner seemed the epitomy of Ivy League gentility once cashed a bad check at a venerable Harvard Square tobacconist's. His signature: *Trine Gettit*.

The birth of the Dionne quintuplets in 1934 seems to have given rise to a number of multiple-birth hoaxes in American newspapers — see Curtis D. MacDougall's entertaining book, *Hoaxes*, for details. Mr. MacDougall does not, however, mention the reported birth of sextuplet girls in Madison, Wisconsin, one fine spring day back in the late 30's. The Madison *Capital Times* printed six pictures over a banner headline, and assured readers that it had obtained exclusive picture rights from the parents, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Vielkinder. The little girls had already been given names; five of them were called after lakes: one was *Wingra*; four took their names from Madison's famous chain of lakes: *Mendota*, *Monona*, *Waubesa*, and *Kegonsa*. The sixth baby was named *Yahara* for the river that connects the lakes. And who can say how many people, reading the *Times* that night, vowed they knew the Vielkinders, then turned to the inside pages for details and more pictures, only to read: April Fool!

On a far less amusing level is the recent hoaxing of *Time* magazine by someone with violent feelings about Mr. Krishna Menon. On February 16, 1962, *Time* printed a letter from Bombay with four signatures. The following week, it printed a letter from Vinod C. Shah of Columbia University, stating that the four "signatures" were not names at all, but unprintable obscenities in Hindi. One cannot help wishing, especially if one enjoys a good spoof now and then, that there might be some unwritten code among those who wish to hoax the rest of us in public, calling for good fun and good taste at all times.

From Donald Baker of Collegeville, Pennsylvania, comes a further note on the problem of why the loose-geese, so common among human twin-names, does not seem to appear among twin cities. Mr. Baker mentions Norfolk-Suffolk, Virginia and Oxford-Cambridge, Maryland as examples of twins with names bound by long association elsewhere, and offers his explanation for the lack of rhyming names: more than one set of "parents" was usually involved in the name-giving process.

The matter of twin-names is not yet closed; some interesting comments have arrived, others are welcome, and a fuller discussion will appear in an early issue.

Elsewhere in this issue is an account of the first annual Names Institute, held Saturday, May 5, on the Florham-Madison campus of Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey. If other similar groups of enthusiasts are meeting to discuss their projects and discoveries, we should be glad to know of it and to report on their activities in *Names*.

Editor E. Wallace McMullen, in addition to his work in organizing the Institute, gave a half-hour broadcast on "The Work of the American Name Society" on April 30 over station WDHA-FM in Dover, New Jersey.

William Feather's remarks on apartment house names caught the attention of Professor Elliott V. K. Dobbie of Columbia, who writes:

"Arthur Minton is the author of an article on 'Apartment House Names,' which was published in *American Speech*, 20: 168-177 (October, 1945). Mr. Minton based his article on usage in New York City, and it is possible that articles on apartment-house names elsewhere in the country might provide different and equally interesting results."

Mr. Feather, meanwhile, has forwarded some notes on street-naming patterns in Shaker Heights, Ohio, which we hope to print soon.

University of Massachusetts

Audrey R. Duckert

*A Note on Norfolk.* In *Names* (Vol. 2, p. 60, March, 1954), Lulu Nordeen has proposed the origin of Norfolk (Nebraska) as being not from the expected Norfolk (England), but a development of *North Fork* meaning the north fork of the nearby Elkhorn River. She

quotes a local anecdote to the effect that the Post Office department in Washington changed the spelling petitioned for, *Norfork*, to the more familiar *Norfolk*, a tale also repeated by Lilian L. Fitzpatrick in her *Nebraska Place-Names* (Lincoln, 1960), pp. 101–102.

In substantiation, Miss Nordeen states that there is a local variant pronunciation, [nórfork], employed by older residents, which would bear out this theory. I find myself unexpectedly able to supply additional evidence pointing to this pronunciation as the one prevalent over half a century ago, by citing the similar consistent (and unmistakable) usage of my mother, Mrs. E. W. Krueger (Philadelphia, Pa.), now approaching 80 years of age. First moving to Nebraska in 1893, she lived in small towns near Norfolk for some 25 years, journeying to Norfolk several times weekly for music lessons around 1900. Later, she and my father moved to other more distant towns of eastern Nebraska, a fact which would suggest she has retained the earlier pronunciation uninfluenced by the present-day spelling pronunciation. I first recorded this usage of hers, which had hitherto seemed to me an error or some personal idiosyncrasy, in notes for undergraduate phonetics (Jan. 30, 1948).

Indiana University

John R. Krueger

## In Memoriam: Waldo Lee McAtee

On January 7, 1962, Waldo Lee McAtee, who was born in 1883, passed away. An eminent naturalist, he was employed for 43 years in the United States Biological Survey and Fish and Wildlife Service rising to head a Division, and serving some years as technical advisor and editor before retirement. He was the founding editor also of the *Journal of Wildlife Management* (1937–1941). He was a prolific writer of mostly small papers: natural history (c. 850); conservation (50); literary (30); and language (50); also thousands of abstracts and many brief articles in mimeographed form. Approximately 35 of the printed papers deal with plant, bird, and insect names. As many *ANS* readers know, Mr. McAtee wrote several articles on bird names which were published in *Names*. It is with regret that we note his passing.