

Methodology Used in the Revision of *Arizona Place Names*

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IN 1935 AN ARIZONA PIONEER — Will C. Barnes — published *Arizona Place Names*, a work of love resulting from a hobby of many years' standing. Over the ensuing years, sales of *Arizona Place Names* continued at a steady pace. By the late 1940's it had become apparent that something had to be done about the vanishing supply of Will C. Barnes' work. Furthermore, letters were accumulating in the University of Arizona files concerning corrections and additions. The phenomenal post-war growth of the state's population was well under way, with the result that old place-names were changing and new ones were being added. In addition, Barnes belonged to the generation which believed that "the only good Indian is a dead Indian," with the result that Indian place-names had been almost entirely ignored in the original volume. For these and other reasons, it was decided to revise rather than reprint the original Barnes' *Arizona Place Names*.

To employ the term "methodology" in connection with what occurred during the course of the project would be somewhat misleading, for the tempo of the work was such that the day-by-day — indeed, the minute-by-minute — schedule was a matter of doing what came naturally at break-neck pace. Nevertheless, were a similar project to be undertaken for another area, the procedures followed for *Arizona Place Names* would undoubtedly prove helpful.

The first task was an obvious one, and that was to ascertain what past and present place-names belonged to the land. At once the question arose whether to begin with contemporary names or to drop back to maps dating from the mid-sixteenth century and so work forward to the contemporary period. Expedience and availability ruled that contemporary maps should be used first. Maps were then obtained from the United States Geological Survey.

As soon as the maps were received, they were marked with coordinates. Names from the maps were then transferred with location identification by county to 4x6 cards, with the map name also noted. The cards were then filed alphabetically by county.

It was immediately evident that the U.S.G.S. maps were a mere beginning, for in 1955 when the project was initiated, somewhat less than half the total area of Arizona had been so mapped. Even today there are vast stretches which have not been scanned by mapping crews. However, the outlook was not entirely discouraging, for additional map sources kept cropping up. Much of Arizona is given over to Indian reservations and national forest lands, and there are maps for such areas. However, consulting contemporary maps alone was not sufficient, since an examination of maps produced roughly at ten-year intervals revealed changes in place-names and, of course, additions. Aerial navigations maps — both those used by the Air Force and by civilian pilots — were obtained through the offices of Arizona's congressmen, and proved useful. Individual county maps and maps issued by the State Highway Department were also used. Mining maps and water table maps turned out to have a limited usefulness.

Contemporary maps, however, were only half the story. To delve into displaced and forgotten place-names, it was necessary to analyze maps which reflected every phase of Arizona's rich past, including the haphazard cosmography of the Spanish explorers, and maps made by missionaries; maps fashioned by the first Anglo-Americans in Arizona, maps produced to guide emigrants from water hole to water hole as they made their dusty way across Arizona en route to the golden hills of California, and maps made of the great Colorado River of the West, with a view to ascertaining its navigability; maps charted by the General Land Office for use by potential settlers; maps made by military men in pursuit of Indians; postal maps, and railroading and commercial maps produced by Rand McNally beginning in 1879. (These last, incidentally, are available without cost to anyone who would like to use Rand McNally maps for research on place-names.) Others maps were used as they were found — in national parks folders, old journals and newspapers, for instance. Cards were typed for every place-name found on a map. The original *Arizona Place Names* contains just under three thousand names; there are currently an estimated

thirty thousand in the card files. It should be added, however, that up to the present time many thousands of these names are completely without historical information.

While map investigation was under way, a copy of the 1935 volume was cut up, each place-name being affixed to a 4x6 card which was then filed with the geographical location cards. This process automatically revealed those names for which known map locations existed. It also revealed where location errors had occurred in the 1935 edition.

Meanwhile, it was necessary to read, read, read — widely, in as many sources as possible — to unearth information about name origins. It would be a mistake to term any category of these sources as uniformly valuable. For instance, many government publications such as the Water Supply Papers contained useful information, but many others consumed hours of unrewarding search. Documents prepared by government explorers proved equally spotty. In the first place, some of the explorers did not know where they were going, where they were, or where they had been when they finished their work. This of course is more markedly the case with early explorers than with those who came later. Even so, some names were found in every such source. The Boundary Survey reports held infinite place-name riches. So also did reports on explorations of the Grand Canyon and of routes for railroads. Geology reports and mineral deposit reports, studies of fauna and flora, Indian agent reports, accounts of military forays, census reports — all of these held clues to place-name origins. In the case of census reports, it was necessary for me to visit county court houses in order to study the documents. In this way it was ascertained that many landmarks had in all probability been named for the first settler in the area, whose name, nationality, date of birth and length of residence in an area were set down in county records. Frequently such information was found to correspond rather closely in date to the first appearance of a place-name on a map.

An obvious source of information is history books, but where Arizona is concerned, the field is a broad one, beginning over four centuries ago. Another rich source is the general books about the Southwest and Arizona, written by men and women who have been intrigued by its deserts and mountains. These works extend all the way from a post-Civil War book by the wife of an army officer in

Arizona to such books as the early twentieth century *Arizona, the Wonderland*, and to an increasing number of contemporary works. It might be added that much information in such books is pure legend. This, of course, is no hindrance, since folklore as well as fact is recorded in place-name investigation. Books and journals by pioneers, and of course territorial and state newspapers, required study. The investigation of manuscripts is an endless one, for they exist not only in obvious places such as the Arizona State Department of Archives and the Arizona Pioneers Historical Society files, but also in local historical societies and in private hands.

Locating documents naturally called for visits to known library collections, such as the southwestern collection at the Huntington Library and the rare maps at the University of California in Los Angeles. Other sources, too distant from Arizona to permit investigation during the course of the project, are known to exist and, it is hoped, may ultimately be examined. However, occasionally one stumbles upon a bonanza, such as was encountered during a visit to the Naturalist's Headquarters at the Grand Canyon where a pencilled notation in an old letter file led to the unearthing of extensive notes on the mapping of the Grand Canyon. It took several days' search to unearth the notes, which were found in a vault where they had lain undisturbed for an unknown number of years.

By this time it will have become obvious that one phase of the investigation of Arizona place-names involved traveling. Visits to national park and forest headquarters permitted examination of field reports containing place-name information. Furthermore, although Indian vocabularies and agents' reports had yielded some information, many unrecorded place-names were obtained during conversation with Indians. In addition, since pronunciations were to be included in the forthcoming volume, it was essential that tape recordings be made with Indians voicing the names. It was equally important to have other place-names pronounced by residents in the area, preferably by the oldest residents.

An important result of this traveling was that viewing the locations eliminated errors in the original volume where a lack of personal knowledge had caused faulty information to be printed. For instance, a reference to a "mining community in the foothills" dropped out when it was seen that the location was actually an agricultural community with the nearest hill twenty miles distant.

In other instances what had been listed as "mountains" showed up as mounds, and rivers described as running in a northerly direction in fact proved to course east to west. It was, of course, not always possible to check information at ground level, because much of Arizona is inaccessible by road. Several times I took to the air to see for myself. However, an automobile was my principal vehicle as I covered over 6,000 miles with a minimum of back-tracking on everything from super-highway to cowpath.

Traveling not only illuminated the physical aspects of the land, but made widespread interviewing possible. Early in the course of the work it became apparent that letter writing was an almost complete waste of time. Interviewing, however, proved to be rewarding, for when it comes to the local scene, those who live nearby are the only ones who can be expected to know the names, much less the origins of the names, of topographical and cultural features. To facilitate the work at the local level, brief lists of place-names in restricted areas were prepared, and sometimes contemporary maps were consulted during interviews. It was soon apparent that local residents are seldom aware of names beyond a fifteen-mile radius of where they live. The sole result of mentioning names outside that radius was that informants tended to become confused and taciturn. Exceptions to this observation are old-time cattlemen who had ridden the range in various parts of the state. Apparently old-time cowboys had much in common with itinerant printers, for both moved freely from place to place and found ready employment. Border patrolmen also knew much about long stretches of land adjacent to Mexico. Forest rangers — the old-timers only — frequently had a widespread knowledge of names. However, often what rangers had to say went against local stories about place-names.

Locating informants did not prove difficult. There are fewer than ten local historical groups in Arizona, but they did have the names of people to be interviewed. However, I soon discovered that some local "historians" are dogmatic and in error. In only one instance was such a local historian dependable enough to be turned loose to assist with the interviewing with collected data then to be turned over to me. This is said as a caution to those who would like to lean heavily on local historians and local clubs for essential information. Where no local historical group existed, it was a matter of dropping

into the local service station or general store. Chambers of Commerce sometimes, but by no means always, knew the names of pioneers or local historians. Lobbies of small hotels and county courthouses are natural gathering places for those with leisure and lore. Postmasters had tips on possible informants. Notably, one informant frequently led to another. In remote areas where ranches are far apart, it was simply a matter of stopping for a drink of water and then asking questions.

The one discouraging aspect of interviewing was that there was not time enough nor money enough to do the job properly. It is a frustrating experience to be tied to a desk and to read in the newspaper of the death of one more potential informant. There is nothing as effective as death in placing a seal of silence.

As for the interviewing, it goes without saying that it occurred whenever and wherever the opportunity arose. I have sat under mesquite trees and shared chuck-wagon lunch with cowboys, old-timers to whom the past is as vivid as the present. I have sat at the bedside of a man who came as a youngster to Arizona in the 1870's and I have held his frail hand as his sonorous voice recalled days when Indians were a present menace. I have listened to retired mining men talk about how names like Klondike made their way to Arizona. I have stood a petitioner at a solemn meeting of the Papago Indian Council while the seated elders pondered the question of place-names. I have sat on the edge of my chair in a formal parlor in Tombstone as an aged pioneer told of her youthful struggles to raise her orphaned brothers and sisters, and incidentally tell how place-names in the hills and valleys came to be. Once — and only once — was I nonplussed by an interviewing experience. That occurred when a writer of many letters to the University told me that he could not understand why he had not been chosen to revise *Arizona Place Names*. I sought tactfully to find his reasons for wishing to do the work.

"Well," he told me, "who is better qualified? After all, I was here first with the Spaniards, then I was on my way to Californy in 1850, then I was a soldier a-fightin' the Injuns, and now here I am again in my fourth reincarnation. I'd know what I was talking about."

I had to admit that I lacked his qualifications.

Recording the information found in books, journals, and newspapers was a simple matter. Incidentally, direct quotations were

taken from such sources. Paraphrasing was done in the final stage. Recording interviews took a double course, depending upon informants. Whenever possible, I used a tape recorder, but since a portable machine with batteries was not available to me, a source of power had to be accessible. In any event, it was not feasible to use the tape recorder when informants took to staring soundlessly at the infernal machine. In such cases, there was nothing to do but bundle it back into my car. With mike-shy informants or those in the wide-open spaces, I took notes unless the sight of pencil and paper paralyzed the person being interviewed. When neither recorder nor notes could be employed, it was necessary to get to a typewriter at the earliest possible moment. At such times when a question arose concerning the accuracy of remembered information, an attempt was made to recheck the item with the informant on the following day.

All of the foregoing, in retrospect and as presented here, seems very orderly. In fact, however, the various phases overlapped in profusion and confusion. The files expanded like an atomic cloud.

Putting the filed results into manuscript form involved many things. Correlating information on various maps required that one specific area be searched chronologically from earliest map to the latest. In accomplishing this check, multiple names applied to a single place became apparent for the first time. Map investigation also revealed time aspects in the naming of places. Concurrently with tracing the names over the years went the work of noting locations for use in conjunction with rudimentary maps prepared for publication in *Arizona Place Names*.

A phonetic system had been developed for *Arizona Place Names* by Dr. C. F. Voegelin of Indiana University. A graduate student in speech undertook to transcribe names phonetically from the tape recordings and incidentally modified the system in order to show inflectional qualities in Navajo place-names. Not all pronunciations are included in the volume, for many place-names are obsolete so that no one now alive can say with certainty how specific names may have been pronounced, as is the case with a place called Whickety-whiz. Where pronunciations are known, they are those used by the oldest inhabitants wherever possible. Where two or three varying pronunciations were found equally distributed in an area, all were transcribed and rendered phonetically in publication.

Particularly with Papago names preference had to be given to a man native to each area, for not only are there twelve sectional dialects, but Papago men do not employ the same speech as Papago women. Because an outsider would probably speak to a man in a village, the masculine pronunciations were given preference.

In writing the manuscript, the card system proved its usefulness. All items of information on a place-name existed behind the geographical location card. A dictaphone was used in preparing the revised volume. It was a simple matter to go through the cards, select those which were applicable, and then dictate the material into the machine. Because direct quotations had been used on the note cards, there was never any question about what the original source had stated.

Information from the cards went beyond place-name origins into local history, since it was known that *Arizona Place Names* would be used by many who would find such additional information pertinent to their interests and work.

As the first manuscript pages came back from the stenographers, the entries were checked with particular reference to the spelling of place-names. Each entry was annotated and the references also had to be verified. This check included not only sources cited, but maps on which the place-name had been found — features not included in the 1935 edition. Further, elevations were inserted in addition to a rough location on maps included in the 1960 volume.

Entries in the current *Arizona Place Names* are listed alphabetically by county, and for this reason an alphabetical index without page reference was deemed — and has indeed proven — to be satisfactory. The alphabetical index was begun when the first manuscript pages were checked. At the outset, sheets were made up for each letter and place-name entered, but not in strict alphabetical order. This preparation of an alphabetical index as the manuscript progressed saved time which would have been necessary for pagination of the entries in the index.

One final point deserves consideration. During the preparation of the manuscript, only one place-name was typed per page. This was done because no one knew how many of the thirty thousand names in the files could be included in the final publication, not only because of the wide variation in their relative importance and available information, but also because no page limit had been established.

Thus when the publications committee arrived at a budget and could set the number of pages, it was simple to eliminate entries merely by abstracting pages and removing names from the alphabetical index. Ultimately, over seven thousand names were published.

Despite the fact that the revised *Arizona Place Names* appeared early in 1960, no one realizes better than the editor how much work remains to be done. In the Southwest, at least, place-names are as changeable as Texas weather. Old information is continually being rediscovered. New place-names arise. Legends expand, contract, change. Inevitably another and another edition will be necessary. The present editor can only hope that editors to come may find the work as rewarding as it has proven in the first revision of *Arizona Place Names* and that her experiences may prove helpful to others engaged in similar tasks.

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NECROLOGY: VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

It is with sincere regret that we note the passing last August of Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the distinguished Arctic explorer, who was one of the first charter members of the *ANVS*. He was also First Vice-President of our Society for three years (1953—55), but declined the nomination for President. Born in 1879, Dr. Stefansson held many degrees and honors, among which were his B. A. (State University of Iowa, 1903); M. A. (Harvard University, 1923); and Ph. D. (University of Iceland, 1930). He was a member of many scientific expeditions to Iceland, Alaska, and the Arctic areas of Canada. He was decorated by the government of Iceland into the Knighthood of the Order of the Falcon. His many publications include *An Actic Manual*, 1941; *Greenland*, 1942; and *Northwest to Fortune*, 1958.