

Book Reviews

California Place Names: The Origin and Etymology of Current Geographical Names. By Erwin G. Gudde. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960. Revised edition, 383 pp., preface, 5 maps, combined glossary and bibliography (pp. 357 to 382). \$10.00.

1000 California Place Names: Their Origin and Meaning. By Erwin G. Gudde. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1959. Second revised edition, viii, 96 pp., 1 map (of the counties). Paperbound, \$1.25. (Based entirely on *California Place Names*, 1949 ed.)

Whenever a sizable dictionary of place-names is so popular that a second edition is necessary, that information is significant onomastic news. Evidently the revised edition of Dr. Gudde's work was brought out simply because of demand, and not because the first required emendation. The later edition includes enlargements and a number of new entries, but contains no major changes that minimize the good qualities of the earlier publication which had appeared in 1949. The lengthy discussions of the names San Francisco and Los Angeles, for example, are identical in both editions. On the other hand, the second printing has benefited by numerous minor deletions (like the last sentence of the California entry), as well as by many interesting additions (such as those found under the *Devil* entry). The 1960 edition also has five excellent maps not in the 1949 volume. (The companion booklet, *1000 California Place Names*, is a selected and condensed version of *California Place Names*, reduced to convenient pocket size.)

Because the more recent volume is printed in smaller type it is somewhat lighter in weight and therefore a little easier to handle than the first edition. However, the listing of first and last entries at the top of each column was sacrificed (I regret) in the new edition, doubtless for the sake of cutting down on printing costs. It is also unfortunate, I think, that Professor Gudde's excellent introduction in the first edition was not reprinted in the second, because readers who see only the later work may be unaware that these illuminating comments and technical explanations exist.

Probably most scholars would prefer to have source references given in the text itself (perhaps on the model of Ekwall's *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4th ed.); but it must be admitted that such a complicated technical apparatus would greatly increase the difficulties of publication. The major sources are listed at the end of the volume, together with a few technical definitions (e.g., "land grant") and other explanatory material. [The location of *total* bibliographical information for this project (in three libraries) is noted (p. 357) for the benefit of those who want such material.] Though there are advantages to reducing bibliographical items as far as practical, obviously it is safer to account for each single entry within the volume itself. Incidentally, the "Glossary and Bibliography" section – in the back of the book – consists mostly of bibliographical items.

One wishes the book had a complete system of cross references, or at least a listing of the numerous names given only under other names. For example, the Shoshonean *pa*, *pah* meaning "water" appears only in compounds (e.g., Pahrump; Yucaipa), while separate entries occur for terms like *alta* and *palo*. (For that matter, many names are listed under words such as *big* and not elsewhere.) Of course, printing complexities increase with such additions; yet difficulties of obtaining certain information in the book are that much greater because of the lack of connecting references. Other examples: there is no entry for *Gospel Swamp* which is included under *Talbert*, nor – for that matter – for *swamp* itself; and *Shake City*, which is listed only under *Shingle*, appears to be an error for *Shingle City*, since there is no entry for *Shake*, nor any for *Shingle City*, either. I do not intend to suggest that the author always takes such liberties (discounting for the moment the publication expenses which had to be considered); usually he is so thorough that the reader is more impressed than not: evidently Dr. Gudde has made practically every scholarly effort to explore all angles of the really difficult etymological problems (see *California*, *Gualala*, *Klamath*, *Tehama* and too many others even to be mentioned here). Indeed, one of the author's most significant contributions was pointing out that a great many "obvious" etymologies were simply not true.

At times omissions occur in the volume, where one or two qualifying statements would have forestalled criticism. Dr. Gudde gives the old meaning of *glade* ("an open space in a forest") and points

out that it has become "a common generic name in North America"; yet he makes no mention of the new meaning developed in America ("marshy, grass-covered ground"; v. DAE). Furthermore, in his discussions of the colors black, red and white he writes as though his remarks have universal application. ("Next to black, red is the most common adjective of color used in place names.") Also, the reader who does not know Spanish would prefer translations, which are not always included even though very helpful ones sometimes do occur (as in the *Medanos* entry).

Other defects in the book include categorical statements, e.g., that *El Modena* was named for the Italian city "or more likely after one of the several American towns by that name." Compare, also, the semantically troublesome verb *to be* in the entry for *Cordero*, which "is derived either from the family name or from the Spanish word *cordero*, 'lamb.'" Nor is the statement (on page 197), "Americans believed (and still do) that *monte* means 'mountain,' as it does in Italian," completely accurate. Furthermore, this reader finds it difficult to accept as plausible the explanation that *Battle Creek* was "So named because it was here that George Cahoon's burro 'Barney' vanquished an unnamed mountain lion in a bloody skirmish" even though the author cites another writer for the story. Does that mean that Dr. Gudde himself accepts the account without question? True, he provides us with so much interesting material that we tend to skip over the dubious. Nor is any book entirely without deficiencies.

Professor Gudde has amassed so much detail that at times one wonders if the general onomastic reader really needs it all. All the early names which are unrelated in form to current names, and the many details on maps and dated events, may be important to specialists or local students, but are not so vital to other readers. For example, in the *Mount Diablo* entry there are four such unrelated variant forms, with a total of eleven dates. Nor do I think that the general reader is particularly interested in hearing about the numerous insignificant individuals who appear in the historical discussions of many of the entries; e.g., "the name was applied to the Monte del Diablo land grant for which Salvio Pacheco had petitioned in 1827." Yet the book was prepared mainly for Californians, many of whom will be interested in these facts. It is usually better to include too many details than not enough.

In the final analysis, though, Professor Gudde's volume succeeds in depicting vividly a cross section of California society (past and present), and undoubtedly contains much of appeal to many people of widely diversified interests – anthropologists, botanists and zoologists, historians, sociologists, students of literature (both English and foreign), explorers, real estate promoters and developers and others interested in pioneer undertakings. A thousand and one fascinating toponymic origins await the reader of this work; here only a few illustrations, given below, must suffice.

Among the well-known persons onomastically memorialized in the State are *Isabella*, Columbus's royal patron; *Jenny Lind*, who never visited California; Lola Montez, the actress and courtesan of a century ago, in *Mount Lola*; *Monterey*, the Viceroy of New Spain; and *Kaiser* – a railroad station named for the "miracle man" of World War II. Moreover, Californians acquainted with literature are responsible for *Berkeley*, *Elsinore*, *Fitch Mountain*, *Mount Goethe*, *Hector*, *Horicon* (probably from *The Last of the Mohicans*), *Mount Ina Coolbrith* (poet laureate of the state in 1915), *Jackass Hill* (from Twain), *Monte Carlo* (from Dumas), *Nordhoff Peak* (for the co-author of *Mutiny on the Bounty*), *Ramona*, *Mount Ruskin*, *Silverado* (analogous to *Eldorado*), and *Tara Brook* (from *Gone with the Wind*). (Suggestion: fiction writers searching for names might well consult a volume like this.)

The distinctive topographical features discussed in the book include the *Pacific Palisades*, which correspond to those in New Jersey, and *fork* – which in California is carried even to the third degree (*West Fork of South Fork of North Fork of San Joaquin River*). Under the *run* entry Dr. Gudde says, "... the tautological Bull Run Creek . . . , Mud Run Creek . . . , Oak Run Creek . . . indicate that 'run' may sometimes mean trail and not creek." Although the "trail" interpretation is possible and might explain forms like these and Saucun Run Creek just south of Bethlehem, Pa., the Virginia and Florida topographical studies (by McJimsey and McMullen, respectively) lend no support to this position.

Californian onomastics could in itself be a good source of Spanish vocabulary; e.g., *Corte Madera* (cut wood – here, the place where wood is cut); *Malpaso* (from *Arroyo de mal paso* – 'creek of tough going or difficult to cross'); *Manzana* (apple) *Creek*; *Mariposa* (butterfly) *Creek*; *Oso Flaco* (lean bear) *Valley*; *Vaquero* (Cowboy);

and *Zapato* (shoe) *Creek*; *San Franciscuito Canyon and Creek* ("It is not the Holy Francis who is little, but the creek"); *San Onofre* (the Egyptian St. Onuphrius); and *Santiago* (St. James).

California has at least one neologism to its credit in the second element of *Davidson Seamount* (designating a particular kind of submarine mountain for which *bank*, *shoal* and *pinnacle* are inappropriate), a term created in 1938. Other localisms include *Jimtown* (for *Jamestown*), *Pacifica*, *Posita* (Mexican for 'pond' or 'water hole') in *Las Positas Creek*, and *American* used as an adjective (as in *American River*) – a usage apparently restricted to California excepting a few other western states.

The tremendous American Indian contribution to California toponymy includes probably the oldest recorded California name still in existence; namely, the second component of *Point Mugu* (evidently from the Chumash Indian *muwu*, 'beach'). Other Indian examples are *Pismo* (tar) *Beach* and *Skookum* (Chinook, 'strong' and 'ghost, evil spirit') *Gulch*. Contact with the Aztec civilization is reflected in *Coyote River*, *Mesquite Valley* and *Lake Temescal*; and direct Mexican influence is illustrated by *Chihuahua Valley* and *Coches* (hogs) *Creek*.

The inventive genius of California promoters is demonstrated by *Lempon* ('lemon' plus 'pomegranate'); *Navelencia* ('navel'; 'valencia'); *Niland* ('Nile land,' suggesting the fertility of irrigated land); *Radec* ('cedar' spelled backwards); *San Ardo* (with shortening of *Bernardo*); *Sniktaw* (i.e., *Watkins*); *Stoil* (Standard Oil Co.); *Usona* (United States of America); and many other coinages.

A few of the many place-names in the State which hold particular interest for onomatologists are *Calistoga* (a slip of the tongue for *Saratoga*); *Flea Valley* (the only one of its kind, probably); *Gas Point* (which refers to talk, not petroleum); a land grant with the name *German* (probably a Spanish phonetic rendering of *Hermann*, the victor over the Romans in 9 A.D.); *Graegle* (a contraction of the nearby *Gray Eagle Creek*, perhaps with reference to *Edward D. Baker*, "the *Gray Eagle of Republicanism*," who stumped the state for *Fremont*); *Elizabeth* and *Helen* (the former probably the most popular of all names for lakes, with the latter coming next, according to *Dr. Gudde*); *Likely* (so called because in despairing to find a name that did not already exist, one of the settlers remarked

that it was not likely they would ever get a name); the frequent occurrence of *mile* in expressions like *Twelvemile Creek*; *Telescope Peak* (for the wide clear view from it); *Tit*, or *Teat* (which Gudde says is seldom found on maps, but occurs in local speech); the form, *Two Rock*; *Two Teats* (one of which points east and the other, west); and *You Bet*. In describing the shortening by the Post Office of *San Buenaventura* to *Ventura*, Dr. Gudde quotes a writer of 1905 who had fought to retain the old name, and who says, "And now comes the Post Office Department, which is the most potent destroyer of names of all . . ."

It seems that the majority of California toponyms are picturesque: e.g., *Dirty Sock Hot Spring*; *Dripping Blood Mountain* (which refers to color, not to an incident); *Last Chance*; *Man Cow Rock* (which name came about because once when a young lady, dressed in red, and her escort were chased by an enraged bull, the brother of the young man painted these words on a rock: "Beware the Man Cow."); *Murderers Bar*; *Nellies Nipple*; *Ocean Roar*; *Pizzlewig Creek*; *Post Office Cave* (named for the numerous pigeon holes in the wall); *Raggedyass Gulch* (so called because the miners there looked more dilapidated than the average); *Rough, Roaring, and Wild Creeks*; *Screwdriver Creek* (for its "screwy movement through the canyon and flat"); *Second Garrote* (for the second of two hangings occurring in the same area); and *Tish-Tang-a-Tang Creek*.

The zest for adventure associated with yellow metal is commemorated by the *Marshall Historical Monument* (for the discoverer of gold in the State who found it in the tailraces of Sutter's mill); *Bullion Bend*; *Placerville*; the ironic *Poverty Hill*, which has a rich gold mine; *Slug Canyon*; *Tin Cup Gulch* – where the miners claimed their daily find was as much gold as would fill a tin cup.

Since California is one of the largest states in the Union, the very magnitude of Professor Gudde's task was a handicap – he tells us he had to deal with the staggering total of 150,000 place-names. In undertaking "to bring out in the stories of these names the whole range of California history," the author has spread out for the reader a vast and fascinating panorama which is the source of an enormous amount of information on Californiana. The greatest achievements of the book are its broad scope, the vividly human picture revealed by the treatment, and the generation of interest in onomastics. I

think this volume is a model of its kind,* a monument to the credit of American toponymical scholarship (on the level of Lewis A. McArthur's *Oregon Geographic Names*), and will be difficult to equal or surpass. In my opinion Dr. Gudde has been eminently successful in producing a wealth of historical and linguistic data in a highly readable style.

E. Wallace McMullen

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Foreign Versions of English Names. United States Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, M-131, Rev. 1962. Washington, D.C., Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1962. Pamphlet. [22 pp.]. 30 cents.

The pamphlet is designed, says the foreword, "to aid the person who needs to know the foreign equivalent of commonly used English given names." Foreign versions for about 500 names are given in the following languages: Bulgarian, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Polish, Rumanian, Russian, Serb and Croatian, Swedish, Ukrainian, Yiddish, and Spanish. Many of the names are not so commonly used as the foreword implies.

Names in South Carolina. Published Sporadically by the Department of English, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina. Volume X (Winter, 1963). 42 pp.

The tenth volume of *Names in South Carolina*, edited by Professor Claude H. Neuffer, is the most interesting, as well as the largest, issue of this highly entertaining and valuable publication that has been published to date. Its 42 pages – single-spaced, sometimes double-columned – contain just about the richest lode of onomastical ore to be found in the United States, although here the vein is

* I do not make comparison here with a broader treatise which included an analysis of place-name research techniques, Dr. Robert L. Ramsay's first-rate "Introduction to a Survey of Missouri Place-Names," *University of Missouri Studies*, Jan. 1, 1934.

being mined in South Carolina only. Other states could do well to follow the example set by South Carolina in the matter of onomastics.

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Kelsie B. Harder

Early English and Norse Studies. Presented to Hugh Smith in Honour of his Sixtieth Birthday. Edited by Arthur Brown and Peter Foote. London, Methuen & Co., Ltd. 1963. Pp. xii, 225. Price 45 s.

This is a group of essays representative of the interests of Professor A. H. Smith, Quain Professor of English Language and Literature in the University of London, University College, and Director of the English Place-Name Society.

As Professor Smith has done more work on the elucidation of place-names than any other man, it is only fitting that a book compiled in his honor have much of its contents on names and particularly place-names. And as his scholarship is of the very highest quality it is only right to expect that the studies in this book be exceptionally well done.

At the meeting of the Eighth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences in Amsterdam Professor Smith was overheard asking another well-known authority concerning his theory of a certain English place-name and getting the reply, "when I encounter a problem in connection with place-names I merely consult the two volumes of Smith's *English Place-Name Elements* and get the answer." While said in jest this points out the outstanding value of Professor Smith's work.

In this volume, Professor Darby of the University of London, in his essay on "Place-Names and the Geography of the Past," has illustrated how large numbers of descriptive place-names have persisted long after the features they once described have ceased to exist. We see geographical features through the eyes of medieval residents. Professor von Feilitzen, in "Some Continental Germanic Personal Names," has treated a selection of about eighty-five names not known to or not included by Thorvald Forssner, a most welcome addition to this group of names.

Professor Hald, of the University of Copenhagen, in "The Cult of Odin in Danish Place-names," discusses the influence of Odin's name in the place-names and religion of Denmark. He shows that

the god Odin played a dominant role in the cult of the Danes, a situation not found in Norway or Sweden. This worship of a single god made the transition to the new monotheistic religion of Christianity much easier. Professor Matras of the same university discusses four classes of Old Norse place-names, mainly nature-names, in a short but enlightening article. Professor Jöran Sahlgren is represented in a discussion of "The Name of the Town Eslöv." A short note by Professor Turville-Petre, of Oxford University, outlines the curious worship of stones or rocks, and notes their influence on place-names.

Some other interesting articles deal with the medieval drama in York, a Middle English metrical life of Job, a newly discovered rune-stone, Sir Gawain's arrival in Wirral, the ending of Chaucer's *Troilus*, the Anglo-Saxon unicorn, Béowulf, the semicolon, and poetic language and Old English meter, all written by recognized authorities in their respective fields. In an essay on "Uppsala, Iceland, and the Orient," Professor Strömbäck, of the University of Uppsala, tells of the tales and legends which arose about the ancient kings of Uppsala where "you meet curious people." He ends with the story of Hrói the Simple, a Danish merchant who is cheated out of his goods in Uppsala and then manages to turn the tables on the crooks. Whereupon Professor Strömbäck concludes his article with, "And now, my dear Hugh, it would be interesting to hear of your experiences when you first came to Uppsala in 1928!"

That he was probably asking no idle question can be inferred from the sketch by Professor R. V. Jones of the University of Aberdeen, entitled, "Wing Commander A. H. Smith, O.B.E.," where he tells of Hugh Smith's efforts to avoid being invalidated out of the R.A.F. during the war, due to a motorcycle accident and a duodenal ulcer. At Smith's request he was appointed to the staff of a department responsible for anticipating the German application of science to warfare. His skill in solving war problems during the fighting in England and on the continent as well as his personal problems are only hinted at, but they are enough to merit a book as Professor Jones observes.

Elsdon C. Smith

Note: Clare (you know, my wife) says that the book should have had more about Hugh's charming wife, Helen. I agree.

E. C. S.