Book Reviews

Toponymie, méthode d'enquête. By Jean Poirier. Québec: Les
Presses de l'université Laval, 1965. Pp. 167. $2.50.

M. Poirier, geographer and secretary of the Commission de Géo-
graphie de Québec has put together a most helpful and interesting
book on toponymy. The principal aim is to answer the questions 1)
what is toponymy ? and 2) what is the proper method to be used in
place name investigation ? The first part is concerned with the
origins, meaning, changes, semantics, and social influences. This is
followed by a discussion of the divisions of geographical names, and
the importance of documents and all supporting sciences (charts,
maps, archives, history, etc.) in place name research.

Part II is concerned with putting the explanations already given
into practice. The reader learns the methods of original investiga-
tion, the role of the investigator and the informant, and the "ideal"
questionnaire to be employed, one that will record meaning,
pronunciation, literal meaning and dialectal form, origins, and source
of all information.

The study has a most intriguing bibliography on Québec place
names.

This is an excellent manual for one who wishes to begin research
in the fascinating field of place names; it shows how to go about
the process in an orderly and scholarly fashion. One is told the
theory and then sees it put into practice.

This charming small book is introduced in a preface by M. Fer-
nand Grenier, Directeur de l'Institut de Géographie of Laval Uni-
versity. He points out that "Le Québec a herité d'une toponymie
fort riche où les sources indiennes et françaises ont constitué un
apport fondamental. Plus tard, malheureusement, la negligence des
autorités locales entraîna l'oubli des toponymes anciens et la fixa-
tion des noms nouveaux plus ou moins heureux." (pp. 8–9) But
the Quebec Geographic Commission is doing a marvelous job in
straightening out what was about to develop into an unhappy con-
dition. M. Grenier hopes others will follow their example.

At the outset Poirier says tersely that "Cet ouvrage a pour but de suggérer une méthode de rechercher sur les noms de lieux" (pp. 11). It does just that.

Sterling A. Stoudemire

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The Meaning of Proper Names, With a Definiens Formula for Proper Names in Modern English. By Holgar Steen Sørensen. Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 1963. Pp. 117.

This highly technical essay – nothing for the amateur place name enthusiast – is, Professor Sørensen says, to be regarded as Part II of his *Word-Classes in Modern English, with Special Reference to Proper Names. With an Introductory Theory of Grammar, Meaning and Reference*, published in 1958 by Gad. This study "examines in detail the various proper name theories that have been put forward. Proper names – that is, the semantic aspects of proper names – have had an appeal for linguists and logicians which is extraordinary, and the literature on the subject is immense. Few unfortunately, have concerned themselves sufficiently with the work of conceptual analysis" (p. 9).

After defining the technical terminology he will use, Sørensen discusses 1) the theories of other writers, 2) the theory that proper names are arbitrary, 3) the theory that proper names have no meaning, 4) ordinary proper names, 5) the theory that proper names are individual names, 6) the Definiens Formula of proper names in English, 7) the relation of proper names to social norms. Discussing all these topics in a highly technical fashion, Sørensen comes to the oversimplified conclusion that "proper names are signs, just signs" (p. 107).

The list of books referred to in the text is indeed a choice but short bibliography on place names. The linguist, philologist, linguistician or logician will be grateful for the index, as well as an index to the earlier *Word-Classes in Modern English*.

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Oklahoma Place Names. By George H. Shirk. Norman, Oklahoma:
University of Oklahoma Press, 1965. Pp. 233.

Since books on the place names of a state appear very seldom,
the publication of such a work is a source of rejoicing to those inter-
ested in this field of study. Such a feeling came to many of us toward
the end of last year (1965) when we noted the appearance of
Shirk's *Oklahoma Place Names.* An examination of the book soon
dampened our enthusiasm, however, for there are many short-
comings in the volume, some of which may not be the author's fault.
It is a rather sad comment on place-name research in America that
up to the present time there have been few suitable guidelines for
workers on state place-name projects to follow. Ramsay and Read's
Introduction to a Survey of Missouri Place-Names (1934) and Cas-
sidy's *The Place-Names of Dane County, Wisconsin* (1947) have
long served as excellent models for use by graduate students work-
ing on the place names of counties or a county of a state, but these
works are old and in need of revision, and, what is more, they do not
serve as suitable guides for statewide projects.

The author of the new book, George H. Shirk, a lawyer by pro-
fession, is now the mayor of Oklahoma City. As president of the
Oklahoma Historical Society, he has done much to stimulate inter-
est in Oklahoma's past.

Some features of the book are admirable. Printed on paper
developed for an effective life of at least three hundred years, it has
been set on the Linotype in ten-point Granjon with bold face.
Garamond roman and italic with eighteen-point Granjon have been
selected for display to preserve the continuity of design. It is an
attractive volume easy to consult. When we consider that some
place-name research in our country is languishing in manuscript
form for lack of a publisher, we should be grateful to the University
of Oklahoma Press for producing such a beautiful book.

The book contains about 3500 entries, from A County to Zybra,
all listed in strict alphabetical order. This practice seems preferable
to listing names under counties or under various headings such as
towns, rivers, hills, etc., or by still some other method. There has
been no uniform practice of listing entries in the few state place-
name volumes now in print.

The author says that he has made full use of Charles H. Gould's popular *Oklahoma Place Names*, published in 1933 by the University of Oklahoma Press and long out of print, as well as a revised version of this book on which Mr. Gould was working at the time of his death in 1949.

The pressing need for place-name work in all parts of our country just as soon as possible is forcefully illustrated in a statement in the introduction to this book that although most Oklahoma place names are not much more than sixty years old, information about the naming process of many of them has completely vanished. Within the last twenty or thirty years, old settlers who could have supplied much valuable information have died leaving no records behind. All through the book there are many entries for which the dates of the establishment and discontinuance of a post office at the particular place are the only bits of information given. An examination of the listings under three letters of the alphabet (B, L, R), chosen at random, illustrate this situation. Of 284 names listed under the letter B, no information about the name was given in 40 instances, just a little under 15 per cent. An average of over 21 per cent was found for L – 160 names listed with no information for 34. Of the 143 names listed under the letter R, no information was found for 30. These samplings lead to the conclusion that more than one fifth of all the names in the book are not explained in any way. This percentage of unexplained names seems very high – much higher than what is found in other place-name works this reviewer has examined. Perhaps there is no way to find the information desired; perhaps we should be grateful just to have the names listed; but we wonder if all sources of information have been thoroughly examined.

A criticism which may be unfair is the lack of any maps in the book. "Legal description" of the location of places might not be satisfactory, but location of places merely by reference to distance from some other place or places often helps little. If there were a few maps – or perhaps just one old and one modern map – a reader might feel a little more at home.

The pronunciation of names is not given. For many entries this might not be necessary, but for the numerous Indian names, such information might be helpful.

As might be expected, the dictionary includes names of a few rivers, creeks, mountains, and other physical features, but the listing is not nearly complete. Important rivers like the Arkansas, Canadian, and Washita are listed, but many others are not. Under the town Beaver there is a reference to the Beaver River but no entry for this river. The town Blue is said to take its name from the river nearby, but there is no entry for the river. There are many entries with *Creek* as part of the name of a settlement or post office, but no entries for the creeks. There are a few entries for mountains, hills, gaps, bluffs, etc., but the listing seems fragmentary. It would be interesting to know just what policy the author followed in the listing of all physical features.

One of the most serious criticisms of the book is the lack of cross references. Even during the comparatively short history of Oklahoma, many places have changed names three times or more. To find all the information about a single place, a reader may have to turn to several parts of the book. If the data about an entry were all given in one place (under the most recent name) with merely a cross reference after the other names of that entry, much space could be saved and much confusion avoided. An example of the difficulties caused by the author's methods can be illustrated in the following: to find the various names of the modern town named Gene Autry in honor of the motion picture actor, we have to consult four entries of the book. Under Gene Autry we are told that the town was formerly named Berwyn. Under Berwyn, after being told of the change of name to Gene Autry, we are told that Berwyn was formerly called Dresden. When we turn to Dresden, after being told again of the change of name to Berwyn and to Gene Autry, we are informed that Dresden was formerly called Lou. Looking under Lou, we find reference to the two other names, Dresden and Gene Autry, but no mention of Berwyn. There are many instances of this irritating time and space wasting practice. All the information should be given under Gene Autry. The former names of this town should be entered in their proper order but with merely the cross reference: See Gene Autry.

In many entries the statement is made that the name came from the name of a place in another state (or possibly another country), but usually no reason is given for such a naming process. Since there may be several places with the same name in various parts of the

country or the world, the author, should if possible, give reasons why he thinks the Oklahoma name came from one particular place. He does do so in a few cases. For example, under Lexington the author says the name came from Kentucky. How does he know the name came from Kentucky rather than from Massachusetts ?

At the end of the book there is a long list of contributors but no indication of the kind of information these persons supplied.

A short bibliography of seventeen items concludes the book. Except for two items on Indian names and one on Nebraska place names, nearly all the items deal exclusively with Oklahoma.

Some of the missing information about the naming of many places may be due to the author's desire to be accurate. He says that many purported origins of place names, although popular, were rejected. We agree that it is better to give no explanation rather than one based only on hearsay or wild speculation. The author's restraint is praiseworthy. However, we feel that there is still much that should be done and we endorse the author's hope that his study will spur further investigation. We are grateful for what Mr. Shirk and the University of Oklahoma Press have given us, but we hope that the next edition will make significant additions to, and changes in, what we now have.

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A Preliminary Inquiry into Hausa Onomatology: Three Studies in the Origins of Personal, Title and Place Names. By A. H. M. Kirk-Greene. (Research Memorandum of the Institute of Administration, Ahmadu Bello University) Zaria, Nigeria: Institute of Administration, Ahmadu Bello University, in cooperation with the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs of the University of Pittsburgh and the United States Agency for International Development, 1964. Pp. 56, iv. mimeo. Out of print.

A Background Note on the Names of Places in Hausaland. By A. H. M. Kirk-Greene. Ahmadu Bello University, Department of Languages, Occasional Paper No. 2. Zaria, 1964. 18 Pp. mimeo. Limited number available from the Department.

Anthony Kirk-Greene, Reader and Head of the Department of Languages in Ahmadu Bello University, is well known for his numerous works on Northern Nigerian history and linguistics. The Hausa language is his particular specialty, although he has developed competence in Fulani (Fulbe) as well. As he has remarked in another place, "Hausa is probably the most widely spoken language in Negro Africa. Besides being generally spoken throughout Northern Nigeria, its motherland, Hausa is ... widely understood in other West African countries ... Indeed, it is often said that you will find Hausa-speakers from Dakar to Port Sudan, from Leopold-ville to Fez."

The two works under review are preliminary essays in Hausa onomastics, with informative digressions on ancillary topics. The second essay is actually a reprint of Part III of the first work. Indeed, the copyist did his job so faithfully that the only appendix to the second paper is labelled "Appendix C," which becomes comprehensible only when one sees that it is the third appendix to the earlier paper.

Although the majority of Hausas are Muslims, Christian and Western influences are often seen in the name-elements, and sometimes the same names are borne by both Muslims and Christians. One notices the more frequent use of certain titles, *e.g.* Mal(l)am and Alhaji, here than in other parts of the Islamic world. Malam, formerly applied to those who were learned in Koranic writings, is now used like the English "Mr." And something akin to Sir is rendered by the respectful Hausa greeting, "ranka ya dade" ("may your life be prolonged").

Hausas take for their second name either father's name, father's title, a place-name, and occupational title (*e.g.*, Musa Kafinta [Musa the carpenter]), or a nickname. An interesting example of the way in which a person's name changes with advancement on the social ladder is afforded by the late Premier of Northern Nigeria, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto. Born Ahmadu Rabah (Rabah was his native village), he gained the honorary title of Sardauna ("cavalry-leader") and became known as Malam Ahmadu, Sardauna. After making the pilgrimage and gaining knighthood, he added the name (Bello) of a distinguished ancestor and so arrived at the final form of his name and title.

⊮ One is struck by the number of English words incorporated into Hausa, producing "Enghausa" (cf. franglais) or what Kirk-Greene calls "malamanci," the ingenious new dialect spoken, not by the ignorant, but rather by the educated members of Hausa society. This is not to be deplored but should be accepted as an inevitable adaptation to the times. Until about fifty years ago Hausa was written in the Arabic script, but now it is almost always written in the Roman script (boko). Spellings are not rigidly uniform, although some standardization has been achieved by the official Hausa Language Board.

Mr. Kirk-Greene's essays are by no means definitive, and he has correctly titled them "A Preliminary Inquiry" and "A Background Note." The interested reader is urged to go on to Bargery's and Abraham's dictionaries and to Mr. Kirk-Greene's other works.

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A System for Automatic Recognition of Names of Persons in Newspaper Texts. By Casimir G. Borkowski. Yorktown Heights, New York: IBM Watson Research Center, 1966. Pp. v, 62.

Here is a typescript report of the results of the study of the mechanical recognition of personal names in ordinary newspaper texts. This is a very important division of the overall problem of achieving fully automatic systems directed to the making of various indexes as well as general problems in retrieving and distributing information.

No better description of this booklet can be given here than by quoting the abstract as set out on the title page: "This paper (1) presents statistics concerning the occurrence of names of persons in newspaper texts; (2) describes the main features of an algorithm devised to recognize names of persons in computer-readable newspaper articles; (3) presents statistics concerning the algorithm's accuracy and exhaustiveness obtained in manual application of the algorithm to texts; and (4) suggests some applications for computer programs capable of recognizing names of persons."

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