

Introduction

With confidence, satisfaction, and hope, the American Name Society presents the accompanying assortment of articles on geographical, tribal, and personal Indian names. The Society's confidence arises not only from a realization that the subject, uniquely American, is the peculiar province of *Names*,¹ but also from the fact that, in the New World at least, few other groups of names are so widespread or so important.² Place names of Indian origin sprinkle the maps of the Americas from Canada to Patagonia, and represent the Western World abroad by, for instance, Ottawa, Chicago, Mexico, Lima, Aconcagua, and Andes. Increasing the subject's breadth, there is the additional category of Indian personal names, such as Powhatan and Pontiac; and the very fundamental category of tribal and linguistic names, such as Eskimo, Sioux, Arawak, and Inca. Hitherto (1953-66), out of *Names'* approximately 304 main articles, only about 20 have been Indian. And *Names*, in that period, has published some ten Indian book reviews and about 15 Indian notes. The Society's satisfaction arises from the fact that, in view of so few articles and other items on Indian topics in *Names* in the past, this special issue takes a step towards fulfilling a need. As for the Society's hope, it is expected that the present collection will encourage greater and more enlightened efforts in Amerindian name study. If this happens, *Names* will receive additional Indian contributions and eventually bring forth another Indian volume.

Although there has been a relative scarcity of Indian items in *Names*, a first glance shows that in the United States a general dearth of books and articles on Indian names is not altogether ob-

¹ Referring to the magazine's proper subject matter, Demetrius Georgacas remarks (*Names*, 8: 1 [1963], 63): "... names of the Western Hemisphere claim a certain priority."

² H. L. Mencken has declared (*Am. Lang.*, 4th ed., 1937, 530-31): "The influence of Indian names upon American nomenclature is obvious. No fewer than twenty-six of the States have names borrowed from the Aborigines, and the same thing is true of large numbers of towns and counties. The second city of the country bears one, and so do the largest American river, and the greatest American waterfall, and four of the Great Lakes, and the scene of the most important military decision ever reached on American soil."

vious. Short items on Indian toponymy appear continually, though not abundantly, in such journals as *American Speech*, *IJAL Names*, *Western Folklore*, and some of the state and regional magazines; occasionally books appear. H. L. Mencken estimated (*Am. Lang.*, 4th ed., 1937, 526) that between 1864 and 1900 about 30 articles on American place names were published, and that the number had by his time reached nearly a hundred. A rough count of the items he mentions in the 50 pages he devotes to United States place names in *Supplement Two* (of *Am. Lang.*, 1948, 525-75) shows that some 23 of the 58 books cited are on Indian names, and this is perhaps a satisfactory amount. However, of the 85 place name articles he mentions, only ten are Indian, and this is low. In the first edition of Sealock and Seely's *Bibliography of Place Name Literature*, published in the same year as Mencken's *Supplement Two* (1948), 57, or 23 percent, of the 244 items entitled "United States - General" are Indian. Though these figures, all in all, are not conclusive, some other figures are. For instance, a bright promise of abundant Indian essays is not indicated when one considers that out of the 26 American place name studies in progress in 1965, not one has an Indian title.³

It would be shortsighted to favor and to study American Indian place names in preference to Indian personal names⁴ and Indian tribal names,⁵ yet it appears evident that the Indian names best

³ As reported by E. C. Ehrensperger for the American Name Society and the American Dialect Society (11th Ann. Report, 1965).

⁴ In ten consecutive issues of Elsdon Smith's annual bibliography of personal names (*Names*, 4 [1956], to and incl. 13 [1965]) the number of items on Indian personal names is about ten. The pages of various state archives (e.g., *Archives of Maryland*, *New Jersey Archives*) abound in unstudied Indian personal names. William N. Nelson (*Am. Anthropol.*, n.s., 4: 1 [1902], 183-92) has noted, for instance, that *N.J. Archives*, XXI, lists 142 Indian landowners (before 1703), and 237 Indian place names, many of them from personal names, together with English interpretations. The personal names of most American Indians famous in history occur with some regularity in such biographical works as Appleton's *Cyclopedia of American Biography* (1886 [New enl. ed., 1915-31]), the *Dictionary of American Biography* (Scribner's, 1928), *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (Permanent series; XLIX, 1966). Among individual studies, one recalls William Nelson's *Personal Names of Indians of New Jersey* (Paterson, 1904), and smaller items on the order of Charles Edgar Gilliam's "Pocahontas - Matoaka" (*Names*, 2 [1954]).

⁵ Stewart (*NOL*, 1958) remarks: "The whole field of ethnic names, not only in this country but all over the world, calls for more study." *The Handbook of American Indians* (ed. F. W. Hodge, 1907-10) has an important tribal synonymy. In

known by the American people, and most important to them, are the place names. These are the names of which people ask, "What do they mean?" These, then, are the names most appropriate for study. Indeed, to cite Max Förster (*Am. Sp.*, Oct. 1939, p. 213), "The main problem of American place-name study seems to me the investigation of American names of Indian origin." In view of such urgency, it is disappointing to realize that, etymologically speaking, many important Indian place names are still unsolved. Moreover, it is certainly true that, as Francis Utley has stated, the study of Indian names still lags behind the study of Indian languages.

Despite this lag of Indian place name study behind the study of Indian languages, it is disturbing to recall Max Förster's notion, expressed in 1939,⁶ that the scientific study of Indian languages is hardly advanced enough to form a "safe basis" for Indian place name research.⁷ This, in a sense, would excuse the laggard place name researcher and put the blame on the linguist. Indeed, if Förster was right, it would make small difference whether Indian onomastics lagged behind Indian linguistics or not. For, if American linguistics is presently so insecure, it would be better for the place name student to bide his time, await the linguistic millenium, and quit troubling the waters.

But Förster was perhaps too hasty. Nearer the truth is the more moderate and optimistic observation of Madison Beeler (*Names*, V, p. 240): "The study of place-names of Indian origin on a more solid

1952 this was supplemented by John R. Swanton's *Indian Tribes of North America* (BAE Bull. 145). Two further bibliographical aids are G. P. Murdock's *Ethnographic Bibliography of North America* (3rd ed., New Haven, 1960) and Frederick J. Dockstader's *The American Indian in Graduate Studies; a Bibliography of Theses and Dissertations* (N.Y., 1957). Some notable special studies are James Mooney's "Indian Tribes of the District of Columbia" (*Am. Anthropol.*, 2 [1889]) and "Siouan Tribes of the East" (BAE Bull. 22, 1894).

⁶ *Am. Sp.*, 14: 3, p. 213.

⁷ It cannot be said that there has been in the past a lack of reasonably helpful vocabularies, grammars, and linguistic essays in the Amerindian field. J. C. Pilling (*Bibliography of the Algonquian Languages*, Washington, 1891, p. III) estimates that the linguistic items listed in just one of his bibliographies (Algonquian) amount to 2,245, beginning with the small vocabularies of such writers as Smith (1612) and Wood (1634) and bringing the reader up to 1891. That there was similar activity in the other Indian language fields is shown by the eight additional bibliographies written by Pilling between 1887 and 1894. Today, by virtue of the journals, *Language* and *Word*, America leads in linguistic publications.

basis will become increasingly feasible as our knowledge of the native languages grows, as it is steadily doing." Professor Beeler had more reason for optimism. Förster wrote in 1939 at about the time Michelson (1938) and Sapir (1939) died, and American linguistics was in mourning. Beeler, however, wrote in 1957, appreciably after the impact of both Michelson and Leonard Bloomfield (1887–1949). Bloomfield meanwhile had brought science to American language study, and both he and Michelson introduced into the Algonquian field the comparative methods of Indo-European philology. Even in 1911 Franz Boas had edited Part 1 of his two-volume *Handbook of American Indian Languages*, with its excellent Introduction (pp. 1–83), and with William Jones's Fox (Algonquian) grammar revised by Truman Michelson. But Boas, an anthropologist, did not develop American comparative linguistics.⁸

This development remained for Michelson and Bloomfield, and it is fortunate for Amerindian linguistics that they applied their comparative methods to Algonquian "... whose speaking peoples covered a greater extent of country, perhaps, than those of any other of the linguistic stocks of North America" (Pilling). Proto-Algonquian became the earliest of those Amerindian "proto-languages, reconstructed by comparative methods from their presumed descendants." Pointing out that the results were made with "a linguistic family without written records," Sebeok⁹ declares that Bloomfield's "descriptive and comparative studies" of the Algonquian languages are among "the classics of American Indian research." While some American Indian languages have no doubt been more neglected than others, one must suppose, in view

⁸ But Boas (inspirer of American linguists) recognized and appreciated the new point of view. Of Michelson he states (Obituary of Truman Michelson, *IJAL*, 9: 2–4 [1936–38]), "Trained in the study of Indo-European languages, he brought to research in American languages a rich experience which he applied particularly to ... Algonquian linguistics. His comparative studies of Algonquian dialects brought a rich harvest of knowledge regarding the history of this important group."

⁹ Thomas A. Sebeok ed. *Portraits of Linguists* (II, 1966, p. 513). He declares (*op. cit.*, 515): "It is not too much to say that every significant refinement of analytic method produced in this country since 1933 has come as a result of the impetus given to linguistic research by Bloomfield's book [*Language*, N.Y., 1933]." For a more technical appraisal of the significance of Bloomfield, see Charles F. Hockett, "Implications of Bloomfield's Algonquian Studies," *Language* 24 (1948).

of the brilliant Bloomfield-Michelson school and the momentum Bloomfield gave to scientific language study, that a firm linguistic basis at last exists for satisfactory Indian place name etymology.

Yet despite the data and techniques they now have at their command, American linguists have, for the most part,¹⁰ made no extensive place name studies. An important reason for this neglect, a reason the layman will understand, was given by William R. Gerard in 1906, when he wrote to George McAleer: "I have never taken any interest in the study of Indian onomatology, since it is very unsatisfactory." Professor Utley puts some of the blame on the subject itself (v. *Names*, 11: 3, p. 159, p. 162), the nature of the "naming process," for instance, and some on such "non-linguistic components" of name study as "... the sparseness or even unavailability of critically needed material." Madison Beeler (*Names*, 5: 4, p. 237) seems to see in the linguists' neglect an opportunity for the place name investigator. After remarking that the linguists who have made good descriptions of currently spoken Indian languages have not been interested in place name study, he adds: "... thus a prime source of sound knowledge has remained untapped by onomatologists." To speak personally, the present writer is on the side of the linguists, and their brethren, the anthropologists. These men are often on the defensive. They have seen their carefully thought out proto-languages ignored by hobbyists who paw at our Indian names amateurishly. One supposes that the linguists, when

¹⁰ Linguists have not completely neglected Indian toponymy. Madison Beeler has written for *Names* and was once this journal's editor; William Bright has written on Karok names. James A. Geary uses comparative methods in a study of Carolina Algonquian place names in D. B. Quinn's edition of the Roanoke voyages (Hakluyt Society, II, 1955). For more than 15 years Professor Geary answered questions sent to the Smithsonian Institution by the public on the meaning of Algonquian place names. Charles F. Hockett, Cornell linguist, has written on "Reactions to Indian Place Names," for *Am. Speech* (25: 2 [May 1950], 118). And Floyd Lounsbury, Yale linguist, deals thoroughly and excellently with Iroquoian place names, most of them native names, in "Iroquoian Place Names in the Champlain Valley" (in *Report ... New York - Vermont Interstate Commission* [Albany 1960]).

Nor have anthropologists completely ignored this field. Notable examples are John Peabody Harrington, who wrote *The Ethnogeography of the Teva Indians* in 1916 (29th Ann. Rep., BAE), and the illustrious Franz Boas, who wrote *Geographical Names of the Kwakiwilt Indians* in 1934 (Columbia Univ. Contrib. to Anthrop., XX). And A. L. Kroeber is noteworthy for his *California Place Names of Indian Origin* (Calif. Univ. Pub. in Am. Arch. and Eth., 12: 2 [1916]).

they have finished analyzing the phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics of the various Indian tongues, will turn to etymology, descend from their ivory towers, and strike gold in the field of Indian place names, tribal names, and personal names.

Of course, there are those who will deny that, as H. L. Mencken once stated (*Am. Lang.*, 4th ed., 1937, p. 527, n.), "... most of the published studies of American place-names are amateurish..." However, there are intimations of this amateurishness in Indian studies in Professor Utley's pleas for "linguistic rigor" and for "the stepping up of the etymological component" (Utley, *op. cit.*). There are intimations of it in the fact that most Indian place name studies, from J. H. Trumbull's "On Some Mistaken Notions of Algonkin Grammar..." (1869-70) to J. C. Huden's *Indian Place Names of New England* (1962), contain complacent discourses on methodology. And there are intimations of it in the unreasonable debates that continually rage about the meaning of this Indian place name and that. An early quarrel of this sort was the debate between W. W. Tooker and William R. Gerard in 1905 (*Am. Anthropol.*, 6: 313, n.s.) on whether Powhatan was a Cree dialect; and such debates continue to this moment on, for instance, whether *Potomac* means "emporium," or *Paramus*, "pleasant stream." But the truest indication of the amateurishness of Amerindian name study in the Northern Hemisphere is the fact that, unlike the trained and occupied linguist, anthropologist, historian, geographer, and the like, many of the researchers in this field do their place name work on the side, as a hobby, and really belong to such walks of life as captain, professor of education, medical doctor, missionary, or librarian. Such venturers bring with them varied and useful skills. They also often bring with them two weaknesses: (1) they think that everyone can both drive and *derive*; (2) they lack the humility to realize that their derivations could be wrong.

However, amateurs and hobbyists should not be hindered. Everyone has a right to discuss the subject of his choice, and Indian etymology can be fascinating. Moreover, there are certain benefits attendant on popularization. But if there is ever organized in the United States a national Indian place name survey, the present writer hopes that it will lie mainly in the hands of professional, academically trained anthropologists and linguists. The amateurs are prompt to point out the mistakes made by linguists who under-

take to analyze an Indian place name – the mistake a historian would not make, such as assuming that the original spelling of *Wisconsin* was with a *w*; or the mistake a folklorist would not make, such as trying to explain the *-ct-* of *Connecticut* by Dutch *ch*, instead of by folk etymology. And doubtless all of us are repelled by the linguist's jargon, which makes of linguistic rigor a sort of *rigor mortis*. However, our Indian place names deserve, indeed require, talented linguistic brains, and the best technical training and knowledge. Although Robert Ramsay¹¹ concedes that "Any worthwhile study of place-names must be a combination of geography, history, and linguistics," he significantly adds: "... of the three fundamentals the greatest, after all, is linguistics."

The tenderfoot who braves the mines and booby traps of the Indian place name field is even to be commended if he contents himself with doing spade work and amassing authentic data. It is when he twists the facts in order to maintain preconceived notions, when he ignores linguistic science, and when he insists too stubbornly on the correctness of his etymologies, that he becomes a threat to the truth. Stewart is right, one feels, when he suggests (*NOL*, 1958, pp. 456–57) that in place name study there is no need for controversies. Lest this Introduction seem to be a diatribe against place name amateurs and hobbyists, let the reader consider that of the two best historians of the English language in America, H. L. Mencken (*The American Language*, 1919) and George P. Krapp (*The English Language in America*, 1925), one was an avowed amateur, a political journalist, and the other an academically trained, professional phonetician and Anglo-Saxon scholar. Mencken, the amateur, amassed more data, and made a weightier impression. Alas, his book was the best seller. But for sound scholarship one would turn to Krapp.

However, need an amateur remain an amateur? Should not our free-lance place name writers steal a march on the linguists by invading their field, embracing their techniques, and forthwith applying them? This would perhaps be a bitter pill for those place name writers who depend so comfortably on the methods of history and geography. One would (1) have to study the phonology and grammar of the Indian languages whose names he was investigating,

¹¹ Foreword to Frederick G. Cassidy's *The Place-Names of Dane County, Wisconsin* (Am. Dial. Soc., 1947).

and (2) he would have to study the comparative and other techniques with which Amerindian linguistics is continually astir. In Algonquian, for example, he would study the methods of Truman Michelson¹² and come to grips with Leonard Bloomfield's reconstruction of the parent Algonquian language (Proto-Algonquian, or PA).¹³ And he would not be daunted by the linguists' jargon, which is perhaps worse than their bite. Hockett¹⁴ makes the pleasant pronouncement: "... for the newcomer to linguistics, a reading of Bloomfield's Algonquian works is one of the finest indoctrinations into the best of linguistic method."

For the present issue the supply of competent authors at the editor's command was necessarily small. Several of the contributors are professional linguists and anthropologists. Those who are not linguists and anthropologists are experts in the methods of history and geography, which are certainly next best. No one of the authors is a novice; and each is a specialist in the area of his subject. The editor is gratefully aware that every one of the writers has cooperated with him valiantly to produce a work of truth, which is surely the goal of all scholarship.

Professor Stewart's article discusses the interesting question of the fate of a place name theory. There follows it an analysis by Edward Taube of the much debated name *Wisconsin*. Nils Holmer, Swedish linguist, gives variety to the issue by dealing with the *native names* of arctic America; Mr. J. A. Rayburn, Ottawa geographer, deals with Canadian Indian names generally, and makes a plea for wider use of the word "Amerindian." Philip Barbour describes the light some newly discovered British Museum annotations of Captain Smith's *A True Relation* throw on the primitive names of the Chickahominy basin. The article on two Delaware Valley names, by Dunlap and Weslager, records the successful outcome of a careful search of old records. Professor Bright tells of the influence on Karok of a Scottish surname; Donald Chaput deals with the semantics of a tribal name. And, finally, Edgar Gilliam

¹² See, for instance, his "Phonetic Shifts in Algonquian Languages," *IJAL*, 8 [1935] 131-71.

¹³ "Algonquian," in *Linguistic Structures of Native America*, ed. Harry Hoijer (N. Y., 1946).

¹⁴ Charles F. Hockett, "Implications of Bloomfield's Algonquian Studies," *Language* 24, 1948.

and Delf Norona contribute brief items to the *Miscellany*. So sharp are the varieties of opinion in the field of Amerindian etymology that *Names* thinks it best to disclaim responsibility for its contributors' ideas and pronouncements. Everything has been done, however, to eliminate obvious error. In several instances, the guest editor has added comments and notes meant to protect the magazine and its contributors and to disarm the hasty critic.

Credit and thanks for the happy outcome of this special issue belong partly to Professors Kelsie Harder and Conrad Rothrauff, and partly to the excellent guidance in all place name study which *Names* has given yearly since 1953 in the form of the scholarly articles, both Indian and non-Indian, that have enriched its pages. The value of our journal can perhaps be fully appreciated only when one is faced with an editorial task similar to that of the present guest editor. Accordingly, to suggest a criterion, the success of this issue will be a reality only if it maintains the high quality of the work that has appeared in *Names* in the past. And, of course, the recognition and the acclaim for that work go to the past researchers and editors who have had the boldness, the stoicism, and the zeal to sail in stormy waters.

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