

Book Reviews

English Surnames. By C. N. Matthews. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966. Pp. 359; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967. Pp. 367. Price \$ 6.95.

This is an interesting, well-written book authored by an historian on the origin and development of surnames, chiefly the common names, in England. After publication in England, Mrs. Matthews added a short chapter on American surnames, inserted lists of common names in some American cities, and made some minor corrections. The work was published in the United States the following year.

In making her analysis of the names Mrs. Matthews relied chiefly upon the frequency of various surnames listed in the 1961-62 edition of the London telephone directory, although some other searches and counts were made, mostly of short lists. This is a book about English surnames; it does not include foreign names - not even Irish or Highland Scottish names.

Mrs. Matthews' scholarly investigation seems to have just skimmed the surface. Some of her statements and assertions are not accurate and others are conflicting. She says that Swedish scholars coined the term "by-name." If she had checked the word in the Oxford Dictionary, she would not have made that error. Mrs. Matthews appears to imply that some English names were hereditary before the Conquest. She then goes on to affirm (page 34) that, "as we have seen a number of names at the time of the Conquest were already hereditary." The recent authorities are agreed that there are no surnames known to be hereditary before the time of William the Conqueror. If Mrs. Matthews wished to disagree with others who have written on the subject, she should have given some basis for her opinions, or at least some instance of a clear hereditary surname existing before the Conquest. Many of her statements disclose a lack of acquaintance with much that has been written on the subject of onomastics. The absence of certain important books from her bibliography seems to confirm this observation.

Some of the derivations of surnames given by Mrs. Matthews are quite misleading. Her discussion of Hawkins and Howlett is particularly far afield – some real evidence of the use of the hawk and the owl should be found before guessing about these names. Of course Mrs. Matthews understands that the more common derivation is the pet forms of given names, but she does not say so when discussing bird names. Bird names are often patronymics from given names.

She overemphasizes nicknames. It is very easy to dismiss a difficult surname by asserting that it arose from a nickname. Of course every name could be a nickname through some unusual act or circumstance, but many she labels as nicknames are better interpreted in another way.

While parts of the book are subject to severe criticism, other parts are well-done. Her discussion of the terminal -s and the types of names which take the suffix are most informative. In the same way her discussion of surnames from certain common Christian names such as Henry, Walter, Gilbert and, Ralph, and the French influence upon them is particularly good. Also her explanation of the sound changes from old Saxon names is most helpful.

Although many parts are inaccurate and must be read critically, most of the book is intensely interesting, and many important observations about English surnames are made which are not found elsewhere.

The eight appendices at the end listing the most numerous English surnames of occupation and office, nicknames, men's Christian names, pre-Conquest personal names, women's Christian names, from local words, from countries, and leading surnames of the English-speaking world are of considerable value. In addition there is an Index of Surnames and a Subject Index.

Elsdon C. Smith

Surnames Are The Fossils Of Speech. By Samuel L. Brown. Minneapolis, Minn.: Published by the Author, 1967. Pp. 350.

Although its title is somewhat unexpected for a dictionary, *Surnames Are The Fossils Of Speech* is a dictionary. It contains some

6,000 entries with data, in most cases, held to compact statements of the name's assigned nationality and principal origin(s) and meaning(s).

Mr. Brown has culled these names from the vital statistics records of five metropolitan newspapers over a period of ten years, and although he states no intention to specialize in less common names, it is in such specialization that the book's greater contribution lies. With its first 12 entries, for example, Mr. Brown treats *Aaberg*, *Aaby*, *Aadahl*, *Aagaard*, *Aaker*, *Aas*, *Aasby*, *Aaseng*, *Aaserud*, *Aasheim*, *Aasness* and *Aasve* while, with apparent purposefulness, striding right past the more common *Aaron*.

And yet the material is not to the total exclusion of common names, and one cannot help wishing that Mr. Brown had ignored such old familiars as *Clark*, *Green*, *Smith*, *Johnson*, *Elder*, *Leigh*, etc., and used the space for a bit more elaboration on the rarer names he has found. Or to have avoided the questions that come up, for example, with his treatment of such names as *Rudd* and *Hatt*. The book offers two explanations of *Rudd*: "(Nor) 1. Der. from ON *rud*, (dwl. at) 'a clearing.' (Eng) 2. Desc. of *Rudda*, an OE personal name." In the case of *Hatt*, a single origin is given: "(Eng) Desc. of *Haett*, an OE pers. name." Does this mean that Mr. Brown rejects the descriptive nickname origin of *Rudd* and the occupational and sign-name origins of *Hatt*? Since nothing perfect has yet been discovered, one has no right to expect perfection of Mr. Brown's dedicated and knowledgeable effort. His work shows an appreciation for and intimacy with the etymology that predicates onomatology. The Campbell Soup Company in one of its employee publications once used the expression, "creating new knowledge," pointing out that facts are not to be created; all the facts we will ever know swim about us, and it is only when a heretofore unknown one is landed that new knowledge is created. The singular contribution of *Surnames Are The Fossils Of Speech* lies in Mr. Brown's having landed some previously-uncaught facts which he now delivers as new knowledge about names. Not all of it is to be accepted instantly, but then that is a characteristic of all new knowledge, and the world will always be indebted to those who know that the journey of a thousand miles does, indeed, begin with a single step.

Otto Whittaker

Deerfield, Illinois

Historic Place Names in Orange County. By Don Meadows. Balboa Island, California: Paisano Press, Inc., 1966. Pp. 142; 32 plates + endpaper pictures and map. Price \$9.50.

Don Meadows has authored a history of Orange County in southern California, as well as several essays on other southwestern historical subjects. Although born in Indiana, he has lived in California since childhood, and he identifies himself as a "true paisano" of the place. The book is published by the Paisano Press, and it is announced as for the benefit of "old and new paisanos" of the area. A "paisano," in local parlance, is a long-time, permanent, and proud resident of his homeland. But the term is sometimes stretched to include non-natives, and recent arrivals at that. The essential attribute of a paisano is his enthusiasm for the place where he lives.

Although a "true paisano," the author is light and cheerful, and not at all insufferable in his paisanismo. He has an engaging sense of humor, and he has a realistically critical attitude toward certain local phenomena. He alludes to "Rio del dulcissimo nombre de Jesus del Temblores" (River of the Sweetest Name of Jesus of the Earthquakes) as a "long name for such a scant stream." The community name *Placentia* is explained as "Realtor Spanish" for a supposedly "pleasing place." He makes it perfectly clear why "Tin Can Beach," littered with campers' and picknickers' trash, was formerly so named. He also suggests that "Anti-fat Canyon" may have been named after a "weight-reducing compound that was highly advertized years ago." The book is full of interesting folk etymologies of this sort.

As is true of many historically annotated name collections, this compilation is liberally sprinkled with tantalizingly interesting allusions to persons, places and events that many alert readers would want to know more about. Almost any interested reader would like to know more concerning Madame Modjeska, the Polish-born Shakespearean actress who lived in the area for 33 years and whose name is attached to at least six local place names. Or about the short-lived cooperative colony established near Anaheim by Polish emigrants, one of whom was Henryk Sienkiewicz, the famous author of *Quo Vadis* and other novels. Or concerning George Risdale Hinde, who established a religious community known locally as Hinde Colony, but which he called *Societas Fraternia*, on 24 acres

of land, which existed from 1876 until 1922, when the last member of the community died. The members of this sect, whose strict dietary customs caused local gentry to call them the "Grass Eaters," lived in isolation from the world and built a round house, to eliminate corners where malevolent spirits might reside. It is really frustrating to be told a little of such people and places, and to be unable to find out more about them without further research. The problem here alluded to is an inherent and inevitable characteristic of any list so briefly annotated.

"Historic Place Names" are here defined as names that "recall (local) history," and they are further delimited in this collection to names that "originated in Orange County prior to 1940." Many of these names are now extinct, except in local memory and in popular speech. "Some names are ephemeral," the author says, "while others (have) become firmly fixed in the land."

Not only have some of these names been of short duration; many of them designate historically and otherwise rather insignificant places. The list includes numerous names for whistle stops on local railroad lines and spurs, as well as names of old adobe houses, ethnic settlements, realtors' residential subdivisions, an art colony, a nudist camp, and other such types of human aggregations. There are also names of physical geographical features of all sorts. If it has a name, or ever had a name, Meadows lists it. How otherwise could one assemble a list of 657 place names in a single county, even although Orange County may well be, as is here asserted, the "most rapidly growing county in the United States" in recent years?

We have here an energetically and enthusiastically compiled list of names. They are alphabetically arranged and each one is briefly commented upon. In most instances their historic origin is either indicated or suggested, and there are many examples of the idiosyncratic origin of certain place names. It is noted that Orange County names have derived from "exuberance, associations, objects, conditions, events, dates, and personalities." There is, however, no analysis of the incidence of these factors in the origin of local names; no attention is given to the typology of these names; nor is there any discussion of the nature of the processes by which names have come to be affixed to localities in an area.

So here is another list of names — annotated, to be sure, but still a list, not a classification. There being no typology, there is no sug-

gestion of the incidence of types. The book is not a systematic onomatological study. Its only systematic aspect is its alphabetical arrangement. It is a source book of material for an onomastic study, not such a study itself. Its primary interest and appeal, therefore, is to local history buffs and *paisanos*, rather than to serious students of names.

Thirty-four of the 142 pages of this book are devoted to full-page illustrations. These are excellently reproduced and of local historical interest. However, their relation to place names is neither indicated, nor always clear. The author himself calls them "ephemera," and they have undoubtedly contributed to the high price of the book. There is a useful end-paper map of the county. The book is beautifully designed and made of quality materials. It is a pleasure to look at and to hold. But a serious detraction from this pleasure is its price: \$9.50 for 142 pages seems quite steep, even in these days of rising prices, especially in the publishing industry.

Maurice A. Mook

Pennsylvania State University

The Romance of Spanish Surnames. By Charles R. Maduell, Jr.
Paperback. Privately printed in New Orleans, 1967. Pp. 221.

Nearly every defect an editor might fear shows up in *The Romance of Spanish Surnames*. It is reproduced by offset from typescript; the typing itself involves many transposed and misstruck characters; the type faces were dirty, so that many enclosed spaces of letters appear solid; necessary diacritical marks are omitted or improvised; and the type size is reduced to No. 7. — a boon to manufacturers of bifocals and aspirin.

Then there are the problems of substance, the first and most obvious of which is lack of professionalism. Mr. Maduell's errata sheet, which itself contains at least one glaring misspelling, is revealing: it lists some 36 errors for 58 pages of preface, introduction and appendices. One can count that many misspelled words alone in five or six pages. The most shocking of these is *patronomics* [sic] — a term basic to the book's *raison d'être*.

The bibliography is extremely limited and fails to include – with one single exception – any of the basic tools in the field. Mr. Maduell does not use any of the standard forms of phonetic, bibliographic or lexicographic notation. One must in fairness acknowledge that many of his etymologies are based on fact; but many others are so patently and agonizingly wrong that one cannot know what percentage of the former belongs to accident or design.

Some of his pronouncements on the history of Spanish are preposterous. Thus it is not surprising to find him maintaining, on p. 80, that *carro* is a diminutive (!) of *carrillo*, and on p. 88 that the preposition *contra* is a suffix! Many of the names he dismisses as “meaning unknown” are in fact understood perfectly and are explained in any major Spanish etymological dictionary.

It is always an emotional wrench to state that something to which a man has addressed part of his life is without positive value, but in the present instance there appears no ready alternative. The book contains sufficient fact to disqualify it as folklore, and sufficient error to disqualify it as anything else.

Douglas P. Hinkle

Ohio University

Dictionary of Alaska Place Names. By Donald J. Orth. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 567. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1967. Pp. xi, 1084 + 12 pages of maps.

On July 30, 1967, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall announced the publication of this monumental work. “It is particularly appropriate,” said Udall, “that this contribution to the geography and history of Alaska becomes available during the State’s Centennial Year. The volume reflects the close association of our Department with the exploration of the territory over the past 100 years.”

The first *Geographic Dictionary of Alaska* by Marcus Baker appeared in 1902 as U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 187. It contained about 6,300 names and 2,800 cross references. After Baker’s death James McCormick continued the dictionary work and published in

1906 a second edition, Bulletin 299, which contained about 9,300 names and 3,300 cross references. These old works have never been reprinted and have long been out of print. After more than 60 years Orth's book fills a long felt need. Although using the valuable material in the early works, Orth's book is completely new. Nearly three years in preparation, this large, beautifully bound volume of nearly 1100 pages $9\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$, weighing over seven pounds with three columns to the page, contains over 44,000 entries, indicating the tremendous increase in Alaska place names during the last 60 years.

Although the book is rightly called the work of Donald J. Orth, the compilation required the time and effort of many persons in the U.S. Geological Survey. The author gives special recognition to James R. Carter whose helpful advice and supervisory assistance contributed greatly toward the format and completion of the book. He also emphasizes the noteworthy research and compilation contributions made by Jerold Gettleman who did most of the Russian transliteration, Susan A. Aldrich, Ellen J. Davis, Ernest M. Harwood, Donald A. Johnson, Arthur S. Knox, Margaret O. Miller, Paul J. Sorvo, and Louise G. Van Winkle.

The book begins with a foreword by W. T. Pecora, director of the Geological Survey. After the table of contents and list of illustrations, there follow a valuable glossary of terms used to designate the geographic features of Alaska, a list of abbreviations used in the work, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names transliteration system for Russian, and a list of Russian generic terms. Just preceding the dictionary is a very important introduction by Mr. Orth explaining his methods of presentation. Anyone who wishes to use this dictionary effectively should first read this introduction. The author says that each name entry consists of two paragraphs, the first of which gives the application and location of the entry and presents variant forms; the second paragraph presents the history and meaning of the name. Much information is given about location in addition to longitude and latitude. In the introductory pages there are many maps, old and recent. One map shows the physiographic divisions of Alaska, another shows the Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut linguistic areas, and, most important, one shows the locations of the 153 topographic maps, scale 1:250,000 (or about four miles to the inch), that have been produced by the Geological Survey together

with a listing of those maps by name. This map and list are particularly valuable because each of the names in the dictionary in current usage is keyed to one of these maps by number.

The last part of the introduction (38 pages) gives a list of the most important explorers and geographers who have worked in Alaska since the time of Vitus Bering, with something about the work of each of these. Among these pages are found fascinating early maps of portions of Alaska.

In the dictionary proper (1,026 pages) all names are listed in strict alphabetical order except for the last three items, which seem to be addenda. Each entry is designated by its geographic feature, such as estuary, settlement, watercourse, lake, bight, etc. Then follows ample information about the location of the entry. The first paragraph concludes with variant spellings and names previously applied to the feature. Variant, obsolete, and doubtful names are also alphabetically listed and are cross referenced to the principal entries.

The second paragraph of each entry gives, when possible, the history and origin of the name. Since the names come from a wide variety of sources, the work on this part of each entry has been particularly difficult and enlightening. The native languages (Eskimo, Aleut, Indian) do not have established written forms, and transcriptions from these languages into our Roman alphabet (some by way of the Russian Cyrillic alphabet), by nonlinguists, are extremely varied. This accounts for the great variety of names given to a single place. In giving the history of names Mr. Orth does not depend on hearsay or folklore. All through the book he makes constant references to the material in his introduction or in his bibliography to substantiate any statements he includes. In every respect the work is as accurately and scientifically done as is humanly possible. At times, however, a reader might wish for a little more information than is given. For example, under Aleutian, the author says there are "several hypotheses concerning the linguistic origin and meaning of the name," but does not mention a single one. He gives a list of references, but most users of this dictionary would not have access to these sources. Space was undoubtedly a factor in cases like this, and we should be very grateful for the tremendous amount of information in this huge work and not quibble over minor omissions.

The work concludes with a selected bibliography of 13 big pages and, finally, a 12-page section of shaded relief topographic maps which cover the entire state at a scale of approximately one inch to 40 miles. There are thousands of place names on these maps, and the maps themselves are on a large enough scale to be very useful.

One might wonder why in the bibliography Mr. Orth always uses the abbreviation p. instead of pp. for pages. Even if this is another space-saving device and even if a few authorities may suggest this practice, the overwhelming majority of handbooks and style manuals still insist on the use of pp. for pages. The single p. does not appear in the list of abbreviations. The meaning might have been considered obvious, but so are the meanings of several other abbreviations which are listed. One might also ask why all the maps are not placed together at the front of the book. The map to which there are references all through the entries could have been placed in a much more conspicuous position. There are some 20 typographical errors – very few for a book of this size – but these would hardly be noticed by the average reader and may even be excused when one realizes that publication was rushed in order to have the book appear during the centennial celebration.

All in all, this book is one of the most important place name studies ever produced in America. Would that there were works like it for each of the other 49 states. It is thorough, authentic, scholarly, magnificent!

E. C. Ehrensperger

Yankton College

Geographical Names of Renfrew County. By A. Rayburn. Ottawa: Geographical Paper No. 40, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Ottawa, Ontario, 1967. Pp. 74. \$1.50.

This book sets forth the results of a 1964 survey of the place names of Renfrew County, which covers 3,000 square miles of eastern Ontario. The venerable history of this region notwithstanding (the geographer Samuel de Champlain made a remarkably accurate map of the area in 1632), the survey revealed 770 previously unrecorded local names. In presenting the results of the

survey, the author has followed the nine-category classification of geographical names advanced by George R. Stewart ("A Classification of Place Names," *Names*, II (1954), pp. 1-13). These are descriptive, possessive, incident, commemorative, euphemistic, manufactured, shift, folk etymological, and mistake, though the last two "were not recognized in Renfrew" (p. 16). The largest category in Renfrew County appears to be commemorative names, among which the author somewhat dubiously includes names of French and Indian origin, "considered commemorative because they have been preserved in a milieu dominated by English-speaking people for two centuries" (p. 29). Renfrew is itself a commemorative name, after the county by the same name in Scotland. In all, this is a carefully prepared and usefully organized compilation.

R. A. Mohl

The State University College at Potsdam, New York

Names in South Carolina, Volumes I-XII, 1954-1965. Edited by Claude Henry Neuffer. Columbia, S.C.: The State Printing Co., 1967. Pp. v, 271. \$15.25.

Professor Neuffer, through assiduous, often sorely tried labor, has built his *Names in South Carolina* from a five-page mimeographed issue in 1954 to 62 pages of full print in 1965. Many of us, long on tongue, short on performance, who witnessed much of this progress, have envied but admired his work, done often at his own expense and in face of skepticism. Although he must have labored literally thousands of hours on his project, I know personally that he carried on his duties as a member of a thriving, even demanding, Department of English. Anyone who directs NDEA Institutes in English probably should give up any pretense at doing anything else, much less edit a magazine, keep up literary output and fulfill administrative duties. Professor Neuffer seems to wax prolific under such pressure. He also has a wife who shares his interest. She helps, too.

His *Names in South Carolina* is now accepted as a model for those who wish to involve themselves in the planned United States

Place Name Survey. In publishing both raw and researched material on names in his state, he preserved sources and information that would certainly have been lost.

By compiling the first 12 years of publication into one volume, Professor Neuffer has made the material more accessible to academic scholars who need such onomastic data. As a by-product he has provided his South Carolina readers, who ultimately contributed enough in subscriptions and orders to finance the project, with enough South Carolinana to keep them reminiscing and compiling for years to come. As the editor says, "Where else but in South Carolina could you find such names as States Rights Gist or Mary John C. Calhoun Happoldt?"

One last query: Do we still have in the academic community enough unselfish scholars of the caliber of Claude H. Neuffer to accept at such risks projects that finally provide us with such basic and necessary equipment to enlarge our knowledge about the American society and, further, the world scene?

Kelsie B. Harder

The State University College at Potsdam, N.Y.

CORRIGENDA

In the final paragraph of Wm. Bright's article, "Karak *makkay* < Scottish *McKay* (Names 15: 3, Sept. 1967), the forms [mækí] and [mækéi] should read [mækéy] and [mækáy] respectively.

A NOTE ON CANADIAN ONOMASTICS

To mark the Centennial of Canadian Confederation, a group of scholars organized Canadian Institute of Onomastic Sciences. The first annual meeting of this Institute was held on June 17, 1967, at the Carleton University in Ottawa during the meetings of other Learned Societies of Canada.

Before CIOS came into being, the Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences — UVAN of Canada — had already published 34 issues of *Onomastica*, the only series in Canada relating to the research of place and personal names. The studies are not confined to Canada, or to Canada and those European countries which have influenced its name, but have been broadened to include the whole of North America.

For the scholar, the studies are of considerable value, particularly in the field of humanities. But the average Canadian, too, will find here some of the most fascinating reading, and a pleasant road to gaining new insight into the history of his province and his country.

One of the first issues, devoted to *The Term and Name Canada*, settles all the age-old arguments about the derivation of this name, simply because there are three interesting theories — local, European and Oriental — and none has been proven.

CANADIAN PLACE NAMES

Indian, Pseudo-Indian Place Names in the Canadian West (Onomastica No. 12, 1956) is a roll call of Canadian history: Saskatchewan from the Cree Indian word *Kisiskatchewan* meaning swift current; Medicine Hat, a translation of the Blackfoot Indian *Saamis*, meaning hat of the medicine man, the magician; Saskatoon for the red berries which the Indians called *Saskatoons*.

In a study of place names in Nova Scotia (Onomastica No. 19, 1960) the reader finds the Germans sharing the French dislike of imported names. Whereas the countryside abounds with English names imported from the homeland, the Germans, except for Lunenburg (a variation of Luneburg) chose geographical or settlers' names, such as Blue Rocks or Wentzell's Lake.

Few, for example, realize the rich contribution which Ukrainians have made to Canadian culture. *Canadian Place Names of Ukrainian Origin* (Onomastica No. 2, 1950) opens up new vistas.

The moving force of this new scholastic venture in Canada is Professor J. B. Rudnyćkyj, chairman of the Department of Slavic Studies at the University of Manitoba. Born in Ukraine, Dr. Rudnyćkyj received his early education in Stryj, and then entered the University of L'viv to specialize in Slavic philology and linguistics in general. He obtained his M.A. degree at that university in 1934, and completed his Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1937. After World War II, he lectured at universities at Munich and Heidelberg, Western Germany. In January, 1949, Professor Rudnyćkyj arrived in Canada and started his work as chairman of the Department of Slavic Studies at the University of Manitoba. In that year he initiated a trimestral publication *Slavistica Canadiana*, and two years later the series *Onomastica*.

The Canadian Institute of Onomastic Sciences is a further step in promotion of this important branch of Humanities in Canada. Other scholars serving at the Institute are: E. R. Seary, St. John's, Newfoundland; S. Losique, Montreal, P.Q., and Y. Slavutych, Edmonton, Alberta.