

Book Reviews

Goodwife Hot and Others. By Godfrey Watson. Newcastle upon Tyne: Oriel Press Limited, 1970. Pp. 220. Price £3.

Here is a work on names with a title in the style of Myron J. Quimby's *Scratch Ankle, U.S.A.* These esoteric titles are just a little irritating to the serious student of names, but, perhaps they attract the curious. I do not know. The subtitle, "Northumberland's Past as shown in its Place Names," is more descriptive and helpful to one considering purchase.

In his preface the author explains that his aim was to produce a book which all who may be interested can read, rather than a book of reference. But as an attempt has been made to cover too many names, reading can be tiresome since no plot or general outline is sustained. He does include a few couplets here and there. For instance:

Hae ye ivver been at Elsdon ?
The world's unfinished neuk;
It stands among the hungry hills
An' wears a frozen look.

He might have, but did not, give the rest:

The Elsdon folks like diein' stegs
At ivvory stranger stare;
An' hather broth an' curlew eggs
Ye'll get for supper there.

Perhaps the reason he did not give it all was because the natives of Elsdon are not particularly fond of the poem, as this reviewer discovered. However, this is just an illustration of the weakness of the book as a pleasant, readable one. Not enough of the history, customs, and folklore of the county are given.

The book is divided into 23 chapters. Some of them are concerned with the names given by the Romans, the Angles, and the Scandinavians. Others explain the names connected with such items as wild plants, valleys, hills, clearings, streams, moors, stones, woods, hedges, animals, fields, roads, and the salt trade. The last few chapters discuss the names which arose in the last three centuries.

Anyone who is familiar with Northumberland through long residence there will be interested in the book. And it must be pointed out that the author has been quite careful in the derivations he has given. The book is much more serious than the title would indicate.

Elsdon C. Smith

Place Names of the Pacific Northwest Coast. By Lynn Middleton. Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1969. Pp. x, 226.

Mrs. Middleton has produced a workmanlike job with her *Place Names of the Pacific Northwest Coast*, the result of years of boating in and out of the inlets and around the many islands of the region. Hers is an alphabetized listing of places, whether bay, shoal, village, cape, rock, or channel, with lively information which is like the feel of salt spray in the wind, so imbued is she with the lore of her wanderings.

An interesting technique is Mrs. Middleton's identifying whether the place-name is Canadian or within the limits of United States waters. Canadian names are identified by a small black maple leaf and those of the United States by an eagle. The frontispiece consists of an "Index to Canadian Hydrographic Service Charts of the Southern British Columbia Coast," a fact which would enable one to ascertain, for instance, that Adventure Cove (49° 125° South West) is on Chart #3609. For what reason Mrs. Middleton does not include an index to United States charts one cannot say, but its omission is unfortunate for one who likes to pinpoint a place-name. "Near Seattle" is too indefinite.

Mrs. Middleton has done well in cross-referencing her materials. A reader has gratifying success in checking, where information appears scanty. For instance, "Yeo Island . . . named by Pender, *Beaver*," requires searching to discover under "Pender Harbor" that Daniel Pender, R.N., was second master of H. M. S. *Plumper*. Under the entry for "Plumper" one finds two bays, a cove, a harbor, and islands, not to mention a passage and a sound, all named by the captain of H. M. S. *Plumper* during a surveying trip from 1857-61. Not the least interesting information in the volume is the descriptions of ships. The *Plumper* was a steam sloop churning along at six knots under 60 h.p.

It is difficult to assess whether a certain unevenness detracts from or adds to the charm of Mrs. Middleton's work. A purist who looks only for place-name information may be irritated by the interspersing of Indian legends which have no place-name information whatever. On the other hand, such a rigid reader-attitude does not coalesce with the author's enthusiasm for her subject, which leads her to quote long passages on how the Cowichan Indians got fire (under "Cowichan Bay and River"), or - following 15 lines devoted to the origin of the name for Douglas Channel - the warm tribute to Sir James Douglas' "administrative abilities, his integrity and fidelity to duty, [which] categorize him as the most prominent figure in the history of British Columbia." Such a graceful acknowledgment is acceptable, but this in turn is followed by two pages of the text of portions of his inaugural address as governor in 1856. Even then the reader is not done with Douglas Point, for the oration

is followed by a comparison of the 1856 budget figures for government expenditure with a reference to contemporary costs. The final paragraph for this entry reverts to Sir James himself: birth date, ancestry, education, and marriage. Does it require saying that no one is constrained to read everything?

On the other hand, the omission of much extraneous detail would, I believe, detract from the interest of the book. Under Albert Islet is a fascinating redaction of rum-running days' adventures, a lively and amusing entry. Dranery Point relates something of the cannery history of the region. Tillamook Rock Lighthouse relates a thrilling story of man's stubbornness against odds which kill, but over which he triumphs in creating the lighthouse. The volume is replete with shadows of the gold rush, stories of shipwrecks, and of ships which quietly sailed about their business until victims of natural extinction by replacement, of chit-chat about this and that, with one vastly entertaining story about Old Mary of Old Mary's Island, a person who had something in common with the Wife of Bath.

Illustrations in *Place Names of the Pacific Northwest Coast* are mainly photographs of men and the ships they sailed. Information about the ships is solid, for the most part. Occasionally the author cites sources for investigation, but does not footnote sources for specific names. The "Acknowledgements" are in fact a bibliography, which suffers from not having been alphabetized. There are no pronunciations. One suspects that the places named also have Indian names, but these are only occasionally given. At the same time, as any onomastic researcher knows, many original names may be unobtainable, having vanished with those who used them long ago.

Byrd Howell Granger

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Webster's Dictionary of Proper Names. Compiled by Geoffrey Payton. Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1971. Pp. iv, 752. Price \$9.95.

The publicity announcement on this volume hails it as "... a boon to students, researchers, writers, puzzle fans and everyone interested in facts, history and names for their own sake." It is avowedly not a totally new work but an adaptation of the author's recent *Payton's Proper Names*, an acclaimed best-seller in England, to which have been added some 2,000 entries to justify its publication as an American edition. Mr. Payton calls his selection a "highly personal" one and, in his preface, admits that he has "stretched the term 'proper name' to its furthest limits (and indeed far beyond)," thus disqualifying in advance any objections on

what should or should not have been included, on what is said on each item, and even on what constitutes a “proper name.”

Literary names can sometimes be found, sometimes not: we are informed about *Mrs. Jellyby* from Dickens' *Bleak House*, but do not find Phoebe Pyncheon from Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*; *Mrs. Malaprop* is listed, but not a word about Mrs. Grundy. Many cartoon characters are included, such as *Li'l Abner*, *Barney Google*, *Mr. Magoo* and *Pogo*. Under *Katzenjammer Kids* is the comment, “. . . The first real comic strip, with frames, balloons and a permanent cast, begun by Rudolph Dirks for Hearst and based on a German model of the 1860s, Wilhelm Busch's *Max und Moritz*. After a lawsuit there were 2 versions, *The Captain and the Kids* (Dirks) and another by Joe Musial.” Mr. Payton neglects to mention that during the 30's and 40's the *Katzenjammer Kids* was drawn by H. H. Knerr. An excusable ellipsis perhaps, but there are more throughout the book.

Historical references are in abundance, but here, too, one takes his chances. *Freudian psychology* and *Freudian slip* are listed without a separate listing for *Freud* (although his name, identity and dates are carried parenthetically). The same is true of the listing for *Arian heresy*.

One may find names of eras, political slogans, acronyms, television shows, and almost anything else the author deemed significant, some examples being *Huntley Brinkley Report*, *Now Generation*, and “*As Maine goes so goes the country*.” The *Gay Nineties* and *Roaring Twenties* are given brief comment, but there is no reference for Noble Experiment. Under *Floradora Girls* we read,

A famous bevy of beauties in the English musical, *Floradora* (1899), which enjoyed long runs on both sides of the Atlantic. The music by Leslie Stuart (composer of ‘Lily of Laguna’) included the outstandingly popular sextet “Tell me, pretty maiden, are there any more at home like you?” Several of the girls married millionaires, but the stage could hardly have accomodated all the handsome middle-aged women who later claimed membership of the original chorus.

Sardi's is listed as a “famous New York restaurant on Broadway, with a primarily theatrical *cachet*,” but it was Tom Breneman's old Blue Network radio show, “Breakfast at Sardi's” out of Hollywood's KECA that made the name known to America in the 40's.

The most entertaining aspect of the book, as one can readily surmise, is the “highly personal” nature of the comments therein. For example, I list four more items:

Jehovah's Witnesses (1852) A US sect founded by Pastor Russel. It teaches that Christ returned invisibly, in 1874; millions (i.e. Witnesses) now living will never die; all Churches and governments are of Satan . . . Witnesses meet in Churches called Kingdom Halls and baptize by immersion. They are also indefatigable door-to-door evangel- and tract distributors.

'*Liebesträum*' A beautiful Liszt piano piece, often murdered by sentimentality.

'*We Shall Overcome*' The civil rights movements song, heard wherever 2 or 3 protesters are gathered together.

'*White Christmas*' (1942) The ever-popular song, 'I'm dreaming of a White Christmas' written by Irving Berlin for the movie *Holiday Inn*, and now an inescapable feature of the Christmas festival. . . .

Mr. Payton's dedication reads, "To Mary, without whose constant encouragement and advice this book would have been finished in half the time." The work is, without question, a handy and informative source of all kinds of information which those for whom it is intended will find quite useful. However, it is hardly a scholar's tool. It has been written in the popular vein for the general reader and for non-specialists of all fields.

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Liverpudlian or What is Who Called Where?! Chicago: Marquis Biographical Library Society, 1970. Pp. 43. Price \$2.50.

Here is a small, interesting pamphlet listing the names people from countries, states, and cities are called, an item of information sometimes difficult to find when needed.

Here we are told that a man from Barbados is a Barbadian or a Bajan, a man from the Congo, a Congolese, and that a Mali is from Mali. A man from Utah is a Utahan while his neighbor from Colorado is a Coloradan or Coloradoan. Cities can present difficulties. From Istanbul, Turkey, comes an Istanbulu. Springfield, Massachusetts, calls its natives Springfieldian while Springfield, Ohio, is satisfied with Springfielder, and Springfield, Illinois, dubs them Springfieldman and Springfieldwoman, according to sex.

Elsdon C. Smith

Acronyms and Initialisms Dictionary, 3rd ed. By Ellen T. Crowley and Robert C. Thomas, eds. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1970. Pp. xv + 484. Price \$22.50.

AID-3, as the editors label it, is now in its third edition, although in such a proliferating coinage area it is essentially a new book. In 1960, the first edition, a slim little volume, contained approximately 40,000 entries; this one, about 80,000 with supplements for 1971 and 1972 to add 12,000 entries each. To be sure, acronyms and initialisms provide

a fertile and sometimes flamboyant source for new vocabulary, and the fad seems to be endearing itself persistently to every level of American culture.

The tendency to abbreviate has been unabashedly strong in the American character since the rise of industrialism and the onslaught of the efficiency expert, helped along no doubt by the chop-chop of the telegraph message with its equating number of words with tolls. This sort of strange nonsense has somehow slopped over into literary criticism, where the "economic style" has rich currency. Probably, some of the Benjamin Franklin syndrome remains in all of us: a word not used is a word "saved," whatever that may mean in metaphysical terms.

Acronyms and initialism are abbreviations, a kind of shorthand (C.O.D.) practiced by busy people in general and by frolicsome black humorists (SCUM, "Society for Cutting Up Men") in particular. Latter-day acronyms are deliberately created to attract attention to a pet project or obsession: GOO, "Get Oil Out"; SWAP "Shared Work Approach"; VIP, "Very Important Poor"; or NOW, "National Organization for Women." These examples could be multiplied by the hundreds.

Little study has been made of the acronym or its nature. S. V. Baum, in the best critique to appear,¹ distinguishes four orders of the acronym: (1) words "formed only from the first letter of each major unit of a phrase," such as PAUSE, "People Against Unconstitutional Sex Education"; (2) words formed from two initial letters of the first unit, such as RADAR, "radio detection and ranging"; (3) "a word composed from . . . the initial plus final syllables" of words in a phrase, such as MOTEL, "motor hotel"; and (4) "a blend formed from the initial syllables of two or more words, as 'amphibious tractor.'" Baum would call the latter an impure acronym. He balked at calling TRANSPHIBLANT, "Transports, Amphibious Force, Atlantic Fleet," a fifth order, since it approaches "agglutinative extremes, introducing medial as well as initial and final letters." These strictures are useful for formal, or structural, definitions.

The editors of AID-3 prefer semantical categories, avoiding the problem of structural definitions, despite the formalism of Baum, whom they must have read. Their purpose, however, was not to define so much as to list. The listings can be educational, I suppose, for a cursory examination of my most privately abhorred acronym reveals that there are two ZIPs, only one of which has gained notoriety, probably the most famous and costly, "Zone Improvement Plan," and the other a limpid "Zinc Impurity Photodetector." Ten NASAs appear, but only one, "National Aeronautics and Space Administration," has a reputation,

¹ "The Acronym, Pure and Impure," *American Speech*, XXXVII (1962), 48-50. Baum has other articles on the subject: "From 'AWOL' to 'VEEP': the Growth and Specialization of the Acronym," *ibid.*, XXX (1955), 103-110, (1957), 73-75.

although we should perhaps do something about "National Appliance Service Association." For some dialectal pronunciations, NASARR probably should belong to the above ten, as anyone who has listened to and watched the moon shots in recent years knows. It has the added spice of containing within it an initialism of another acronym, "North American Search and Ranging RADAR (Navy)."

Most of the entries are initialisms, perhaps 95 per cent, although I have not laboriously counted them. Many entries have the same initials; for instance, selected randomly, there are 17 GBs, 31 GCs, 13 GCAs, 10 GCCs, 17 CSSs, 16 CSRs, 42 CSCs, and on it goes page after page. It seems needless to list FDR, HST, LBJ, and JFK, which should probably be called initials rather than initialisms. Why include HST and not DDE and RMN? Why not include pronunciations for entries that may or may not be pronounced like the words they spell? It is always C.O.D., for instance, never *cod*.

A thorough exploration of the implications needs to be made. Perhaps AID-3 will stimulate someone to undertake the study. Still, it might be difficult to explain the mind that prefabricated "Redirected Unilateral and Multifaced Plans to Elevate Lower Strata and Timid Individuals and to Liven and Train Scared Kids In Need." Shade of RUMPELSTILTSKIN!²

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Studies on Middle English Topographical Terms. By Gillis Kristensson. Lund, CWK Gleerup, 1970. Pp. 122. Price Kr. 40.

This appears to be a very careful study of Middle English topographical terms evidenced by surnames, a welcome addition to Mattias T. Löfvenberg's *Studies on Middle English Local Surnames* published in Lund in 1942.

After a brief discussion, the terms are given in two alphabetical lists, first, Simplex Terms (pages 19-46) and second, Compound Terms (pages 47-96). Following the lists is a word index of the elements included in the lists with their meanings. A bibliography and a place-name index completes the work.

Eldson C. Smith

² Provided by Professor Robert Rennick, and not listed in AID-3.