

Book Reviews

Place Names of the English-Speaking World. By C. M. Matthews. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972. Pp. xi, 370. Price \$8.95.

This book is a companion to the author's *English Surnames* which Elsdon C. Smith, its reviewer, called "an interesting, well-written book authored by an historian," stating that "many important observations about English surnames are made which are not found elsewhere" [*Names*, 16:184-5] If *surnames* is replaced by *place-names*, the same can be said about this text. Of course, Mr. Smith made other statements about *Surnames* which were not so complimentary; one in particular seems to be applicable here: "Mrs. Matthews' scholarly investigation seems to have just skimmed the surface."

With these caveats out of the way, it can be said safely that no other text treats place-names in English with the same thoroughness as does the one by Mrs. Matthews; detractors might say that this is the only one, which is true. Nevertheless, it is an honest attempt to survey the history of the dissemination of names to almost all parts of the world from those which apparently originated on what we now call the British Isles, in this case England, Wales, and Scotland, and some surrounding islands, including Ireland, which has a half-English name.

Mrs. Matthews makes "no claim to original research into the origins of place-names," although she has contributed "special details" when her materials warranted. She has supplemented a deep interest in place-names with an almost total dependence, completely acknowledged by her, on the work of Eilert Ekwall, A. H. Smith, P. H. Reaney, G. R. Stewart, K. Cameron, W. F. H. Nicolaisen, and other onomatologists. It would indeed be difficult to disagree with her interpretation of name meanings, since they have already been subjected to intense and rigorous research by the ablest scholars in the field.

Her purpose, however, is not to ferret out the meanings and derivations of names but to write popular history by using names to provide romantic flavor and human interest, for all the great names are there, both in places and also in their adventurous and pedestrian name-givers. The English, as history tells us, went just about everywhere and left their names behind them: "The sun never sets on the English place-name." In general, the English, as well as explorers and exploiters from other nations, let nostalgia intrude and named accordingly; hence, such names as New Jersey, New Plymouth, New Providence, New York, New South Wales, and even New England, among a few thousand others, testify to the emotional home attachment of the Englishman-away-from-home. Explorers were also careful to name places after their patrons or their

governmental superiors: Admiralty Island, Alaska, (which Mrs. Matthews does not mention), Admiralty Bay (she mentions one among several), Virginia, Charlestown, Williamsburg, Annapolis, Cumberland, Gloucester, Halifax, Grafton, and probably hundreds of others. Still, some names reflect the problems that beset naval officers, especially Captain James Cook and Captain George Vancouver: Thirsty Sound, Cape Tribulation, Weary Bay, and, perhaps best of all, Cape Flattery. Cook was a careful namer – after he had taken care of his admirals and cabinet members.

The text is well organized, with pre-English names discussed first, along with pre-English names of natural features. The Roman legacy plays a prominent part in early naming and is thoroughly analyzed, in a most scholarly summary, certainly the best I have read. The Viking and Norman influences are well documented. The Celtic West is given some prominence, although marred somewhat by the author's statement that "Welsh is unrelated to English." Nearly half of the book is devoted to English and Celtic names.

The latter half presents a rather rousing and exotic picture of Englishmen naming throughout the world wherever they happened to land, conquer, colonize, or exploit. The narrative sweeps through the New World, with short but vibrant chapters on the United States, Canada, Southern Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. India is given short shrift, as perhaps it needs, although English naming habits have been of greater influence than Mrs. Matthews admits. On the other hand, she is correct in saying that the English have left less imprint on place-names there than in other large areas that did not have the "advanced civilization" of an India. The reasons should probably be investigated by political scientists and historians. Elsewhere, the English lavishly overlaid local names with their own coinages and national impertinence. The failure in India may be attributed to the tenaciousness of the natives to retain their names in the face of adversity. Still, the differences in script brought about some changes in names that might not otherwise have occurred: Benares for Varanarsi, and Cawnpore for Kanpur. Additional ones can be identified by reference to a map of India. Within cities the English left such names as Victoria Square, Connaught Circus, New Delhi, and a host of others. The Indians have been slow to change these names, but within a few years these landmarks may have Indian names now that the official language of India is Hindi. A good case in point is the change of the name United Provinces in Northern India to Uttar Pradesh, the meaning retained but the name completely different. After all, English is spoken by only about two percent of the populace and it can be forecast with certainty that the number will decrease in the next two or three decades.

In Africa the situation is in a state of flux. English names are disappearing as rapidly as the change of Cape Canaveral to Cape Kennedy.

Perhaps we should not be disturbed by this, as Mrs. Matthews is, for it is a human action. New countries and new events bring about new names. Skunk Road is changed to Paradise Lane with the same impunity as the change from Victoria Street to Gandhi Marg. Mrs. Matthews, in a book that extolls the magnificence of naming, fails to take these changes into consideration: once an Englishperson always an Englishperson! That seems to have been the history of England. Times change; names change. We can only watch and record. Still, Mrs. Matthews has written a valuable, occasionally prejudiced, book, a work that challenges and informs on every page.

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Russian Surnames. By B. O. Unbegaun. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972. Pp. xviii, 529. Price \$27.25.

Here we have a most important addition to onomastics, a work that describes the modern Russian surname system from the morphological point of view. Special attention is given to stress and to semantic and historical aspects and to the meanings of the root words from which the names are derived. Very few Russian names consist only of a word without any morphological addition as is so often the case of surnames in other European countries.

This is the kind of book sorely needed in this country, a clear, authoritative book about the names, in this case surnames, derived from languages other than English, written in the English language by one well qualified to write. Besides books about Irish and Scottish surnames, the only other important book of this kind I know of is Joseph G. Fucilla's *Our Italian Surnames*.

Many who write about Russian names in English give the illustrative names in their original Cyrillic spellings. The special value of this work for speakers of the English language is that the Russian names are given in the Latin transcription traditionally used in Slavonic philology, the form in which Russian surnames are found in this country.

Dr. Unbegaun divides the work into four parts of 14 chapters. The first part is general on Russian names, consisting of two chapters, the first on the origin and history, and the second on form, stress, and declension. This introductory part provides a very concise explanation of the Russian name system set out very clearly to help the novice in the understanding of Russian onomastics.

After the East Slavs accepted Christianity, about 989, each person had to have a single baptismal name conferred on him by a priest. Most of these true Christian names were the names of saints, not Slavonic but of Greek origin, which thus, centuries later, entered into the surname system. Since to these baptismal names was often added another or familiar name, the Russian surname system is not confined to the comparatively limited number of Greek names.

For a name to become a surname it usually had to have a possessive suffix added. The most common patronymic suffixes were *-ov/ev* and *-in*, and we find the overwhelming majority of Russian surnames with one or another of these suffixes. The *-in* suffix is not nearly as common as the *-ov/ev* suffix. To a derivative noun the suffix *-ic* had to be added, and in the Muscovite State of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the terminations *-ovic/evic* became the privilege of the upper classes. A decree of 1685 made it an offense for such individuals as members of the Tsar's Privy Council not to use the *-vic* suffix. Later the patronymics *-ovic/evic* became a polite form of address for people of higher social standing. The use of *-vic* was extended to all, including those of the lower social ranks, in the nineteenth century. Various suffixes have fused with the common endings *-ov/ev-* and (less frequently) *-in* and *-skij* to form numerous characteristic compound suffixes.

As elsewhere throughout Europe, the princes, wealthy landowners, and the aristocracy were the first to accept hereditary surnames. They took them from the names of their estates, adding the terminations *-skij/-skoj*, *-ckij/-ckoj*, but these names are now uncommon because of the early fluidity of land ownership. Some surnames were taken from the names of women, and this often indicated a child born out of wedlock, although some came from the names of wives.

In English, surnames are not declined, but in Russian one must be able to recognize surnames in other than the nominative case. Most Russian names can be declined. There are six cases: nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, locative, and instrumental. Each may be masculine or feminine and they may be plural, recognizable by their endings. And all these forms may be surnames, although most surnames are found in the nominative case. Fortunately, the spelling of Russian names corresponds pretty well with the pronunciation.

Part II, in seven chapters, discusses Russian names derived from baptismal names, occupational names, local names, and nicknames, as well as artificial surnames. The first two chapters of Part II are allotted to a discussion of surnames derived from baptismal names, distinguishing between surnames from the full form of the baptismal name and those from a pet or diminutive form. Dr. Unbegaun classifies surnames from baptismal names from their endings, mostly *-ov*, with some *-ev* and *-in*.

Others are examined and classified from their initial letter or syllable, or from medial letters. He lists copious examples indicating the underlying baptismal name.

A complete chapter is allocated to surnames derived from the diminutive form of the baptismal names. Familiar or pet names were very common at all times in Russia. Russian diminutive forms usually include a suffix and there were about 50 such suffixes which could be combined with a Christian name, but of course not every one could be used with any particular name, and Dr. Unbegaun discusses them with relation to the suffixes. One diminutive form could be derived from another. As in other languages, diminutive forms could be derived from the first syllable, the last syllable, or from a median syllable. Surnames derived from diminutive forms are far less common than those from the full form of the baptismal name. With the copious examples the author lists will usually be found the underlying baptismal name.

Some surnames from pet forms could be derived from more than one baptismal name. Thus Filov could come from Filimon, Filipp, Filon, or Feofil. For eight common given names Dr. Unbegaun gives a full list of surnames derived from them. For example, from Ivan (John) he lists 100 different surnames, and from Jurji (George) he gives 35. This chapter is concluded with a group of surnames derived from women's given names.

The original meaning of each Russian surname derived from an occupation is easily establishable. Occupational names show characteristic suffixes – usually *-ik* followed by the surname ending *-ov*. All the occupations of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are found in Russian surnames, each translated into English by the author. The two most common occupational family names are Popov (priest), followed by Kuznecov (smith).

Russian surnames derived from local names are less numerous than those of the three other main groups. But the proportion of aristocratic and noble surnames is higher in this group. Here a very common ending is *-skij*, along with the ubiquitous *-ov/ev*. As elsewhere, Russian local surnames do not always indicate ownership of land by the bearer. Here as elsewhere all statements are supported by copious examples.

Dr. Unbegaun devotes two chapters to the Russian surnames derived from nicknames (a nickname being defined as a name that is not derived from a baptismal name and is neither occupational nor local – a definition perhaps too wide, in the opinion of this reviewer). This does appear to be an odd method of attacking the problem. Here the writer finds that the suffixal pattern is irrelevant, although he does group many of them by their suffixes, others by meanings. Some names, he thinks, must be studied with reference to their semantics alone, the same as in the West European languages. He divides them roughly into two classes, that is,

surnames derived from personal attributes or behavior and those from transferred nicknames. Transferred nicknames are those where the description is from the use of a word which has some nebulous meaning applied to a person. For instance, *medved* ("bear") is a word giving rise to the surname Medvedev, probably for a clumsy, bulky person. The author has listed large groups of surnames derived from birds, animals, fish, and insects, many of which are among the most common surnames in Russia.

In considering the very large group of Russian surnames derived from nicknames, Dr. Unbegaun is very careful to point out that in such names it is practically impossible to distinguish from among names in the other three classes of surnames. Practically every surname can be derived from a nickname, and many would be so classified if the circumstances of their bestowals were known.

In the chapter on artificial surnames the author starts with a discussion of the names adopted by the Orthodox clergy who, about the end of the seventeenth century, dropped their ordinary surnames to be known by artificial names. Many were given to students in the ecclesiastical schools. As the Russian clergy were allowed to marry, these clergy-names survived. Many, but not all, bear some relation to religion and the church, and often end with the suffix *-skij*. Other artificial surnames discussed in this chapter are pseudonyms, literary surnames, and deliberately changed surnames.

Dr. Unbegaun classifies the surnames used by some of the principal writers and gives the meanings in English. Before the Revolution of 1917 surnames could be changed only by a complicated legal procedure. After the Revolution many availed themselves of the new freedom to adopt a more desirable name.

Part III consists of three chapters on surnames of non-Russian origin, the first being on surnames of Ukrainian origin. The Ukrainian onomastic system differs morphologically from that of the Russian. Chapters on surnames of White Russian origin and surnames of other Slavonic languages follow, all generally classified by their endings and derivations. Surnames of Polish, Serbian, Bulgarian, and Czech origin are discussed.

Part IV, in two chapters, discusses surnames of non-Slavonic origin found in Russia. This part commences with a brilliant outline of Jewish surname history in Russia, mostly from the viewpoint of their form and meaning. The rest of the chapter is devoted to surnames of West European origin. The last chapter discusses surnames of non-European origin found in Russia.

Dr. Unbegaun would have added to the value of his work if he had discussed the alteration of Russian surnames in the United States. Why did many *-ov* suffixes become *-off* in America and elsewhere, and how did

the termination *-skij* become *-sky*? But such carping criticism as this is a small pin prick in such an outstanding work.

Much of Dr. Unbegaun's book is confined to lists of surnames illustrating his statements. He gives the meanings of the words from which the names are derived, but seldom does he attempt to show how the particular surname arose. In an appendix he lists the hundred most common Russian surnames based on the St. Petersburg directory of 1910.

On pages 414-424 is a bibliography of items on Russian surnames, mostly books and articles in Russian, German, and other European languages. Dr. Unbegaun has not, for some reason, included any articles on his subject which have appeared in *Names*. Attached is an index of more than 10,000 Russian surnames. A short Corrigenda and Errata taped in, while not catching all possible errors, gives one confidence that the work has been most carefully checked and rechecked for typographical errors.

Since the author has generally classified Russian surnames from the suffixes, it is right that he close the work with an index of more than 300 surname endings. He points out, however, that the index does not include the *-ov/-ev* and *-in* terminations because they are to be found on almost every page of the book. The index of Russian surnames is full and complete.

One cannot praise a work of this character and scholarship too highly. This is a brilliant, outstanding, and authoritative work, written for the English speaker.

Elsdon C. Smith

London Street Names. By Gillian Bebbington. London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1972. Pp. viii, 367. 8 maps. Price £4.50.

To one who likes to wander through the streets of London this is a most attractive book. True, it is just a dictionary of almost 4,000 London streets covering thoroughly not only the ancient city but the nearby suburbs, north to Hampstead and Highgate, west to Chelsea, east to Aldgate, and south to Bankside, an area of over 25 square miles. Eilert Ekwall published his *Street-Names of the City of London* in 1954 and Al Smith published his *Dictionary of City of London Street Names* in 1970, but these brilliant writers restricted their attention to the old mediæval city.

Mrs. Bebbington starts with an interesting and instructive essay on the origins of the street names of London. Here she traces their general history. She says, and I quote, "As time went by, regular footpaths were trodden out in the mud from one place to another, and over the centuries acquired names in the same way that surnames developed: some from a physical feature, such as the path's steepness or broadness or even its

filth, others from a destination: the City Wall, a gate, a stream, a church." Other names describe people, as Carter Lane and Old Jewry, and animals and plants, as Cock Lane and Vine Street. These descriptive names are the first street names. She finds that the earliest street names emerged from the chaos of the Dark Ages in about the tenth century.

In later times noble landowners began to develop their great estates and their names were applied to streets. Others applied topical names and the favorite was, of course, royalty, the source of the great estates, and streets named Victoria, Albert, York, Clarence, Hanover, and Regent are common. Less popular were "great men" names such as Wellington, Pitt, and Gladstone.

Mrs. Bebbington discusses the synonyms for *street*, such as *road*, *avenue*, *terrace*, *lane*, *alley*, *passage*, and other similar terms such as *yard*, *court*, *circus*, *mews*, and *square*. These terms originally had very precise meanings. A *street* was the paved way of the Romans; an *avenue* the approach or drive leading to a mansion.

The dictionary part lists names in alphabetical order keyed to maps at the end of the book. However, after many names one is merely referred to another name where the brief sketch only mentions it. By number the author shows where she obtained the information about the name – 340 references listed at the end. Many street names listed carry only the brief comment, "Origin unknown."

A very intriguing feature of the book is the inclusion of a list of the main London estates and owners at the time of development, 88 in number. In the maps at the end these estates are designated by number and the tracts roughly outlined in red.

With the book in one's hands one quickly turns to those famous names known everywhere such as Trafalgar, Waterloo, Regent, and Piccadilly, the last considered the most famous street name in the world. Then perhaps one looks for an interesting name, such as Nine Elms Lane, and does not find it since the book covers only the principal parts of London, not all of Greater London. It may be hoped that Mrs. Bebbington will compile volumes two and three in order to include all of that sprawling Greater London.

Elsdon C. Smith

GALE RESEARCH REPRINTS: X

This survey of reprints by Gale Research Company, Book Tower, Detroit, Michigan 48226, is the tenth in the series of notices giving prominence to books of interest to readers of *Names*. Titles and bibliographical information appear below.

- Cussans, John E. *Handbook of Heraldry*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1893. Pp. 353. Republished, 1970. \$15.
- Mordacque, L. H., trans. *History of the Names of Men, Nations, and Places in their Connection with the Progress of Civilization*. From the original by Eusebius Salverte. 2 vols. London: John Russell Smith, 1864. I, xii + 367 pp.; II, vii + 447 pp. Republished, Ann Arbor, Mich.: Gryphon Books, 1971. \$20.
- Stenhouse, Thomas. *Lives Enshrined in Language; Or, The Sociological Aspect of Words*. London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton Kent & Co., Ltd., 1928. Pp. xv + 290. Republished, Ann Arbor, Mich.: Gryphon Books, 1971. \$10.
- Swann, H. Kirke. *A Dictionary of English and Folk Names of British Birds*. Pp. xii + 266. Republished, 1968. \$9.50.

Of least importance of these books to the onomatologist is the one on heraldry, despite its providing a psychological insight into the social scheme that caused the phenomenon to develop in the first place. Although this book is a study of heraldry as attained and obtained by individuals for themselves and their families, we should note that institutions usually resort to creating for themselves emblematic shields based on "coats-of-arms." Apparently, among us live those who wish to prove that they have descended from persons of note. Consequently, many genealogical "research" companies invent pedigrees, along with names, for those who desire a sense of ancestry. For those interested in such things, Sir Walter Scott made some derogatory remarks about heraldic science in *Kenilworth*. The *Handbook*, nevertheless, represents a serious attempt to explain just about all the possibilities of man's attempts to glorify himself externally.

British Birds contains many commonized bird names derived from proper names, beginning properly enough with the *Aberdeen Sandpiper*, but the reason for the name is not given. Another provoking one is the *Acadian Owl*, "a North American species," again not divined in the text. As some people certainly know, the Acadians were Indians driven from Canada, some migrating as far south as Louisiana, whence the parish, Acadia. Alphabetically, proper names appear often: *Algerian Red-Necked Nightjar*, *Allan, Alp, Alpine Accentor, Arctic Skua, Athenian Owl*, and so on through the entries, which number some 5,000. Like eating peanuts, one continues to read the next entry, almost to a surfeit. The bibliography lists some 100 items, and seems to be excellent. Also, some strange terminology appears too, such as *Butter Hump, Cawdy Mawdy, Drunken Sow, Devil Squeaker*, to mention only a few. For the ornithologist in the family, the book will surely provide instant entertainment and, perhaps, information.

Mordacque's translation of the two volumes by Salverte contributes in a most important way to the study of names, and the republication of this difficult-to-find book is a credit to Gale Research, or, more aptly, to its subsidiary, Gryphon Books. Salverte attempted to develop a theory of names, one which probably has little justification in linguistic terms; that is, he took the view that "our proper name is ourselves," using two volumes to prove it. In a sense, of course, this is right, but simplicity is not always the shortest line between resistances. Certainly, names do reflect man's occupations, activities, customs, etc., and, therefore, should be studied. Perhaps we cannot escape names, and should not try, although man has devised numerical systems supposedly to take the place of names. That, as we must recognize, is merely another way of naming, despite its psychological effect of demeaning and humiliating.

Salverte wrote a treatise that must take its place as an important work in the history of onomastics. Sometimes infused with manifest destiny, it still remains a germinal study in which the author recognized the manner in which names change as circumstances change. Also, the study is probably the first to consider names in all parts of the world. Even after arguing with his conclusions, we must admit that he carefully considered his materials.

Stenhouse, *Lives Enshrined in Language*, wrote a most readable book about proper names that border on and sometimes become common words. The borderline between the two has never been delineated, and Stenhouse does not try to make the distinction. Of course, he did not have to deal with the problem of *Xerox*, *Coca Cola*, and the legions of trademark names that slip over into lower case spellings everyday. Someone surely should make a study of that twilight area where "propers" become "commoners."

The format of the book disturbs, for the chapters have no headings, only Roman numerals. The essays underlying may strike off in any direction, making shambles of any sort of continuity. The index does not seem to correlate with the text, pagination being somewhat askew; for instance, *Macadam* simply cannot be found on the pages noted, even though the term occurs several times in the text. On the whole, the etymologies are dependable and discussed in a scholarly way, albeit journalistically, not a fault in this case. Still, the author further mars the book with a kind of mystic message that would be appropriate to a religious confessional or an ideological tract, but hardly what one would expect in a treatise of this kind.

In this group, the Mordacque text stands out as important above all the others. In fact, it is an early attempt to make the study of names respectable.

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New Acronyms and Initialisms: 1972. By Ellen T. Crowley, ed. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1972. Pp. xiv, 129. Price \$15.

Despite the American penchant for the telegraphic jactitation that claims verbal shortmouth for efficiency at the expense of coherence, I doubt that I will ever become accustomed to excessive use of initialisms during conferences, committee meetings, and just plain discussions. Recently, at a meeting of department chairmen and deans, all of them academics with expertise, I jotted down DEC, FE, SS, FTE, RA, FLD, SGA, MA, MLA, Ph. D., Ed. D., M. S. in Ed., HEW, SUC, WPDM, and DC, some of them used many times during a two-hour session. It is doubtful that Benjamin Franklin, that prototype of adroit time-savers, would have in his strongest muscular wisdom condoned this *minispeak*.

Nevertheless, the phenomenon exists in a lively, wriggling way, snaking through the speech of nearly everyone, including my own. For this reason, there is need for dictionaries of initialisms and acronyms. Ellen T. Crowley has compiled a new list of 18,000 items to supplement the 80,000 already listed in AID (*Acronyms & Initialisms Dictionary*, 3d ed.; Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1970). The 1972 supplement also cumulates the 1971 one.

Word watchers probably are more interested in acronyms, for they often have a satiric connotation and occasionally add dimensions to coinages, as well as point up current political and social movements. Examples are CHOKE (Care How Others Keep the Environment), SMASH (Students Mobilizing on Auto Safety Hazards), SUMP (State University at Muddy Pond), TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly), and CALM (Citizens Against Legalized Murder), some not noted in the Supplement. Several acronyms now circulating spell out four-letter "taboo" words, but these are not entered. Strangely enough, I have noticed that the majority of acronyms are actually four-letter words, a subject that needs further study.

Apparently, the editors of Gale Research Company intend to publish a new hardcover edition of initialisms and acronyms soon, for the Third Edition is already dated, although only two years old. Of course, one can argue that a dictionary of any kind is out of date the moment of publication.

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The Name Game. By Claude and Irene Neuffer. Columbia (S. C.): Sandpiper Press, 1972. Pp. viii, 60. [Can be purchased from *Names in South Carolina*, Columbia (S. C.) 29208.] Price \$3.95.

Let's Find Out About Names. By Valerie Pitt. New York: Franklin Watts, 1971. Pp. 48. Price \$3.75.

These are juvenile books, so why are they mentioned in *Names*, a scholarly journal? An important purpose of the American Name Society is the encouragement of the study of names. And what better way is there than by interesting young people?

Professor Claude Neuffer, the founder of *Names in South Carolina*, and his wife have written their book to show young people the fascination of place-names. Although this work is limited to South Carolina place-names, it will tend to stimulate interest in place-names everywhere.

While the Neuffers restrict their work to place-names, Valerie Pitts has only personal names in mind. This book will instruct children concerning their own names and those of others.

Elsdon C. Smith

Your Name and Coat-of-Arms. By the Rev. James S. McGivern, S. J. Don Mills, Ontario: Paperbacks, 1971. Pp. 127. Price \$1.50 (paper).

The material in this small book comes chiefly from a column of the same title in the *Toronto Telegram*, where it has been such a popular feature that it has drawn thousands of letters of comment and inquiry from Canada and numerous other countries. It is concerned with surnames, genealogy, and coats-of-arms, most of these last illustrated by Hans D. Birk. The discussion of well-known Canadian and British family names occupies much of the book, but there are also short articles, by other contributors, on Polish, Ukrainian, Slovak, and Hungarian surnames. French Canadian names receive little attention. Most of the articles conclude by naming famous dead or living Canadians who have borne the surname under discussion.

Although the book is intended for a popular rather than a learned audience, its author seems to be well informed in the field of surname history. An introductory chapter discusses the origins of the chief classes of surnames. There is an index of names. Mistakes in typography, spelling, and composition are frequent.

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