

Book Reviews

Kansas Place-Names. By John Rydjord. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972. Pp. xiii + 613; nine Maps, index, bibliography. Price \$20.

John Rydjord is one of those proper scholars who, after years of service for others as Dean of the Graduate School at Wichita State University, has brought out two comprehensive books on Kansas toponymics, the present one, and its predecessor from the same press in 1968: *Indian Place-Names: Their Origin, Evolution, and Meanings: Collected in Kansas from the Siouan, Algonquian, Shoshonean, Caddoan, Iroquoian, and Other Tongues*. Of the central disciplines of onomastics, history, geography, folklore, linguistics, and "psychology," he has neglected none. His favorite is probably linguistics, and by separating out the Indian material he has dealt competently with the major problem of American toponymic linguistics, as Kenny, Huden, Vogel, W. A. Read, Beachamp and others have done before him. One can see why the Oklahoma Press, which is doing yeoman service for name-study, would prefer two volumes to one massive tome.

Despite its learning and its richness of reference, *Kansas Place-Names* is meant for the gentle reader; it is not a dictionary, and has more in common with George Stewart's *Names on the Land* than it does with his recent *American Place-Names*. Rydjord believes that "A dictionary approach would destroy the topical and historical sequence. Mark Twain purportedly disliked the dictionary because, he said, it was constantly changing the subject." I recall no comprehensive American study which arranges topics in just the fashion of this book. They are arranged for good reading: scattered bits of local history become cohesive in much the same way as in Stewart's classic, though the book lacks the massive theme of continental exploration and migration evident in the earlier study.

Essentially there are five groups of chapters. The first of these, Chapters II–VIII, is geographical or topographical – with such titles as "Sun, Water, and Weather" and "Bees, Birds, and Beasts." At first glance the serious student is a bit chary of such classifications, which seem to resemble the casual arrangements of pre-systematic nineteenth-century country vicars. But when we come to the last two of the group, "Natural Resources" and "Economic Imprint," we see the point of the weather, the flora and the fauna – the economic geographer is well-served.

The second group, Chapters IX–XX, is ethnic: Castilian, French and Franco-Indian, English, Scots, Welsh and Irish, Platt- and Hochdeutsch, Scandinavian, Slavic, Asiatic and African, Greek, Roman and Italian.

Biblical names form a transition to names from Saints and Preachers (XXI–XXIII). The whole group is cultural, religious, and linguistic in orientation, though it also reflects the historic migrations of the American melting pot, which certainly overflowed into the landscape even if it did not create the perfect alloy in the tense ghettos and Indian land remnants. Not all the ethnic names are brought by immigrants; many are literary (see, for instance, pp. 157–162 on the major influence of Sir Walter Scott, also a favorite in the American South), journalistic, or second-hand from other parts of the Union.

The third group (Chapters XXIV–XXIX) likewise treats migrants, those from other American states. It stresses the complex history of Kansas' competitive settlement from East and South, and its role as one of the first battlegrounds which were to lead to the War between the States. One is reminded of Linguistic Atlas maps showing Northern, Midland and Southern dialects; east of the Mississippi the arrows flow more or less straight at first, but begin to crisscross in the Appalachians; west of the Mississippi the arrows become an inextricable tangle. These chapters reflect the intensive borrowings from New England, New York and the Middle Atlantic, the Northwest Territory, Midwest and Far West, and the Old South. Just as with the first geographical and ecological section, which reveals cohesive economic patterns, this section is dramatically summed up by Chapter XXIX on squatter sovereignty and the "Bogus Legislature." Conscious as we are of election scandals today, we may take special interest in the fake elections of 1854 in which Southern-disposed wags voted "Henry Ward Beecher, Horace Greeley, and William H. Seward" for pro-slavery candidates. The resultant legislature moved the capital from Pawnee City to Shawnee Mission, in order to sit closer to Missouri, southern sentiment, and importable voters. As a consequence the first 35 counties were named not only with the inevitable Washington and Jefferson, but also with Francis Marion – South Carolinian Swamp Fox hero of the Revolution, as well as a flock of Virginia Johnsons and Kentucky Coffeys. Needless to say there was a backlash, and 11 of these counties were renamed when the Northern element gained control. It is not surprising that the aristocratic philosopher of slavery, Calhoun, lost his county to the more democratic Jackson.

Readers of place-name dictionaries, though they recognize the importance of accurate local history even when it applies to obscure farmers and postmasters, grow somewhat weary of the eternal Jonesvilles and Smith Towns. In his fourth group (Chapters XXX–XXXVII), Rydjord has conquered our tedium with casual but cohesive assemblies of toponyms from anthroponyms. The obscure eponymous heroes take on importance by association and naming-pattern: Kansas State Officials, Lincoln and his Associates, Presidents and their Associates, The Fourth

Estate, Political Nomenclature, Generals and County Names, Private Rooks and Men of Rank, The Soldier State. As we see, the military immortalized themselves in this frontier state, so closely associated with Indian and Civil Wars.

The fifth and last group is a miscellany: "Lo, the Poor Indian" (selective since he had already done his duty to the aboriginal tribes in his first book), "Railroad Roster" (the railroad men were as prolific as the postmasters), "Cherchez La Femme," and at the end a "Potpourri," primarily devoted to the whimsical humor of the pioneers. The author does not forget the postmasters, small men who defeated death with a town name; there is an appendix for them. (For further systematic work on this subject, apparently done without benefit of Rydjord but with the aid of the same book, Robert W. Baughman's *Kansas Post Offices* [Topeka, 1961], see Karl M. D. Rosen, "Community Names from Personal Names in Kansas Post Offices," *Names*, 21:1 [March, 1973], 29-39).

Delightful to read, Rydjord's book shows as much energy in research as any American onomastic study I know, as well as vastly more wit in the arrangement than most of them. Of special interest are the nine maps, which graphically illustrate some of the most important naming sources. Singled out for treatment are British, German, Biblical (a map of the Holy Land accompanies the map of Biblical Kansas) and Military Names, the names of American Indian tribes, and the toponymic deposit of the song-famed Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe. In the Biblical names I find no specific pattern, but there are a Mount Nebo, two Mount Zions and a Zion Valley, Mount Horeb, Mount Gilead, and Mount Sinai, in addition to a Jordan Springs and a Canaan. It is hard to believe that Moses did not lead these Kansas pioneers to the Promised Land, the American Eden. Indeed, there are an Eden Prairie and a Paradise. Quite as interesting is the map of "Military names for Kansas counties." Some 105 counties owe 49 of their names to military men, from a Private Rooks who died in the first year of the Civil War to Generals Washington and Meade.

Rydjord has not neglected the creative onomastics of the folk. He is never fooled by the tales, and recognizes as the systematic folklorist does the importance of belief status and legend, but he tells the stories without condescension. I count about 40 folktales, anecdotes with a twist, and folk etymologies - and I have certainly missed some of these lively additions to the book. There is the expected tale of love associated with Wakonda Springs, with an exogamic lover who fell into the water and was followed by a faithful and suicidal sweetheart (Wakonda is a well-known name for Great Spirit or spirit power or *mana*). There is the Indian wife who asked her husband to fill a pail of water which she had placed by a maple tree. In his male chauvinist arrogance he hurled a tomahawk against the tree and started the white sap flowing. The venison in which

she cooked it was so good that maple sugar was discovered, and a host of Maple names bestowed on Kansas. Popcorn Creek and Post Office evoke a tall tale: "Critics said that Kansas was too hot to raise popcorn because the corn would pop before it could be harvested. According to one story, a farmer going out to inspect his popcorn crop saw his field completely white. He thought it was snow and froze to death." In a Butler County history Ecuadorian Quito became "Key Toe." The temporary Sowtail for Sauterelle, French for an originally Indian Grasshopper, is a worthy rival folk etymology for the Arkansas Smackover for Chemin Couvert, or the Colorado Picketwire for Purgatoire. Ninnescah, meaning "good water," got respelled Ninnescaw and led to a schoolboy etymology "Kneedeep to a squaw." Mi'xa-chau-tse, a marshy junction of the Big and Little Osage Rivers, meant "where white swans were plentiful," and the French properly translated it Marais des Cygnes, but it spawned a group of American horrors like Mary de Zene, Meridizene, and even "Old Aunt Mary." La Bette recalls an Indian legend about a fearful monster, but it became associated with *la bête puante*, and there is the predictable story about the Frenchman who made an unfortunate acquaintance with a skunk in that locality.

The journalists brought the Franco-Prussian war to Kansas, and the results were a Metz, a Lorraine, and a Sedan (the last probably reflecting local German sympathies). Before this the town Sedan was Shoo Fly, from a popular song, and after an argument the local printer, John Gilmore, chose Sedan. But folklore says a popular fellow was a sawmill owner named Dan, and the residents were always going to "see Dan." Wow! Like Show Low in Arizona, Kingsdown is often referred to a poker game, but it probably has more prosaic antecedents like a British town or a personal name. The elegant Lodi of California or Italy (the direction of borrowing is not certain) is said to go back to the greeting of a popular pioneer "Hello Dye!" Igo, probably a form of Iago (Spanish James rather than Shakespeare's villain) generates the story of a Chinaman who discovered gold, who was assaulted by a white supremacy man who did not believe the heathen deserved such riches, and who raised his arms and said "I go, I go." Senator Morrow had a favorite joke of a party of travelers at a settler's house who commented on the "gray-backs" or lice climbing the wall, and asked if they were a natural infestation. Their hostess answered "Oh, no! Not now, but we all had-dem." Thus the town was named Haddam, with no reference to the well-vouched-for Haddam, Connecticut. There might have been a Sumner county if the local namers had not admired the Massachusetts senator so much that they would *not* give his name to "a treeless and trackless portion of the Great American Desert." One small community was asked whether it needed a postoffice, and when someone asked "Is that a fact?" The town became Fact.

Thus Rydjord freshens his book with folklore, though some scientific folklorists might have wished for a little better documentation of the folklore process. Linguists already were in his debt for his careful work with Indian names, so that we can clearly identify on maps in his first book the complex tribal structure of the state – 21 counties which have received their names from Indian tribes, a network of Siouan river names, the delimitation of Algonquian and Iroquoian naming patterns, and the 16 different tribal reservations established before 1854. With such work we approach the happy alliance of history and linguistics which has made the study of place-names in England so valuable a tool for the medieval historian. Indeed, Rydjord's passion for linguistic explanation finally becomes what linguistic purists and overtaxed American onomasticians might call a vice which is the excess of a virtue. A general axiom is that the etymon of a borrowed name like Dublin or Berlin or London or Aberystwyth is the problem of the better-equipped foreign expert, and that the American's task is only to explain the historical migration which led to the borrowing. The Indian names are of course our task, and a heavy one. Having done his Indian homework so well, Rydjord may have let his passion to get at the original etymon and his desire to amuse or inform his reader run away with him. It is delightful to know, for instance, that when in World War I the English had changed the royal name to Windsor, the Kaiser retorted that his favorite English play was "The Merry Wives of Saxe-Coburg." But it leads to two sizable paragraphs on the Kansas Winsor (so spelled) for which linguists might have found other uses. For instance, the book has no evidence of fieldwork on phonetics. The author is puzzled as to whether Elgin comes from the Lord Elgin marbles or from the town and the watch-industry in Illinois; the question might have been answered if we knew whether the pronunciation was English /elgin/ or American /eldžin/. Abilene is a Biblical name associated with *abila*, "grassy meadow," and the town, Milton Eisenhower's birthplace and one of Dwight Eisenhower's many claimed residences, is a "City of the Plains," though apparently not a Sodom. Here someone learned in the Biblical etymon may have reinforced the name of the town, though the local story has it that Tim Hersey said the "Petraich" (Tetrarch) of Abilene in the third chapter of Luke led his wife to pick the name. To the purist, however, the provision of etyma for other towns like Lebanon, Adam, Horeb, Canaan, Sharon, and Samaria is superfluous and "chatty."

This seems a niggardly cavil for a book so full of pleasure, but with hard etymologies from the American Indian to solve, and more of the rich treasures of the gazetteers and archival maps to be plumbed for folklore and history and all the rest, we may fear a rash of books which give us well-known information we do not seek, and which might, because

of the enormous repetition of common borrowings from abroad, lead to a host of fat books which duplicate each other, written with none of the ample talent and zest of Rydjord. We prefer from him the relevant account which only he could give of the four counties (Buffalo, Hodge-mann, Garfield and Finney) which at one time or another held the town of Ravanna, of the Bull City and Bull's Town from a local John Bull which was its rival name, of the Victorian ladies who preferred "Gentleman's Cow Town" and then "Cowland," and finally the appearance of migrant Ravanna from Ohio's Ravenna, which went back to the Byzantine stronghold in Italy.

This is a long review, but it is justified, for the book, as a few samples show, is packed with fascinating material, even when it grows a little redundant to the informed student. There is, after all, plenty also for that student, and I am willing to declare this book with its Indian companion the best pair of volumes (excluding dictionaries proper) on American place-names since Stewart's classic. It holds deep interest for both the scientific worker and the general reader who has a sense of his country's past.

Francis Lee Utley

The Ohio State University

Washington State Place Names. By James W. Phillips. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972.) Pp. xviii + 167; 2 maps. Price \$6.95.

This is a second printing (after 1971) of Phillips' book. It is good to see a University Press making a bit of money from what is basically a journalist's compilation of 1,500 "interesting" names from a state of complex ethnic mixture — a Spanish, an English, and an American wave of exploration and settlement; a climactic mixture of all the American dialects, Northern, North and South Midland, and Southern; and, because of its late settlement, rural as well as urban admixtures of many ethnic groups, Swiss, German, Scandinavian, Lebanese. Beneath it all is the important Indian substratum, for Washington, like California, is still one of those states with a great many indigenous tribes who may be squeezed but are not completely displaced like the aborigines of the East and Middle West. It is no major contribution to the new and systematic survey of American place-names, for essentially it is an abridgement of one of the best American dictionaries: Edmond S. Meany's *Origin of Washington Geographic Names* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1923; reprinted by Gale Research in 1968). Phillips recognizes his indebtedness by dedicating his book to Meany; he has updated it with the 1970 state

and federal gazetteers and with new phonetic material from Hugh A. Rundell's *Washington Names: A Pronunciation Guide* (Pullman: Washington State University, 1960?). The flyleaves contain two useful colored physical maps of the state and the Puget Sound area.

Though it cuts down much rich data from Meany, it adds new data because of the continued growth of the state. In *A*, for instance, we have as additions Adna (originally Willoway, "Where there's a will there's a way," and subsequently Pamona); Airway Heights for the two airports near Spokane; Ajlune in Lewis County named by the first postmaster, a Lebanese; Alderton in Pierce County for the wood used for North Pacific fuel; Alstown after Al Rogers; Altoona, "Founded in 1910 as a site of a fish cannery . . . named after Altona, Germany, major fish-processing city on the Elbe River"; Appleyard as an apple terminal (but a well-known British surname?); Azwell from A. Z. Wells, a merchant and orchard owner. There are a few puzzles. Ardenvoir is "named after Ardenvoir Harris," a sawmill operator, but where did he get his unusual forename, which is not present in ten or so of the major English and American or French books on personal names? Was there a parent who put Shakespeare's forest together with a French *voir*, suggesting in some wry fashion "forest view," and if so, why did he not give it to a place rather than to a son? Here is a place for research; one would expect that the Harris family might have some explanation. There seemed to be a good deal of fancy in Washington pioneers: Ariel is said to be named for Ariel Chitty, son of the first postmaster, but Phillips then follows with one of those extraneous accounts which may amuse tourists but which is useless for scholars — an inverse sin to the silence about Ardenvoir: "The town's name literally means 'lion of God' and is a title applied to Jerusalem in the Old Testament. . . . Subsequent namesakes include a character in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, a satellite of the planet Uranus, and a small boat used for shore explorations by the Wilkes Expedition." Since that expedition took place in 1841 (Meany, pp. vii, 128), it seems to have little relevance for the Ariel of Cowlitz County. I wonder if a little research might show that the postmaster chose the Biblical name for a new Jerusalem and then thought it a pleasant name for his sprightly son? One guess is as good as another. Such are the additions Phillips makes to Meany in the first letter; a glance at B shows the reverse process — the omission of Meany's Baadam Point (an important name from the Wilkes expedition) and Ballard (a city now absorbed by Seattle).

Phillips recognizes the five major disciplines which go into place-name study: history (pp. ix, xi, the waves of historical contact), linguistics (p. xi, the Indian names and the Chinook jargon, phonetic spellings from Rundell, though not the IPA), geography (Aberdeen from Scotland, not merely for Caledonian sentiment but because it, like the Gaelic word,

describes "the meeting of two rivers"), and psychology or whimsy (Eliotopia, a euphemism for "Hell-to-Pay"; the usual Opportunity, Acme, Paradise). Folklore comes off worse, with a rather slighting reference to "apocryphal myths" (p. vii); Phillips, like so many searchers after "accuracy," forgets that the mythical explanation is also a part of the accurate science of man. He is good enough to name Chief Toke, after whom Tokeland in Pacific County was allegedly named, and who was "the town drunk, the region's finest canoe paddler, and a garrulous source of Indian legends." We wish we had some of them about Washington place-names.

The entry on Oregon (p. 102) does not refer to George Stewart's famous and controversial derivation from a map misreading of *Ourisconsint* ("Wisconsin" of 1715); Phillips' earliest citations are Rogers' *Ourigan* of 1765 and 1778, and he attributes the popularity of the name to William Cullen Bryant's *Thanatopsis* (1817). Since one of Stewart's points was the unlikelihood of a Spanish *huracán* (West Indian Taino in origin), we might note that there are a fairly significant number of Spanish names in Phillips: Alava, Anacortes (a remaking of the English Anna Curtis), Buena, Camano, Carbonado, Isla de Dolores (now Destruction Island), Diablo, Ensenada de Heceta (now Deception Bay) and San Rogue (now Cape Disappointment), Espanola, Guemes Island, Jovita, Juanita, Juan de Fuca Strait, Lopez, Malaga, Malo(?), Manzanita, Isla de Mata (now Matia), Mazama, Mesa, Ocosta, El Cerro de la Santa Rosalia (now Mount Olympus), Orcas Island, Orillia, Oroville, Oso, Pasco, Pateros, Patos Island, Plaza, Port Angeles, Quimper Peninsula, Rosario, San de Fuca, San Juan County, Sucia Island. Admittedly, some of these are not of the early Spanish centuries, like Redondo, a swank name from the popular Redondo Beach in California; but a sufficient number of them are old.

The book, then, is a useful addition to Meany, and a help to the tourist, but the American place-name survey will need to supplement them both extensively.

Francis Lee Utley

The Ohio State University

The Place-Names of Berkshire, Part One. English Place-Name Society
Volume XLIX. By Margaret Gelling. Cambridge: at the University
Press, 1973. Pp. xxi, 285. Price \$18.50.

The first volume of a projected three-volume series continues in the tradition of great scholarship that has characterized the previous volumes of the study of all the place-names in the counties of England. The three

volumes, when finished, will complete the survey of the counties that border on the middle and upper Thames.

The format has become almost predictable. Each volume has a carefully investigated commentary on each name, including names of places that can no longer be located. Abbreviations and bibliography appear as a part of the front-matter. Notes on arrangement of the material give concise directions to special treatment that may occur in the body of the work. Geographical features, such as rivers, dikes, or special areas, other than place-names are discussed before the places are. Etymological comment is provided for each name, with earliest possible date and spelling listed for each variant. Street names of individual towns or cities are listed but not always indexed and seldom interpreted, probably because such treatment would require documentation far beyond the scope of the work, but obviously not beyond the capability of the editor.

Berkshire has historic ties that are as important as those of any county in England, making it rich in tradition and royal associations. In the county can be found Wantage, the birthplace of Alfred the Great; Windsor, associated with a royal residence since the time of William the Conqueror, is only some 20 miles west of London; hence, it has been a center of activity – and intrigue – through the centuries, important enough to have held some 70 taverns and inns even in Shakespeare's time. In Frogmore, a part of Windsor, is the mausoleum in which Queen Victoria and Prince Albert are buried. Henry VIII and Charles I are entombed in St. George's Chapel.

Abingdon, on the Thames, was a seat of learning in Norman times. It also contains two fifteenth century churches and the ruins of a Benedictine Abbey dating from A.D. 675. In Berkshire, on Blackwater River, is located the famous Royal Military College, known over the world as Sandhurst, for the small town and parish nearby.

History aside, however, the scholarship expended on the text and commentary sets the volume apart from the earlier ones, mostly because of demands from other disciplines, especially history and anthropology, for more information on the area and for more interpretive material that seems to be embedded in the surviving names. The later volumes of the series have indicated that it is no longer possible, in the interests of superior scholarship, merely to list a name and give a modicum of historical background, plus some philological comment or surmisings.

For instance, Mrs. Gelling sets to rest some popular notions concerning the name Berkshire itself, which occasionally has been glossed and etymologized as meaning "box." *Berk* was a descriptive name: Celtic, *barrōg*, "hilly." As it developed, it became a site of location – a place-name –, several places attesting to this, such as Barrock Fell, Barog, and Barog

River. Its connection with *box* came about, apparently, through a reference to box (trees) growing there, although it is possible that the form *berroc* and its linguistic changes and pronunciation may have attributed to the supposition. Other names that deserve but will not be given attention here are Windsor, Old Windsor (with a mysterious American Clump there), Maidenhead, Sandhurst, and Tidmarsh.

This volume is a fitting one with which to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the English Place-Name Society.

Kelsie B. Harder

The State University College at Potsdam, New York

NEW DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN FAMILY NAMES. By Elsdon C. Smith. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972. Pp. xxix + 570. Price \$12.95.

Elsdon C. Smith has now completed and has published the companion to his *American Surnames* [*Names*: 17:1 (March, 1970), 57–61], both within two years, although years of labor, probably spent in tedium and with love, are involved in bringing together this mass of informative material on surnames and “family” names. The *Dictionary* is obviously an index to the narrative discussion of the earlier work and complements it in an extraordinary way – that being the bringing together of approximately 20,000 surnames and their origins in alphabetical order. Names from some 40 countries are entered.

In the original edition, Smith listed about 5,000 names, which means that this really is “a new dictionary,” but, as the author would be the first to admit, not an exhaustive one. Still, it will satisfy the curiosity of many of us who desire to learn “what my name means,” despite the philosophic belief that names do not really mean anything in a semantic framework. On the other hand, it can be cogently argued that names have a meaningful content as vocabulary items to which we react in certain, sometimes unpredictable, ways depending on the context when we hear them. Surely, we can recall hundreds of these names without a long discussion of them here. Names in the United States that have erotic overtones or with scatological connotations have been pretty much eliminated, unless such are buried in the etymology of a “foreign” name that no longer calls attention to itself or its origin. There are some remaining of the latter. Scan down the entries for a sampling.

Smith notes that almost all European names derive from (1) a place of residence, (2) an occupation, (3) the father’s name, and (4) a des-

criptive name or nickname. Some derivations are obvious; others have been obscured by the antiquity of the name, whatever its source. Let us begin with category (1). Names from places of habitation arise in a number of ways: all in a particular village would have the same name, which corresponded exactly with that of the village. When a member moved, he would in all probability be called the same name by his new neighbors. Occasionally, the owner of a village or manor would acquire the name of the place, but these instances are definitely in the minority. Many names are taken from generics, such as *Hill, Lake, Brooks, Rivers,* or *Woods*, with corresponding names in other languages. Such names serve to distinguish one family or clan from another. Someone employed or living in an inn or house might acquire its name: *Angel, Adam, Bell,* or *Swan* could be examples, although sometimes it is not safe to assume that they refer to the house or inn sign. For instance, a John Hancock, owner of an inn, created a pun-sign, or sign-pun, by painting a hand and a cock on his signboard, but his name is derived from *Hane*, the pet form of John, plus *cock*, a diminutive.

Occupational names probably occur more often than those in other categories. In villages, a division of labor was needed; consequently, a man was known by his work, such as *Smith* (which covered a multitude of services), *Miller, Carpenter, Baker, Cook, Shoemaker,* or *Steward*. Religious offices also provided such names.

Patronymical names occur just about everywhere, European or not. Seemingly ubiquitous, such names are forenames handed down from one generation to the next, such as *George, Thomas,* and hosts of others. Others have a derivational suffix or prefix as the distinguishing characteristic. In English, the terminal form usually is *-son*; prefixes occur in Welsh, *Ap-*, Scots and Irish, *Mac-*, or Norman, *Fitz-*.

Descriptive names and nicknames provide a source for numerous surnames. A red-haired person is often called "Red," which could then become *Reid, Reed,* or *Read*, as well as *Ruddy, Russ, Ruff,* or even *Russel(l)*. Body shapes, complexions, habits, or physical abilities can result in nicknames that have become surnames. The possibilities may be infinite, as *Short, Brown, Sebzda* (Pol.), or *Fish* testify.

The author experienced difficulty in assigning a name to any particular country. He solved the problem satisfactorily by listing names occurring in more than one country as being common to each country: *Nelson* and *Larson* occur often in both Norway and Sweden and are so listed. Name-forms occur in common among Slavic countries, although ascribing a name in such a catchall fashion may be dangerous, for case endings are often different and even connotations can cause divergences.

On balance, however, the names in the United States and Canada cause great difficulty in attempts to interpret them, with those in the

former often being almost impossible to decipher. Millions of persons immigrated from Europe and have now lived, in some cases, for several generations with altered names, obscured to the point that the owners themselves do not know the originals. Examples are everywhere. As Smith notes, "In numerous instances the spelling of foreign names is altered to make their pronunciation more agreeable to American ears." Once the name was attached and once the owner of it received his first pay under the altered name, it remained to him and his descendants unless legally changed. Although we may not know when *Dick's* became *Dickson* or *Dixon*, nor how long *Dick's Son* remained that way before it was accepted as a surname, we can document almost exactly when, e.g., *Mr. Pietrzak* became *Pete Shack*. That was the day he came through Ellis Island.

The work has some shortcomings, unavoidable ones perhaps in a text of this scope. The entries are sparse; sometimes obscure. Further, many names are debatable or at least have more meanings than noted. The author recognized this and has compromised by listing only the most important ones. Publishers' demands being what they are, it is surprising that so many origins are listed. Also, the names listed come from predominantly European sources. American Indian names, African names in the United States, and Oriental names are poorly represented. To be sure, little has been written about the names that young blacks have taken, or think they have taken, from African languages. The material that has appeared certainly came after this book was placed in the hands of the publisher. These minor quibbles are of little import in face of the wealth of names and information Mr. Smith has accumulated here. The dictionary will long remain the major reference on American surnames.

Kelsie B. Harder

The State University College at Potsdam, New York