

Names in Brief

Celia.—Spelled *Coelia* in the 17th century, due to a false association with Lat. *coelum*, 'the heaven'; considered a contraction of *Cecelia*; often identified with the Irish *Sheelah*, *Sheelagh* or *Sheila* <*Sighile*, probably a corruption of *Cecelia* (name which was introduced in Ireland by the Normans).

Celia is the Latin *Caelia*, feminine of *Caelius*, a Roman *gens* whose foundation was attributed to the Etruscan chieftain *Caeles Vibenna*, whence also the *Caelius Mons* (to-day the Lateran Hill).

Although Etruscan, the meaning of *Celia* is known, due to the fact that *celi* is among the few words interpreted with certitude in that language. It means 'September.' (Massimo Pallottino, *Etruscologia*, Milan, 1947, page 307.) Cf. *Januarius* > It. *Gennaro*. *Febronia* and *Aprilis* (> Fr. *Avril*), names of saints connected with months, are also of Etruscan origin. Cf. also June.

Cecilia > *Cecily* > *Cicely* is, like *Caelia*, the name of a Roman *gens*. Following the tradition it derives from the mythical founder of Preneste: *Caecūlus*, diminutive of *caecus*, 'blind.' This interpretation is due obviously to folk etymology, like *Claudius* < *claudus*, 'lame,' *Iulius* < ἰουλος, 'soft hair, down,' etc. *Cecilia*, like so many other names of Roman *gentes*, is of Etruscan origin and its actual meaning will not be revealed before many years.

GUTIERRE TIBON

The present practice of endeavoring to ascertain the names used in every day life by the inhabitants or natives of a newly mapped region is by no means new. The following item goes back to 1786. It is taken from a recently published volume entitled *Russian Discoveries in the Pacific and in North America in the 18th and 19th Centuries*, collected by A. I. Andreyev. Translated by Carl Ginsburg, Department of State. Published for American Council of Learned Societies by J. W. Edwards, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1952.

On pages 55-56 there is a set of instructions from G. I. Shelekhov to his Head Manager, K. A. Samoylov. Item 30 of these instructions follows:

“Upon the arrival from Unalaska of Mate’s Apprentice Dmitry Ivanov Bocharov he should be sent, immediately the opportunity arises, to make a minute survey of the island of Kyktak (Kodiak), the American coast from Katmak, the gulf of Kenai and, if possible, the coast as far as Chugach. Thus he should survey, around Kadyek (Kyak?) and near the American coast, all the large and small islands, the bays, rivulets, harbors, capes, shallows, reefs, hidden and visible rocks; observe the localities where there are resources such as forests and meadows, the characteristics, appearance, and situation of the land, what kind of things may be found in what place and in what season, of what kind they are and in what quantity they come, where there is fishing, what animals there are and when and how they may be caught. He should note all living plants, not omitting any.

“His main object should be to survey every settlement, find out the number of people, and take a census of the men and women, noting down, if only approximately, their ages. Every rivulet, lake, habitation, island, in short, every useful place should be designated by a letter in the survey, which will serve to indicate everything accurately on the maps. The names should be spelled to correspond to those used by the local inhabitants and should not be disfigured by names newly coined by you, in order that it might be possible to locate every place from the name by which it is known to the natives.”

Orinoco.—The tobacco called Orinoco connotes ‘best or fine tobacco.’ In the December issue of *Names* (p. 270) J. A. C. Leland states that the name of a certain place in Missouri might be derived from *oronoco*, ‘a variety of tobacco brought to Virginia from the Orinoco River, South America.’ This would make the origin of the word Carib *Ibirinoco*. I have long suspected this traditional derivation of the name of our tobacco. The source references to where the better-grade tobacco seeds came from are too general in my judgment to justify localization to this specific river vicinity, unless one reasons that, because the colonial Virginia term and the South American term are phonetically similar, the accepted derivation is valid.

Early colonists who could read had little chance of being familiar with *Orinoco* river until narratives of early Spanish explorations

by John Smith and others were first published in 1624. I do not find this river-name in those of 1608 and 1612. But few colonists could read.

The term *oronoko tobacco*, connoting 'best' or 'fine tobacco,' was recorded in Virginia between 1613 and 1619. An almost identical Powhatan term was recorded in 1610-12.

Between June 1610, and December 1612, Wm. Strachey noted Powhatan *oronocah* (var. by others *oranoco*, *orinoco*), 'a garden or plot of ground to sow in corn) (*sic*). In PA -oco signifies any 'cultivated field.'

Narrative ethnic data justifies concluding that these Indians planted their corn in their cleanest-of-stumps and most fertile fields. Historical documents prove that from the first English colonists were avid for such Indian *orinoco*, for the economic advantage of possession of cleared fertile fields. No doubt one of the first Powhatan terms learned by settlers was *orinoco*. Individuals began to be allowed to cultivate 50 acres, as if their own, in their spare time in 1613-14. To obtain one with an *orinoco* within its boundaries assured the small planter of *the best tobacco*, or *best money crop*, his first season. Tobacco was from the first and for years used as currency in colonial Virginia.

In view of this common local native term and its local cultural English significance, the probability that it derives from *Orinoco* river, in the absence of contemporary records definitively so asserting, seems as remote as is the South American river from Virginia. Indeed, this well-grounded concept of origin appears to be another of the scholastic, or etymological, myths about the origins of more than one colonial Virginia term.

CHARLES EDGAR GILLIAM

Siouxland.—In 1947, Frederick Feike Manfred used for the first time the name Siouxland in his novel *This is the Year*. It designates the area drained by the Big Sioux River in Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota and Nebraska. Slowly and gradually Manfred's designation is being adopted by the natives. Radio station KCOM says it "serves Greater Siouxland"; the high school football conference of Sioux River Valley calls itself the "Siouxland Conference"; the Sioux City Unitarians publish a bulletin called "The Unitarian Voice of Siouxland"; both in Sioux City and Sioux Falls the name is used on billboards of certain business organizations.