

Book Reviews

On Defining the Proper Name. By John Algeo. University of Florida Humanities Monograph No. 41. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1973, P. 94 Price \$2.50 (paper).

The author of this carefully focused and tightly constructed monograph is a professor at the University of Georgia and the editor of *American Speech*. With Thomas Pyles, he is co-author of *Problems in the Origins and Development of the English Language* (1966; 2nd ed., 1972) and of *English: An Introduction to Language*. The six chapters deal with the problem of defining the term *name*, orthographical and phonological names, morphosyntactic names, referential names, and the degree and kind of meanings of semantic names, according to the contents page. The book's main purpose is to correct the usual misapprehension in previous studies "that names are a unified monostratal phenomenon." It centers on "those things that most grammarians and most students of onomastics have agreed to call *names*," with the intention of surveying "some ways of characterizing that class of things and of defining the term *name* for onomastic purposes." Proper names in English serve as examples, but whether the principles involved are parochial or universal is also kept in mind.

Spare of words and succinct in content, the book shows full control of previous literature in this field whose history goes back to earliest antiquity. References to other authorities, adroitly placed in the text itself, can easily be followed through the excellent bibliography. In spite of the fact that the subject has been much investigated, this work ably condenses, distills, unifies, and adds original material and many fresh observations. An excellent job. An index of subjects discussed and names mentioned would have been helpful.

Eugene B. Vest

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Place Names of Early Portsmouth. By Marshall W. Butts. A publication of the Portsmouth, Virginia, American Revolution Bicentennial Committee. Portsmouth, Va.: Portsmouth Public Schools Print Shop. 1973. Pp. vi, 32. 1 map.

Portsmouth, Virginia, a city of about 110,000 people, has a history rich in Revolutionary War lore. This booklet is a model that bicentennial committees all over the country might well follow. Limited to place-names on an 1851 map of what today is downtown Portsmouth, it contains

alphabetically arranged sections dealing with 187 names of towns and natural features, streets and squares of the city, and streets of Gosport, formerly independent but now a part of Portsmouth. Entries include such information as location of streets and squares, bounds of squares, origin of names, identification of persons honored by place-names, and dates of naming.

The author has been judicious in his research and has used such reliable sources as early maps, court records, newspaper accounts, local residents' knowledge, and resources in the Library of Congress. This booklet contains a preface and an introduction, a bibliography, an index and a readable reproduction of the 1851 map. Although printed in the Portsmouth Public Schools Print Shop, it is an attractive professional job. It is regrettable, though, that it was prepared specifically for distribution in the schools of the city and is not immediately available to the general public; but it is hoped that a second printing will soon be made for general distribution.

P. Burwell Rogers

Newport News, Va.

Ghost Towns of Arizona. By James E. and Barbara H. Sherman. Maps by Don Percious. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969. Pp. 208. Price \$6.95 – cloth; \$3.95 – paper.

“This book is to be read for fun,” the authors state in their preface. With this aim, they have limited their material and have not attempted to include every ghost town, but for those included they “have presented the information as we found it, without elaboration or magnification.”

The book is rich in “then” and “now” pictures with many of the last of the nineteenth and first of the twentieth century from the files of the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society. Reproductions of advertisements add to the aura of authenticity of the descriptions of the towns as they were when thriving communities. The book contains 13 maps, hand-drawn and designated by the authors as “artistic”; however, each map has township, range, and section co-ordinates “enabling the serious ghost town explorer to locate the towns.”

The entries are presented alphabetically, and each includes the county; a description of the location; a reference to the map on which the town may be found; post office information: established, rescinded, re-established, discontinued; and a paragraph or more of information about the town: description, history, population, dates and anecdotes.

Since it deals with Arizona, a comparison was made with Byrd H. Granger's revised edition of Barnes' *Arizona Place Names* (Tucson: Uni-

versity of Arizona Press, 1960). The Sherman volume contains enlarged accounts but does not include all the facts given in the concise, scholarly Granger work. The main appeal of *Ghost Towns* is to the lay reader who will enjoy the pictures, the advertisements, and the anecdotes. The pleasure that this husband-wife team had during their research glows from every page.

Lurline H. Coltharp

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Dictionary of Ukrainian Surnames in Canada. By Forwin Bogdan. Winnipeg-Vancouver: Onomastic Commission of UVAN and Canadian Institute of Onomastic Sciences, 1974. Pp. 354.

This work consists of about 30,000 Ukrainian surnames in Latin characters, listed in alphabetical order, followed by the original Cyrillic characters. By abbreviation and page or other volume or part number after each name, the author refers to his list of six pages which he identifies as "Sources Quoted." A short bibliography is included.

Preceding the list of names is a short foreword by the author. Then follows an interesting and instructive dissertation on Ukrainian family names in 18 pages by Larysa Zales'ka-Onyshkevych. Dr. Zales'ka-Onyshkevych discusses the types of Ukrainian surnames with special emphasis on the suffixes found with them, and their significance. Slavic family names differ from other European surnames in that practically all of them have a patronymical suffix and almost never consist only of a word without some patronymical or case ending.

Next there is a short, but authoritative, dissertation entitled, "Anthroponymic Changes in Canada and the USA" by Professor Jaroslav B. Rudnyćkyj, that eminent, internationally-known authority on Slavic nomenclature. Here he summarizes the methods of name change, that is, Full Assimilation, Partial Assimilation, and Hybridization, with examples of each.

Elsdon C. Smith

Naming the Baby 1972. By Leslie Dunkling. Thames Ditton, Surrey, England: The Names Society, 1973. Pp. 29. Typescript. Price 30p.

This is an unusual baby-naming book, called "an interim report." First, there are some brief notes on the origin of names, followed by some paragraphs on first name frequencies in various parts of the British Isles and in other European countries. Next, the author lists comments on first names from his extensive correspondence as president and founder of The Names Society.

Perhaps the most valuable part of the work is a list of first names given in 1972 in England with the reasons for the selections as provided by the parents in letters to the author. These explanations were invited by Mr. Dunkling in appeals published in various English newspapers. Some explanations for choice of names were also given from literature. Authors often seem to feel that they must reveal the source for the names of their characters. The reasons for the choices were then summarized in 22 classes.

Students of onomastics will look forward to seeing a comprehensive printed (not typescript) book on this subject by Mr. Dunkling.

Elsdon C. Smith

Alaska-Yukon Place Names. By James W. Phillips. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973, Pp. 149 (foldout map, selected bibliography). Price \$6.95.

This new book by the author of *Washington State Place Names* might, I suppose, be greeted with the remark, "What, another book on Alaskan place-names! How can anything top Donald Orth's definitive dictionary?" Now I do not mean to imply that this book will do that, but I found it to be an entertaining, well conceived, and reasonably well executed volume that is probably more accessible and thus more useful to the ordinary reader, the non-scholar, than Orth's dictionary. Specifically, the book is designed to acquaint the newcomer, the visitor, or the armchair traveler – whether his interest lies in the landscape or history – with the fascinating, colorful, and varied names of this last frontier of the North American continent.

The author's thesis that place-names "provide a mute, but richly descriptive account of the history of Alaska and the Yukon Territory" (p. xi), while hardly original, seems to be realized by the brief yet fairly inclusive historical introduction that shows how names have reflected the interests and values and loyalties of the area's indigenous population and successive waves of white explorers, hunters and trappers, settlers, scientists, prospectors, and developers of several nationalities. While a more comprehensive treatment for the scholarly reader would have detailed the impact of the various ethnic and occupational groups upon the land, such apparently was not the purpose of this book.

Following the introduction, the volume provides the derivations and meanings of the names of over 2,000 places located throughout Alaska, the Yukon Territory, and northern British Columbia, the last being included for the benefit of the traveler along the main northward routes.

The major populated places are covered as well as a representative sampling of geographic features of historic and contemporary significance. Such entries as *Massacre Bay*, *Peace River*, and *Killer Bay*, to give a few examples, record important events in the history of the area, while other names, such as *Too Much Gold Creek*, reflect the namer's sense of humor, often, as in the above case, through irony. Places no longer in existence – ghost towns and abandoned mining camps and trading posts – are also featured along with Alaska's share of colorful place-names: *Chicken*, *Asses Ears*, *Coldfoot*, *Naked Island*, *Faro*, and others. For convenience and "in the interest of brevity," only a single entry of a specific name is given, for a community or some major geographic feature that bears it, with the assumption that its meaning can be extended to other features (mountain, glacier, inlet . . .) of the same name. Some entries refer the reader to others when there is some association between the two.

When several possible accounts of the derivation of a name are available, the author presents what he considers "the best documented, most logical explanation." In the absence of an authenticated definition, which is acknowledged under the entry, other useful information about the particular place is given as a clue to inspire further research. When he can, the author identifies the namer.

Included with each entry, except where obvious, is a phonetic pronunciation guide based on currently accepted general usage. The author acknowledges, however, that pronunciations will sometimes vary from place to place "and between old-timers and newcomers," especially in the case of Anglicized names of indigenous and Russian origin (p. viii). While the places are not precisely located in the text, in terms of geographical coordinates or even with reference to other places, they are sited on a foldout map (scale of approx. 110 miles to the inch) in the back of the volume. Given the nature and limits of this book, this is not regarded as too great a deficiency.

As the basis for his choice of names, the author consulted the 1970 Census, the 1972 postal directories, current official government gazetteers, and tourist guides (for their list of places that would likely have tourist appeal). A search of local archives for the records and journals of explorers and scientists – many of these containing accounts of the naming procedures themselves – and interviews with natives and settlers supplied the necessary information on these names. It would have been desirable, however, if the author had given the specific source of each item of information, perhaps by using some coded reference to an extensive (rather than selective) bibliography at the end of the book.

Many books on place-names, even those by scholars who ought to know better, are guilty of presuming too much from their data. Neither this volume nor any other that I know of can demonstrate conclusively that

the place-names of an area “graphically explain [its] history” – the explorations and patterns of settlement, and the “phases of development or use that it has undergone” which author Phillips implies (p. xii) was his intention. Names can only “explain” history when they offer reasons for an event – for our purposes, why a particular name was applied to the place it identifies. But this kind of information is extremely difficult to acquire in retrospect when the researcher has no first hand knowledge of the motives of the name givers. Assuming their motives from the names themselves, on the basis of the researcher’s own customary naming proclivities, is not sound historical procedure. In short, simply knowing that Jonesville was named for Sam Jones is not sufficient to understand why this name was selected over any other. Herein lies the substance and architecture of history.

Author Phillips is probably somewhat more fortunate than most of his fellow onomasticians. Seemingly a higher proportion of Alaska’s place-names are of known derivation than those of other states; or at least there are more extant accounts of the naming experience through the writings of explorers, settlers, and other name givers than have been found elsewhere. And many of these Phillips has examined and included in his book. Nevertheless, even he cannot claim to be able to explain Alaska’s history through its names. Would that he could.

Phillips modestly implies that his is not the last word on Alaskan place-names and seeks from his readers additional data on places mentioned, and especially those omitted, and documentation for a number of accounts that are based on hearsay or legend. Thus we can expect that, with the assistance and cooperation of his readers, the resource value of future editions of his book over that of his present volume will be immeasurably increased.

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