News, Comments, Queries

With reference to a recent article on a national gazetteer (*Names,* Vol. I, No. 4) the library of the U. S. Coast & Geodetic Survey recently received from the Library of Congress a small volume entitled *The United States Gazetteer,* compiled by Joseph Scott and published at Philadelphia in 1795. It lists and describes almost 1300 names, and has about 40 cross references. Included are the then 15 states (the original 13 plus Vermont and Kentucky), all counties, major rivers and streams, the larger lakes, all important inhabited places, numerous Indian tribes and where they lived, and a few other natural features. Longitude was calculated from the meridian of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia was still the largest city (42,500 in the census of 1790 against 32,328 for New York) with an estimated population of 55,000 in 1794. In 1790 Philadelphia had 6704 dwellings and 414 stores, workshops, etc. A total of 662 lanterns lighted its streets and consumed 8606 gallons of oil per annum.

New York was even then experiencing trouble with its water supply, having few wells and being principally supplied from a spring almost a mile from the center of town. The average daily quantity drawn was 110 hogsheads of 130 gallons each, although in some hot summer days 216 hogsheads had been drawn from this spring. The water was commonly sold at 3 pence per hogshead. Flatbush was then the "chief town of King's County," with 150 houses, while Brooklyn consisted of one principal street on which there were about 100 houses and two churches.

With substantially the same population, Albany had more slaves than Alexandria, Virginia. The latter carried on a "comfortable trade" with the West Indies, exports in 1794 being valued at slightly more than half a million dollars. Georgetown in the newly established "territory of Columbia" had 230 houses, with exports of $129,000 in 1794. The new city of Washington was progressing very slowly, with not more than 40 houses, although a start had been made on the capitol and the President's house. The fact that the Anacostia River (then and until recently the Eastern Branch of the Potomac River) was a much better harbor appears to have

been one of the reasons that the areas south and east of the capitol were first built up.

Louisville, Kentucky, is listed as "a port of entry," with 100 houses. Detroit is described as "the largest and best situated town in the N.W. territory, still in possession of the British, in violation of the definitive treaty of peace." Lynn, Massachusetts, already had the largest shoe factory in the United States, with an output of 200,000 pairs annually. Savannah was stated not to be so unhealthy as represented, since only 78 of the population of 2500 died in 1794. Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was the largest inland town, with 900 houses.

As to the spelling of the names used, there are surprisingly few variations from modern usage. Rapidan River in Virginia was called the "Rapid-Anne." Tennassee was used, Kenhawa for the present Kanawha River, Shanandoah River, and Lewistown for Lewes, Delaware, but such differences are the exception.

Since the author of this book was a resident of Philadelphia, his information is naturally most detailed for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Maryland, but he appears to have traveled widely and had recourse to members of Congress (then sitting in Philadelphia), the 1790 census report, the post office department, the secretary of war, the commissioner of revenue, and other sources for the descriptions of the more distant parts of the country. He claimed his work to be the first gazetteer of the United States, and that he had "trodden an unbeaten path."

Guagninus' Toponymy of 1611 by Rev. O. Kupranec is the title of No. VIII of the series *Onomastica,* edited by J. B. Rudnyćkyj and published by UVAN, P. O. Box 3597, Station B, Winnipeg, Canada. The treatise, printed in Ukrainian, is a delightful example of the manner in which onomatologists attacked their subject 250 years ago.

Guagninus gives six possibilities regarding the origin of the name Rus′:

1. That it is taken from Rus, a grandchild of the legendary Polish prince, Lech;
2. That it is derived from the town "Russy," which was supposed to be in the vicinity of Novgorod;
3. That it comes from the reddish color of fair hair, which predominated among the people of Rus′;

4. That it is taken from Resen, a descendant of Ham, whom we meet in the Bible;
5. That it goes back to Ros, a prince in the Bible, who is mentioned by Prophet Ezekiel;
6. That it is derived from the Slovakian word "rozsiewa," which means "sowing."

Guagninus does not decipher clearly the meaning and the origin of the name "Ukraina." He uses this term not in the onomastic but in the appellative sense. The name "Rus'," in those times, was traditionally used for signifying the Ukrainian nation, while today's Russians were called "Moscovites."

Guagninus does not give the etymology of the name "Wolynia," but states that a nation from beyond the Volga, known as the "Wolgary," and later as the "Wolyncy," settled on the territory today known as "Wolynia."

In American Literature (January 1954) George R. Stewart writes on "The Two Moby-Dicks." The article, in part, deals with the names in the novel (persons, ships, etc.), basing much of its argument upon the frequent failure of the so-called "canting" names really to describe the character. Partially on this basis the author argues for an earlier version of the novel, in which the names would have properly described the characters to whom they are applied.

Renaissance Names in Masquerade by Franklin B. Williams, Jr. appears in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association* (March 1954). The author presents the various transformations of English names by latinization, hebraization, Greek versions, modern language versions, and scrambled names, and adds a final section for unsolved names under Puzzle Department. Under scrambled names are included reversed spellings, camouflage jumbles, and motto anagrams. Many of the shifts are both illuminating and highly amusing, and also must have demanded much ingenuity in the solving, as well as a thorough knowledge of the historical background.

Popular rather than scholarly is the unsigned "Alberta's Place-names of Colorful Origin" (*Within Our Borders,* March 1, 1954). Although it is not critical and fails to give sources, it presents many local legends, and at least supplies clues which the scholar may follow up.