

## Book Reviews

*The New Century Cyclopedia of Names*. Edited by Clarence L. Barnhart. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954. \$39.50)

Here in three good-sized volumes, totaling 4342 pages, is a most comprehensive encyclopedia of names—proper names of all kinds from the dawn of history to the present day. Besides personal names, place names and Bible names, there are included names of newspapers, political parties, organizations, societies, institutions, tribes, novels, languages, leading court cases, buildings, ships, songs, literary pieces, magazines, railways, cultures, holidays, jewels, statues, wars, laws, in fact all things known by proper names.

This is a greatly enlarged and revised edition of the original *Century Cyclopedia of Names*, first published in 1894 as a supplement to *The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia*. In 1909, a supplement to the *Names* was issued as part of a two-volume supplement to the *Dictionary*. The *New Century* has a better selection of names—better because more up to date, and the sketches are longer and more complete, all in all greatly superior to the old edition.

Compared with the original edition, the *New Century* eliminates the few etymologies found in the old edition. Most of the articles have been entirely rewritten. In those minor items not rewritten the definite or indefinite article has been omitted. The small print quotations of the previous editions have been eliminated in favor of newly edited information.

The personal names include not only the famous men of all times, but names of characters in fiction and mythology, names of gods, and important nicknames. The place names comprise all the important places in the world as well as names of mountains, canyons, streams, lakes, streets and regions with their popular nicknames. There are about 100,000 proper names culled from a master list of more than a half million—those most likely to be the subject of reference interest to the English-speaking world.

The system of pronunciation of all these names, except, of

course, ordinary English words, is that used in the *Century Dictionary*. Foreign names are, in general, given their native pronunciations except where they have become wholly or partly Anglicized. Former as well as variant spellings are given when they are important. In a book of this kind where many persons and places are known by more than one name, copious cross references are a necessity, and care appears to have been taken in connection with them.

With only two columns to a page the print is of sufficient size to avoid the eye discomfort occasioned in consulting some large reference works. The articles vary in length from many one- and two-line items to articles such as that about the United States running to nine and a half columns.

A brief sketch of famous persons is given, together with a list of their more important writings. In the articles on the principal place names, brief facts concerning terrain, climate, population, agriculture, industry, commerce, government, history, and culture are set out. Having been prepared by so many separate authors and covering such a wide range of subjects, complete uniformity was not possible, but the surprising amount of uniformity found evidences the careful planning of the whole work.

One is sometimes disappointed in the lack of information. In looking up Kitty Hawk, for instance, one learns that near there the Wright Brothers made their first flight, but one has to look up the Wrights to ascertain the date. A reviewer can criticize almost any entry for some real or fancied omission, but, on the whole, the entries are most satisfactory considering the small amount of space necessarily allotted to each one.

Comparison must be made with other important works of reference. In general, about the same ground is covered as *Webster's Biographical Dictionary*, plus, of course, those who have become prominent in the last eleven years. The information given in the work here reviewed is a little fuller than in *Webster's*. Also, the *New Century* includes fictional, legendary and mythological characters while *Webster's* contains only those who actually lived.

*The New Century Cyclopaedia of Names* treats the more important place names a little more fully than *Webster's Geographical Dictionary*, but does not include maps as does *Webster's*. The many minor geographical names in *Webster's* are not found in the *New*

*Century*. And of course the *New Century* is not meant to cover the detailed geographical information found in *The Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer of the World* with its approximately 140,000 geographical names.

Valuable appendices, covering 114 pages in the third volume, are included, similar to those in *Webster's Biographical Dictionary*, which comprise a chronological table of world history, lists of rulers, chiefs of state and other notables, by country, genealogical charts, members of the United Nations, table of popes, geological table and a comprehensive list of prenames with pronunciations.

Clarence L. Barnhart, the editor, and his assistants have done a magnificent and scholarly job. The list of members of the editorial advisory committee, the lists of consulting editors, special consultants and special writers (more than 350 altogether) testify eloquently to the authoritative nature of the work. Many of these authorities are members of the American Name Society.

The cost of this work will restrict it to public and institutional libraries and the larger private libraries, but it is safe to say that it will be in constant use among scholars and students for many years to come. When one wants information about a proper name, he will not have to stop to consider whether to consult a biographical or a mythological dictionary.

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*English Topographic Terms in Florida 1563-1874*. By E. WALLACE McMULLEN, JR. (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1953. Pp. 227. \$5.50)

Linguists now realize the importance of topographic terms in a comprehensive historical treatment of American English, for a vast amount of literature was produced by the early European adventurers in America. These early explorers and colonizers were faced with a new environment, the topography of which, as well as its plants and animals, was many times entirely unlike anything they had known before. They found it necessary to name and often to describe the new and strange features of the landscape. In so doing, they took words from the Indians, the Spanish and the French, put together English words that they knew, and employed ordinary English words in new ways, thereby changing their meanings or at times preserving British dialectical or obsolete forms. In this way, many new terms grew up in the new territory.

The first concentrated study of such expressions was made in 1940 by Dr. G. D. McJimsey: *Topographic Terms in Virginia* (*American Speech* Reprints and Monographs, No. 3, Columbia University Press). Dr. McMullen has extended the examination of such terms in his investigation of the books written in English from 1563 to 1874 concerning the state of Florida. It is an interesting study of neologisms, of Americanisms, Southernisms, and localisms belonging to Florida alone. The author in his thorough investigation has discovered citations which antedate those of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the *Dictionary of American English*, and the *Dictionary of Americanisms*. For example, the earliest quotation for *savanna* ('a treeless, grass-covered plain; a lowland meadow') precedes that in the *D A E* by 99 years, and that in the *O E D* by 61 years. He includes and defines terms which are not found in the standard dictionaries.

The results of this research are presented in an introduction and a glossary, which defines and illustrates each term. Among the terms peculiar to Florida are *Everglades* (plural with a singular meaning), that low region in southern Florida, to which he devotes more than three pages; *swammock* (a blend of *swamp* and *hammock*, 'a tract of land having a deep, fertile soil and usually well wooded'); *key*, 'a low island or reef' and the variants *cay(o)* and *kay(o)*; *gall*, 'watercourse thinly covered with soil'; *cockle bank*, 'a bank found along the Gulf consisting of sand and cockle shells'; *coquina land*, 'land consisting chiefly of coquina rock (a soft stone consisting of marine shells bound together by calcareous cement)'; and *wrecking ground*, 'the region of the Florida Reef, where countless ships were wrecked because of the treacherous currents and dangerous rocks and shoals.'

This work is of lexical importance but in addition it will be of interest to the historian, the botanist, the geographer, the geologist, the amateur and professional student of language, as well as to those who have a special love for the state of Florida. Any one may enjoy reading about *cabbage-bluff*, *cabbage grove*, *cabbage hammock*, *cabbage knoll*, *cabbage land*, *cabbage pond*, *cabbage swamp*, not one of which refers to cabbage but to cabbage palmetto trees; that is, a *cabbage grove* is a grove of cabbage palmetto trees. Thus a study of topographic terms can have a far wider appeal than to the linguists alone.

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