

News, Comments, Queries

Charles William Collins.—One of the purposes of the American Name Society is “to make the American people conscious of the interest and importance of names.” No American has done better work along this line than our charter member, Charles William Collins, well-known journalist, dramatic critic, author, and editor. Last summer he published in the *Chicago Tribune* fifteen articles on personal names in the United States, articles which had a strong popular appeal but at the same time clearly showed serious study and sound scholarship. In the meantime, the serial was syndicated by the Chicago Tribune-New York News Syndicate and has been, and still is, published by a large number of leading newspapers from New York to California and from Washington to Florida. These were the subjects which Mr. Collins treated in his series:

1. General theory of family names origins, with special emphasis on the Smiths as an example.
2. The Johnsons, and other close rivals of the Smiths.
3. The 50 commonest American family names.
4. Irish names, especially Kelly and Murphy, the American leaders.
5. Scottish names, especially the MacDonalDs, Campbells, and Stewarts, which are commonest.
6. Welsh names, and those occurring among the 50 American commonest.
7. Italian family names in the United States.
8. German family names, including German-Jewish.
9. Polish names.
10. Bohemian names.
11. Scandinavian-American names.
12. Hungarian names.
13. French and Spanish family names in the United States.
14. The 200 commonest American family names arranged in their order of numerical frequencies.
15. “All-American finale,” which discusses certain characteristics of American names, and also tells the story of the origin of the place name, America, gleaned from the first number of *Names*.

U.S. 40: Cross Section the United States of America is the title of the latest literary product of George R. Stewart, one of the founders of the *ANS* and a member of the Editorial Board of *Names*. The book is a biography of the great high road between Atlantic City and San Francisco in all its geographical, historical, sociological and cultural aspects. It goes without saying that Stewart



Names Along Highway 40

has added a highly interesting chapter on the geographical names encountered along U.S. Highway 40. The book, published by Houghton Mifflin, is another excellent example of Stewart's literary versatility, blending thorough scholarship with readability and general appeal.

Gemini.—Upon the suggestion of Chester Versteeg of Los Angeles, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names has placed this name on the twin peaked mountain at $37^{\circ} 17' 45''$ N., $118^{\circ} 49' 00''$ W. in Sierra National Forest, Fresno County, California. Gemini is the astronomical name for the zodiacal constellation of the two stars Castor and Pollux. Some objection was raised because most people would have to consult a dictionary to get the meaning of the strange word. However, Francis P. Farquhar, a member of the Place Name Committee of the Sierra Club, defended its application: "The names of Castor and Pollux, the famous twins of Greek myth, have been applied to double peaks more than once; so, what could be more appropriate for such a pair in the Sierra? For variety's sake let us, therefore, accept Gemini instead of the double name, and especially to avoid another 'Twin Peaks' or 'The Brothers'."

Deutsche Namenkunde.—The first part of the second volume of A. Bach's monumental work on German names was recently published by the Carl Winter Universitäts-Verlag in Heidelberg. It contains the general introduction, phonology, accidence, syntax, word formation and significance of German geographical names. The two parts of volume I, German personal names, had been published previously.

534 Nebraska Town Names.—The Omaha *Sunday World Herald* devotes a large section of its issue of May 30, 1954, to an alphabetical listing of Nebraska's incorporated places together with the origins of their names. The information was gleaned from questionnaires sent out by the editor and from Lillian Linder Fitzpatrick's book, *Nebraska Place Names*, published in 1925. The information taken from the latter may be considered more authentic. The answers to the questionnaires are often of doubtful value. They were apparently published as received and many bear the obvious stamp of folketymological endeavor or jumping at con-

clusions. Nevertheless, there is a wealth of information in these items for the discriminating reader and similar attempts by newspapers should be encouraged. They will be of help to the onomatologist who will eventually write the authentic dictionary of Nebraska place names.

Names in South Carolina is the title of a new mimeographed periodical, published sporadically by the Department of English of the University of South Carolina. Among its editors we note our charter member, Dean Francis W. Bradley. This is decidedly a new way of starting the compilation of the geographic names of a state. Let us hope it will stimulate similar undertakings in other states, without, however, imitating the unwieldy formate, 8" x 15".

Massachusetts Names.—Our member, Audrey R. Duckert of the G. & C. Merriam Company, is currently laying the groundwork for a detailed study of the place names of three Massachusetts counties—Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin—with particular emphasis on the valley of the Connecticut River.

The Importance of Generic Terms.—A paper entitled, "Generic Terms in the Place Names of the Northeastern United States: an Approach to the Demarcation of Culture Areas," was read by Wilbur Zelinsky of the University of Wisconsin at the April meeting of the Association of American Geographers at Philadelphia. Our charter members, Meredith Burrill and H. F. Raup, acted as commentators. Mr. Zelinsky's complaint that generics have been strangely neglected by geographers and linguistic specialists is not entirely justified; in Stewart's *Names on the Land* and Gudde's *California Place Names*, to mention two important books in the field, they receive adequate treatment. He is right, however, when he points out that students of toponymy have here a wide field ahead of them and that the study of generic geographic names may assist in identifying and, to a certain extent at least, even in demarcating culture areas. Mr. Zelinsky will continue to work on the subject and give the article more permanent form.

K. K.