

Book Reviews

The Place-Names of Oxfordshire. Based on Material Collected by Doris Mary Stenton. By MARGARET GELLING. (ENGLISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY, 2 Parts, Vols. XXIII and XXIV, Cambridge: University Press, 1953, 1954.)

Miss Gelling's study of the place-names of Oxfordshire marks a great improvement over the only available earlier survey of Oxfordshire names—that of Henry Alexander published in 1912. We learn from the Preface as well as from the subtitle of the book that Lady Stenton supplied a large proportion of the material here set forth, and it is further stated that Professor Bruce Dickins wrote parts of the Introduction and supervised the working up of the name data.

As do the earlier numbers of the English Place-Name Society series, this book opens with a systematic, although highly condensed, treatment of such background matters as the settlement of the Angles and Saxons and the geology of the county, the latter section prepared by Dr. W. J. Arkell. The notes on the Oxfordshire dialect which follow are admirably succinct and usable. A point of particular interest here is the observation that both the Wessix OE diphthong *ea* and the Anglian *a* are reflected in names compounded with *c(e)alc*, *c(e)ald*, *(e)ald*, and *w(e)ald* (compare Coldwell and Aldee, from *cald* and *ald*, with Chalgrove, Chalk Wood, and Weald, from *cealc* and *weald*). Because both types are represented in all parts of the county, however, one cannot draw a dialectal boundary separating Wessex from Anglian influence.

The first pages of the name survey proper are devoted to the name Oxfordshire, first recorded in 1053–57, and to the names of roads, dykes, rivers, and streams, and then to the names within Oxford itself. The earliest mention of the city of Oxford is dated about 925. The river-ford to which the name refers is located at Hinksey Ferry, to the west of Osney (p. 19). Of the names of rivers, streets, and the like in this section, only a few—Akeman Street, Icknield Way, Cherwell River, and Thame River—are treated in Alexander.

Next, in keeping with the practice in the other volumes of the series, place-names of all sorts within each Hundred are presented, parish by parish. Beginning with the southernmost Hundred of

Langtree, Miss Gelling catalogues and comments on perhaps two thousand names in the 244 parishes of the county. The book is particularly rich in its collections of the names of farms, woods, hills, ponds, and fields, the vast majority of which have never before been noticed. Alexander's book even omits the names of certain parishes, such as Kidmore End in Binfield Hundred and South Weston in Pyrton Hundred. At the end of Part II are the usual indices of place-name elements and maps showing parishes and Hundreds and also the geological character of the county. In addition, the author includes in an appendix quotations from a number of Old English charters describing certain boundaries within Oxfordshire.

Among the most interesting names in the book are several which are shown to have come about through popular etymology. Thus, Downhill Farm, in Handborough Parish, is a corruption of earlier *Dunhall*, 'Hall on a hill' (p. 269); and Pixey Mead, in Gosford and Water Eaton Parish, was originally *Pics (i)eg*, 'Pic's island' (p. 267). Water Eaton itself is a redundant name inasmuch as the first element in Eaton is OE *ea*, 'water' (p. 266), as was pointed out in one of the first publications of the English Place-Name Society (PN BedHu, pp. 54-55). Miss Gelling has also turned up an unusually large collection of minor names of a descriptive and fanciful nature (see her index of Place-Name Elements, pp. 430-72, under "Des" and "Fan"). Fields of odd shape are designated by such names as Half Moon, Bull's Tail, and Rainbow Acre; and Breakneck Hill and Wet Foot are likewise self-explanatory. The infertility of the land seems to have given rise to Job's Close, Sullen Field, and Cold Comfort Farm, whereas good farming land is called Paradise, Fattening Field, Noble Furlong, and the like.

One may occasionally object to the terseness of the etymological notes. In commenting on Ray, a river-name, Miss Gelling states that it derives "from a misdivision of ME *atter e*" (p. 10), an expression the meaning of which would not be immediately apparent to all readers. One must turn to Ekwall's *English River-Names* (p. 337, *s.v. Rea Brook*), the authority cited here, to learn that *atter e* is a Middle English corruption of OE *æt þære ea*, 'at the river.' Again, the author seems unduly taciturn when she asserts (p. 6) that the origin of the first element of Cherwell is altogether uncertain. Actually, in a passage of *English River-Names* to which reference

is made, Ekwall suggests, plausibly enough to deserve repetition, that Cher- may possibly be related to OE *cierr*, a 'turn' or 'winding' (pp. 75-76). Further, Miss Gelling's explanation of OE *sweora*, in the names Swerford and Swire Furlong, as 'col' (p. 468) is scarcely helpful to one who is not already aware that *sweora* means 'neck.'

The number of problem names—for example, the second element in Duns Tew (p. 287) and Brize in Brize Norton (p. 306)—which the author despairs of accounting for in any convincing fashion is relatively small. Most names are provided with an entirely adequate commentary, especially those which Miss Gelling interprets differently from previous writers. Thus, in treating Britwell, the name of a parish in Lewknor Hundred (p. 105), she takes issue with the meaning 'bright spring' proposed in Ekwall's *Dictionary of English Place-Names* (p. 63). On the grounds that this place and five other places bearing names compounded with Brit- are all in some way connected with water, she argues that the initial element is really an obscure stream-name having nothing to do with OE *beorht*, *bryht*, 'bright,' or *Bryt-*, 'Briton.' Fresh information is also to be found in the discussion of Shelving-stool (p. 23), apparently a ducking-stool for scolds once located in Oxford. Miss Gelling has recently published a somewhat expanded note on this curious name in *The Modern Language Review* [XLVIII (1953), 176-77].

Clearly a worthy addition to the publications of the English Place-Name Society, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire* reflects the increased attention to minor names, especially field-names, manifested in the more recent volumes of that notable series.

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Orts-und Personennamen. By ERNST SCHWARZ. (DEUTSCHE PHILOGIE IM AUFRISS, 4. Lieferung, hrsgbn. v. Wolfgang Stammeler, Erich Schmidt Verlag, Berlin, Bielefeld, München, 1951 —, I, 582-654.)

The most recent endeavor to lay down the principles for the origins and the development of German place names and family names appears in the concise survey by Ernst Schwarz. This outline must serve as a point of departure for an examination of the subject so far as the European German area is concerned. It will

be useful likewise as a model of procedure for any similar perspective. To be sure, the problems of historicity are not so directly pertinent for the New World, as long as we do not carry the search back to ultimate origins. In the light of our own German importations, however, one cannot ignore the methodology, relationships, and sources as they are recorded for this part of Europe. For the novice, this study is basic as an introduction to two important segments of name lore.

Schwarz divides place names into two kinds: die eigentlichen Ortsnamen (actual place or settlement names) and die Flurnamen (names outside actual settlements, i.e., fields, forests, roads, elevations, etc.). His discussion of the range and variety of such names suggests not only the difficulties of derivation, the whole question of which needs re-examination and is by no means a settled business, but also calls for a continuity of philological interpretation cautiously applied, since certain human vagaries of usage are always present. The nature of place-name creations, transitions, and current forms are pertinently illustrated from scattered documentation. Indeed, the bibliography is invaluable for any German regional study.

Since the discussion of personal names involves, historically, the advent of double-naming, thereby sharing similar European perspectives of evolution, Schwarz's elaboration is of particular interest. The examples, to be sure, are representative of basic tribal stems and tangent importations, especially for the surnames. As Schwarz points out, "The scholar's problem is not concerned so much with word-meaning as with word-history;" hence meaning can be indicated only separately. The pattern of development indicates chronological advancement: given names with sources; the formation of old German given names with single and double stems; continuant formation in historical times; by-names in the period of single names; decline of native given names; saints' names; and given names in modern times. Family names are treated similarly: sources and origins; by-names as family names; given names as family names; family names from topographical features and settlements; offices and professions; and nicknames. Discussion moves then to: social considerations and alterations of names, followed by significance of family names for historical linguistics, folklore, and cultural history.

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Onoma. Bulletin d'information et de bibliographie. (Vol. III, 1952. Louvain: CENTRE INTERNATIONAL D'ONOMASTIQUE.)

The third volume of this periodical marks a noticeable advance over its two predecessors. It is rapidly approaching a content-pattern which, in substance, will characterize it from now on: namely, the communications of the secretary-general, convention proceedings, biographical sketches of the most distinguished onomatologists, reports on research projects or activities taking place in various parts of the world, *chronique*, obituaries, contents of current onomastic journals, current onomastic bibliography. What still remains of a transitory nature is the section on new onomastic publications involving countries for which no retrospective bibliographies have as yet been printed, which should soon disappear unless additional countries are included. The same holds true for the section on retrospective bibliographies. The extensive current annual bibliography (pp. 129-96), here appearing for the first time will henceforth take its place as the most attractive and valuable feature in the review. It covers the year 1951. Except in one instance, Africa, items are grouped according to country, each country being assigned to a leading authority in the field. We note the omission of Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Rumania and (lamentably) Russia. The Ukraine is, however, represented but in an oblique manner since its bibliographer is not a resident of that republic and since most of the items noted have been published beyond its boundaries. The USSR, incidentally, has not sent delegates to any of the congresses sponsored by the International Committee of Onomastic Sciences for which *Onoma* is the official bulletin. From Asia only Turkey is included. Australia and New Zealand do not appear, while only two or three titles (under Spain and Portugal) are cited for all of Latin-America. Some of these lacunae will undoubtedly be filled in the course of time, but even with these deficiencies the compilation is impressive in bulk as well as in range—an admirable example of what can be accomplished through international co-operation.

It is interesting to observe that the study of names is most intensively cultivated in Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Spain. There is also considerable activity in Germany and Austria, Israel, Italy, Jugo-Slavia, Portugal and Sweden. The United States ranks tenth and Canada last among the countries listed, a ranking which

fails to come up to our expectations but which at the same time suggests that both countries hold a vast amount of onomatological lore in need of exploitation.

JOSEPH G. FUCILLA

The Place Names of Franklin County, Missouri. By ROBERT L. RAMSAY. (University of Missouri Studies, Vol. XXVI, No. 3, 1954. Pp. 55)

In this study of some six hundred place names the late Professor Ramsay again uses what he calls the "organic" plan, arranging the names of the area considered in natural groups, so as "to let them illustrate and interpret each other by community of origin rather than separately and in isolation." As opposed to the usual dictionary arrangement, this plan makes for "good reading." Nevertheless, for quick reference, a complete alphabetical index is included.

Franklin County, says the author, "is both American and broadly cosmopolitan in outlook at one and the same time." Thus, he devotes a section of the study to names derived from the county's reverence for great Americans (Garfield, Taney), a section on names borrowed from other areas of the United States (Casco, La Jolla, Frisco Heights), and a section on loans from other countries (Dundee, Krakow, Japan). But he notes that La Jolla is pronounced "La JAH-luh" and Japan "JAY-puhn."

In this manner Ramsay proceeds through Indian survivals, names of French origin, Spanish and German names, names originating with mines and mining, Franklin County's fauna and flora, and rounds out the picture with Biblical and humorous names.

Here, then, we have another chapter in the comprehensive study of Missouri place names so ably initiated by Professor Ramsay and which, it is to be hoped and expected, will be pushed to completion by his students and associates.

HOBART M. LOVETT

A Pronunciation Guide to Nebraska Place Names. Prepared by ARVED CHRISTENSEN, WAYNE B. WELLS, NANCI DEBORD, under the supervision of PAUL SCHUPBACH. (University of Nebraska Publication Number 183, April 1953; Radio Section, Department of Speech, School of Fine Arts.)

Copies of pronunciation guides are in considerable demand in these days of radio and television, for newscasting has become

a matter of on-the-hour and between-the-hour activity. Guides to localities near and far are necessities, not only for public announcers, but for the rest of us, who converse and discuss everything we hear and read about. I thought the broadcaster on a national radio chain who recently announced the discovery of the tomb of "chē' öps" (Cheops) should have consulted a guide before he trusted to instinct and passed on the wrong pronunciation to thousands of his listeners. We therefore welcome another pronunciation guide, this one to the place names of Nebraska, prepared by students and faculty members of the University of that state.

In 1950, the National Association of Radio News Directors urged the preparation of pronouncing guides for place names in all the states of the Union. Following this request, guides were prepared for Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, South Dakota, Kentucky, Missouri, Indiana, Texas, Florida, Colorado, and other states. Nebraska has been added to the growing list. Most of the audio-visual people prefer an eye-recognition type of key, i.e., "äl'-boo-kur-kee" (Albuquerque), "loss an'-je-less" (Los Angeles) rather than a key with diacritical marks, as "äl'bū-kēr-kē" and "lös än'jě lěs" (Merriam-Webster). Thus the *Nebraska Guide* indicates the pronunciation of Brady as "Bray' dee" and of Lincoln as "Lin'kuhn." Since the key shows "ī" as "igh," Lyons is indicated for pronunciation as "Ligh'uhns." A few pronunciations individual to Nebraska are indicated in "Bee-at'ris" (Beatrice), "Mac-leen'" (McLean), "Sahltil'-loh" (Saltillo), but for local choice there seems to be nothing so surprising as the "Ee'mouse" (Emmaus) of Pennsylvania or the "Thoo-roo'" (Thoreau) of New Mexico.

T. M. PEARCE

Colorful California Names. By THOMAS P. BROWN (pp. 44; 5th printing. Distributed gratis by American Trust Company, San Francisco, 1854)

It is paradoxical that this slender booklet is of great importance. It is not a work of tremendous erudition; the author gives his sources in the acknowledgements. That is no disparagement. Hilaire Belloc said that historians make their living by copying one another—a legitimate reason why authors of name books should follow this time honored custom. Nor does the work pretend to be comprehensive—it lists but 209 of the many interesting names in California.

Its importance is for other reasons. If the American Name Society is to expand and properly cover its field it needs widespread support and increased public interest in names. Booklets of this type accomplish these purposes. To commemorate its 100th anniversary the bank publisher distributes the booklet at all of its 83 offices and at conventions. It reaches a large audience not otherwise in contact with onomastics and stimulates interest in the grass roots.

Most name books have a small sale. Scholars labor for years and the product of their lucubrations reaches but a limited audience. This is a virgin field for such authors to condense their works and compile similar territorial brochures and have them issued by banks, industrial companies, department stores, or other commercial sponsors. It would give the author some financial return and is a dignified and effective method of public relations for the sponsor. The makeup of *Colorful California Names* might well be emulated—the layout is topnotch, the typography excellent, the articles are clear and concise and contain nuggets of name knowledge in entertaining form. *Verbum sapienti sat.*

Your reviewer has checked the contents with Gudde's *California Place Names* with which there is agreement except in a few instances, where the author has chosen perhaps to follow other authorities, has stated the origins as being definite where Gudde has given them as probable, and has included some palpable legends for local color.

There is one lamentable omission which is characteristic of virtually all place name books. Where the place name is derived from a personal name, the meaning of that name is not given. In most instances it is readily ascertainable and would enhance the book.

JOSEPH N. CORCORAN

Place Names in Colorado. By J. FRANK DAWSON. (The J. Frank Dawson Publishing Company, P.O. Box 2600, Denver. 54 pp. \$1.00.)

There are not many states in the Union whose geographical names have been compiled and published in convenient form for the native and the tourist alike. Mr. Dawson's little book is one of the first along this line and will take its place in the literature of a state which is as colorful as are its place names. Serious students

of onomatology might not be entirely satisfied with the book: the author gives hardly any dates, does not distinguish between genuine and pseudo Spanish names, lists many uninteresting names of towns and fails to list the names of many physical features with highly interesting names. Entries like

TIOGA. Indian name meaning "where it forks"

CONEJOS. Named for the county

ARRIOLA. Name of an early Spanish general

HASTY. For Lon Hasty, early day farmer

will to many appear too sketchy and too meager.

However, Mr. Dawson didn't publish his book for the onomatologist but for the general reader. In this respect, he has succeeded very well and later editions will doubtless round out the picture. The main thing is that a beginning has been made in the study of the names of this interesting state.

One of the illustrations shows beautiful Dinosaur National Monument, now in danger of becoming a victim of commercialism and utilitarianism.

A. E. M.



The Eaglet.—Here in eastern Nebraska we have affection for, and are amused by, a Missouri Pacific "train" which is actually a one-car motor, a combination passenger, baggage, freight, mail, and "milk" conveyance shuttling twice daily between Lincoln and Union, Nebraska. At Union, this shuttle bug fulfills its purpose for being because it makes connections with that fast Missouri Pacific train, the famed Eagle. The official name of the motor is the Eaglet. Early each morning, and each afternoon, the Eaglet lurches gaily down the single track over forty miles of peaceful countryside to meet the Eagle.

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