

Review

GALE RESEARCH COMPANY PUBLICATIONS

This survey of recent publications by Gale Research Co., Book Tower, Detroit, MI 48226, serves as prominent notice of books of interest to readers of *Names*. Titles and bibliographical information appear below.

- Alkrie, Leland G., Jr. *New Periodical Title Abbreviations*, Vol. 1, 3d ed. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1981. Pp. 357. Paper. \$75.00.
- Brewer, Annie M., ed. *Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, and other Word-Related Books*, Vol. 1, 3d ed. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1982. Pp. xx + 519. \$90.00.
- Koster, Donald N., ed. *American Literature and Languages: A Guide to Information Sources*. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1982. Pp. xiv + 396. \$38.00

The three texts here are compilations of different material, each, of course, serving a particular field of research or knowledge, and each with a different approach to compilation. These differences should be detailed, with some intimation of their importance to the study of names noted along the way. As we know, accumulations, or to use the apocopated form, cumulations, have a way of arranging themselves, seemingly sometimes without the help of the persons who "pretend" to block out space to contain the material.

The Alkrie *Abbreviations* carries a Gale Research initialism of NPTA-81 and is the first of two supplements to the third edition of *Periodical Title Abbreviations* (PTA-3). As with other Gale cumulations, this one adds substantially, over 6,500 more entries, to the earlier editions, many entries new, but also many from sources that were not covered before, thereby taking both "a current and a retrospective view." The text is divided into two sections: "By Abbreviation" and "By Title," both alphabetical. Since NPTA-81 is a supplement, it will need to be used in conjunction with the Third Edition, which contains 35,000 items, listed by both title and abbreviation (two volumes). The total, then, is now well over 40,000 printed items, which do not include the many that overlap. The latter were edited out, since their differences were minor.

The need for such a compilation has been questioned, and should have been. The proliferation of lists has come about primarily because of ease of listing through the use of computers. Before computers, such work was done laboriously by hand and by years of card stacking and indexing, sometimes requiring a lifetime to compile a rather ordinary concordance. Now, such a project should take only a few weeks or at most a few months, mostly a matter of typing fast and programming the wasteful, but the gathering of the cards into one place can be helpful and time saving.

American Literature has a numerical format, containing 1109 numbered items that

include principal works that have been produced through the stimulus of the American studies movement begun in the 1930s. Since almost anything that mentions the United States can be categorized under the rubric of "American Studies," it is not surprising to find such topics and subjects as biography, autobiography, history, family studies, women, minorities, ethnic groups, philosophy, law, religion, intellectual history, popular and mass culture, and the important ones for onomastics, items on folklore and folklife. George Stewart's books are not listed. The coverage is skimpy, but surely future editions will be more comprehensive. The index to authors and editors, as well as the general index, points to care in reference and documentation. A spot check revealed no errors.

The three approaches are indicative of Gale's eclectic choices of editing compilations. To be sure, other formats, such as the lexicographical, the encyclopedic, and the biographical appear in Gale publications, each providing a format compatible to a particular subject or type of material. Indeed, the important matter is the material, but the format can be alphabetized in the right order, no mean feat for some programmers, sorry to say. Still, the closing of the time span and the establishing of almost routine production allow large amounts of information to be stored and then printed in any form that the compiler desires. Hence, the accumulation of ordinary but sometimes arcane information can be accomplished with a very little effort and hardly any requirement of intelligence. Certainly, some compilations would be better to drift into the mists of needless "facts"; but given the state of research now, petty facts—if such can be termed that—become a fetish for those who insist that all details of documentation be covered and in "positions of access." No doubt, we have carried such documentation to extremes, enough so that vital knowledge is too often overlooked while intellectuals are allowed to grovel in minutiae. But so long as documentation demands a semblance of accuracy and exactness, such a compilation as PTA is essential as a time saver, not to mention the alleviation of the psychological wear and tear in the attempt to trace down, say, *N. H. Soc NB B* that just might occur in a reference. With the aid of PTA, the item can be found in seconds.

The Third Edition of *Dictionaries* represents another type of compilation, that of reproducing Library of Congress (LC) cards to arrange titles of books, names of authors, and subjects, into LC classifications. The 28,000 titles (cards) cover dictionaries and "highly specialized" word books. The format may cause the researcher some difficulty at first, since the alphabetical arrangement is not followed. The editor "decided to arrange hierarchically by the Library of Congress classification number," a method "designed to present general works on a subject, followed by more detailed and specific works." The problem, however, is the LC system itself. For instance, a lot of time can be spent searching among the categories for the title needed, although it is assumed that the user will look for only titles within a category. Still, in a search for Stewart's *American Place-Names*, I worked through three categories before trying "U.S. History." I gave up on two titles, both by Elsdon C. Smith. In other words, if a particular title is needed, time and temper will be saved by using the nearest available LC card catalog, or even the Dewey Decimal catalog, if that is the only one available. There, three cards are available for those of us who have trouble ferreting out information. Still, for a quick compilation of material within one classification, *Dictionaries* is more useful than is the LC card catalog, as I learned when I needed quickly some titles for a search for books on American Indian names. Reproducing LC cards may seem to be primary when information must be found rapidly and in a usable form. As David W. Marcell in *American Literature* writes, ". . . organizational strategy" in a compilation "poses basic prob-

lems” to the editor and must be met if the reference work is to be successful. Probably, the time has come to make a study of formats and their impact on “information storage,” whether in a book or in a computer.

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INDIAN PLACE-NAMES

Indian Place-Names, by John Rydjord, University of Oklahoma Press, 1005 Asp Avenue, Norman, OK 73019, is now available in a softbound edition, \$9.95. Reviewed by Virgil J. Vogel in *Names*, 17.3 (1969), it is recognized as a major study. The text “details the origin, evolution, and meanings of Indian place-names in Kansas from those collected from the state’s early native inhabitants—Siouan, Caddoan, and Shoshonean tribes—to the Algonquians, Iroquois, and other eastern groups, and even a few from the West.” It is good to have this well-written account available again.