

Twelfth Annual Report, Committee on Place Names
1966

American Dialect Society
American Name Society

WPA { It may safely be said that during 1966 there has been more activity in place-name research than at any time since the 1930's. The earlier period is mentioned because at that time the national government, through the Writers' Projects of WPA, made available both workers and funds for extensive place-name investigations. Some projects recently brought to completion (for example, the New Mexico volume) were begun at that time. Unfortunately a large part of the work of the 1930's was not directed by scholars, and the resulting publications at that time were usually very disappointing -- fragmentary, unsystematic, and undependable. Even so, much valuable information was assembled. In 1966, however, the work has been of an entirely different nature, and although not yet extensive enough, is pointing in the direction of permanent worth.

Although appearing before the end of 1965, two place-name volumes have received circulation in 1966 -- T.M. Pearce's New Mexico Place Names and George H. Shirk's Oklahoma Place Names. Margaret Bryant's review of Pearce's book appeared in the September issue of Names, and E.C. Ehrensperger's review of Shirk's work is in the December issue of the same publication.

Nicolaisen { Perhaps the most important work of the year has been done at Ohio State University under the able direction of the energetic president of the American Name Society, Francis Lee Utley. Through his efforts Ohio State asked William Nicolaisen, Chief of the Survey of Scottish Place Names, of the School of Scottish Studies and of the University of Edinburgh, to be Visiting Professor during the fall and winter quarters of 1966-67. His presence is bringing American scholars and students in touch with a vigorous young worker, deeply engaged in a major government-supported project, and well trained in both British and Continental methods (his degree is from Göttingen). At Ohio State this quarter he is setting a precedent by giving, so far as we know, the first full-fledged seminar on place-name methods ever offered in an American university. Eight graduate students are working on what is hoped will naturally evolve in the direction of Ohio county surveys. In the past several American workers directed similar projects (for example, R.L. Ramsay, Frederic Cassidy, and E.C. Ehrensperger, to mention a few, in their respective states), but not through formal seminars.

In New York at Christmas time Professor Nicolaisen will address a joint session of the Name and Dialect Societies, after which the three members of the place-name liaison committee of the two societies will serve as discussants. In addition, in New York on the afternoon of December 29, 1966, there will be an important meeting of invited onomasticians and related specialists for the purpose of planning guidelines, organization, a proposal for subsidy, and if all these matters are successful, a training session at a later date. This will be a business meeting, attempting to move directly to the points at issue and to come up at least with a committee which can help with a proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Office of Education. Mr.

Utley had hoped to obtain funds for a two-day symposium to be held at Columbus, Ohio, in February, but unfortunately this project failed.

→ Last summer at the Ninth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences at University College, London, July 4-8, Mr. Utley read a paper on A Survey of American Place Names: Strata, Organization and Method. He will report on the conference and speak on the same subject at the Name Society dinner in New York. In addition, his report is in the December issue of Names.

If all the activity listed above weren't enough, Mr. Utley is also working on several articles having to do with names: "Satan's Sectaries: The Names of the Devil," "The Names of the Knights of the Round Table," "Anthropology and Indian Place Names," and "Onomastic Folklore in Literature."

A.R. Dunlap (Delaware), who is planning a dictionary of Delaware place names, made a strong plea at the fifth Annual Names Institute on May 7, 1966, for national planning and guidance.

What he said has been emphasized by many of us often before, but his call for help in the midst of work on his own project was especially poignant and should spur us to make every effort at New York to formulate at least some kind of tentative guidelines.

C.A. Weslager (Hockessin, Del.) will undoubtedly be of assistance to Mr. Dunlap in the Delaware project.

Claude H. Neuffer (South Carolina) rightfully boasts of being the editor of the first state place-name journal in the United States, published each November since 1954, at the present time with over 1000 subscribers -- individuals, libraries, and schools -- in thirty-two states. Volume XIII appeared last November, and Volume XIV is already being planned. In May, 1967, Volumes I-XII will be published as a book in limited edition, with a preface discussing the scope of place-name work in South Carolina and a thoroughly accurate index. There is a special "package deal" bargain price for this book plus Volumes XIII and XIV for all new subscribers ordering before February 25, 1967. In exuberant promotional material the suggestion is made that the book be ordered as a Christmas gift for friends. In addition, Mr. Neuffer reports that Julian Petty, head of the Geography department at the University, is completing a place-name gazetteer of that state.

Kelsie B. Harder, Thomas Perrin, Richard Haber and Conrad Rothrauff wish to announce that they now have authority at State University College at Potsdam, N.Y., to begin a semiannual journal to be entitled New York State Place Name Study, which, it is hoped, will first appear in either the spring or fall of 1967 and which will serve as a medium for collecting information about place names of the state, including origin, meaning, and variations. The first issue will include a brochure of place-name literature and an article concerning unrecorded toponymy of St. Lawrence County. Two states, then, will have regular state place-name journals. Are there any others that we do not know about? Which state will be next?

Next year (1967) Names, the official organ of the American Name Society, is devoting two issues exclusively to two types of place-name study. One issue will be devoted to Indian names, the meanings and origins of which are often difficult to determine. This issue will be edited by the veteran place-name researcher, Hamill Kenny, author of West Virginia Place Names and currently at work on Maryland Place Names. The other issue, scheduled to appear

in December, 1967, is to be devoted to the folklore of names and naming and will be edited by Jan H. Brunvand of the University of Utah. Anyone interested in contributing to either of these issues should get in touch with the respective editors as soon as possible.

Jan H. Brunvand (Utah), who began place-name work at the university of Idaho, then transferred to Southern Illinois University where he became interested in that state's place-name project, has recently moved to the University of Utah. He writes that he finds Utah place-names fascinating. Most prominent are the many Mormon names and the ones that call up the proper promised-land image such as Bountiful and Eden. There are many Indian names and a great crop of puzzlers, probably rich in folk etymologies. He hopes to have a real report in a year's time.

The following three items illustrate the frustrations which place-name workers experience all too frequently.

1. William S. Powell, (North Carolina), having completed his North Carolina Gazetteer, turned over his manuscript to the University Press last February. It had previously been approved for publication, but the project proved to be so huge that the director of the press decided the work couldn't be published until special funds could be obtained. The search for funds is still going on. The manuscript contains approximately 20,000 entries on cards, from which the typesetter will work directly. The press estimates that it will make a volume of about 800 pages. During the delay Mr. Powell is polishing and revising the material on his cards.

2. Morse Allen and Dean Hughes (Connecticut) have been in a similar situation for several years with regard to their completed manuscript of Connecticut Place Names. Connecticut Printers, Hartford, are willing to go to work as soon as funds are forthcoming. A dummy has been made and an estimate given that the projected book of 1248 pages, hardbound, would cost at least \$23,000. Both Trinity College and the Connecticut Historical Society are willing to sponsor the work, but no organization or foundation is willing to furnish any funds. Mr. Allen, age 76 and in poor health, shows the typical spirit of place-name workers when he says that although he would very much like to see his work in print, he has nevertheless thoroughly enjoyed working for ten years on this inexhaustible task.

3. Frank Wuttge, Jr. (New York City), who for several years has been searching for a publisher of his Bronx Street Names, continues his investigations enthusiastically. He finds a large segment of American history connected with the naming of these streets. Last August he published a short article on "Printers' Streets" in Printing Impressions, Volume 9, No. 3.

George R. Stewart (California) is forging ahead with plans for a Place-Name Dictionary of the Continental United States. He recently signed a contract with Oxford University Press (N.Y.) and is looking toward 1972 as a date of completion. Though some may question whether the time is yet ripe for such a work, Mr. Stewart feels that an adequate work can be produced, and that it will be highly useful from the beginning. He says that the book would probably need to be revised in the light of additional accumulation of knowledge about once every ten years, and in the course of fifty years might well be a somewhat finished work. He admits that such a work presents problems of tremendous magnitude, but he has worked out an admirable prospectus in which he

presents plans for limiting, condensing, and arranging material. Some workers on state projects, whose materials seem to be going beyond reasonable bounds, might well study Mr. Stewart's prospectus.

Lalia Boon (Idaho) is working on a place-name dictionary of that state. Last summer she had a research grant from the American Philosophical Society which allowed her to devote the entire summer to field work; this year she has a University of Idaho Research Committee grant for the school year. She has collected a remarkable amount of material and hopes to have all data for North Idaho completed by the end of 1967. She, too, has many questions about methods of procedure.

Lorena E. Kemp (West Virginia) has for several years been assigning semester research papers dealing with various aspects of the place names of West Virginia. In addition to this assistance from students she has also secured the cooperation of Roland Sevy, Assistant Professor of History at West Virginia State College, Mr. Douglas Anderson, registrar at the same institution, and Mr. William Blizzard, editor of the Charleston Sunday Gazette Mail Magazine. She and her assistants have yet to decide upon the organization and scope of the material which she hopes will form the basis of a new revised edition of Hamill Kenny's West Virginia Place Names (1945), for some time out of print.

Marvin Carmony (Indiana State University, Terre Haute) began work on Indiana place names last year, having students do studies of their own counties. With encouragement, he is willing to call a meeting next spring to form an Indiana Place-Name Committee. Place-name work in Indiana is long overdue.

Margaret M. Bryant, Brooklyn College, continues directing master's essays on the names in Brooklyn.

Arthur H. Hughes (Trinity College, Conn.) is currently at work on a place-name directory of central Florida, which he hopes can be expanded to cover the entire state.

P. Burwell Rogers (Bucknell University, Pa.) says that last spring he spent three months in Richmond, Va., gathering materials about place names in that state. He prepared a paper entitled "The First Names of Virginia," which he read on May 12, 1966, in Newport News, Va., before the Colonial Dames of America, and which he has submitted to the Virginia Place Name Society for consideration for publication as one of its Occasional Papers.

Lee L. Snyder (Philadelphia) has resumed some long-postponed research aimed at redefining the old English dialects on the basis of place-name evidence.

Sterling A. Stoudemire (North Carolina) is working on "Guadalupe: the Spread of a Hispano-Arabic Name Around the World" and "Patterns Followed by Christopher Columbus in Naming Islands (etc.) in the Caribbean."

Col. C. I. Kephart (Florida) has written two articles, one on the "Origin of the Name America" and the other on the "Origin of the Name Russia."

Jack Smith (Mississippi) last year began work on place names in Etowah County, Alabama, but having moved to the University of Southern Mississippi, he has changed to a study of place names in Forrest County, Miss. With the help of advanced undergraduates in linguistic courses, he and Mrs. Marice Brown are collecting information about Mississippi place names in general.

Douglas P. Hinkle (Eastern Kentucky University), whose principal interest is Mediaeval Spanish place names, writes that he has

quite a collection of correspondence on Spanish place names in the state of Virginia.

Louise W. Hanley (Wisconsin) has long been interested in Kentucky place names, but has had difficulty in locating many small places not noted on maps, in postal lists, or in books. This past year she made considerable progress, but finds she cannot travel extensively in Kentucky (as would be necessary) and is therefore turning over all her materials to workers on the Dialect Dictionary project with the hope that, with their facilities, they may be able, while carrying on their project, to do much with place names as well.

With the return of Eric P. Hamp from a year in Europe, the Illinois project may be expected to progress apace.

H.F. Raup (Kent State University, Ohio) has in progress a study tentatively titled An Analysis of the Geographical Names of Connecticut's Western Reserve, which will probably not be completed in 1967.

William E. Ashton (Montana) is gathering information on Montana place-names. He is ignoring physical features such as mountains, streams, gulches, etc., and is confining himself to places that are, or were, settlements. He includes post offices as "Settlements," and has completed the study of post offices up through 1929. He is turning up a large amount of interesting information which should be systematically recorded.

Atcheson L. Hench (Virginia) is investigating the origin and history of various place names in Virginia. At present he is working on Stuart's Draft. He writes that the youthful Virginia Place Name Society is beginning to produce.

Leo Gosser (Auburn University, Alabama) reports the following county place-name studies as completed: Bertha D. Lindsey, A Study of Source Names in Calhoun County, Alabama; Lucy Patterson, A Study of Some Place Names of Southeastern Lee County, Alabama; Fred L. McDonald, A Study of Place Names in Lowndes County, Ga.; Patrick P. Garrett, A Study of Place Names in Lincoln Parish, Louisiana. He says several more county studies are in progress.

Allen Walker Read (Columbia) has put out a mimeographed pamphlet of 57 pages listing his special studies and publications during his long and distinguished academic career. Some of the items deal with place names.

In our report this year we miss the comments of three veteran correspondents: C.M. Goethe, Alfred Percy, and Mamie Meredith. In every one of our previous reports Miss Meredith supplied information about all kinds of place-name activities in Nebraska. There is no report from Nebraska this year. Who will take Miss Meredith's place?

To those interested in seeing place-name research grow, this report may seem encouraging, but there are still large sections of our country where very little or nothing is being done or has ever been done.

Corrections of and additions to this report will be most welcome.

E.C. Ehrensperger, Chairman
Liaison Place-Name Committee