

Fourteenth Annual Report, Liaison Committee on Place Names
1968

American Dialect Society
American Name Society

In letters to some 250 persons known to be interested in place names, the statement was made that place-name work has seemed to be languishing this past year. We suggested that our correspondents try to prove this statement to be wrong. Replies varied widely. Several said there was no lack of activity in their regions. Others frankly admitted that nothing was happening. The most disturbing element was the silence of too many sources. We should like to think that some were so busy they couldn't find time to write, but the more likely conclusion is that there was nothing to report. In going through this report our readers may decide for themselves just what the present status of place-name research is. It may be we are expecting too much too soon. Place-name projects require time and support, both of which are often lacking. Considering the circumstances which have prevailed in the world during 1968, perhaps we should rejoice at the amount of place-name work which this report indicates is in progress. Since there is so much that should be done, however, and since time is of the essence in some respects, we may be justifiably impatient. There is much interest in a national place-name survey, as is frequently indicated below. There is also a feeling that many kinds of place-name research have not yet been attempted. Perhaps after our New York meetings, where many of these matters will be discussed, the future may look brighter.

Meredith F. Burrill, (Office of Geography, U. S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.) has been so occupied with many place-name projects that any idea that place-name work has been languishing seems inconceivable to him. To go back a bit on matters concerning his activities which we have not reported before, Mr. Burrill was president of the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographic Names at Geneva, Switzerland, September 4-22, 1967. The report of the United States delegation to this conference, which Mr. Burrill helped to prepare, was published December 30, 1967, and is obtainable from our State Department. In May, 1968, the Economic and Social Council of the U.N. took up the Conference recommendations specifically directed to it. It requested the Group of Experts on Geographic Names (set up at the time of the Conference) to continue to function as a liaison and coordinating body, and requested the U.N. Secretary General to consult with the Group of Experts on the holding of a second conference not earlier than 1971.

Since then the Conference recommendation that the subject of standardization be pursued at regional and subregional meetings has been heeded. The seventh conference of the U. S. Board on Geographic Names and the British Permanent Committee on Geographic Names was held in Washington, June 10-18, 1968. A copy of the findings and recommendations may be obtained from Mr. Burrill. The countries of Central America held their first regional conference on standardization of geographic names in Guatemala in October, 1968. Mr. Burrill thinks that one or more meetings were held in northern Europe and that there was talk of discussions by the Arab states, but he has no reports from these meetings.

At the time of our meeting in New York, he will be reporting on these developments at the International Geographical Congress in India. En route to and from India at a number of countries he will be discussing international cooperation on behalf of the United States Board on Geographic Names and the United Nations Group of Experts.

Mr. Burrill's largest project on the geographical distribution of generic terms used in U. S. geographic names is, he says, on the back burner. The development of a polyglot dictionary of geographic terms in the Americas, under the auspices of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, has registered progress irregularly. Mr. Burrill is deeply interested in the language of geography.

One of the next things he wants to help start is some carefully controlled investigation of human behavior in using and manipulating geographic names. He thinks we have been proceeding and making rules on the basis of assumptions that have never been properly tested. It is entirely possible, he says, that international movements of the greatest importance in this field may come in the next few years, whether we are ready or not.

Francis Lee Utley (Ohio State), who does as much work as three ordinary persons, continues his efforts to get an American Place-Name survey under way. The meeting last Christmas time of several interested in such a project did not seem very encouraging. In addition to the problem of securing funds (during the past year or so the purse strings of the government as well as of foundations have been drawn very tight), there is also the question of location and facilities as well as the need for a national director with an adequate staff. But Utley is not the kind of person to give up in the face of difficulties. He has been making plans for a third conference on the survey to take place in connection with the American Name Society meeting in New York in December, 1968. He has appointed a committee, the membership of which will be definitely settled at the New York meeting, to explore the possibilities. Even though there may not be a national headquarters for some time, much may be accomplished in regional endeavors. He mentions three very active centers at the moment--a few others could be added. One of these centers has arisen this year: a vigorous effort at Boston University under the leadership of Eugene Green of the department of English there, in cooperation with Celia Millward. These two workers are making a careful survey of the New England situation to see what can be done as a springboard for national action. Another center is Delaware where A. R. Dunlap, a veteran in place-name research, has been joined by W. Bruce Finney. Such a combination should produce results. A third center is at the University of Arizona where Byrd Granger is hard at work. Other states in which there is considerable activity at this time are Idaho, South Carolina, and Mississippi. Utley feels that any national survey must work out of centers of this kind, though it will some day be necessary to make one university the major center for teaching, training, collecting, and, above all, information storage and retrieval. The choice of such a center, and the search for local and government support for a National Survey should be made with care, probably after we have seen some results from the younger men who might make proper claim to the Directorship of such a survey. Utley will discuss these and other related matters at a meeting of the American Name Society in New York at the Americana Hotel at 11:30 A.M. on Monday, December 30, 1968. All those interested in such projects are urged to attend.

Allen Walker Read (Columbia), the president-elect of the American Name Society, read an excellent paper entitled "The Prospects of a National Place-Name Survey for the United States" before the Thirteenth Annual National Conference on Linguistics sponsored by the Linguistic Circle of New York at the Biltmore Hotel in New York on March 9, 1968. This paper gives a brief and authentic history of attempts to conduct a national survey and should be made available to all those interested in such a project.

Sterling A. Stoudemire, North Carolina, wishes us to call attention to the recent publication by the University of North Carolina press of the monumental work of William S. Powell, North Carolina Gazetteer. It is the product of fifteen years' work and not only lists place names but gives much information about origins, history, and folklore. We are always happy when a work is printed which for some time we have mentioned in our reports as "in progress."

C. A. Weslager (Delaware) has in process one unpublished paper entitled "Two American Indian Place Names on St. David's Island in the Bermudas," which has to do with two islands named Oswego. What makes the matter intriguing is that prior to American and Spanish settlement there was no native occupation in Bermuda. In his latest book manuscript The Log Cabin in America, which Rutgers University is now preparing for May or June publication, he has included in the text various incidental references to American place names. Although the book is essentially social history, he has not overlooked the opportunity to make name references where he felt them needed.

E. R. Seary (Memorial University of Newfoundland) reports that in October the transcript of his book on Place Names of the Avalon Peninsula of Newfoundland was sent to the publishers, University of Toronto Press.

Harold Allen (Minnesota) says that he prepared a request for a grant to do a state place-name survey, but other projects were given precedence. How familiar that last clause sounds!

Claude H. Neuffer (South Carolina) notes that the current issue of Names in South Carolina, Vol. XV, Winter, 1968, contains the first article written by a high school student, Iris Teal, on the place-names of her region. We applaud most heartily when he says he hopes to encourage more of this kind of work. He also informs us that another onomastic award for the best work on South Carolina place names has been made, this time, for 1968, to Mrs. Joyce O'Bannon for her work on Barnwell County. For the benefit of those not familiar with our past reports, we might add that Mr. Neuffer publishes the only periodical in the country devoted exclusively to the place names of a single state.

C. G. Holland (Virginia) has almost completed a phonemic, morphemic and morphological study of the Powhatan language, used on the coast of Virginia. It involves almost 2000 entries (recordings). While his work has not been specifically devoted to place names, it does involve a good sample of these recordings. He hopes to have the work finished by spring of 1969.

W. Edson Richmond (Indiana) writes that, to the best of his knowledge, little or nothing is going on in place-name studies in his state. He has tried to couple place-name research with folklore studies, but has not had much success in interesting graduate students in place names. He concludes: "Though I am personally still interested in place names and have slowly built up a file of records on Indiana place names over the years, I find little time to work on these materials and have nothing more than lists of names with popular explanations."

Marvin Carmony (Indiana State University, Terre Haute) would agree with Mr. Richmond, but he is trying to do something about the situation.

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He is working on plans for a place-name institute to be held at his university the early part of May, 1969. He wishes to bring in some outside speakers but would like primarily to stimulate interest in place-name research both in his own state and in surrounding states.

Donald J. Orth (Board on Geographic Names, Washington, D.C.) has been working on a supplement to his Dictionary of Alaska Place Names, which he hopes can be published by the end of 1969. It would list new names, corrections, and new information with regard to name origin or meaning. It could mean a publication containing from two to four thousand entries.

His dictionary of three Wisconsin counties--Fond du Lac, Calumet, and Winnebago--probably will be finished in 1969. His dictionary of Puerto Rico and Virgin Island names is presently at a standstill. He is very much interested in ways and means to promote a National Place-Name Survey. At the time this report is presented in New York he will be attending the International Geographic Conference meetings in New Delhi, India.

Bruce Finnie (Delaware) has finished a monograph-length manuscript on Topographical Terms in the Ohio Valley, 1748-1800, which is being considered for publication. This work parallels in format the similar books on topographical terms in Virginia and Florida by McJimsey and McMullen respectively.

Fred C. Robinson (Stanford, California) has published two articles on proper names--including place names--as names are treated by medieval poets (Anglia LXXXVI, 14-58, and Neuphilologische Mitteilungen XLIV, 161-171, and he has in progress yet another article on the same subject. He gave this last article as a lecture at the Centre for Medieval Studies in Toronto, October 18, 1968.

A. R. Dunlap (Delaware) continues his work on the Delaware place-name archive.

D. J. Georgacas and W. A. McDonald (North Dakota) announce that their Place Names of the Southwest Peloponnesus, University of Minnesota Press, 1968, 403 pp., has been printed in its entirety and will circulate by Christmas, 1968, or January, 1969. Two universities, two societies, and one foundation have supported this book, which consists of an introduction, annotated bibliographies, and the register of about 20,000 place names of Messenia, including a Greek-Albanian place name register and indices, Greek and Albanian. Continuing his work on the names of the continents, Mr. Georgacas has completed an article on Asia which is to appear in a forthcoming issue of Names. He is reading a paper on names for the African continent at the December, 1968, meeting of the American Name Society as well as at the International Congress on Onomastics at Vienna, Austria, in September, 1969. Finally, Mr. Georgacas has compiled an index for Mary Ann Barnes Williams' Origins of North Dakota Place Names (1966). His review of this book is scheduled to appear in Names.

George R. Stewart (California) reports that work on his concise dictionary of the place names of the United States (except Hawaii) has gone so well that he thinks he can send the manuscript to the Oxford University Press some time in 1969.

Frederic G. Cassidy (Wisconsin) writes that his old Place Names of Dane County, Wisconsin is just coming out (1968) in a new edition, University of Wisconsin Press. It has a larger map, a new introductory note, and a few necessary corrections. But it has not been brought up to date; it remains in essentially its form of 1947, PADS, No. 7.

J. Franklin Murray, S. J. (Alabama), vice president of Spring Hill College, says that although his present administrative duties do not permit him to devote much time to place-name research, he has not lost his interest in the field of investigation. He writes that one of his former

permit him to continue place-name research, he has not lost his interest in this type of investigation. He writes that one of his former students, now completing his doctoral program at the University of Alabama, reported to him that several graduate students at the University were writing theses and dissertations on place names. He further adds that Allen Nickey Lewis showed a strong interest in this work and has all but completed his dissertation on Tuscaloosa County. Mr. Lewis expressed the intention of continuing this work after receiving his degree.

H. F. Raup (Ohio), editor of the Professional Geographer, has a couple of projects under way, but he says that editing takes up most of his research time.

Richard Clark (Minnesota) has completed an article entitled "Place Names of German Origin in Kansas," which he hopes to see in print before long.

Edwin H. Bryan, Jr. (Hawaii), as usual, reports considerable activity in our fiftieth state. With regard to his proposed gazetteer of Hawaiian place names, he says that with the help of volunteers the bulk of the State's place names (at least 15,000) are now listed on cards, with their geographical coordinates. The next step is to draw some thirty outline maps to accompany their tabulation by areas. He is a member of a state place-name committee which has been actively cooperating with the U. S. Board on Geographic Names and which during 1968 has to date produced three quarterly reports on the geographic names. His annual "Sectional Maps of Honolulu, Rural Oahu, and the Hawaiian Islands," which is revised each year to include all possible additions, continues to grow in size. There are now more than 4,000 different street names on the island of Oahu, most of which are Hawaiian words. He has a catalogue of them with their meanings.

Samuel H. Elbert and Mary Kawena Pukii (Hawaii), who produced Place Names of Hawaii, published in 1966 by the University of Hawaii Press, are planning to enlarge their listing of Hawaii place names and their meaning by a thousand or more new entries. They plan to include the meaning of street names also.

Lalia Boone (Idaho) says that place-name work is not languishing in Idaho. Since October, 1967, work has been completed on Payette, Nez Perce, Owyhee counties. There is a possible publisher for at least part of this material. Another graduate student, Jim Dahl, is almost through with Bonner County. Approximately 2000 items have been processed on IBM cards. This year Miss Boone's department is allowing her more money for processing 1000 items per semester. Next summer she will be free of classes, so that perhaps she can finish all field work and hopefully begin to see the end of this project. She concludes by saying that Idaho is interested in making the University a center for place-name collections and training.

W. G. Gaffney (Nebraska) reports that place-name work is languishing in his state.

James C. Austin, Southern Illinois University, has been having students in his introductory English language course submit papers on such subjects as folk sayings, children's games, and place names. The students are beginners and their papers are not outstanding. They usually write on regions (in eastern Missouri to southern Illinois) where they live or with which they are familiar. Mr. Austin has filed these papers and would be glad to make the place-name material available for use in a larger work.

Vivian Zenkin (Columbia) has completed a study of the place-names of Ocean County, New Jersey.

P. Burwell Rogers (Bucknell University) has collected materials about place names, including names of geographical features, in Virginia pertaining to the elk and is now ready to prepare an article on the subject. This project was suggested by an article by Gary S. Dunbar, "Some Notes on Bison in Early Virginia," Virginia Place-Name Society Papers, No. 1, January 30, 1962. He has found so much of interest about the elk and places named for it that he is looking forward to extending his work to an examination of places named for other animals, such as deer, panther, otter, beaver, and fox. He is also investigating the names of surface waters of the state and thus far has concentrated on the rivers and smaller streams. He says that it will be some time before he shall have made a broad enough survey to assemble his findings.

Louise W. Hanley (University of Miami, Florida) gave a talk on place names last May at the meeting of the Florida Alumnae Chapter of Phi Delta Gamma at Palm Beach. She is scheduled to give another at the December meeting of the Language Circle of Miami. She says that Florida is a gold mine of names of various kinds, especially names of hotels and motels, shops, restaurants, and (most interesting of all) night clubs.

T. M. Pearce (New Mexico) participated in the Western History Association symposium on October 18, 1968, in Tucson, Arizona, reading a paper on "The Non-History of Place Names." Kelsie B. Harder, editor of Names, was chairman, speaking on "The Place-Name Survey of the United States and the Study of History." A third participant was Robert Hitchman, who read a paper on "Footprints on the Land--Place Names as Clues for Historical Research."

Jan H. Brunvand (Utah) has devoted a considerable part of his time this past year to editing a special issue of Names, September, 1968, with folklore aspects of names and naming.

Robert Skoglund (Rochester, New York) has been working on place names in St. George, Maine, which have to do with the shore line or the ledges and islands off shore. He says he has been using Cassidy's Dane County study as a model.

Wilbur Zelinsky (The Pennsylvania State University) is engaged in a study of the geography of a particular type of urban morphology, one which, for lack of a better term, he is calling the "Pennsylvania Town." Such "towns" are found not only in Pennsylvania but also in portions of Maryland, West Virginia, and Virginia. In addition to various physical traits that distinguish this town type from others, it may also be distinctive in terms of street name patterns. Mr. Zelinsky hopes to finish this study sometime in 1969.

Richard Pillsbury (West Virginia University), like Mr. Zelinsky, has also worked on this question of street names in early Pennsylvania towns and has completed a brief paper on the topic. He has indicated that he might wish to pursue the matter further.

David Stephenson (Arlington, Virginia) is hard at work on a master's thesis dealing with the historical geography of the place names of Centre County, Pennsylvania. It is a comprehensive study, taking in a wide variety of physical and cultural terms. He hopes to finish this coming spring.

John Rydjord (Wichita State University, Kansas) is to be congratulated on the appearance this fall of his Indian Place Names. The book deals with the origin, evolution, and meanings of these names collected

in Kansas from the Siouan, Algonquian, Shoshonean, Caddoan, Iroquoian, and other tongues. The great variety of Indian place-names in Kansas resulted from attempts to create a permanent Indian frontier in the West, and, consequently, Kansas has Indian place names not only from its early native inhabitants but also from eastern groups and even a few from the West. This book is only a step in Rydjord's larger work on the place names of Kansas. He has completed over twenty chapters on this larger study, but says he does not dare set a date for its final completion.

Jack Smith (Southern Mississippi) as editor of the Mississippi Folklore Register, has written an article in this periodical entitled "The Mississippi Place-Name Repository," Volume II, No. 1, Spring, 1968, pp. 19-25. When the Mississippi Folklore Society was reactivated, the small number at the first meeting on December 10, 1966, agreed that a repository for the collection of place-name data should be at the University of Southern Mississippi at Hattiesburg. In his article Mr. Smith outlines the plans for the development of this repository. In this same periodical, Volume II, No. 3, Fall, 1968, pp. 76-78, Terry L. Alford discusses the place-name Indianola, at one time or other the name of some seventeen different places in this country.

Frank Wuttge, Jr. (Bronx, New York) has a helpful suggestion for those having difficulty getting their place-name manuscripts into print. He took his material dealing with street names in the Bronx to the New York Public Library, where Xerox copies of his manuscripts were made. The pages were then bound in a standard cover and placed on reference shelves. If works in manuscript form could be preserved in this way, the efforts of authors would not be wasted and valuable information which otherwise might be lost could be saved. We might add that if there were national or regional place-name archives, the same results which Mr. Wuttge describes could be achieved.

In studying the works of Edgar Allan Poe, Mr. Wuttge has noted that these works contain many references to place names of New York, both city and state. Burton R. Pollin's Dictionary of Names and Titles in Poe's Collected Works, New York: Da Capo Press, 1968, should be of special interest to Mr. Wuttge.

Kelsie Harder (The State University College at Potsdam, New York) editor of Names, is engaged in so many activities connected with place names that we can mention only a few in this report. During 1968 he has continued a practice started in January, 1966, and has issued four more American Name Society Bulletins, Nos. 9-12, in mimeographed form. Copies are sent to all members of the American Name Society. Bulletin No. 9, February, 1968 (seven closely packed pages), is called the Newsance Issue. Bulletin No. 10, April, 1968, (sixteen pages) is called the Onomadologist's Issue. Bulletin No. 11, August, 1968 (fifteen pages), is called the Ultraistic Issue. Bulletin No. 12, November, 1968 (eighteen pages), is called the Proofreader's Issue. These bulletins contain not only news about the American Name Society but announcements of new publications in the field and clippings and items of all kinds dealing with names sent in by members. Some of the material in those issues could well be deposited in place-name archives.

Editor Harder has announced that the December, 1968, issue of Names, edited by Arthur Beringause, will be a Literary Names issue.

Hamill Kenny (Annapolis, Maryland) says his work on Maryland's place names is proceeding at a snail's pace, although during the summer he almost completely excerpted the sixty-three volumes of the Maryland Historical Magazine and unearthed much that is to the point. Some of the comments of this excellent place-name scholar are worth quoting verbatim:

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"The state abounds in old, old communities with obscure, almost non-existent names, usually surnames. It is an impossibility to learn about them all, nor is it necessary. I shall have to be content with "specimens." I shall, of course, include the Indian names, but shall refer to my fuller work and discuss them with brevity.

"The difficulty of finding a publisher is a deterrent to American place-name work. Besides, people do not understand what a place name is. They see no treasure here, are aware of no linguistics. Perhaps places are not so dear to us as to people in other lands. Our nationalism is not strong. . . ."

With the words of Hamill Kenny just quoted, words similar to those we have heard from place-name workers again and again, we bring to a close this fourteenth annual report. As always, we are eager to receive corrections and additions.

The Liaison Place-Name Committee

Frederic G. Cassidy, University of Wisconsin

Francis Lee Utley, The Ohio State University

E. C. Ehrensperger, Yankton College, Chairman