

Fifteenth Annual Report, Liaison Committee on Place Names  
American Dialect Society  
American Name Society  
1969

The list of persons interested in place names has now grown to over 300 names. Each year several more are added. The number of projects in progress has also grown steadily, one very important aspect of this growth being the increase in the number of M.A. and Ph.D. dissertations as well as of research papers of various kinds. Only a few years ago many instructors did not feel qualified to direct studies of this kind, but more and more have tried such undertakings and have found them most rewarding. What is especially needed very soon is a place-name headquarters or repository in each state as well as national archives where all kinds of information about place names might be assembled. Up to the present, attempts to find subsidies either from foundations or from government sources have not been successful, but at the New York meetings last Christmas, time plans were formulated for carrying on such work in a variety of ways. More news of these plans will be forthcoming. What we have said very often is gradually becoming recognized--place-name research is a virgin field very much in need of workers. On the following pages are listed many such activities which have come to our attention. We should certainly like to hear of ones which we may have missed.

During the past year we lost one of our most loyal and enthusiastic workers in the death of Erwin G. Gudde, who was one of the founders of the American Name Society and its first secretary. His work on California place names remains unchallenged.

F. L. Utley (Ohio State) and E. C. Ehrensperger (Yankton College, South Dakota) were guest leaders at a Names and Folklore institute held at Indiana State University at Terre Haute last May. Professors Marvin Carmony, Ronald Baker, and Charles Blaney, with the full support of the department chairman, George E. Smock, planned and directed the institute, which was attended by representatives from several Indiana schools. The directors were so well satisfied with this institute that they are planning another for next April 25. The program has not yet been fully worked out, but one paper will be read by Larry Seits, a graduate student, who is doing a study of the place names of Parke County for his master's thesis. Another very important project of these same three men is the beginning of a periodical to be called Indiana Names, starting with a mimeographed paper and moving up as rapidly as the response permits. They will serve as editors, with R. M. Rennick (DePauw University) acting as contributing editor. The journal will not be confined to place-name research, but will no doubt emphasize such work. These men are also forming an Indiana Name Society to sponsor this publication and to hold annual meetings. Among other things, the new Indiana society and its professional staff will be encouraging masters' and doctors' theses on place names. In addition to the Parke County study mentioned above, there is also one on Laurence County. Others are being talked about. All hail to the program of place-name work in Indiana!

Robert M. Rennick (De Pauw University) reports that he has just completed a rather lengthy (almost 40,000 word) manuscript on the popular or traditional accounts of Indiana place names. This is going to Indiana Folklore (Indiana University, Bloomington) for publication in the spring of 1970 and also to Indiana Names, 1970. He has also published brief summary statements, with examples, of the above in various other Indiana publications and has presented papers on the subject at Indiana-wide meetings of folklorists and others. He is likewise currently engaged in a study of place names in Kentucky--particularly of those 125 or so communities in the eastern part of the state that have feminine names.



where 2

His Washington D. C. area dictionary and Wisconsin projects mentioned last year remain incomplete awaiting final computer formal decisions. He plans to finish those projects next year (1970).

Lee L. Snyder (Philadelphia College of Textiles and Sciences) completed his Ph.D. dissertation entitled "The Old English Dialect Boundaries: Some Place-Name Evidence" at the University of Pennsylvania last summer and received his degree. The study was based on over 11,000 place names from west-central England, the pre-1500 variant spellings of which were analyzed as to their geographical distribution during three time periods (pre-1200, 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries), for what light might be shed on the question of the dialect of a given place at the time of its settlement and subsequently. The only conclusive outcomes are these: (1) the methodology does not yield convincing results largely because of the paucity of pre-1200 names; (2) the methodology might be more fruitful when applied to Middle English names, which are far more abundant; (3) often quite different variant forms of the name of given places coexisted. He intends to continue working with the same methodology and the same material and additional material in two ways: (1) studying individual dialectal features in more detail and (2) extending the study to more of England than was covered in this particular project. An interesting aspect of the project was that all the data were recorded on IBM cards and that the analysis of variant forms and the plotting of the distribution of variants were carried out by means of computer programs.

Claude H. Neuffer (South Carolina) has put out Volume XVI of Names in South Carolina. This famous place-name periodical was sent to over 1100 subscribers in 47 states, with 12 documented articles, 2 maps of Coastal Islands and Lower Kershaw Plantations, and the editor's variegated "Notes on Names" column. The uniqueness of this annual journal is its continued appeal to scholars and laymen, who make for its self-supporting success as patrons, subscribers, and contributors of origins and legends of place names.

For the Tricentennial of South Carolina Professor Neuffer wrote "Place Names Related to the Lords Proprietors and Their Associates" for a special edition of THE STATE (Oct. 1969). Neuffer was recently elected president of Caroliniana Society, which maintains a library of valuable materials, from which he and his associates glean much place-name data.

Mario Pei (Columbia) has sent some interesting information about place-name work of two of his students:

Henri Diamant (University of California at Irvine) completed last year a dissertation on the modern place-name reflexes of the Latin castrum and castellum. At present Professor Diamant is on leave in France where he is working on French place names.

Jean McConnell Mammarello (Florence, Italy), who is about to present a thesis on the linguistic aspects of the contemporary Italian writer Carlo Emilio Gadda, has an interesting section on the imaginary place names that appear in La Cognizione Del Dolore.

Arthur F. Beringause (Bronx Community College) is working hard on Hebrew onomatology, by means of which he hopes to determine authorship of crucial documents, trace migratory movements, and determine influence of various groups.

Noel C. Stevenson (Santa Rosa, California) is interested in California place names and in the legal aspects of names in general.

Hamil Kenny (Annapolis, Maryland) says that he now has in his Maryland place-name files enough data to justify beginning a typescript. Since so many of Maryland's place names represent surnames he is at present paying particular attention to the statistics, classification, and importance of such names. He hopes to write an article on this type of place names in Maryland. He comments on the difficulties of such work, saying that it is often like pursuing a ghost to find the precise person or family responsible for a place named from a surname. His work demonstrates the close relation of work on place names and surnames.

Petras Jonikas (Riverside, Illinois) is writing an article on the adaptation of certain North American place names to the Lithuanian morphology.

W. F. Nicholaisen (School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh, Scotland) writes from Edinburgh that his main projects are a Concise Dictionary of Scottish Place Names and an anthology of articles on the study of names. Other projects are of a more limited nature and mainly refer to Scottish onomastics.

Mrs. Bernice Kliman (Queens College) would like to work on local place names. She would be very much interested in hearing from anyone on Long Island (North Shore, Nassau County) who would like to join her in a cooperative effort.

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George H. Shirk (Oklahoma City) is collecting material for a revised edition of his Oklahoma Place Names (1965), which will be forthcoming as soon as the present inventory of the press is exhausted. He says his book has been well received throughout Oklahoma.

Terry L. Alford (Mississippi State University) is working on geographical place names dealing with the Great Plains region during the first half of the 19th century, parts of which region have sometimes been referred to as the Great American Desert. He is especially interested in the origin and use of the following words: desert, savannah, plain, llanos, waste, and prairie. He is trying to discover how and when these words were incorporated into the English language and what they were applied to. He has spent some time at the Library of Congress working extensively with old dictionaries, geographies, and gazetteers. He would very much like to get in touch with anyone having an interest in this material.

Dale E. Johnson (Yakima, Washington) has completed much of the library and field research on "Place Names of Mount Rainier National Park." When completed, the project will represent a revision and expansion of "Place Names and Elevations in Mount Rainier National Park in Edward S. Meany's Mount Rainier, A Record of Exploration (1916). His survey will include nearly 400 names in comparison with 305 in Meany's work. Origins or derivation of most of these names will be included as compared with 133 in Meany's work. He hopes in the future to write a long work on the place names of Yakima county. He wishes that work might be started on the place names of Olympic National Park (Washington), Crater Lake National Park (Oregon), and the Pacific Northwest (Oregon, Washington, Idaho).

William S. Powell (North Carolina) is already collecting notes for additions and revisions of his North Carolina Gazetteer, which appeared last year.

H. F. Raup (Kent State University, Ohio) reports that his collection of name data on all of Ohio is about complete. A segment of the work dealing with an analysis of place names is in rough draft. He is eager to extend another project which attempted to trace the northern limit of Spanish cultural influence in California based on place-name distribution of Spanish origin. He would like to expand this study and do the same in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and whatever points north might be involved.

John P. Pauls (Cincinnati, Ohio) has published three articles on the names (places, rivers, surnames) of Polesie (Brest-Litovsk region), and now he is working on the names in Pushkin's works.

Robert Skoglund (Rochester, New York) is still working on his M.A. thesis dealing with the place names in St. George, Maine, which pertain to the sea-going or fishing industry. He hopes to finish by January, 1970. He is listing islands, coves, ledges, points, and those hills or landmarks which the fishermen take sightings on to fix their position. Collecting the inland names will be another study.

Eugene Green and Celia Millward (both of Boston University) report the following studies completed but not yet ready for print: Eugene Green and Rosemary M. Green, "Place Names and Dialects in Massachusetts: Some Contemporary Patterns"; Celia Millward, "Toward a Classification of Place-Name Generics"; Celia Millward and Eugene Green, "Some Generic Terms for Water and Waterways in Algonquin Place Names." In collaboration these two scholars have the following studies under way: "The Etymology of Natick-Narragansett Place Names," "An Historical Phonology of Indian Place Names in New England," "The Function of Indian Place Names in New England Culture and Society," "The Territory of New England from the Perspectives of Indian and White Settlers," "The Distribution and Dispersion of Natick-Narragansett Place Names."

Roland Dickison (Sacramento State College) continues his work on onomastics in the Virgin Islands and hopes to extend his study to the remaining Caribbean. He also contemplates working on the general type of onomastic amelioration in California.

Mary Rita Miller (University of Maryland) is interested in a thorough study of the place names of Northern Neck, Virginia, an area sixty miles long, varying in width from ten to twenty miles, and lying between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers. Five counties comprise the region, which is of considerable historical significance. She hopes to do extensive field work next summer.



where's 6

D. J. Georgacas (North Dakota), whose Place Names in Southwest Peloponnesus was published last July, continues his work on the names of the continents. He has generously offered to send free offprints of his "The Name Asia for the Continent; Its Origin and History," which appeared in Names last March, to any onomatologists or other scholars who request copies. At the 10th International Congress of Onomastics in Vienna last September, he was the official delegate of the American Name Society and presented a paper titled "The Names for the African Continent," which will appear in the proceeding of the Congress. The full monograph on Libya and Africa and related names will be worked out in 1970. The cycle will be closed with the third part on Europe. Mr. Georgacas also presided over the meeting of the International Committee for Outer Space Onomastics in Vienna on September 11, 1969, where he reported on the activities of the executive group. His report is to be published in Onoma, Beiträge zur Namenforschung, and Names. The committee has been in correspondence with the appropriate offices of the United Nations. He has likewise completed a monograph titled "The Names Designating the Asia Minor Peninsula and Congeners," which is to appear in 1970 as an issue in the separate series of the Beiträge zur Namenforschung. Finally, he has done on request a smaller study on the names of the Santorini island group in Greece which will appear both in Greek and in English. Mr. Georgacas laments that his work on a Dictionary of Modern Greek (Greek-English) allows him almost no time for more onomastic research!

Francis L. Utley (Ohio State University), who attended the 10th International Congress of Onomastics in Vienna last September, will have a paper on "Mountain Nomenclature" in the proceedings of the Congress. He is also doing a chatty study of Sierra Nevada place-naming for the American Folklore Society Meeting.

Lionel D. Wyld (Cazenovia College) is collecting material on place names of New York which have folkloristic relevance. "Place Names in New York State" is one of the possible topics on which students in his American Folklore Seminar may work.

George R. Stewart (California) reports that his concise dictionary of the place names of the United States (except Alaska) is now being set up and will probably appear in print in 1970.

Wilbur Zelinsky (Pennsylvania State University) reports the completion in September, 1969, of a master's thesis in geography by Mr. David Stephenson entitled "The Place Names of Centre County (Penna.); a Geographical Analysis."

Jack Smith (University of Southern Mississippi) nearly a year ago completed his dissertation on "A Study of Place Names in Forrest County, Mississippi." He hopes to revise this study at a later time and also work on other counties of Mississippi.

G. F. Delaney (Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographic Names, Ottawa, Ontario) reports that the following manuscripts are being prepared by the Toponymy Division for publication by the Permanent Committee: R. Disipio, Features in Canada Named for Statesmen and Royalty, J. A. Rayburn, English Geographical Names in Canada with Generic Terms of French Origin, J. A. Rayburn, Origins of Geographical Names in New Brunswick (to be a major publication in dictionary form with origins and usage for about 3000 names). The following are being considered for research and publication: Origins of Geographical Names in Prince Edward Island (to be similar to the New Brunswick study with about 1000 names), Pronunciation Guide to Canadian Place Names. His office also publishes the Gazetteer of Canada series. The second edition of the Saskatchewan Gazetteer is now at press. The second edition New Brunswick Gazetteer will be the next to be published, possibly 1971.

Yar Slavutych (University of Alberta) has completed his work on "Ukrainian Place Names in Western Canada." Some one hundred names of towns are discussed from the viewpoint of origin, formation, and meaning.

Dr. Gutierre Tibon (Mexico) editor of Enciclopedia de Mexico, says that in the third volume of this work all the place names will be listed together with etymological explanations. He believes that this is the first time an encyclopedia will have had this feature. By the time this report appears, his book on the name Mexico may be in print. It will be a work 400 pages, the result of nearly 30 years of investigation.



Even though the information given above is most exciting, we are sorry not to have heard from languishing projects in several states. A report of a project of this type is worth quoting verbatim because it is typical of the experience of many place-name workers. Eric P. Hamp (University of Chicago), chairman of an Illinois project, writes: "The Committee on Illinois Place Names has, to my knowledge, not made a twitch this past year since I last circularized it to see if there was any life left in it. At this rate I don't know when before Doomsday anything will happen. I am circulating a copy of your letter [our letter sent out asking for information] and also of this reply to see if perhaps Doomsday may have arrived unnoticed."

But lest this report end on a sour note, let us take this opportunity to thank all those who have generously sent detailed information concerning the large amount of important work they are doing. This report is by far the most voluminous and most encouraging which we have ever been able to put together.

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