

Introduction*

I suppose I have always been fascinated by place names.

Snohomish, Skykomish, Skookumchuck River
Duwamish, Mukulteo and Ostrich Bay
Walla Walla, Lilliwaup and Magnolia Bluff

These were the first that caught my fancy. As a youngster living on the outskirts of Seattle, these became familiar words. What was it, the cacophony, the alliteration, the euphony, the romantic sounding names of far off (to me) places that captured my fancy? Surely, it wasn't an evocative quality. Hardly, I had never been to Snoqualmie or to Cle Elum, so there was nothing to evoke. They had a lilt, a zing, and certain mysterious qualities about them.

Whatever it was, the seed was planted. And I became a collector. Others chose baseball cards, cigar bands, aggies, bird's eggs, post cards, or book marks. But I collected place names.

We moved to Oregon. Here was an entirely new territory. Multnomah Falls, Killamacue Creek, Teepee Springs, Sullivan Gulch, Euchre Butte, Scappoose (one of my favorites), Folly Farm, and Flounce Rock. When I was in the fourth grade, or thereabouts, I even wrote a poem filled with place names. It had the very unoriginal title "Oregon, My Oregon." I entered it in the Rose City Park hobby show—after all, it was a hobby — and I won first prize in the poetry class. I was so proud until I learned that mine was the only poem submitted.

Then to California. A new territory and new names, new vocabulary, strange pronunciations common to us today, but odd to a newly arrived teenager, who learned that one took the Key System to the Oakland Mole for a ferry to The City. A mole? The City? And what tongue-twisters that are taken for granted by the old-timers — Codornices Park, Mount Tamalpais. Some I quickly learned were shibboleths — La Jolla, San Jose, Vallejo, Yosemite. Others were beautifully sonorous with their repetitive syllables like the tintinnabulation of the bells of Poe — Hetch Hetchy Valley, Topa Topa Bluff, Mount Umunhum, and Yolla Bolly Mountains. Others called for explanations: Corte Madera, Thousand Oaks Boulevard (that many?), Orinda, Alcatraz and Tiburon and Fish Ranch Road; what is a fish ranch? and what about all those strange "-mne" endings and how were they pronounced? Mokelumne Hill, Tuolumne Meadows, Cosumnes River.

In high school, I remember, I was drawn to Stephen Vincent Benét's "American Names," the poem that starts:

I have fallen in love with American names,
The sharp names that never get fat,
The snakeskin titles of mining-claims,
The plumed war-bonnet of Medicine Hat,
Tucson and Deadwood and Lost Mule Flat.

Seine and Piave are silver spoons,
But the spoonbowl-metal is thin and worn,
There are English counties like hunting-tunes
Played on keys of a postboy's horn,
But I will remember where I was born.

I will remember Carquinez Straits,
Little French Lick and Lundy's Lane,
The Yankee ships and the Yankee dates
And the bullet-towns of Calamity Jane.
I will remember Skunktown Plain.

It was also at this time that I fell under the spell of H. L. Mencken. I have since learned that scholars sometimes take a dim view of Mencken. I certainly didn't. I was a subscriber to his *American Mercury*, (this as a college student during the depression when funds had to be husbanded). I devoured his *The American Language*. I corresponded with him. A meticulous answerer, he was.

*Based in large part upon the introduction of the author's *Santa Cruz County Place Names*.

MONTEREY COUNTY PLACE NAMES

If you have an interest in place names (and you probably do, or you wouldn't have read this far) I urge you to read or re-read his sections on place names in his first and supplementary volumes of *The American Language*.

In college the interest persisted and was evidenced in the senior honors paper I wrote on place names in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Still vivid in my mind are the rolling phrases in Book I:

And all who since, baptiz'd or infidel
Jousted in Aspramount or Montalban,
Damasco, or Morocco, or Trebisond;
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia.

But unbeknownst to me another important toponymic (I didn't learn this word until years later: it simply means things related to the place names of a region) influence was being established within me. In many ways my college career at Berkeley was influenced by Professor George R. Stewart. He was my faculty advisor, and professor in three classes, in one of which I was the only student — a specially designed course I took as a graduate student. This was well before his interest in place names became evident. But because of my admiration for him, I tried over the years to acquire and read every book he wrote — a formidable task for he was the author of many — including: *Ordeal by Hunger*, *Man, East of the Giants*, *Fire, Storm*, *Earth Abides*, *Pickett's Charge*, *California Trail* and many others.

But it was his *Names on the Land*, *Names on the Globe*, and *American Place Names* that intrigued me most. In my graduate school days in New York I fell in love with a fellow graduate student. Amazing, no, not that I fell in love, but it turned out that she (now my wife of over fifty years) was the daughter of the author of *Pennsylvania Place Names* one of the first significant scholarly studies of place names in the United States.

And so the interest continued and expanded. I read everything that came to hand on place names and became a member of the American Name Society when it was organized. I even developed a fondness for the *U. S. Postal Guide*. What a reservoir of names. The *National Zip Code Directory* is pretty good, but it seems to lack the character of the old postal guides. But the best of all was the *Official Railway Guide* in its heyday. And telephone directories. Have you ever read a phone book? I don't mean just looking up someone's number. I highly recommend sitting down and reading it. The next time you are holed up in a motel room in Vinegar Bend, Alabama or Shady Side, Maryland reach for the local telephone book. Fascinating. If you do nothing else, take a look at the names for barbershops and beauty salons. I don't know what they call them in Shady Side or Vinegar Bend, but in Monterey County it is hard to find a barber shop. There is Hair Affair, Shear Explosion, Cuts & Collectables, The Head Quarters, Carmel Crimpers. And for beauty salons: Scissor City, Totally You, From Hair to Eternity, Hair & Now, Hair Encounters, Hair, There & Everywhere, and Shear Delight.

I know that I received many Christmas presents in my early youth, but the one that stands out most clearly in my memory was a globe. A wonderful world globe. This led to what has been a lifelong interests in maps, which led, when I began collecting postage stamps, to a special interest in stamps with maps, an interest that still persists.

And so, dear reader, I felt I owed it to you to let you know my qualifications for writing this book. I am not a lexicographer, linguist, etymologist, scholarly toponomist. I am not trained in historiography. I am simply one who has had a life-long interest and curiosity about names — a collector, a hobbyist with a sharpened awareness and highly sensitized inquisitiveness about names; one who has wondered what is behind that name. Who bestowed it, why?

I am not a scholar. I am a trivia buff. (Did you know that the prestigious United States Board on Geographic names, after careful deliberation, approved the name Bumpass Hell for a basin in Lassen National Park; more trivia, it was named for a guide, Kendall V. Bumpass). I love the sounds of words — Kishacoquillas, Kottanning and Kutztown; the unusual — Bird in

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Hand, King of Prussia, and Snow Shoe; the unexpected — California, the humorous, Slippery Rock — all in Pennsylvania.

This is the background I brought with me when I settled in Santa Cruz County in 1962. Immediately I began to take notes about the names around me. Who was this Hermon for whom a mount was named, was it true that Capitola was named because of an attempt to persuade the state legislature to locate the capitol there? What was Bonny about Bonny Doon? Gold Gulch, Pogonip, Mountain Charley Creek, how did they get their names? The result — my 1986 book, *Santa Cruz County Place Names*, published by the Santa Cruz Historical Society (now the Santa Cruz Historical Trust), the culmination of nearly 25 years of recording, investigating, interviewing, guessing, and analyzing.

Even before the Santa Cruz book was finished I began taking notes on place names of Monterey County. But my interest was sharpened when I learned of the work the late John D. Jernegan had done in preparation of a place name study of Monterey County. When his extensive papers became available through their donation to Mc Henry Library of the University of California, Santa Cruz, my decision was made. Let's do another volume on place names. Then the real work began. For over four years, I have travelled the county, spent days in its libraries, museums, and government offices. I have spent untold hours interviewing "old timers." I have searched everything that I thought might help — journals, letters, newspapers, magazines, deeds, account books, assessors' documents, and above all, maps. My travels have taken me to the State Archives, State Library, and the Caltrans History Center in Sacramento, the Bancroft in Berkeley, and the Huntington in Pasadena. The files of the United States Board on Geographic Names and the National Archives were opened to me through correspondence. But most helpful above all has been the freely given, helpful advice and suggestions of so many wonderful individuals throughout the county. I have been overwhelmed by their generosity, but more on this in the Acknowledgement section.

Throughout the development of this volume I have been guided by the words of Professor Allen Walker Read who wrote:

The great bane of writings on American place-names has been that they so often have consisted of idle lucubrations over a railway time-table or a Postal Guide. To be sure, the oddities are funny, but one soon tires of them. Genuine significance can be found when place-naming is regarded as a dynamic process, growing out of the characteristics of a particular culture. — *Names*, September 1970:206.

So this is what I have attempted to do — to look at the dynamics of place naming in what is now Monterey County; to examine the influence of the first residents, the local Indians and the impact of the great exploration party of 1769, how members of the expedition — the missionaries as well as the soldiers — named the rivers, lagoons, Indian settlements and their campsites; to determine how a specialized type of land ownership, the rancho, gave the territory a host of names that have been perpetuated in names of towns, streams, beaches and many other topographical features.

What influence did the presidio of 1770 and the missions established in 1770, 1771, and 1791 have upon the toponomy? Did industries have any force in the dynamics of naming: hide and tallow trading, lumbering, tanning, lime production, sugar-refining, mining, whaling, fishing and sardine canning, farming, dairying, cattle raising, wine making? And agriculture, food processing? And sports fishing and tourism? And the existence within the county of Fort Ord, Presidio of Monterey, Fort Hunter Liggett and the northern portion of Camp Roberts? The Defense Language Institute and Naval Postgraduate School? The extensive Los Padres National Forest and Ventana Wilderness Area? What were the toponymic effects of all these? What about the topography and natural resources? The rugged mountains, deep valleys, magnificent coastline, many streams, the bay, and the ocean? The redwoods, oil, gold, lime, sand, coal? Transportation: stage coaching, railroads, shipping lines? How did they influence the naming of places in Monterey County? The answers are here; they may be hidden, but they are here. Happy searching!

Donald Thomas Clark

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