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“Something Savage and Luxuriant”: American Identity and the Indian Place-Name Literature

RDK Herman

In 2003, Sandy Nestor published the two-volume set “Indian Placenames in America.”¹ Its attractively illustrated covers, state-by-state organization, and selectivity (or paucity) of its content mark this work as intended for average readers. As a fairly recent effort in a long trail of popular Indian place-name texts, Nestor’s book is noteworthy for what it does *not* do: it does not romanticize about Indian place-names. It *does* demonstrate an awareness of, and sensitivity to, living American Indians. Almost as recently, anthropologist Keith Basso has published essays regarding place-names, or toponyms, among the Western Apache, as well as a subsequent book, *Wisdom Sits in Places*.² Basso’s scholarship is preceded by a long anthropological tradition on Indian place-names that similarly addresses actual contemporary Indians and their practices. Yet in its use of storytelling, its smell of the dusty West, and its immersion into Apache ways of knowing the land, it may be deemed more romantic than its disciplinary predecessors. These two different texts, one scholarly and one popular, represent the current endpoints in the historical trajectory of treatment of Indian place-names in America. It is a story of this young country’s struggle for an identity as that identity was simultaneously becoming defined, in real terms, by both encounters with American Indians and their displacement.

Senior geographer for the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, RDK HERMAN’S work focuses on indigenous cultural knowledge and environmental understandings and their importance in addressing modern environmental crises. As part of the museum’s *Indigenous Geography* project, he created *Pacific Worlds*, a web-based indigenous-geography education project for Hawai’i and the American Pacific. His article, “The Aloha State: Place Names and the Anti-Conquest of Hawai’i,” republished in *Critical Toponomies* (2009), is considered a seminal paper in the application of critical theory to the study of place-names.

In an oft-cited work, Saul B. Cohen and Nurit Kliot remind us, “Affixing names to places is inextricably linked with nation building and state formation.”³ In the United States, this takes place mostly after the American Revolution, when a new national identity was needed to distinguish this young country from its European colonial forebears. Both as a means of forging a national identity for the settler culture and appropriating indigenous peoples, the engagement of American Indian place-names has been well discussed. As Richard A. Grounds argues, “The adoption of the Indian name was specifically an effort to co-opt the strength and life connection to the earth that the Aborigines embodied to the Americans” and that while indigenous peoples themselves were to be removed as quickly as possible, “the image of the Indian was to remain.”⁴

This study does not pretend to present a full analysis of Indian names in the American toponymy. Indeed, the scope of the overall topic of American Indian place-names is enormous. At the time of Western contact hundreds, if not thousands, of tribal groups were speaking hundreds of languages across a North American continent with enormous environmental, and hence cultural, diversity. Over several centuries, multitudinous colonial encounters among differing European and Indian peoples from various regions and times produced quite different results. Colonial-era wars and the later process of Indian Removal from 1828 to the 1870s brought about a great deal of short-term and long-term Indian migrations throughout the lower forty-eight states, which drastically rearranged the demographic and linguistic mosaic. All of this complexity lies collapsed beneath the singular, monolithic term *Indian* which allows it to become an idealized image in American discourse.⁵

Rather, this article focuses on the treatment of Indians and Indian place-names in the place-name literature to show how that treatment itself reflects the American imagination in the search for identity. It follows on the works of Philip Deloria and Robert Berkhofer, who argue effectively that there is no way to conceive an American identity without Indians: to understand the white image of the Indian is to understand white societies and their intellectual premises over time.⁶ My question is, how is this reflected in the published works on Indian place-names? What discourses emerge from that literature, and how do they change over time?

Thomas F. Thornton remarks that place-names draw the interest of scholars studying culture because place-names intersect language, thought, and the environment, which he denotes as three fundamental domains of cultural analysis. He states, “Place-names tell us something not only about the structure and content of the physical environment itself but also how people perceive, conceptualize, classify, and utilize that environment. Even more fundamentally toponyms . . . provide valuable insights into the ways humans experience the world and appropriate images of the landscape to interpret and communicate their experiences.”⁷ My argument, on the other hand, is that how non-Native American scholars have approached Indian place-names provides valuable insights into the perception and representation of Indians in American thought.

As Jani Vuolteenaho and Lawrence Berg point out, the study of place-names has traditionally ranged across the disciplines of cartography, linguistics, etymology, anthropology, and geography, but never quite finding a stable home—and, until recently, not

deeply exploring the relations of power inherent in the place-naming process.⁸ Paul Carter's work on Australia began the explicit examination of place-naming in colonial contexts, followed by Berg and Kearns' work on New Zealand and my own paper on Hawai'i, among other studies.⁹ The role of place-naming in forging national identities has received particular attention.¹⁰ Alderman and Modlin's recent work on racialized landscapes points out that "toponyms have historically reinforced stereotypical racial identities while also normalizing a white perspective on the landscape."¹¹

The present study, though looking at the discourses around place-names more than the names themselves, follows this literature in examining the role of place-names in the construction of national identity. The study draws on approximately 120 texts on Indian place-names—everything I could access, particularly the vast store of materials available at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History's Anthropology library. In addition, I researched journal articles published over the last century or more, sometimes no more than a few paragraphs identifying and defining two or three Indian place-names, as well as papers published in the journal *Names*, in which the scholarly discussion continues today. While this journal research does not cover all the possible material, I believe it surveys a significant amount. I include in the notes only those sources that are specifically cited herein.

These texts span the period from roughly 1870 to 1960, with the place-name literature shifting into the hands of linguists towards the end of this period. A decade later began the period of turbulence in 1970s America when contemporary American Indians started to make their presence felt in American society. By the end of the twentieth century, trending critical theory in American scholarship makes it problematic to talk about Indians in the same third-person manner that we found in the earlier period covered by this study, encouraging a decline in scholarly discourse of this kind.

In surveying the texts examined, I identify three general types.¹² The first major wave of place-name studies to emerge is "hobby studies," generally undertaken by learned men with no linguistic training but who are avid compilers. As Kenny notes, many such researchers undertook these studies out of intellectual curiosity but without any qualifications for the job, and "really belong to such walks of life as captain, professor of education, medical doctor, missionary, or librarian."¹³ I distinguish this from my second category, scholarly studies, even though many of these hobbyists are in fact scholars—just not in fields that equipped them to study Indian place-names. Those studies I designate as scholarly are done by professionals in Indian studies in whatever field, particularly linguistics. Madison Beeler's admonition that knowledge of the language is essential for studying Indian place-names clearly turned the field in the linguistic direction, and generally more linguistically based studies took over from the hobbyists from the 1950s, though the two overlap for quite a while.¹⁴ The third category is popular publications intended for the commercial market and drawing on any range of sources, from folklore to scholarship. These three categories, I must emphasize, form a continuum, and it isn't always possible to separate them clearly. I focus on what these texts state, implicitly or explicitly, about white American images of Indians and the role of Indians in American identity, and not on the merits of either the texts or the place-names themselves.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Prior to the independence of the United States in 1776, Europeans had successfully been colonizing these shores for more than a century and a half. The early Puritan settlers viewed Indians as vehicles either to help or hinder them on their path to salvation. Either way, they were often marked as distinctly “other.” This is reflected in place-naming practices of British settlers, which largely ignored Indian names in favor of names from Old England or the Old Testament,¹⁵ though Indian names were retained for smaller villages and many topographic features.¹⁶ In the late-seventeenth century Indian terminology was used to detail land transactions with whites to assure mutual understanding, but later English surveys largely ignored the Indian terms and conceptual frameworks.¹⁷ Rogers’ 1956 study of Virginia, and Green and Green’s 1971 study of Massachusetts elaborate on the attitudes and processes whereby Indian names were replaced by English names.¹⁸ Inasmuch as place-names form a way of humanizing the landscape, the imposition of these imported names played an essential role in the settlers’ transformation of the landscape to make them feel more at home.¹⁹

The story of place-naming in the newly created United States from 1776 is one of forging a new identity by means of the nation’s toponymy; and, as Berkhofer and Deloria point out, that identity is inextricably tied up with Indians. The rebellion that carved the United States out of these early colonies was marked from the start by the deployment of Indian identity. Deloria points to the Boston Tea Party as a “catalytic moment” in which white Americans began molding a national identity based on rejection of European consciousness. The icon of the Indian, used to represent the United States in opposition to colonial rule, conveyed a revolutionary message. This era of white identification with Indians didn’t last long, as Indians “got in the way” of American expansion, and the policy of Indian removal began in the late 1820s. Still, when the use of British names ended with the American Revolution, among other naming trends was a turn to the Indian as a means by which to deeply link the American nation to the American continent.²⁰ State names came to be drawn from river names, which had tended to retain the Indian names colonists had assigned.²¹ This resulted in twenty-six states having “Indian” names, sometimes assigned arbitrarily. With Indians “disappearing” from the East coast, where they had longest been afflicted with the ills of colonization and now removal, the motif of the “Vanishing Indian” took on a romantic aspect, resulting in a small resurgence of Indian place-names. For example, in 1868 Wyoming was given an Eastern Indian place-name, marking the end of the era of state naming.²²

As American expansion galloped across the continent, the adoption of Indian place-names continued to be complex. While Spanish names were easily adopted, Indian names were largely either translated or abandoned.²³ But without detailed study, it is difficult to determine how many Indian place-names still exist, whether in translated or corrupted forms, or otherwise. It seems fair to suggest that where relations were more hostile, as for example in California, Indian names were of little interest to new settlers, whose aim was to get rid of the Indians as quickly as possible. With Indians being more or less simultaneously relocated onto reservations and targeted by government policies aimed at assimilation, the Bureau of American Ethnography

was created as a place to concentrate the documentation and study of these “vanishing peoples” and their cultures. Back East, where Indians as such had all but disappeared from view, nostalgia for the vanished other continued in a new form, and around this same time study (or collection) of Indian place-names began in earnest.

As modern American society moved further from any sense of the Indian past as a lived reality, by the mid-twentieth century the study of Indian place-names gradually shifted to a more scientific mode as white linguists and Indian studies scholars took over. Their emphasis on linguistic science differs markedly from studies of the previous periods, but still frame Indian place-names as objects largely divorced from real Indians. It is not until the end of the twentieth century that Indians themselves become significant players in memory, discourse, and policy regarding Indian place-names.

These are but the barest bones of the story, of course. When one adds Spanish, French, Creole, African, African American, and perhaps even Chinese influences, together with a plethora of micro-histories, geographies, and the racial and political histories of the country both in parts and as a whole, the idea of a complete and comprehensive review is revealed as an impossibility. Place-naming is always a complex and ongoing negotiation among diverse systems of signifying, and there is much at work here. Rather, let us look at the discourses that emerge in the literature.

INDIANS—ROMANTIC AND OTHERWISE

All aboriginal names sound good. I was asking for something savage and luxuriant, and behold here are the aboriginal names.

—Walt Whitman, *An American Primer*

The theme that predominates this literature, in one form or another (and often by its denial), is romance: the Noble Indians of the past and the romantic meanings of their place-names. Such discursive trends cut across notions of Indians as namers, the meanings attached to Indian names, the euphony similarly ascribed, and also more overt machinations—including the rise of clearly white-fabricated folk etymologies, the imposition of Christian notions onto places and Indian names, and the outright commodification of Indian names into the American imaginary. Running throughout this literature is the positioning of Indians as self and other, what Deloria calls the “internal Indian,” which, whatever form it takes, always represents America.

“Romantic” is a slippery and many-faceted notion, with various meanings in dictionaries and in literary theory, virtually all of which are applicable here. Romanticism as a literary and philosophical movement sought a return to Nature, not as a source of “Reason,” but as “unbounded, wild and ever-changing.”²⁴ It posited that evil would disappear if people were allowed to behave naturally. But in addition to these two movements, “romantic” narrative can involve telling stories that are not true, or stories that describe something in a way that makes it sound more interesting and or magical, or suggest adventure, or aim to promote the “love” between two peoples; hence these stories are often emotionally satisfying. All of these practices and perspectives manifest in non-Native American stories about Indians, and in the stories told or presented as fact about Indian place-names in America.

A romantic discourse of Indians emerged in the United States not long after the removal period began. With the quest for an American identity came the quest for an American literary tradition, and the landscape and the American Indian became subjects of a new romantic genre that flourished between the War of 1812 and the Civil War, with many great works in the period from 1840 to 1865.²⁵ American Romanticism as a literary movement is described by Ann M. Woodlief as “a Renaissance in the sense of a flowering, excitement over human possibilities, and a high regard for individual ego . . . as these writers struggled to understand what ‘American’ could possibly mean.”²⁶ James Fenimore Cooper’s *Last of the Mohicans* and Longfellow’s *Song of Hiawatha* are noted representatives of this genre. Both did much to stir emotions in their readers, and *Hiawatha* in particular romanticized place-names.²⁷

Poets further pushed Indian place-names into the realm of the romantic. Walt Whitman waxed about “the strange charm of aboriginal names” in his *American Primer*, and Washington Irving also engaged with Indians and their place-names.²⁸ An enduring remnant of this era in American literature is Lydia Sigourney’s 1834 poem “Indian Names,” which depicts the somber, dying, and departing Indian, with one stanza concluding, “But their name is on your waters,/Ye may not wash them out.” Sigourney’s poem appears even today in Indian place-name texts, in addition to other poems from this time period that similarly reflect the passing of Indians and the importance of preserving their “noble” names on the American landscape. Both the use of the poetic cadence as well as the messages espoused within these short pieces reflects the romantic longing for and appreciation of the vanishing other. The poetic form as much as the content reflects the romantic framing of these studies.

At the same time, this discourse contains the seeds of its own opposite: that differentiating the superior white race from less-civilized others is important. Inasmuch as Indians are recognized as some deep part of “us,” their noble savagery is still *savagery*, and readers are not to forget it. The “romantic-Indian” literature had its counterpart in “savage-Indian” captivity narratives, perhaps equally romantic, in which Indians take white women captive. Subsequently, with the growth of summer camps in the early twentieth century, Indians become equated with children, a development which embodies the dual tension between Indians as “internal others” who are to be embraced and explored internally as a pre-adult way of being, and as external others who are inferior, less developed, and in the end to be left behind.

INDIANS AS NAMERS

From the start, non-Natives studying Indian place-names wanted to know what these names said about Indians and their relationship to the land: what the names meant and what they told us about Indians and how they perceive the world. Exploration of Indians as place-namers begins with Rev. Joseph Gilligan, a missionary to the Ojibway in Minnesota in the 1880s. He wrote, “The Ojibway Indian is a very close observer, a name either of a person, or a place with him always *means something*, and is never a mere arbitrary designation as with us, but expresses the *real essence of the thing*, or its dominating idea as it appears to him” (emphasis in original).²⁹ Gilligan was clearly

trying to understand Ojibway thought and language. Waterman, who worked painstakingly with local tribes on Indian names in Washington State, also has a grounded assessment, stating that this “is not to say that the Indian lacks poetry in his make-up. He has the poetic instinct and along with it an appreciation of beauty, ranging from that of basket designs to that of majestic scenery. But his ‘poetry’ does not take the form of far-fetched metaphor nor clothe itself in weak and transparent allegory. Nor does the Indian sentimentalize over the scenery.”³⁰ This is a direct shot at those who found romantic meanings in Indian place-names or in the Indians as place-namers.

But in the hands of armchair scholars and hobbyists with little or no connection to real Indians, the appraisal of Indian naming tells us more about the non-Native writers than about the Indians or their names. In particular, they speak of the hierarchy of race and civilization found in late-nineteenth-century American thought. William Francis Ganong, for example, states that there are two kinds of place-names: those that spring up “without intention” and those deliberately given by “those in authority.” Because Ganong links Indians with “Nature,” he places Indian names in the first category, and they do not figure in his discussion of *deliberate* names.³¹ Lincoln Newton Kinnicutt states that “imagination was rarely, if ever” used by the New England Indians in their place-naming.³² William Alexander Read asserts,

The prosaic character of the native geographic names in Florida is remarkable . . . drawn with keen powers of observation, it is true, but apparently with little or no display of emotion . . . indeed, scarcely a single one that would appeal to a white man’s sense of beauty. . . . The imagination of the Indian is aroused, to a great extent, by that which he sees and hears; whereas the imagination of the white man is moulded, to an extent equally great or even greater, by his familiarity with much that is lovely and imperishable, enshrined in the literatures of the world and brought down to him from a thousand yesterdays.³³

Finally, E. H. M. Clifford asserts that “place-names are given differently by peoples of different economic orders and at different stages of civilization . . . certainly western European ideas on the matter by no means coincide with those of other races, particularly those still at a relatively early stage of development.”³⁴ Others leave out the racial argument but continue to assert the unromantic: Wright agrees with the above writers that “Indian place-names are very simple, always descriptive, usually geographical and most elementary.” Taking a shot at the romantically inclined, he adds, “An abundance of Indian names . . . will be found in New England, but ‘the place where the golden osprey woos its regal mate’ will be sought in vain.”³⁵ Nils Holmer follows by saying that “The intricate phrase names, as well as the fancy names, appear on the whole as freaks in a uniform and rather monotonous pattern.”³⁶

But not all of the scholarly literature eschews the fanciful, and the hobby studies often incline toward romance. Deloria’s work suggests that the “romance” of the topic is what inclined many authors to undertake their studies in the first place. The divergence of these writers from the statements above is distinct. Stephen Boyd, a hobbyist writing on Pennsylvania in the 1880s, asserts that Indians “exercised quite as much judgment and good taste as did any of the races in Europe or Asia in former times.”³⁷

William Tooker first expresses, in his 1889 work, the opinion that there was “nothing poetical or romantic appearing in any” of the names he studied, but his 1911 text opens with a poem by a local poet, admonishing readers to “Keep evermore the Indian name” and emphasizing the emotional attachment place-names invoke. Tooker then suggests, “The Indians were very figurative and expressive in their nature and speech.”³⁸

That the turn of the century was bringing the rebirth of nostalgia for Indians and their place-names is similarly found in Jacob Dunn’s popular 1908 book on Indiana. Dunn states, “No part of the United States is richer in the tragedy, romance and pathos of Indian history than the region included in the old Territory Northwest of the Ohio River.”³⁹ William Moore, a hobbyist, advises us to read Longfellow’s *Hiawatha* and compare it to Homer’s *Odyssey*. “What woman among the Greeks was more loveable, more loyal than Minnehaha?” he asks.⁴⁰ William Culkin uses the opening stanzas of *Hiawatha* on the frontispiece of his text on Indian names in the Great Lakes.⁴¹ As late as mid-century, T. M. Pearce’s 1951 article enthuses “If the Indian names were widely known in English, what color they would add to our place naming. . . . Poetry, myth, natural and social history come out of names of this sort lost now except in the Indian tongues.”⁴² Virgil Vogel’s 1963 study of Illinois, which opens with poetry, holds that “The Illinois map glows with picturesque names that are survivals of the romance and tragedy of the state’s history. It is obvious that the American Indians hold high rank among those who gave names, or had their names given.”⁴³

EUPHONY

The romance of Indian place-names was certainly in the eye of the beholder, but that it was often more fabricated than real—at least within the English-speaking tradition—is particularly evident in many American writers’ praise of the euphony of place-names. These pronunciations devolved from mangling Indian names into English speech. Noah Webster, father of American dictionaries, argued for this practice, writing,

Nor ought the harsh guttural sounds of the natives be retained. . . . Where popular practice has softened and abridged words of this kind the change has been made in conformity with the genius of our own language, which is accommodated to a civilized people. . . . The true pronunciation of the name of a place, is that which prevails in and near the place.⁴⁴

As Kearns and Berg point out, the conscious choice of *how* a name is pronounced involves *strategy* that can be deployed to assert a politics of representation.⁴⁵ And that is clearly what Webster is advocating for here, in his call to give up the “harsh guttural sounds of the natives” in favor of how it is pronounced by the dominant (white) society. His words were echoed a century and a half later by John Rydjord, who wryly stated that these vocally transformed Indian place-names

indicate the difficulty of transferring the guttural and nasal sounds of Indian words into the phonetics of a European language. After all, the natives did not give us the seemingly atrocious orthography for their outlandish names. Americans had a way

of modifying and simplifying these unpronounceable and seemingly unspellable names until the names were sufficiently simplified to become acceptable and often attractive place-names in America.⁴⁶

Many Indian names still exist, largely unknown, in translation. George Bird Grinnell justified the preservation of Native names through translation as “the only practical way, since the Indian term is often too long and its pronunciation too difficult for the average white man.”⁴⁷ Culkin noted that French explorers tended to retain the Indian names, except when too difficult to remember or pronounce, in which case they were translated into French.⁴⁸ William Bright points to Indian names in the Louisiana Purchase that were translated first into French and then into English.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, many Indian place-names rendered into American-English speech were often admired for their euphony. This first appears in the 1854 writing of Amelia M. Murray of Scotland, published in 1929 with notes by Mamie Meredith: “I learned the Indian name of that pretty lake, on the borders of which Hawthorne wrote his *Seven Gables—Mackinaw,—‘the Mountain Mirror’*; what an improvement upon that un-euphonious appellation of Stockbridge Pond!” In New Hampshire she found the Indian names “much more beautiful and appropriate to this country.” Meredith adds,

We could wish that our pioneer fathers might have heeded the advice given seventy years ago by this British visitor to preserve Indian names in the new towns they were so industriously building. But many of them thought of all Indians as they did of all trees, that they were good things to get rid of quickly. . . . Indians were still too numerous and too close to the settler for their persons or their placenames to have romantic associations.⁵⁰

Boyd’s study of Indian place-names in Pennsylvania remarks on “the sweet melody of their sounds” as the “subject of unceasing admiration,” worthy of the attention of those who admire “the beautiful in thought and sentiment.”⁵¹ Kinnicutt’s study in Massachusetts similarly refers to the Algonkian language as “euphonious.”⁵²

Not only do many Indian place-names today sound little like the native terms from which they derived, but some apparent Indian place-names are not Indian at all, having been coined by Anglo-Americans.⁵³ Mixing words and syllables from Native American, Arabian, and Latin languages, ethnographer Henry Rowe Schoolcraft made up Native American-sounding words for some Michigan counties established in 1840.⁵⁴ This is perhaps the most blatant case in which nostalgia for the lost other comes at the expense of any genuine engagement with real Indians. This consumption of Indianness is further reflected in the manipulation of Indian names and their meanings to suit non-Indian purposes, including particularly the rise of folk etymologies.

A HELL OF A STORY

If the words themselves were twisted, how much more the meanings: “For barbarous words,” Kenny postulated in his 1961 study of Maryland, “it has long been noticed, the folk are prone to substitute sounds that to them make better sense. For uncouth

place-names, the folk are not only inclined to substitute more intelligible sounds, but to create etiological stories to explain the use of these sounds" (one hopes that Kenny is using the terms "barbarous" and "uncouth" ironically).⁵⁵ His point about folk etymologies had been noted before; in 1916, California anthropologist Kroeber postulated, "The prevalent inclination has been to base explanation of place-names of Indian origin, not on knowledge . . . but on vague, though positively stated, conjectures of what such names might have meant or on naïve fancy of what would have been picturesque and romantic designations if the unromantic Indian had used them."⁵⁶

The business of naming, interpretation, and folk etymology is represented clearly in Bernard G. Hoffman's article, "An Unusual Example of Virginia Indian Toponymics." Looking at the river Mattaponi (the last vowel pronounced like "eye"), attached to the northern main branch of the York River, he points to two consecutive old maps showing its four tributaries as named the Mat, Ta, Po, and Ni Rivers. Noting that the names of these tributaries then combine in pairs when they form the larger Matta and Poni Rivers, he concludes that "Mattaponi" was formed by the simple combination of the names of its principal tributaries. He does *not* consider that perhaps the first cartographer, desperate for labels in keeping with the long tradition of non-Native place-naming, broke up "Mattaponi" to stick names on these branches. He finds this notion "most unlikely." But he then ends by citing an "undoubtedly apocryphal" legend, clearly a fabricated folk etymology, in which an Indian explains getting through a cold night by saying, "I put a mat upon I." This mocking of Indians' use of English is no doubt intended to be humorous, but it is revealing that Hoffman saw fit to include it.⁵⁷

Waterman felt that people engaged in a search for meaning are prone to find explanations that seem credible, regardless of their basis in fact.⁵⁸ Thus by studying place-name legends, it is said we can often get much closer to the common man, the typical American.⁵⁹ Indeed, folk etymologies can tell us more about the Indian in American identity, and an excellent point for studying folk etymologies of Indian place-names is their juncture with religious imperialism in the form of "devil" place-names. The presence of the devil and his territory "hell" in American place-names reaches back to the Puritans. As Berkhofer asserts, for Puritans, Indians were tools of the Lord if they were helpful, or agents of Satan if they were not; hence, Indians were an external manifestation of the inner conflict between conscience and sin. He adds, "If the Puritans . . . could project their own sins upon people they called savages, then the extermination of the Indian became a cleansing of those sins."⁶⁰

But George R. Stewart's magnum opus on American place-names contends, "Except when based upon Indian belief there is no evidence that any of the numerous names arise from genuine belief in a devil." Since pre-Christianized Indians themselves did not believe in the devil, Stewart's reference to "Indian belief" is misleading at best, as we shall see. In the western part of the country, Stewart suggests, such names "attribute something to the devil in a humorous manner" or reflect the presence of geothermal activity.⁶¹ This may be true for the English, and perhaps Spanish, place-names, but studies by Chamberlin and Jett show that in hot arid regions, Indian place-names unsurprisingly have a preponderance of references to water rather than to heat.⁶² Roger L. Payne, former director of the United States Board on Geographic

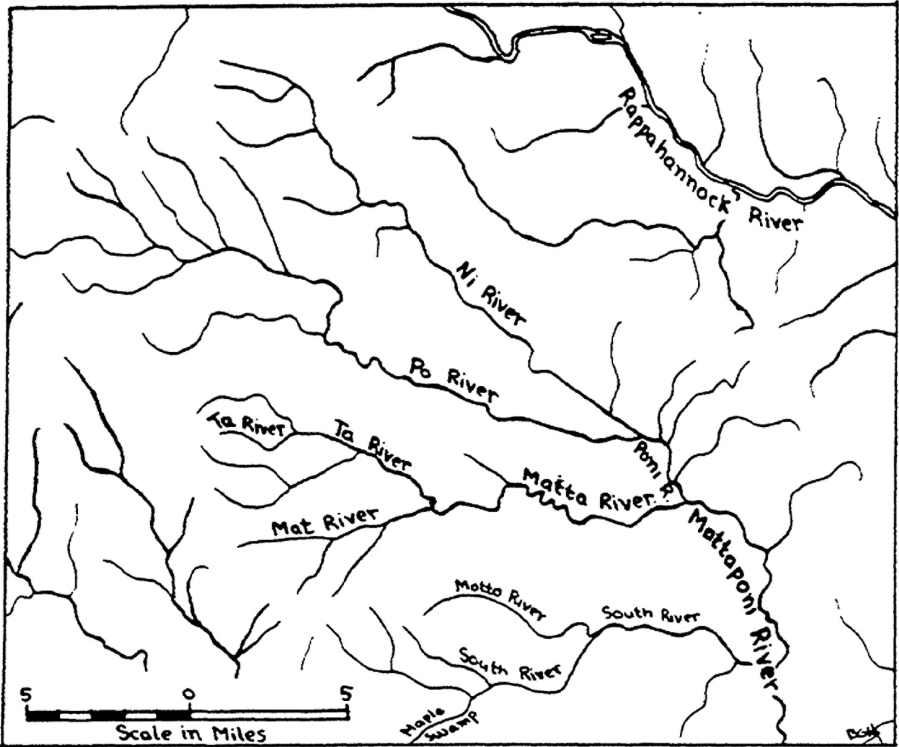


FIGURE 1. “The headwaters of the Mattaponi as depicted on modern maps.” Source: Bernard G. Hoffman, “An Unusual Example of Virginal Indian Toponymics,” *Ethnohistory* 11, no. 2 (1964): 175.

Names, states, “Europeans tended to place ‘Devil’ on a feature of unusual nature, something that seemed to be created by hellish forces.”⁶³

A simple statistical analysis shows that while such English names are more commonplace in the West, they are also well represented in the smaller states of the East. Table 1 shows *devil* and *hell* place-names by period of American takeover, roughly moving east to west. The mapping of *hell* and *devil* onto the land has little to do with heat and nothing to do with Indian beliefs. To the extent that it has anything to do with Indians at all, it represents a practice whereby white Christians imposed the devil on pre-Christian Indian spiritual beliefs.⁶⁴ A few examples include:

Devil’s Lake, Wisconsin: Scholars assert that the Dakota name is *Minnewakan*, meaning roughly “holy waters,” or that this is a Dakota translation from the original *Hotcāk*, where it is called *De Wākātçāk*, “Holy Lake.” Traditional stories tell of this lake as the home of a powerful water spirit sent by the Earthmaker to help humankind.⁶⁵ The benevolent Indian “spirit,” a positive force for humankind, was rendered as “Devil.” Similarly, a “Devil’s lake” in North Dakota led to the Indians there being known until recently as the “Devils Lake Tribe.” They are now the Spirit Lake Tribe, but partly out of loyalty to the local high school football team—the Satans—and partly out of name

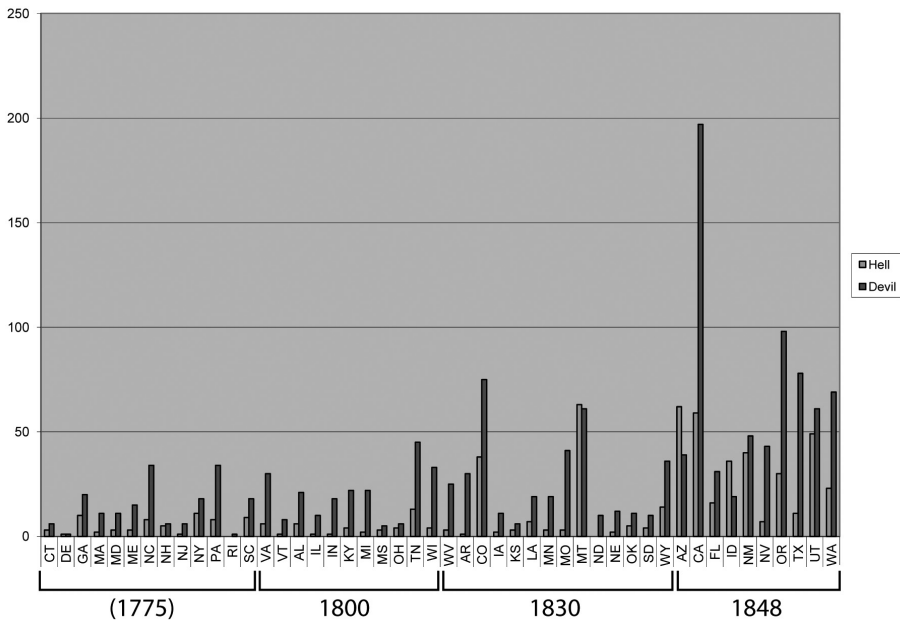


FIGURE 2. “Hell” and “Devil” place-name frequency by period of US occupation. Graph by the author based on USGS Geographic Names Information System data.

recognition for a lucrative sport-fishing industry, the virtually all-white townspeople on the far side of the lake are sticking with Devil’s Lake as the place-name.⁶⁶

Devil Track River, Minnesota: The name Manido-bimadagakowini-zibi was translated by Gilligan in 1886 as meaning, “the spirits or God walking-place-on-the-ice river.” This translation was accepted by Culkin, but he suggested it could be rendered figuratively as “Angels’ winter parade river.” It is still called Devil Track River.⁶⁷ In some cases, the supposed Indian name is actually a translation from the English name. Dieterle notes that the settlers’ designation, “Devil’s Lake,” was translated back into Hotcák as De Cicigera, and Huden points out that “The Devil’s Footprint” in Maine is actually a Penobscot translation of a white-invented name.⁶⁸

Whatever the motivations, the conflation of the devil with the Indian leads to fanciful folk etymologies, such as the myths and fabrications concerning Mount Diablo in California dissected by Bev Ortiz. Ortiz’s study reviews recorded Indian accounts by Miwok and Maidu peoples that tell different stories of creation, the origin of certain beings, or other sacred aspects of the mountain. The name “Monte del Diablo” was originally applied by the Spanish and later adopted by American settlers. Over time, non-Indian folklore came to supplant traditional accounts, and fed a popular misconception that Indians associated the mountain with evil spirits. Ortiz identifies seventeen non-Indian folkloric explanations for the mountain’s name that evolved over the period from 1850 to 1961. Of 120 articles in popular media that refer to Mount Diablo myths, legends, or accounts, only two refer to the Plains Miwok account.⁶⁹

David Philips perpetuates contemporary folk etymologies in his stories about the Devil's Hopyard, Connecticut. While blaming the Puritans for the name, Philips adds that "local Indian tribes . . . are said to have used Devil's Hopyard for religious rites and powwows." He gives several folk etymologies of the name, including a clearly folk-fabricated story "they tell around Portland" of a young Mattabassett Indian who offended the Devil. He similarly explains the "Devil's Footprint" in Montville in terms of "an old Mohegan Indian legend" in which "the Evil One . . . occasionally felt a need to leap over Long Island Sound to Montauk on Long Island, to visit his numerous subjects there." Thus Indians are conflated into a religious imaginary that is uniquely American and divorced from any Indian understanding of place.⁷⁰

Indeed, regardless of the intent behind the settler imposition of *devil* and *hell* names or the folk etymologies surrounding them—whether intentionally derogatory of Indians, representative of difficult terrain, spiritually pointed, or just flippant—the astounding presence of such names presents a landscape of Christian ideology. It was to this Christianizing attitude toward place that the holistic spiritual ecology characterizing precontact American Indian civilizations yielded, together with religious conversion of Indians and their own adoption and incorporation of devil terminology. Of course, this discursive transformation of toponymy accompanied white settlers' colonization of the land itself and the reduction of Indian populations and space.

DYING INDIANS, INTERNAL AND ETERNAL

While Indian place-names were going to "hell," some Indian peoples were dying off and some were losing elements of their traditional culture. The Indian of the past retained noble-savage status—the "vanishing" Indian—while assimilated Indians came to represent the worst of society, especially with modernization. The late-nineteenth-century notion that "culture" is what made Indians "Indian" allowed native people who no longer manifested traditional ways to be deemed "not really Indians."⁷¹ The place-name literature tracks these trends, manifesting that tug-of-war between glorious Indians-of-the-past, who represent the best qualities of America and democracy, and the despicable Indians of the present, who lack those noble qualities.

The first trope is found in Kinnicutt's 1909 work on Massachusetts, in which he is "speaking of the race before it was corrupted by European influences," and claims that Indian names "bear the hall-mark of our own country and are more consistent with our *national traits of independence and individuality* than borrowed names from England, France or Italy" (emphasis added).⁷² That same year R. A. Douglas-Lithgow speaks of Indian place-names as representing "a brave, noble and patriotic race" that "embodied a pure and lofty patriotism for which they fought and died like men and true patriots."⁷³ Chamberlain, in his foreword to Tooker (1911), acknowledges that "The Red Man has influenced in many ways the language, the economic life, and even the institutions of his conquerors and dispossessors."⁷⁴

That present-day Indians were losing their "Indian-ness" appears as early as Parsons' 1861 description of the 122 remaining Narragansets: "two of three-fourths blood, ten of half blood, forty-two of quarter blood, and sixty-eight of less than

quarter blood. . . all of them exhibiting marks of the race.” This suggests the fading away of the race by intermarriage (like many New England tribes, the Narragansets are alive and well today).⁷⁵ Boyd is less kind. In 1885 he remarks about Pennsylvania that, of “the Indian” language, “even now some of those dialects are unknown to their few mongrel descendants.”⁷⁶ A few years later, Tooker is likewise disparagingly racist: “In regard to the degenerated remnant of the tribe now residing within the limits of the township, recognized by their characteristic aboriginal features, mixed with negro, we would say that they have no knowledge of their native language, traditions or customs, all have been lost or forgotten years ago”—as if it is the tribe’s fault.⁷⁷

Such racial comments come at a time, post-Civil War, when former slaves were migrating north and the racial tension between white and black societies was also involving Indians. The Indian acceptance, accommodation, and intermarriage with African Americans, largely anathema to whites until fairly recently, further pushed Indians of this region into a racial category disrespected by white society. Angela Gonzales and colleagues document government efforts to eliminate Indians in the Southeast by denying them a census category—and hence a legal identity.⁷⁸

At the same time, as Deloria has written, Americans were “playing Indian” as never before, noting that the connection between Indians and children had a long history, “the two being paired rhetorically as natural, simple, naïve, preliterate, and devoid of self-consciousness.”⁷⁹ In 1881 the first boys’ summer camp was founded with an Indian name. The Camp Fire Girls was founded on alleged Indian principles, and the Boy Scouts as well, although to a lesser extent. Charlotte Gulick and Ernest Thompson Seton of the Camp Fire Girls provide lists of Indian names for summer camps, and Indian names to be adopted by the girls themselves, along with a range of “Indian” songs, games, rituals, and so forth.⁸⁰ The *Book of the Camp Fire Girls* states, “The names and symbols of the Camp Fires or of the Camp Fire Girls . . . are perhaps more often taken from the Indian lore, because it is suggestive of the spirit of out-of-doors, of the ingenious use of the materials at hand, and is so distinctly American.”⁸¹ Tooker noted in 1911 that he was receiving “constant inquiry for euphonious Algonkian names and their signification.” Consequently, at the end of his place-names study, he includes a list of Algonkian names “suitable for country homes, hotels, clubs, motorboats, etc.”⁸²

LINGUISTIC TURN?

The praise for Indians of the past extended to their languages as well. Jacob Dunn argued that Indian languages were not crude, but demonstrated a perfect grammatical system (1908), while Moore posited, “The Indians in their own way were an educated people. True, they had no written language. But their many prefixes and many affixes enabled them by means of one root word to express themselves very clearly” (1930).⁸³ But by the time interest in Indian place-names blossomed around the turn of the twentieth century, many Indian languages—as well as some Indians themselves—had become extinct, and by and large what remained had not been seriously studied. The impact of removal and assimilation policies, boarding schools, and general cultural hegemony had taken its toll. That the study of Indian place-names was at first taken up more by

hobbyists than by linguistics led to confusion, speculation, or merely the perpetuation of errors that had mangled the names to begin with. In 1929 Allen Read pointed out, "With regard to Indian names, there seems to be complete chaos in both spelling and form: the Latin alphabet is unsuited to the nature of Indian speech. . . . It is no wonder that the Indian names have so many forms when we consider the number of ways it is possible to spell them." He notes that the postmaster of Oskaloosa reported that his office had received mail with at least twenty-one different spellings of that place-name.⁸⁴

Many early texts give no translations of the Indian words, or do so using limited knowledge of Native languages and little recognition of how distorted the contemporary words may be from the Native terms. In 1956 Beeler points out that many publications on Indian place often provided translations "despite the absence of any adequate grammar or dictionary of the language from which the name in question is supposed to be derived." Such meanings "have no basis other than that of popular tradition" and are usually unknown to the speakers, for whom the word is just a name.⁸⁵

T. T. Waterman had earlier stated in 1922 that "The meaning of Indian names . . . must remain in many cases a matter of some uncertainty. There is a probability of error which cannot be precisely measured." He added that, as with place-names anywhere, they often come down from "a hoary antiquity," the original meaning often not known to the contemporary people who live in the region.⁸⁶ Later, Pearce apparently agreed with Waterman about unknowability of meaning due to "early language deposits underlying later ones and with individual structures emerging as a result of linguistic erosion, folds and faults."⁸⁷ Pearce's geological metaphor captures the complexity of Indian languages and place-names as recently affirmed by Ives Goddard, who explains that many of the Indian languages of North America are polysynthetic, with individual words being comprised of multiple parts. He states, "One of the challenges faced in documenting polysynthetic languages is that, in addition to the fact that words take large numbers of prefixes and suffixes, the word stems themselves may be complex, comprising layer upon layer of derivation and accretion."⁸⁸

Interestingly, in a 1950s echo of the "Indian turn" of the post-revolutionary United States, Beeler turns the challenge of interpreting Indian place-names into a uniquely American issue. He agrees that here, as in Europe, some place-names might be relics of long extinct languages and peoples, and thus trying to make sense of them in the currently spoken Indian language might be futile—but nonetheless argues that such research might be very fruitful even given the current problem of significant Indian language loss and our lack of knowledge thus far about them. "Here is a field particularly American, with problems, methods, and the possibility of results distinct from those of our European predecessors."⁸⁹ Beeler's work is widely noted as calling for and marking the "linguistic turn" in American Indian place-name studies: "it is imperative for anyone dealing with Indian names either to have a firsthand acquaintance with the Indian language or languages involved, or, lacking this, to make himself familiar with all the printed material on those languages which is available." He adds, "this principle of American placename research has too often been honored in the breach."⁹⁰

Kenny, who ten years later argues for a "comparative method" in Indian place-name analysis, believes that Indian place-names deserve separate consideration from those of

European origin: "Such names, to begin with, are from intricate American languages; when they are cast into the maelstrom of our English and European names they are out of place and may seem less important and interesting than they are."⁹¹ Thus from the mid-twentieth century the study of American Indian place-names becomes much more scholarly and linguistically oriented, with or without the involvement of actual Indians.

GETTING REAL

In the 1950s, Indian hobbyists, perhaps among them former Camp Fire Girls and Boy Scouts, moved beyond place-name studies to participating in dances and powwows on Indian reservations and reproducing ancient artifacts in imitation of ancient Indians. Such hobby Indianism was moving from the books and out onto the land itself with a new seriousness.⁹² A new seriousness took over the Indian place-name literature as well. In both cases, there was a search for the authentic—one in physical practices, the other in language. For the former, it signified a more serious romance moving beyond mere flirtation into a deeper, more meaningful relationship. Among other ideas the counterculture movement adopted in the 1960s were Indian symbols and ideas, however corrupted, in an effort to counter what was perceived as an unhealthy society out of balance with the Earth. The famous "Crying Indian" environmental campaign, for example, mobilized the romantic image of Indians of the past as a symbol for treating the earth more gently and kindly.

In place-names research, however, the romance largely dried up. First came the turn to the linguistic approach, with its strict analysis, as well as a more clinical academic approach in which the old romantic notions and the amateurs and hobbyists who fomented them had no place. Meanwhile, the American Indian Movement and the 1973 Wounded Knee standoff brought Indians back into American consciousness as unromantic, angry, perhaps even scary people who reminded Americans of the history of dispossession that the Romantic movement had obscured. It was safer—and more intellectually rigorous—for non-Native place-name scholars to stick to linguistics. As sensitive issues of positionality continue to shift with the civil rights movements of the sixties and seventies to the "political correctness" of the nineties and into the present, Indians' demands for greater respect from the dominant culture are affecting place-names. The "romance" of "warriors," "braves," and "redskins" has given way to calls for respecting Indians' desires to be seen as people and not mascots, stereotypes, or caricatures.

For place-names, the push has been twofold. On one hand is the push to eliminate names deemed derogatory to Indians. The high-visibility debate on Indian sports mascots that continues to rage at this writing draws on similar arguments for respect. A campaign against "squaw" place-names is also prominent, despite controversies and disagreements within and beyond Indian communities.⁹³ On the other hand is a push to reinstitute traditional names, either in place of existing non-Native names, or as new names for as-yet-unnamed places. Obtaining approval for unnamed places is much easier than reinstituting traditional names. The United States Board on Geographic Names has come a long way in supporting Indian place-names and working with tribes. Their current policy stipulates,

Proposals to change widely known, long-published geographic names derived from non-Native American languages for major (primary) features within, or partly within, areas of Native American tribal jurisdiction rarely will be considered by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names unless such changes have extensive public support and are approved by appropriate State and tribal authorities.⁹⁴

Given the ways in which American Indian place-names have been trammled by colonization over the past few centuries, it should not be surprising that the process of restoring traditional names is fraught.⁹⁵ The issue of pronunciation rears its ugly head again, as in attempts to rename Squaw Creek in Oregon. One suggestion was “ixwutxp,” meaning “blackberry” in the Wasco language, or words with a guttural “tla” sound that does not exist in English, spelled using the symbol “ł.”⁹⁶ Each attempt is an act of sovereignty on the part of the tribal peoples involved, and there are success stories of working with the non-Native communities to agree on such changes.⁹⁷

FULL CIRCLE?

We now return to the beginning of this story: Sandy Nestor and Keith Basso. On the one hand, we have a new, somewhat extensive popular text on Indian place-names that eschews romanticism and does its best to parlay accurate place-name information into a readily accessible form for the average reader. It is a sober departure from the popular place-name books of the past. Basso, meanwhile, moves the scholarship in a direction that is more “romantic” in the sense that it tries to convey how wisdom is found in the human interface with nature. Wisdom sits in places and is conveyed through place-names and their stories; now it is a matter of recovering that wisdom before it’s too late. For all its myriad faults, the long history of whites’ fascination with Indian place-names at least provides a mass of documentation with which to work.

The romantic Indian of yore may never go away from American culture. But in the twenty-first century, the American search for identity has a postmodern instability that includes an increasing recognition that Indians are alive and well and often want their land back. The Bureau of American Ethnography is now displaced by the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian, a national monument to living Indian cultures in the center of the nation’s capital. Scholarship on Indians that does not involve Indians is now problematic. The use of Indians as sports mascots is being replaced. Most importantly, Indians themselves are going through old records and using GIS to remap lost place-names.⁹⁸ A new conversation on Indian place-names is taking place, one that may see another resurgence of native toponymy.

NOTES

1. Sandy Nestor, *Indian Placenames in America: Cities, Towns and Villages* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2003).
2. Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).
3. Saul B. Cohen and Nurit Kliot, “Place-Names in Israel’s Ideological Struggle over the Administered Territories,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82, no. 4 (1992): 653–80.

4. Richard A. Grounds, "Tallahassee, Osceola, and the Hermeneutics of American Place-Names," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 69, no. 2 (2001): 291–92.

5. In keeping with this practice, I use the phrase "the Indian" throughout this paper to reflect the monolithic (and masculine) discourse that permeates the literature in question. My use is ironic and does not indicate agreement with such a representation.

6. Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) and Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978).

7. Thomas F. Thornton, "Anthropological Studies of Native American Place Naming," *American Indian Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (1997): 209.

8. Jani Vuolteenaho and Lawrence Berg, "Towards Critical Toponymies," *Critical Toponymies: The Contested Politics of Place Naming*, ed. Lawrence D. Berg and Jani Vuolteenaho (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2009), 1–18.

9. Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987); Lawrence D. Berg and Robin A. Kearns, "Naming as Norming: 'Race,' Gender, and the Identity Politics of Naming Places in Aotearoa/New Zealand," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14, no. 1 (1996): 99–122; RDK Herman, "The Aloha State: Place-names and the Anti-Conquest of Hawai'i," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 89, no. 1 (1999): 76–102.

10. See *Critical Toponymies*, ed. Berg and Vuolteenaho. This collection brings together an array of case studies that elucidate the power relations inherent in place-naming.

11. Derek Alderman and E. Arnold Modlin Jr., "The Historical Geography of Racialized Landscapes," in *North American Odyssey: Historical Geographies for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Craig Colten and Geoffrey Buckley (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2014), 281.

12. I have focused on texts that deal explicitly on Indian names, as stated in their titles. Anthropological studies on individual tribes, which sometimes include information on place-names, have not been considered.

13. Hamill Thomas Kenny, "Introduction," *Names* 15, no. 3 (1967): 162.

14. Madison S. Beeler, "Sonoma, Carquinez, Umunhum, Colma: Some Disputed California Names," *Western Folklore* 13, no. 4 (1954): 268–77; "On Etymologizing Indian Place-Names," *Names* 5, no. 4 (1957): 236–40.

15. Harry Andrew Wright, "Some Vagaries in Connecticut Valley Indian Place-Names," *The New England Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (1939): 535–44; Stanley Martin, "Indian Derivatives in Connecticut Place-Names," *The New England Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (1939): 364–69.

16. See Martin, "Indian Derivatives," 366. Martin notes as significant that only two towns in Connecticut bear Indian names, but that the number of Indian names for smaller units such as villages and country districts is legion, and that the native names were retained for most lakes, streams, mountains, and other topographic features.

17. Peter S. Leavenworth, "'The Best Title That Indians Can Claim': Native Agency and Consent in the Transfer of Penacook-Pawtucket Land in the Seventeenth Century," *The New England Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (1999): 275–300.

18. P. Burwell Rogers, "Indian Names in Tidewater Virginia," *Names* 4, no. 3 (1956): 155–59; Eugene Green and Rosemary M. Green, "Place-Names and Dialects in Massachusetts: Some Complimentary Patterns," *Names* 19, no. 4 (1971): 240–51.

19. Indian names were often recorded, however, and many took on a new form in translation. See George Bird Grinnell, "Cheyenne Stream Names," *American Anthropologist* 8, no. 1 (new series 1906): 15–22. Furthermore, English and French colonists borrowed Indian words and reshaped them to fit the phonemic pattern of their languages, with the original meanings, if ever known, soon

forgotten. See Charles F. Hockett, "Reactions to Indian Place-names," *American Speech* 25, no. 2 (1950): 118–21. Sometimes words in the European language that sounded roughly similar replaced the Indian name (e.g., "Potopaco" becoming "Port Tobacco"). The retention of Indian names also depended on the colonists' purpose: those Europeans who aggressively aimed to settle and cultivate North American landscapes agriculturally had very different perceptions of land and their "ownership" (e.g., the English) than those Europeans who initially aimed to trade rather than dispossess Natives of large swaths of territory (e.g., the French). Such variations in motivation and type of settlement process could be elucidated from a detailed study of New England place-names, for example.

20. Deloria, *Playing Indian*.

21. The Indian names associated with rivers appear often to have been names of tribes or even individual Indians whom explorers or pioneers encountered, and which they then assigned to the river where these encounters occurred.

22. George R. Stewart, *Names on the Land* (New York: Random House, 1945), 311. The states with names that originally were those of Indian tribes are Alabama, Arkansas, North and South Dakota, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, and Utah. Ives Goddard, "Endangered Knowledge: What We Can Learn from Native American Languages," *Anthronotes* 25, no. 2 (2004): 3.

23. See H. F. Raup, "Place-names of the California Gold Rush," *Geographical Review* 35, no. 4 (1945): 653–58; T. M. Pearce, "Some Indian Place-names of New Mexico," *Western Folklore* 10, no. 3 (1951): 245–47.

24. H. W. Janson and Anthony F. Janson, *History of Art*, 5th rev. ed. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1997), 672.

25. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian*.

26. Ann M. Woodlief, "American Romanticism (or the American Renaissance)," course introduction to English 372 (2001), <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/eng372/intro.htm>.

27. James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans; A Narrative of 1757* (New York: Bantam Classics, 1982); Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *The Song of Hiawatha* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1856).

28. Grounds employs the notion of anti-conquest that Mary Louise Pratt discusses in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), which my article "The Aloha State" also expands upon. Grounds argues that "Irving's program on Aboriginal names bespeaks the American desire for a national identity and the need to believe that the seizure of Native lands would be vindicated by the disappearance of the Indians and glorified in the taking up of Indian names as if they were trophies from deserving victories" ("Tallahassee," 298).

29. Rev. Joseph A. Gilligan, "Minnesota Geographical Names Derived from the Ojibway Language," *The Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota 15th Annual Report* (1886), 451–52.

30. T. T. Waterman, "The Geographical Names Used by the Indians of the Pacific Coast," *Geographical Review* 12, no. 2 (1922): 182.

31. William Francis Ganong, "A Monograph of the Place-Nomenclature of the Province of New Brunswick," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, 2nd ser., 2, no. 2 (1896): 181–82.

32. Lincoln Newton Kinnicutt, *Indian Names of Places in Plymouth, Middleborough, Lakeville and Carver, Plymouth County, Massachusetts, with Interpretations of Some of Them* (Worcester: The Commonwealth Press, 1909), 6–7.

33. William Alexander Read, *Florida Place-Names of Indian Origin and Seminole Personal Names* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1934), 78–79.

34. E. H. M. Clifford, "Recording Native Place-names," *The Geographical Journal* 109 (1947): 99–100.

35. Harry Andrew Wright, "Some Vagaries in Connecticut Valley Indian Place-Names," *The New England Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (1939): 544.
36. Nils Magnus Holmer, *Indian Place-names in North America*. The American Institute, University of Upsala, Essays and Studies on American Language and Literature 7 (Upsala: A.-b. Lundequistska Bokhandeln; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), 37.
37. Stephen Gill Boyd, *Indian Local Names, with their Interpretation* (York, PA: The author, 1885), ix.
38. William W. Tooker, *Indian Place-Names in East-Hampton Town, with their Probable Significations*, East Hampton town records, Vol. IV (Sag Harbor, NY: J. H. Hunt, 1889), iii; *The Indian Place-Names on Long Island and Islands Adjacent, with their Probable Significations* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911), viii, xix.
39. Jacob Piatt Dunn, *True Indian Stories, with Glossary of Indiana Indian Names* (Indianapolis: Sentinel Printing Company, 1908; rpt. 1997, Salem, MA: Higginson Book Company), 1.
40. William F. Moore, *Indian Place-names in Ontario* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1930), 15.
41. William E. Culkin, *North Shore Place-names* (St. Paul-Minneapolis: Scott-Mitchell Publishing Co., 1931), x.
42. T. M. Pearce, "Some Indian Place-names of New Mexico," *Western Folklore* 10, no. 3 (1951): 246.
43. Virgil J. Vogel, *Indian Place-names in Illinois* (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society Pamphlet series no. 4, 1963), 5.
44. Noah Webster, *The American Spelling Book; Contains the Rudiments of the English Language for the Schools in the United States* (Brattleborough, VT: Holbrook and Fessenden, 1824), 5, online typescript by Donald L. Potter (2006–2007), <http://donpotter.net/PDF/Webster's%20Spelling%20Book%201824.pdf>.
45. Robin A. Kearns and Lawrence D. Berg, "Proclaiming Place: Towards a Geography of Place-name Pronunciation," *Critical Toponymies*, ed. Berg and Vuolteenaho, 157.
46. John Rydjord, *Indian Place-Names: Their Origin, Evolution, and Meanings, Collected in Kansas from the Siouan, Algonquian, Shoshonean, Caddoan, Iroquoian, and other Tongues* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), vi.
47. Grinnell, "Cheyenne Stream Names," 15.
48. Culkin, *North Shore Place-names*.
49. William Bright, "Karak Names," *Names* 6, no. 3 (1958): 172–79.
50. Mamie Meredith, "Indian Place-Names as Viewed by a Scotch Noblewoman," *American Speech* 4, no. 5 (1929): 365.
51. Boyd, *Indian Local Names*, vii.
52. Kinnicutt, *Indian Names of Places in Plymouth*, 5.
53. Charles F. Hockett, "Reactions to Indian Place-names," *American Speech* 25, no. 2 (1950): 118–21.
54. Calhoun County MI Archives History, "How Michigan Counties Got Their Name" <http://files.usgwarchives.net/mi/calhoun/history/howmichi3ms.txt>.
55. Hamill Thomas Kenny, *The Origin and Meaning of the Indian Place-names of Maryland* (Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1961), 17.
56. A. L. Kroeber, "California Place-names of Indian Origin," *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnography* 12, no. 2 (1916): 32.
57. Bernard G. Hoffman, "An Unusual Example of Virginal Indian Toponymies," *Ethnohistory* 11, no. 2 (1964): 174–82.
58. Waterman, "The Geographical Names," 177.

59. Ronald L. Baker, "The Role of Folk Legends in Place-Name Research," *The Journal of American Folklore* 85, no. 338 (1972): 367–73.
60. Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 81.
61. George R. Stewart, *American Place-Names: A Concise and Selective Dictionary for the Continental United States of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 135, 202.
62. Ralph V. Chamberlin, "Place and Personal Names of the Gosiute Indians of Utah," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 52, no. 208 (1913): 1–20; Stephen C. Jett, "An Analysis of Navajo Place-Names," *Names* 18, no. 3 (1970): 175–84.
63. James Brooke, "What's in a Name? An Affront, Say Several Tribes," *New York Times*, November 17, 1996, <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/11/17/us/what-s-in-a-name-an-affront-say-several-tribes.html>.
64. The extent to which Christianized Indians engaged in the use of the "Hell" and "Devil" place-names that remain today is not readily decipherable.
65. Richard L. Dieterle, "Devil's Lake," *The Encyclopedia of Hotcāk (Winnebago) Mythology* website (2005), <http://www.hotcakencyclopedia.com/ho.DevilsLake.html>.
66. Brooke, "What's in a Name?"
67. Culkin, *North Shore Place-names*.
68. Dieterle, "Devil's Lake"; Huden, *New England*, xiii.
69. Bev Ortiz, "Mount Diablo as Myth and Reality: An Indian History Convolved," *American Indian Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1989): 457–70.
70. David E. Philips, "Devil's Hopyard," *Legendary Connecticut: Traditional Tales from the Nutmeg State*, 2nd ed. (Willimantic, CT: Curbstone Press, 1992): 125–31.
71. Deloria, *Playing Indian*.
72. Kinnicutt, *Indian Names of Places in Plymouth*, 6.
73. R. A. Douglas-Lithgow, *Native American Place-names of Maine, New Hampshire, & Vermont*, xxi (Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 2001; partial reprint of *Dictionary of American Indian Place and Proper Names of New England*, 1909).
74. Tooker, *Long Island*, viii.
75. Usher Parsons, *Indian Names of Places in Rhode Island* (Providence: Knowles, Anthony & Co., 1861): preface.
76. Boyd, *Indian Local Names*, x.
77. Tooker, *Indian Place-Names in East-Hampton Town*, iv.
78. Angela Gonzales, Judy Kertesz and Gabrielle Tayac, "Eugenics as Indian Removal: Sociohistorical process and the De(con)struction of American Indians in the Southeast," *Public Historian* 29, no. 3 (2007): 53–68.
79. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 106.
80. Charlotte V. Gulick, *A List of Indian Words from which Girls can Derive their Camp Fire Names* (New York: Camp Fire Outfitting Company, 1915); Ernest Thompson Seton, *The Woodcraft Manual For Girls: The Fifteenth Birch Bark Roll* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company for the Woodcraft League of America, 1916).
81. *The Book of Camp Fire Girls*, 4th rev. ed. (Philadelphia: William F. Fell Company, 1914), 23.
82. Tooker, *Long Island*, xxiii, 299.
83. Dunn, *True Indian Stories*, 12; Moore, Indian Place-names in Ontario, 12.
84. Allen Read, "Observations on Iowa Place-names," *American Speech* 5, no. 1 (1929): 42–43.
85. Beeler, "On Etymologizing," 236. See also Goddard, "Endangered Knowledge." Various monographs by William Alexander Read on Indian place-names in the South appear to have engaged thoroughly with the language. A "Professor of the English Language and Literature" at LSU, Read states that the names he lists come almost entirely from the "Longtown dialect of the Choctaw

language,” gives a short phonetic instruction, and then refers readers to available dictionaries and other sources for that language. William Alexander Read, *Louisiana Place-Names of Indian Origin* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1927), 5.

86. Waterman, “The Geographical Names,” 176.

87. T. M. Pearce, “The New Mexico Place-name Dictionary: A Polyglot in Six Languages,” *Names* 6, no. 4 (1958): 217.

88. Goddard, “Endangered Knowledge,” 5.

89. Beeler, “On Etymologizing,” 239–40.

90. Beeler, “Sonoma,” 269.

91. Kenny, *The Origin and Meaning*, vii.

92. Deloria, *Playing Indian*.

93. There is extensive material on this subject. See for example Ives Goddard, “The True History of the Word *Squaw*,” *News From Indian Country*, April 1997, 19A, http://anthropology.si.edu/goddard/squaw_1.pdf; Marge Bruchac, “Reclaiming the Word ‘Squaw’ in the Name of the Ancestors” (Northampton, MA: posted 1999 on native.web.org), <http://www.nativeweb.org/pages/legal/squaw.html>; Tom Robertson, “Squaw Lake Resists Name Change,” Minnesota Public Radio, April 30, 2001, http://news.minnesota.publicradio.org/features/200104/30_robertson_squawlake-m/; Eli Sanders, “Renaming ‘Squaw’ Sites Proves Touchy in Oregon,” *New York Times*, December 11, 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/11/national/11squaw.html?ex=1103818559&ei=1&en=b3c3d5c4f4e77993&_r=1&; “A Real Honor: Collaborating with Tribes on Name Changes,” *Indian Country Today* Editor’s Report, October 18, 2007, <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2007/10/18/real-honor-collaborating-tribes-name-changes-91622>; C. Richard King, “American Indian Heritage Month: Commemoration vs. Exploitation,” *ABC-CLIO, History and the Headlines*, <http://www.historyandtheheadlines.abc-clio.com/ContentPages/ContentPage.aspx?entryId=1171648¤tSection=1161468>; and Carey Gillam, “Changing ‘Negro’ and ‘Squaw’ Place-names in South Dakota a Difficult Process,” *The Star*, April 29, 2013, http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2013/04/29/changing_negro_and_squaw_place_names_in_south_dakota_a_difficult_process.html.

94. Department of the Interior, “Names of Native American Origin,” *Principles, Policies and Procedures: Domestic Geographic Names* (Reston, VA: United States Board on Geographic Names, 1997), Chapter 3, Policy X, http://geonames.usgs.gov/docs/pro_pol_pro.pdf.

95. See Dennis Wagner, “Ancient Echoes: Tribes Embrace Native Names,” *The Republic*, April 8, 2012, <http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/2012/03/27/20120327tribes-native-names.html>.

96. Sanders, “Renaming ‘Squaw’ Sites.”

97. I attended a meeting of the Board of Geographic Names a few years ago, in which a tribal representative from Oregon told of a compromise wherein the translated (English) version of the traditional name was used. She said, “That way we still have our name there, and better in translation than not at all.”

98. At the time of this writing, Aaron Carapella’s map “Native Nations: Our Own Names and Locations” has received a great deal of press for its attempt to create an accurate map of tribal names and locations at the time of European contact. While the accuracy of the data is questionable, the map demonstrates the enormous effort being made to re-place Indian names.