

**A HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN OF THE  
PLACE NAMES CONNECTED WITH  
THE CHICAGO & NORTH WESTERN  
AND CHICAGO, ST. PAUL,  
MINNEAPOLIS & OMAHA RAILWAYS**

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A History of the Origin of the Place Names Connected with the Chicago & North Western and Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railways by William H. Stennett

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**WILLIAM H. STENNETT**

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"Local names—whether they belong to provinces, cities and villages or are the designation of rivers and mountains—are never mere arbitrary sounds devoid of meaning. They may almost always be regarded as records of the past, inviting and rewarding a careful historical interpretation."

*Isaac Taylor in "Words and Things"*

COMPILED BY  
ONE WHO FOR MORE THAN 34 YEARS HAS BEEN  
AN OFFICER IN THE EMPLOY OF THE SYSTEM.

CHICAGO

1908

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# INTRODUCTION

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The primary purpose of this volume is to supply authentic information as to the origin and derivation of the names of the towns, cities and villages which are located on the Chicago and North Western and the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railways. In those instances where said names have some special meaning or significance, such meaning or significance is noted.

While it was not in the plan of the work to furnish a history of the various places referred to, it has nevertheless often happened that the meaning or derivation of a name could only be made clear by introducing more or less information of an historic character. In such instances, the historic statement has been used.

In compiling the work, voluminous correspondence has been had with state, county, city and town officials, for the purpose of gaining authentic information, and of eliminating local, fanciful and unreliable legends. Local legends are generally the offspring of the imagination, or of personal vanity, and where reliable data is the end which is sought, are worthless. As far as possible these imaginative and local legends and "travelers' stories" have been eliminated and established facts alone have been accepted. While it is true that the investigations of the writer have shattered many pretty romances, it is not unlikely that others have escaped his notice and may yet be handed down as history.

In some cases positive evidence concerning names and their origin, has already been lost, and in such cases, the best possible information attainable has been used.

Legg, in his "Wisconsin Place Names" says: "As a rule, (which, however, has notable exceptions), it will be found that the streams and lakes and mountains preserve the names given them by the Red Men, or their equivalent in European tongues: many of the cities and villages bear names transplanted from European soil. Thus may be found scattered over this continent in juxtaposition to names of undoubted Indian origin, a nomenclature whereby the immigrant exiles sought to preserve in the wilderness, the associations endeared to them in youth."

Many of the recently adopted names were selected for their brevity, or to avoid the objections of the United States General Postoffice Department. Many of the names were manufactured expressly for the place and have neither sense nor fitness, but as they have been registered in county records, they necessarily appear here.

To secure the true history of the origin of many of the names has cost immense labor. As an illustration, attention is called to the name *Marinisco*. To get the facts about that name the Compiler was obliged to write more than one hundred letters!

The oldest as well as the most modern records of cities, towns and villages have been ransacked. The journals and other papers preserved at the state capitals and at county seats; the records of state historical societies, and local and state histories, have been searched and their stories freely used. Henry Gannett's admirable "Origin of Certain Place Names," has given a great and valuable fund of reliable information. This has been freely used without acknowledgment, but which is now tendered to the fullest extent.

Indian records, the "Jesuit Relations" and the like, have been freely used and relied upon, as they are generally reliable.

During the thirty-five consecutive years of the administration of Mr. Marvin Hughitt, now President of the Chicago and North Western Railway, the mileage of the road has increased nearly four-fold, and the railway stations are nearly three times as great as at the beginning of his service. Literally, hundreds of these miles of railroad were built through virgin territory and far beyond the picket line of the white man's settlements. Mr. Hughitt thus created the necessity for new stations and either suggested or approved their names. His personality is, therefore, in one way or another interwoven with the origin and development of hundreds of western towns, and to him, more than to any other one person or agency, is to be attributed the fact that these towns were called into existence.

The writer of this history has been much more editor than author and much more collator and compiler, than either. He has not aimed to originate anything, but merely to record and preserve that which, after almost infinite care in the processes of culling, selecting and sifting of material received from countless sources, seemed to be worthy of permanent preservation. His effort has been to hold fast to the grain and to discard the chaff.

The Compiler is especially indebted to Mr. P. E. Hall of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for many facts as to the place names in Iowa and Nebraska; to Mr. Doane Robinson, the accomplished secretary of the State Historical Society of South Dakota; to G. F. West and Lewis S. Reid of Omaha, Nebraska; to General H. H. Beadle of Madison, South Dakota; to ex-Governor W. H. Upham of Wisconsin; to Hon. E. W. Keyes of Madison, Wisconsin; to Mr. Peter White of Marquette, Michigan; to ex-United States Senator Alger of Michigan; to Senator John Gaveny of Wisconsin; to Hon. Warren Upham, secretary of the Minnesota State Historical Society; to Mr. R. G. Thwaites of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin; to Mr. A. C. Johnson of Winona, Minnesota; to General J. W. Bishop, to Messrs. L. A. Robinson, T. W. Teasdale, and Capt. E. E. Woodman of St. Paul, Minnesota, and to almost countless correspondents, for the facts they had to give and who gave freely. To all of these most cordial thanks are due and are here tendered.

The following together with many other works were carefully examined, and much valuable information was secured therefrom:

"Indian Local Names and Their Interpretations," by S. G. Boyd. "Indian Linguistic Families of America," by J. W. Powell. "Aboriginal Races of North America," by S. G. Drake. "The Menominee Indians," by W. J. Hoffman. "Vocabularies of Tribes of the North West," by W. H. Dall. "Dakota-English Dictionary," by S. B. Riggs. "Reports of the Bureau of American Ethnology," by J. W. Powell. "Indian Dictionary," by Bishop Fredrich Baraga. "Reports of the Exploring Expeditions of John C. Fremont." "History of the Expedition Under Lewis and Clark." "The Narrative of an Expedition to the Sources of the St. Peter's River, etc., Under the Command of Stephen H. Long." "The Story of the Expeditions of Grosielliers and Radisson," by H. C. Campbell. "Father Marquette, Joliet and Other Early Missionaries, Travelers and Traders." "The American Indian," by E. M. Haines. "Barrett and Johnson's Histories of Nebraska." "The Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Science." "Leger's Wisconsin Place Names." Mrs. Kinzie's "Wauban." G. W. Butterfield's "Stephen Brule's Discoveries and Explorations," and the many volumes of "Early Western Travels" edited by R. G. Thwaites. All of these have furnished many curious and accurate facts that have been freely appropriated.

THE COMPILER.



AS TO THE  
**Chicago & North Western**  
Railway.



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