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MOTIVATION OF AMERICAN INFORMAL PLACE NAMES

Problem Statement. The nature of onymic motivation relates to general functions of a proper name. This type of motivation means that a given lexeme individualizes, identifies and differentiates a unique referent [12, 86]. It seems highly promising to conduct research into the motivation of nicknames or informal (alternative) names for geographical objects that belong to particularly interesting phenomena in the sphere of proper names. They fulfil an important informative function and are of immense ethnocultural value giving us an insight into the “historical development, into humorous civic and personal struggles, or into the commercial and social development” of cities and towns, etc. [15, III].

Literature Review. According to Theodore J. Holland, Jr., “despite a vast scholarly literature on naming and terminology, nicknaming itself has received astoundingly little research attention” [7, 255]. Moreover, even in comparison with informal anthroponymy, the scientific investigation of alternative place names has barely begun. As a rule, they are just mentioned or briefly characterized within the surveys of nicknames of a certain country or language community (see, e.g., works of O. Leonovich [2, 11–12], O. Tytarenko [3, 9] and G. Tomakhin [4, 212], etc.). V. Kanna analyzes some US state and city nicknames in the context of the research of “connotative toponyms” as a particular type of proper names [1, 12]. Many English and American scholars compile dictionaries of alternative and secondary names, sobriquets and titles for geographical places, including explanations of the nicknames and one or more quotations documenting their use [8; 14]. David Muench in his report on Wisconsin community slogans provides information on the origin of many city and town nicknames, the activities related to them, such as festivals and attractions, etc., as well as the perceived impact of the slogan (and the nickname connected with it) on the local economy, identity, and attitude [10, 1]. Some recent studies in the field of the US informal toponymy focus on the structure and derivation of the nicknames in question (see, e.g., O. Zosimova [18; 19]). However, the motivation and functions of American alternative place names still need an in-depth analysis.

Research Purpose. This paper is aimed at identifying and describing some popular motivational factors that determine the use of a particular informal place name in the USA.

Main Body. Many American nicknames under discussion feature the city or town **architecture, historic monuments and other sights**, e.g.: Baltimore – *Monument(al) City*, Hamilton – *The City of Sculpture*, Jonesboro – *The City of Churches*, Kansas City – *City of Fountains*. Known as the *City of Beautiful Homes*, Fort Thomas boasts more than 160 residences that are at least 100 years old. The city of Midland in West

Texas has been called *The Tall City* because of the tall buildings in its central business district [13]. A 2006 study determined that Pittsburgh has 446 bridges, and with its proximity to three major rivers and countless hills and ravines, Pittsburgh is known as *The City of Bridges*. Without bridges, the Pittsburgh region would be a series of fragmented valleys, hillsides, river plains, and isolated communities [17]. Breckenridge was named the *Mural Capital of Texas* by the Texas legislature in 2001. Murals based on historic town photos were painted around the town by Billy Ines [13]. Baltimore's nickname *Monument(al) City* was given to the city in the early 17th century, and it was transferred to the state over time, thus Maryland is sometimes called *The Monumental State* [11].

Quite a big number of **culture-related** nicknames make up a considerable part of the US city and town monikers, e.g.: New Orleans – *City of Festivals* and *Birthplace of Jazz*, Kansas City – *Jazz Capital of the World*, Memphis – *Birthplace of Rock 'n Roll* and *Home of the Blues*, Mountain View – *Folk Music Capital of the World*, Mississippi – *The Birthplace of America's Music*, Renfro Valley – *Kentucky's Country Music Capital*, Peru – *Circus Capital of the World* [17].

Delavan, nicknamed *Clown Town, U.S.A.*, has a long history associated with the circus and clowning. Over 26 circuses, including P.T. Barnum, had winter quarters in Delavan from 1847 to 1894. Nowadays a local newspaper published twice annually is called "*Clown Town News*". The city even has trash cans around town with clown tops; many stores carry various clown memorabilia. The main attraction in Delavan for clowning is the Clown Hall of Fame and Research Centre. It is a museum as well as an entertainment centre for clowning [10, 27].

Fort Lee is called *The Birthplace of the Motion Picture Industry* because it used to be a favourite locale of such film pioneers as D. W. Griffith and Mary Pickford. The historic borough of Fort Lee was the first centre of the American motion picture industry; studios lined both sides of Main Street, and enormous film laboratories fed the nickelodeon market with thousands of reels of comedies and cliff-hangers [6].

Springville is known as *Art City* due to its strong development of the arts. It is home to the Springville Museum of Art, Utah's oldest museum for the visual fine arts (circa 1937). The main street of the city is dotted with bronze statues, including several from the local sculptors Gary Price and Jeff Decker [17].

Oxford, Mississippi is considered *The Literary Center of the South* with many writers calling it home. William Faulkner immortalized the vivid characters that walked the town's streets, managed its stores, and lived in its historic homes in his literary works. According to the information of the city's website, Oxford truly "seems to be a breeding ground for novelists, having since been home to the likes of John Grisham, Willie Morris, Barry Hannah, Cynthia Shearer, and Larry Brown, along with dozens of noteworthy journalists, poets, and other writers and artists" [9].

Many American city and town nicknames are connected with national and local traditions, customs and festivities in particular. For example, Anoka proclaimed itself *Halloween Capital of the World* [17]. Maggie Valley, *Clogging Capital of the World*, in Haywood County (North Carolina) is home to America's Clogging Hall of Fame (ACHF), a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the old time square

dance and clogging. ACHF is housed in Maggie Valley's Stompin' Grounds and sanctions competitions as well as the National Championships dance-off. Clogging events can be found throughout the state and at several festivals. Clogging is the official dance of North Carolina [16].

The small western Pennsylvania town of Punxsutawney is known as *Weather Capital of the World* due to its most famous resident – Punxsutawney Phil, a legendary groundhog said to predict the weather annually on Groundhog Day (February 2) [17].

Indiana and Elkhorn got their nicknames – *Christmas Tree Capital of the World* and *The Christmas Card City* respectively – due to Christmas traditions. Indiana earned its title because the national Christmas Tree Grower's Association was founded there (there are still a large number of Christmas tree farms in the area) [17]. Elkhorn was chosen on two separate occasions during the 1950s as the perfect small town Christmas setting. The second, in 1958 by the Ford Motor Company, resulted in the commissioning of 6 paintings of small communities to be reprinted into Christmas cards [10, 30].

Several informal names of the US cities and towns are related to **education** and, especially, higher education institutions, e.g.: Conway – *The City of Colleges* (The University of Central Arkansas, Hendrix College, and Central Baptist College are situated there), Bloomington – *University City* (it is home to Indiana University Bloomington; established in 1820, IU Bloomington has approximately 40,000 students and is the original and largest campus of Indiana University), Fall River – *Scholarship City* (because Dr. Irving Fradkin founded *Dollars for Scholars* there in 1958; *Dollars for Scholars* is a coalition of local scholarship organizations in communities across the United States; it is one of the two main program divisions of *Scholarship America*) [17]. Bonduel is nicknamed the *Spelling Capital of Wisconsin* because it has produced state champions for grade school spelling bees six times during the 1980s and continues to have a strong spelling program [10, 17].

There are quite a few **sports** nicknames among the onyms in question, e.g.: Fairmont – *The Gymnastics Capital of West Virginia*, Brownsville – *Chess Capital of Texas*, Springfield – *Birthplace of Basketball*, Sparta – *Bicycling Capital of America*, Eureka – *Horse Racing Capital*, Camden – *Steeplechase Capital of the World*. The “champions” among the sports that gave nicknames to American cities and towns are naturally baseball, the national sport of the US (Reading – *Baseballtown*, Cooperstown – *Birthplace of Baseball* etc.), hockey (Minnesota is often called the *State of Hockey*; at least three cities lay claims to the title of *Hockeytown* (Detroit, Saint Paul and Warroad), golf (Pinehurst – *Golf Capital of the World*, Palm Desert – *Golf Capital of America*), and rodeo, a competitive sport that arose out of the working practices of cattle herding and that is now the official state sport of Wyoming, South Dakota, and Texas: Mesquite – *Rodeo Capital of Texas*, Payson – *Arizona's Rodeo Capital* [17]. It should be mentioned here that many popular and widely recognized sports and games like American football, boxing, and tennis, etc. are not represented in the nicknames under discussion. At the same time there are a lot of informal place names related to sports that are primarily recreational activities (often including extreme sports), such as cave-diving (Branford), tubing (Somerset), snowmobile trail riding and racing (Eagle

River), quail hunting (Albany), etc. Among them air (Elmira – *Soaring Capital of America*, Whitewater – *Hang Gliding Capital of the Midwest*) and water (Ely – *Canoe Capital of the World*, Oriental – *Sailing Capital of North Carolina*, Stuart – *Sailfish Capital of the World*) sports predominate. Bloomer proclaimed itself *Rope Jump Capital of the World*. Its rope jumping began in the school's physical education classes. A challenge went out to area schools. The competition has been going on for 30 years. A record rope jump was established by a local person [10, 16].

Louisiana's nickname *Sportsman's Paradise* pays tribute to its hunting, trapping and fishing resources as well as other outdoor recreational and sporting activities within the state. Football, ice hockey, horse racing, golf, baseball and college sports round out the "sporting" experience of "The Sportsman's Paradise". This nickname appears on the Louisiana license plates [11].

Some of American state, city and town nicknames are related to their **notable inhabitants**, mostly people who were born in a particular place or spent their childhood there, etc., e.g.: Hannibal is known as *Home of Mark Twain* [17]; Illinois – as *Land of Lincoln* (refers to the fact that Abraham Lincoln began his political career in this state; he also lived there when he became President of the United States in 1861 [11]); Juneau – *Birthplace of Addie Joss* (the Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher); Eden – *Hometown of Baseball Star Jim Gantner* [17].

Often the nicknames in question do not include particular proper names but refer to the position of a distinguished person (or a few of them), their contribution to society and history etc., e.g.: Quincy, nicknamed *City of Presidents*, is the birthplace of former US Presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams, as well as the statesman John Hancock, fourth and longest serving President of the Continental Congress [17]. Virginia is often referred to as *Mother of Statesmen* and *Mother of Presidents* because many of the early Presidents of the United States were native Virginians [11]. Ohio is sometimes called *Mother of Modern Presidents* as seven US Presidents were born there. They are Ulysses Simpson Grant (Point Pleasant), Rutherford Bichard Hayes (Delaware), James Abram Garfield (near Orange), Benjamin Harrison (North Bend), William McKinley (Niles), William Howard Taft (Cincinnati), and Warren Gamaliel Harding (Corsica, now Blooming Grove). William Henry Harrison, born in Virginia but settled in Ohio, is also claimed as one of Ohio's own [11]. Pueblo's nickname, *Home of Heroes*, refers to its four Medal of Honor recipients – Drew D. Dix, Raymond G. Murphy, William J. Crawford, and Carl L. Sitter. In 1993, the City Council adopted the tagline "*Home of Heroes*" because it can claim more recipients per capita than any other city in the US [17].

In some cases the relation between the informal place name and the town's notable citizen is implicit, e.g., Derry's nickname, *Spacetown* (*Space Town*), derives from the fact that Derry is the birthplace of Alan Shepard, the first astronaut from the United States in space [17].

A few nicknames for American states, cities and towns are related to the names and titles of their founders or people they were named after, e.g., Rhode Island – *Land of Roger Williams* (named after Roger Williams, who founded Providence Plantation in

1636); Maryland – *The Queen State* (probably because Maryland was named after Queen Henrietta Maria) [11]. It is generally believed that Albuquerque, *The Duke City*, was named by the provincial governor Don Francisco Cuervo y Valdes in honour of Don Francisco Fernández de la Cueva y Enríquez de Cabrera, the viceroy of New Spain from 1653 to 1660. One of de la Cueva's aristocratic titles was Duke of Alburquerque, referring to the Spanish town of Alburquerque. The middle "r" was dropped from the city's spelling over the years, but the nomenclature remained. The city of Albuquerque is colloquially called the '*Duke City*' to this day [17]. It should be noted that the number of such nicknames is rather small in comparison with official place names.

Sometimes American state, city and town nicknames include names of people for other reasons, e.g., Alaska was named *Seward's Folly* after the US Secretary of State William H. Seward who promoted the agreement to purchase the Alaska territory from Russia in 1867. At that time there were many people in the US who looked upon the deal with skepticism. Though Seward finalized agreement with Russia in March, 1867, it was a long and bitter battle to get final Congressional approval for the purchase. During this period, the critics of Seward's project referred to the plan as "Seward's Folly" [11].

Some of the onyms under discussion are based on the names of **fictional characters**, e.g., Metropolis – *The Home of Superman*. Although Metropolis, Illinois, differs from Superman's home (Metropolis of *Superman* comics is traditionally associated with New York [17]), this small Illinois city embraces Superman as its hometown hero and has the Super Museum as well as a 12-foot tall Superman statue [5]. Chester is nicknamed *The Home of Popeye* as the famous fictional cartoon character is rumoured to be based on the Chester, Illinois resident Frank "Rocky" Fiegel [5]. North Carolina is sometimes called *The Rip Van Winkle State*, probably, due to the fact that northern visitors may have compared the mountains of North Carolina to the Catskill Mountains of New York where the Rip Van Winkle legend was publicized by Washington Irving [11].

A vast number of American city and town nicknames are based on their official names. The main ways of formation of the onyms in question include artificial deformation of the official name and substitution of its certain elements. Different types of clipping are widely used, namely: initial (*Wauwatosa* – *Tosa*, *Evansville* – *The Ville*, *Pittsburgh* – *The Burgh*), final (*Nederland* – *Ned*, *Jeffersonville* – *Jeff*, *Cleveland* – *The Cleve*), complex (a type of shortening in which the middle part of the official name is clipped, e.g.: *Evansville* – *Eville*, *Kalamazoo* – *Kazoo*) or middle clipping (when the initial and final parts of the official name are clipped and the middle one is retained, e.g.: *Northampton* – *Hamp*). Clipping is often combined with other types of word-building, e.g. affixation. The most productive affix in this case is the diminutive suffix -y (with the necessary changes in spelling): *Wilmington* – *Wilmy*, *Philadelphia* – *Philly*, *Indianapolis* – *Indy*. One of the most popular models of American city and town nicknames formation is the combination of a clipped form of the official name (often its initial letter) with the word *town*: *Indianapolis* – *Naptown* (*Nap* + *town*), *Chicago* – *Chi-Town* or *Chitown*, *A-Town* (*Atlanta*), *D-Town* (*Denver*), etc. If an official city or town name consists of two or more words one of the components (or several ones) can be omitted to form a nickname, e.g.: *Colorado Springs* – *The Springs*, *El Paso de Robles* – *Paso*. A

nickname can be a literal translation of the city name from Greek (*Cosmopolis* – *City of the World*, *Demopolis* – *City of the People*, *Philadelphia* – *The City of Brotherly Love*), or an allusion to the meaning of the name in another original language, e.g.: *The Big Onion* (*Chicago*) – a homage to the Native American name for the area (*shikaakwa*, which means “wild onion” in the Miami-Illinois language), in parallel with the popular New York nickname, *The Big Apple* [17].

An official name can provide basis for its various humorous variations like *Circleville* – *Round Town*, *Madison* – *Mad City*, *Santa Monica* – *Soviet Monica*. Play on letters, rhyming and other phonetic and graphic means are thoroughly employed, e.g.: *Azusa* – *A to Z, USA*; *Redwood City* – *Deadwood City*, *Lafayette* – *Laugh at it*, *Omaha* – *The Big “O”*, etc. [17].

Some other productive models of name-derived nicknames have been analyzed in our articles that deal with the structure and derivation of the informal place names in question (see O. Zosimova [18, 138–142; 19, 60–61]). It also needs to be said that nicknames based on the official names (their shortening or substitution of certain elements etc.) are not typical of the US states. Very few examples of such onyms can be found, e.g.: Rhode Island – *Little Rhody*, Idaho – *Little Ida*, Massachusetts – *Taxachusetts* (the state had a reputation for high taxes), Florida – *La Florida* (refers to the original Spanish name of the territory) [17].

Conclusion and Prospects. To sum up, it should be noted that many American informal place names indicate a special feature of the architecture, cultural, educational and sports activities characteristic of a particular city or state. Also, the nicknames based on the names of the notable city inhabitants as well as the names of some well-known fictional characters make up quite a numerous group of the onyms in question. A special type of informal place names is represented by the nicknames derived from official city, town or state names.

The prospects for our study can be seen in singling out and describing other motivational types of the language units under discussion, namely historical, geographical, demographic and economic nicknames, etc.

A further detailed analysis of the motivation of the US informal place names offers a lot of prospects for onomastics as well as country studies aimed at broadening our knowledge of American history, economics, politics, culture and traditions.

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Анотація

Топоніми-прізвиська, або неофіційні назви географічних об'єктів, належать до особливо цікавих феноменів у сфері власних імен. У статті розглянуто мотивацію неофіційних топонімів США, які часто вказують на прикметні риси певного міста чи штату, зокрема особливості їхньої архітектури, культурно-освітньої та спортивної діяльності. Також досить велику групу досліджуваних онімів складають назви, пов'язані з іменами видатних мешканців певного населеного пункту чи місцевості. Особливий мотиваційний тип прізвиськ являють собою топоніми, утворені від офіційних назв міст та штатів.

Ключові слова: неофіційний топонім, прізвисько, онім, мотивація, мотиваційний тип.

Аннотация

Топонимы-прозвища, или неофициальные названия географических объектов, принадлежат к особенно интересным феноменам в сфере имен собственных. В данной статье рассматривается мотивация неофициальных топонимов США, которые часто указывают на характерные черты города или штата, в частности особенности их архитектуры, культурно-образовательной и спортивной деятельности. Также достаточно большую группу исследуемых онимов составляют названия, связанные с именами выдающихся жителей определенного населенного пункта или

местности. Особый мотивационный тип прозвищ представляют собой топонимы, образованные от официальных названий городов и штатов.

Ключевые слова: неофициальный топоним, прозвище, оним, мотивация, мотивационный тип.

Summary

Nicknames or informal names for geographical objects belong to particularly interesting phenomena in the sphere of proper names. The article deals with the motivation of the informal place names in the USA that often indicate a special feature of the architecture, cultural, educational and sports activities characteristic of a particular city or state. Also, the nicknames based on the names of the notable city inhabitants make up quite a numerous group of the onyms in question. A special type of informal place names is represented by the nicknames derived from official city, town or state names.

Keywords: informal place name, nickname, onym, motivation, motivational type.

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ДИФУЗНІ ПРОЦЕСИ ЛЕКСИКИ В МОВІ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ПЕРІОДИКИ (НА ПРИКЛАДІ ЛЕКСЕМ УСНОГО РОЗМОВНОГО МОВЛЕННЯ)

Вступ. На сучасному етапі розвитку української мови можна говорити як про позитивні зміни – відновлення престижу, звучання її в громадських місцях, у розмовах дітей і підлітків, зацікавленість її вивченням російськомовних студентів, так і негативні – подальше панування російської мови в багатьох населених пунктах нашої держави, а також постійне її вживання на радіо та телебаченні. Двомовність – процес, що негативно впливає на українську мову. Стихійне співіснування двох мов призводить до виникнення такого явища як суржик, який продовжує поширюватися областями, містами і селами нашої держави, спотворюючи українську літературну мову.

Значного поширення “гібридне українсько-російське мовлення” набуло наприкінці ХІХ – на початку ХХ століть [7, 105]. У часи радянської України вивчення суржику було забороненим. Однак попри табу дослідження суржику мали місце. Так свою розвідку цьому явищу присвятив Б. Антоненко-Давидович. За словами Лариси Масенко, науковець дав “чітке визначення суржику і пов’язаної з ним загрози тотального розмивання норм української літературної мови” у праці “Як ми говоримо” [7, 108].

Книга письменника була видана 1970 року, але незабаром цензура внесла її до списку забороненої літератури. Після оголошення незалежності нашої держави дослідження вчених щодо українсько-російського суржику активізувалися. Так, одна з перших дослідниць О. Сербенська продовжила роботу Б. Антоненка-Давидовича, розвиваючи його погляди.

Суржик, його появу, історію розвитку та місце в українській мовній системі описують у своїх працях Н. Дзюбишина-Мельник [3], Л. Масенко [7; 8], В. Радчук [10], Л. Ставицька [13], В. Труб [16], Т. Фудерер [18] та інші.