



DODGE CITY IN 1872.

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Facts and Fiction

Every place has its name, and every name has its place. (Or should this statement be qualified?) At least in *this issue* every place has its name, and every name has its place.

“Interesting theory,” you may say, “but so what?”

So what’s in a name? Some good stories for one thing. Some history for another, and often some interesting sociological commentaries. The study of the origins of place names in a given community may unearth some skeletons in closets, some ghosts in the graveyards, some spoofs by the people—or it may simply turn up some clay-cold facts. Whatever may be turned up in such a study, however, the student of folklore, of local history, or of the heritage of a people finds place name origins valuable.

The name origins may or may not be indicative of the characteristics of the settler group. The name Lindsborg, for example, would point to some Swedish town-namers because “borg” is the Swedish word for “fort” (or castle) and “Lind-” appears frequently in Swedish surnames. But why Halstead? Why Oketo? Why Bird City?

Again, Le Loup would indicate that the town was settled and named by Frenchmen, Liebethal by Germans. But how can Osawatomie be explained? Or La Crosse, or Melvern, or Dexter?

The name origins may or may not be indicative of the location of a town. Highland, for example, points toward its high elevation, Neosho Rapids to its location near the rapids of the Neosho River. But what about Hill City and Courtland and Haysville?

But instead of speculating any further, let’s find out about Anniejane Cover (rhymes with “clover”), and then let her enlighten us on some Kansas place name origins.

Mrs. Cover, of Abilene, is a native Kansan and a loyal one. Her grandfather Hicks brought his family from New York state to Kansas in the early 1880’s. He purchased a farm north of Lawrence from Amos A. Lawrence, the man for whom the town was named. Mrs. Cover was born

on that farm and lived there until she was twenty. She attended elementary and high school in Lawrence, and went to K.U. for one year, later finishing her college work at Kansas State Teachers College.

Mrs. Cover has raised two fine sons (with the help of her husband, of course), and has taught at the grade school level for eighteen years in this state. With her enthusiasm, energy, and understanding, she could not help but be successful. She certainly has been successful in beginning her study on Kansas place name origins. (Only three or four months ago did she start this project!) A complete study will probably take years, so if any reader knows any good stories about the origins of any Kansas town names, send them in to Mrs. Anniejane Cover, Route 3, Abilene, or to *Heritage of Kansas*.

Now without further ado, let's learn about "Some Place Names of Kansas" by Anniejane H. Cover.

