As a linguist who is in the present instance trying to discover history, or reconstruct it, I feel a bit out of place in the present company, for my interest is rather to dispel than preserve folklore. On the other hand the naming practices of a people certainly mirror their spirit and interests, and hence my interests have a common meeting ground with yours.

The choice of classical names, for people as well as places, was part of the spirit of the nineteenth century in the United States. There is nothing unusual about their appearance in Kansas. How they got here will come out in the sequel.

This afternoon I shall be giving you a progress report on my investigation into the place-names of classical origin or inspiration in the state of Kansas. It would be pleasant if one could simply enumerate a number of semantic categories of names, give a list or count of each type, and say “Done!” But this is not fully possible at the present time.

My collections—compiled essentially from the late Robert W. Baughman’s book *Kansas Post Offices* (Topeka, 1961)—include roughly 300 names that (a) are attested Latin or Greek words; (b) were obviously formed in post-Classical and even modern times in more or less successful imitation of Latin and Greek; or (c) may possibly have been attempts at giving a name a classical flavor, but so faintly show classical inspiration that no definite statement about any one of them can be made unless we should find out exactly who thought up the name and why. Among such problematic names are those ending in -a, that look like stylish girls’ names of a century ago, e.g. *Fleta*, *Florena*, *Vanora*, and as such are probably names taken from early residents and no more classical in their intended effect than certain other names that I shall cite presently—names that did exist in Latin and Greek but whose ultimate origin is beside the point. I suspect that when all of the problematic names have been eliminated the number of classical names in Kansas will be below 200.

Perhaps the group of names with the most classical aura is that of figures of mythology and legend. At the moment there appear to be over 30 names ranging from *Achilles* to *Zephyr*. Interesting are the...
doublets Alcyone and Halcyon, Hesper and Vesper. There have been three Auroras, at least one of which is supposed to be named after the Illinois city and so must have been chosen for its evocation of the recent past of some settler rather than of the distant past. Not only is there a Vesta (who for all we know was someone’s wife or daughter and not the Roman goddess of the hearth) but there is also a unique Kalvesta, which we are told has Greek kalos “beautiful, good” prefixed.

It is not surprising that in a state where agriculture is the number one industry there are 20 odd names in a category I call “agriculture, plants, and animal husbandry.” These names, too, range from A to Z, specifically from Agricola to Zeandale. The Agricola of Kansas has been found to be the first town with this name in the United States (1876). Agricola, of course, is the “farmer” in Latin. Zeandale (1857) is a hybrid: -dale was suffixed to zea, the name of a genus of grasses, including zea mays, Indian corn; zea goes back to Greek zea, aeia, the name of some types of grain; its use in a place name seems unique to Kansas. A few other words in this group are Bosland ("Cow-land"), Pastura, and Spica ("ear of grain"). My favorite is Aroma, which probably does not refer to the barnyard as one might suspect initially (Greek did have an aroma “aromatic spice” which lies behind English aroma) but is more likely Greek aroma “arable land.”

Names of historical personages may number as many as 30. They also range from A to Z: Adrian to Zenobia. Among them are Cato, Flavius, Homer, Plato, Pliny, Tully, and Virgil. Some of these must simply repeat town names back east. Others may have been taken from the given names of settlers and may eventually have to be so groups. A name worth dwelling on is Bucyrus. It and all the other towns of the same name in the United States must repeat the name of Bucyrus, Ohio. According to William D. Overman in his Ohio Town Names (1958 ed., p. 20) this town was named about 1820 and refers either to a Busiris of ancient Egypt, which I strongly doubt, or contains the name of “Cyrus the Persian” with the prefix Bu- “beautiful,” referring to the countryside. Well, perhaps the name Cyrus cannot be disputed, but Bu- does not mean “beautiful” in Greek or Latin; rather Greek bou- as a prefix means “huge, monstrous” and is the word for “cow” or “ox” cognate with Latin bos. I suspect that Bucyrus was a valiant attempt at a Greek-sounding name, and when I Hellenize it to Boukyros it feels as Greek as can be—but no such Greek word ever existed. Or can Bu- be simply a respelling of the first syllable of beautiful!
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About 40 places in Kansas bear names of cities and countries of the ancient world, or neo-Latin names for locations in the Old World. There have been 3 Albions (Albion seeming an attempt of the Romans to reproduce a native name for Britain); 2 Athens, 2 Romes, 2 Syra-
cuses, Zenobia’s Palmyra, and other ancient cities; an Arcadia and a New Arcadia, 2 Atticas, a Laconia and a Sparta; an Ilion and a Troy. Belgica, New Cambria, Germania, Helvetia, Italia, and Scandia (earlier New Scandinavia) are either ancient or medieval Latin; they and others like them tell us as a group that classical place-
names were stylish when Kansas was being settled and tell us in-
dividually where their principal founders had come from. Of un-
certain origin is Media (1878), which may be the land of Medes, or the Pennsylvania city, or a neo-classical coinage, since the settlement was established at a point on a railroad midway between Lawrence and Ottawa. Or else, it has been suggested to me, it prefigures the recent watchword of Kansas “Midway USA!”

Two names of ancient places other than political units are found: Aetna, which must be of ancient inspiration because of the Ae-
spelling, and Tempe.

Two letters of the Greek alphabet are found: Alpha and Delta.

There are about a dozen names that seem to have geographical and topographical significance, e.g. 2 Acemes (though figurative use is possible), 3 Akron (I wonder how many were actually on a hilltop), 3 instances of Oasis, a Montana, a Fontana, and a surprising Terra Heights. I should note that the same name may have been used more than once as settlements and post offices failed.

Nine terms, more or less, of astronomy and meteorology appear, overlapping with other categories. Aurora (3 instances), Alcyone and Halcyon, Hesper and Vesper, and Zephyr have already been mentioned. Comet may be the ordinary English word, and so may Zenith; the two Stellas may be personal names.

A half-dozen verbs appear: Amo, Cresco (three times), Fiat, Ovo (unless it’s an egg), Scio (twice)—these from Latin. Greek Eureka is also found. These names are known from other states, as are just about all the names I have been discussing.

There are a good number of names that defy classification. Among these are Agenda, Angelus, Concordia, Ego, Emporia, Excelsior, Museum, Plexus, Superior, and Xenia. The origin of some is known; all must have an interesting history.

Somewhat problematic are names derived from minerals, when these are the usual English words, e.g. Carbon, Carbondale (twice),
Gypsum, Niter, Radium, Silica (twice). Argentine looks like a recent neo-classical coinage; Petrolia, with its final -ia, is one for sure.

There are a large number of neoclassical coinages, some old and some recent. Names like America, Americus, Atlanta, Columbia, Columbus, Georgia, and even Utopia came to Kansas from elsewhere. Most interesting to me are names formed by adding -ia to a family name, e.g. Dentonia, Padonia, Wirtonia (probably). These follow closely the Roman pattern of naming a place after the people who lived there: the Galli were said to live in Gallia, for example, and the Germani in Germania. I am endlessly amused by the fantastic Nonchalanta and Violenta, which are based on ordinary English words (in turn borrowed from French), though I must add that the latter may alternatively be taken from the name of a character in Shakespeare’s All’s Well that Ends Well, for literary allusions are a source of Kansas names. Indianapolis and Minneapolis appear to be transplanted; Centropolis may be a local coinage and Kanopolis must be. Polis was, of course, the Greek word for “city.”

The ultimate in names in -polis occurs in Kansas, namely Opolis (the O- is pronounced like the name of the letter). I think I can explain this name. In 1868 J. L. Davis and Ebenezer B. Hoyt founded a town in Crawford County just on the Missouri line, calling it State Line (Stateline). Its postoffice was called Steven(s)town after Leonard G. Stevens, the first postmaster. After the railroad came through in 1876 the town was resurveyed by the founders, and it got its new name in 1877. On 4 June of that year the post office was changed from Steven(s)town to Oopolis, and on 5 July to Opolis. The postmaster at the time of these changes was John H. Ozbun (Osborn, Ozburn). I venture to say that Opolis was derived from the postmaster’s name (taking its initial letter) just as Steven(s)town had been, and that the city got its name from the new post office. But I am bothered by Oopolis, in case that it did not contain an erroneous dittography, i.e. an extra o or lo, that was quickly corrected. Since Greek holos means “whole, entire,” Oopolis could conveyable by poor Greek for “big city,” coined by cofounder Hoyt, who had taken the classical course at Knox College in Illinois; but why it should have been shortened to Opolis after one month I cannot say. And so I prefer the first explanation, although I must admit I don’t know why the town should have been renamed for the post office.

Just one week before the scheduled delivery of this paper I had for a few moments thought that further evidence had turned up supporting my explanation of Opolis. John Fydjord, in his new volume Kansas Place-Names, which had only then become avail-
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able to me, cites an Ospolix as the short-lived predecessor of Opolis. It looked to me as if the first two letters of the postmaster’s name
had been used. But neither of Fydjord’s cited sources mentions any form other than Opolis; nor does he comment on the Olopolis that
appears several times in Baughman’s lists. Since Fydjord simply doesn’t say where he found Ospolis, the matter must continue un-
certain until the discrepancy between it and Opolis can be cleared up.

I have postponed until now mentioning some names that are of ultimate classical origin but have no classical reference as they are
used in Kansas. Towns named after known settlers are Alexander, Augusta, Delta, one Letitia, Sylvia. Eudora is named after an
Indian girl whose father was Pas(h)al (Pascel) Fish. Victoria was founded by some Englishmen who decided to honor their queen.
Indian girl whose father was Pas(h)al (Pascel) Fish. Victoria was founded by some Englishmen who decided to honor their queen. The
best-known Ulysses is the seat of Grant County. Horace and Tribune look so Latin, but, alas, they are side-by-side in Greeley
County, commemorating the great journalist, who made a famous trip through Kansas, and his newspaper. Nonclassical Whitelaw, a
few miles away, recalls his associate, Whitelaw Reid. It has even been claimed that nearby Hector preserves the name of Greeley’s
dog! Thus we see that although it may be disputed just how deeply the spirit of things classical has affected Kansas, Horace Greeley has
certainly become part of the folklore of Kansas. And on this note I shall close.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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APPENDIX I

Map showing location of Ransomville and the sections Cap Ransom first leased when coming to this area. (Courtesy of Ransom Family)
APPENDIX II

Lease telling about the agreement between Lizzie Richards and H. G. Ransom.
(Courtesy of Ransom Family)

William H. Schofield

Kansas City, Burlington and Santa Fe Railway Co.

Williamsburg, Kan. Aug. 28, 1878

Agreement entered into this County Fifth Day of May 1878 between Lizzie A. Richards of
Chesterfield, and former H. G. Ransom of Williamsburg
Kan., this is to certify Richards leased to Mr. Ransom the land hereinafter described on Section 40 and 31,
Wallingby now Makeup for the purposes of farming
Other lands and appurtenant as one unit, the
Out for the term of time from date and
Also the Rights of way for road or rail and
Or now when anything has been done.
The Royalty for eternal land is to be one half
Out the Nature and as a perfect, that
Of the 1878 Rents are inalienable of the said
Ransom and the only way to alienate himself
Land of land during the Company land
Season ending May 1st 1878
The Royalty was paid annually on the 15th
For the preceding Month to the heirs and
Sister of H. G. Richards

Lizzie M. Richards
APPENDIX III

Picture 1
H. G. ("Cap") Ransom with one of Ransomville's horses. (Courtesy of Ransom family)

Picture 2
One of the coal mines back when it was in operation. (Picture courtesy of Ransom family)
APPENDIX IV

Picture 3
One of the miner's homes. Now used as a garage. A few of these houses are still being used.

Picture 4
The General Store and Post Office at Ransomville. (Courtesy of Ransom family)
APPENDIX V

Picture 5: The back of the General Store and Post Office.

Picture 6: Full picture of store and Post Office. (Pictures courtesy of Ransom family)
Picture 7: Post Office and General Store as seen today.

Picture 8: Post Office and General Store as seen today from front.

Picture 9: New grain bin built when Cap Ransom started buying and selling grain.

(Picture courtesy of Ransom family)
APPENDIX VII

Picture 10: All of the work was done on the farm by horse and wagon. (Picture courtesy of Ransom family)

Picture 11: To place the hay in the hay loft, a hook and pulley were used. In this picture the hook is in the hay and the men are getting ready to pull the rope in order to raise the hay to the loft. (Picture courtesy of Ransom family)
Ile farm by horse and wagon. (Picture courtesy

APPENDIX VIII

Picture 12

Picture 13

Picture 14

Picture 15

Pictures 12, 13, 14, and 15: All pictures of the new Ransom home built in 1905.

(Pictures courtesy of Ransom family)
APPENDIX IX

Picture 16: The Ransom home built in 1905 as it is seen today.

A. L. Cook, the wealthiest man in Franklin County at this time. Donated gift to the Ottawa hospital in Ransom's name. (Picture courtesy of Ransom family)

Picture 17: A. L. Cook, the wealthiest man in Franklin County at this time. Donated gift to the Ottawa hospital in Ransom's name. (Picture courtesy of Ransom family)
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