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Review of *People Places: Saskatchewan and Its Names* By Bill Barry

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People Places: Saskatchewan and Its Names. By Bill Barry. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1997. Maps, illustrations, photographs, foreword, introduction, note on sources, appendix. xiii + 202 pp. \$29.95 paper.

Bill Barry has collected a vast amount of information on the more than 25,000 place names in Saskatchewan and made it accessible in three publications. There is, first, a comprehensive computer database, arranged alphabetically but also sortable by location, date, or class of entry, available from the author and in many Saskatchewan libraries. Barry has always had a particular interest in a thematic approach to the study of place names, however, and *People Places: Saskatchewan and Its Names* provides much interesting and personalized information on the naming of many, but certainly not all of the places identified in the computer database. In addition, a comprehensive dictionary on Saskatchewan place names, self-published in 1998, is also available from the author.

The first chapter appropriately discusses the many Saskatchewan names derived from the province's First Nations heritage, a subject about which Barry clearly has done extensive research, consulting widely with knowledgeable First Nations people, particularly linguists of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College. Railways provided names for many of the towns, sidings, and settlements that sprang up along their lines and are discussed in a separate chapter, as are various ethnic groups that settled in Saskatchewan as well as many of the well-known fur traders, politicians, businessmen, writers, military heroes, and prominent local people. Names of numerous old world places were transplanted, while other Saskatchewan places were named to honor major battles or military leaders. Many names owe much to local or individual idiosyncrasies, while others are of enigmatic or unknown origin.

Post Office records yielded Barry much information, as did the voluminous records of

Saskatchewan rural school districts. The Medical Services Branch of Health and Welfare Canada, the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, as well as staff at various archives, libraries, and museums also provided relevant data. Barry complains, however, that some publications, particularly Peter Russell's *What's in a Name*, printed not only valuable and well researched material but also "a host of myths and legends." Although Barry's research seems more meticulous, he does not provide extensive footnotes. No doubt he has them in his computer database.

It is always easy to point to omissions. Place names along the Canadian Northern Railway mainlines receive relatively scant attention, as do many of the old world names Menno-nites gave to their villages. The author discusses the patriotic motivation of those who named places to honor important military battles or leaders, but there is no reference to the vindictive manner in which such names were sometimes imposed on communities with strongly pacifist, enemy-alien, or French Canadian populations thought to be inadequately enthusiastic about the war effort.

People Places is, and perhaps will always remain, a work in progress. It provides genuinely engaging personalized information, but will be further improved as readers accept Barry's invitation to provide input to future editions.

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