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Book Review: A Provisional Gazeteer of Florida Place-Names of Indian Derivation

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BOOK REVIEWS

A Provisional Gazetteer of Florida Place-Names of Indian Derivation, Either Obsolescent or Retained, Together with Others of Recent Application. By J. Clarence Simpson. Edited by Mark F. Boyd. (Tallahassee, Florida Geological Survey, Special Publication No. 1, 1956. X+ 158 pp. Maps.)

THE LANDSCAPE OF FLORIDA is dotted with Indian names, some of them with the long, rolling music of Chattahoochee and Okeechobee, others' with the terseness of Micco and Nittaw. But all of them, with the exception of a few latter day imports, are part of our historical heritage.

Through an unfortunately short lifetime of interest in all things Floridian, J. Clarence Simpson compiled such information as he could on place-names of Indian origin in our state. The task of editing the manuscript for publication was undertaken by Mark F. Boyd with his usual competence.

There are 277 entries in the gazeteer. In each case the location of the feature is given. Early references in maps and documents are listed, and the meaning, or possible meaning, in the Indian tongue is given. Of particular value is the extensive cross-referencing. The book is easy to use. Four maps at the end of the book aid in locating the place-names discussed in the text.

One cannot help but note the paucity of Florida place-names derived from the truly aboriginal, pre-Seminole, languages of Florida. The vast majority of the names are from the Creek or Hitchiti, i.e., Seminole.

This book is undeniably a valuable reference work for anyone working in the field of Florida History. But to those of us who knew him, it is equally welcome as a posthumous tribute to a modest scholar and scientist. His keen mind ranged widely over such fields as geology, archaeology, natural history and history, and his knowledge of the Florida terrain was unequalled. All of this he gave freely to co-workers. There are not many publications which bear Clarence Simpson's name on their covers, but a great many bear the influence of his knowledge on their pages.

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