

George R. Stewart's classic study of place-naming in the United States was written during World War II as a tribute to the varied heritage of the nation's peoples. More than half a century later, *Names on the Land* remains the authoritative source on its subject, while Stewart's intimate knowledge of America and love of anecdote make his book a unique and delightful window on American history and social life. *Names on the Land* is a fascinating and fantastically detailed panorama of language in action. Stewart opens with the first European names in what would later be the United States—Ponce de Leon's flowery Florida, Cortes's semi-mythical isle of California, and the red Rio Colorado—before going on to explore New England, New Amsterdam, and New Sweden, the French and the Russian legacies, and the unlikely contributions of everybody from border ruffians to Boston Brahmins. These lively pages examine where and why Indian names were likely to be retained; nineteenth-century fads that gave rise to dozens of Troys and Athens and to suburban Parkside, Brookmont, and Woodcrest Manors; and deep and enduring mysteries such as why "Arkansas" is Arkansaw, except of course when it isn't. *Names on the Land* will engage anyone who has ever wondered at the curious names scattered across the American map. Stewart's answer is always a story—one of the countless stories that lie behind the rich and strange diversity of the USA.

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