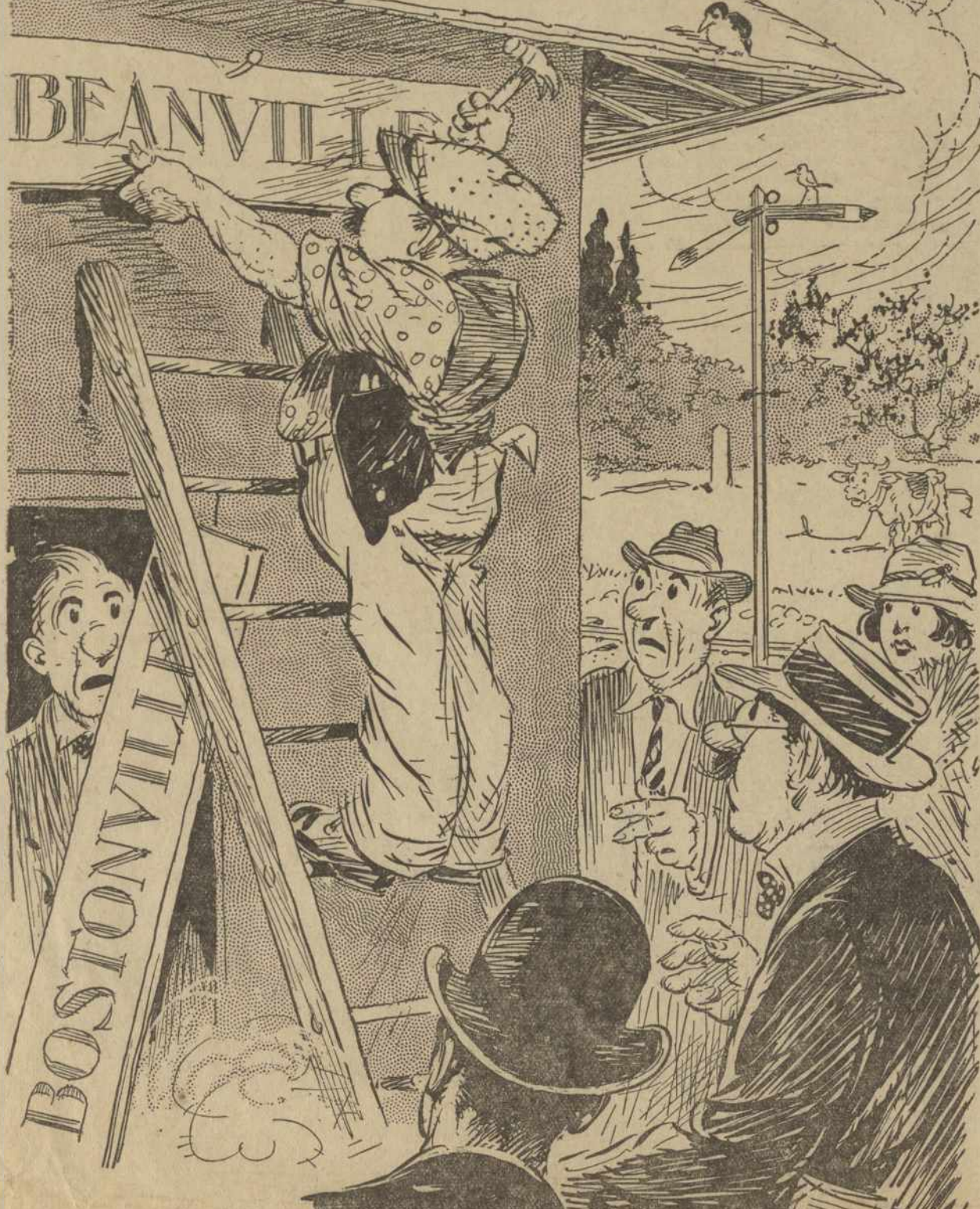


Will They Change the Name of Our Town?



Drawing by Ray Walters.

DO YOU like the name of your town? Do you want it changed? Can you present good reasons for making a change?

Whether you want a change or not, now is the time for everyone interested in place names to come forward and assist the government in its gigantic task of compiling the hundreds of thousands of names bestowed on geographical units and natural objects throughout America. Now for the first time all the Jones' corners, Wildcat creeks, Hogback mountains and amusingly named hamlets in the country are to be christened officially by the federal government.

This compilation will include the review of each name for authenticity, proper spelling, and in many cases propriety and convenience. Attempt will be made to evolve new names for places which now have none. Then all will be published in an official gazetteer.

"The history of the nation is reflected largely in these names," said Frank Bond, chairman of the United States Geographic board, which is to supervise the work. "It is a big job, and the board will need a lot of voluntary help. We hope to develop widespread and constructive interest in place names."

The board is appealing to the governors of the states to assist in quickening the sources of the vast amount of material which the board must gather and scrutinize. The gazetteer is to contain the name, authentically attested even as to spelling, of every hamlet, village, town and other geographical unit, as well as that of every creek, river, bay, inlet, mountain or natural object having or deserving an identifying name.

In the majority of cases names already exist in undisputed forms, and consequently much of the task will entail compilation only. It is expected, however, that when the board comes to pass on these officially there will be many demands that old names be discarded and new ones adopted. Even without the stimulation to such action as the present work provides, the board in the past regularly has handled many requests of that same sort.

In making up the official gazetteer

many changes probably will be thought desirable in certain instances on account of confusing duplications and sometimes truly objectionable terminology. Recently, for example, the board accepted a new name for Little Smallpox creek in Wisconsin because of the claim that the old name carried a detrimental suggestion.

The board has good reason for undertaking this work. In probably no other country in the world is there such a tremendous duplication of place names as in the United States. There are, for example, dozens of Deer and Silver creeks. There are ten or more Lookout mountains, at least two of which are of note historically or otherwise. Scores of towns have been named after famous Americans and well-known European places: the Paris and Londons are legion. This of course results in using the same names more than ever.

There are cases of small villages in the same county using the same names, and many instances of neighboring streams being identified by the same name. These confusions made little difference in the early days of the country, but now, with intensified communication, they are bothersome in many ways. This is particularly true in map making of the kind done by the United States geological survey.

Confusion of many kinds has been found. There are instances of a multiplication of names by common usage for the same place or object. There are small rivers known to people in one county by a name different from the one designating it in another county. Mountains called Hogback

on one side are called Green on the other.

In gazetteering places and objects that have more than one name each the board must decide which are most authentic and appropriate. There is room for a thousand heated local disputes in the clarifying of these confusions. Many people surrender old place names with great reluctance and many others are equally disputative about the way place names should be spelled.

In formulating the gazetteer new names will have to be originated, for there is still a large number of nameless natural objects of distinction or importance in the country. In the Rockies alone there are hundreds of tall mountain peaks which never have been christened.

In clarifying confusion and finding appropriate new names a vast amount of research in local history, custom, philology and convenience must be done. Little attention will be paid to etymology as such, for in evolving place names usage as a rule guides that science. When L'Eau Fraie becomes Low Freight or custom turns Aux Anes into Ozan the national board raises no staying hand. For the most part the board attempts only to guide the currents of usage.

Old names, such as reflect early history or preserve the names of original settlers, are preferred. The objection that an old name is homely or even ludicrous does not carry much weight with the board. In Indian names, wherever preserved, also have the affection of the board. But in passing on these no attempt is made to conform to the originals as against usage or simplicity.

Still Awake

The world may quit sleep, according to a chemist, but it seems to many of us that a great number of its population abandoned sleep some time ago.—Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman.

Named From Genoese

Mincing Lane, London, the center of the wholesale tea trade, derives its name from certain tenements there once owned by the "minchuns," or nuns, of St. Helen's. There, in the time of the Plantagenets, lived a colony of Genoese traders called galley-men because they brought their wines and other merchandise to Galley wharf, says the London Chronicle. They were a wealthy and powerful

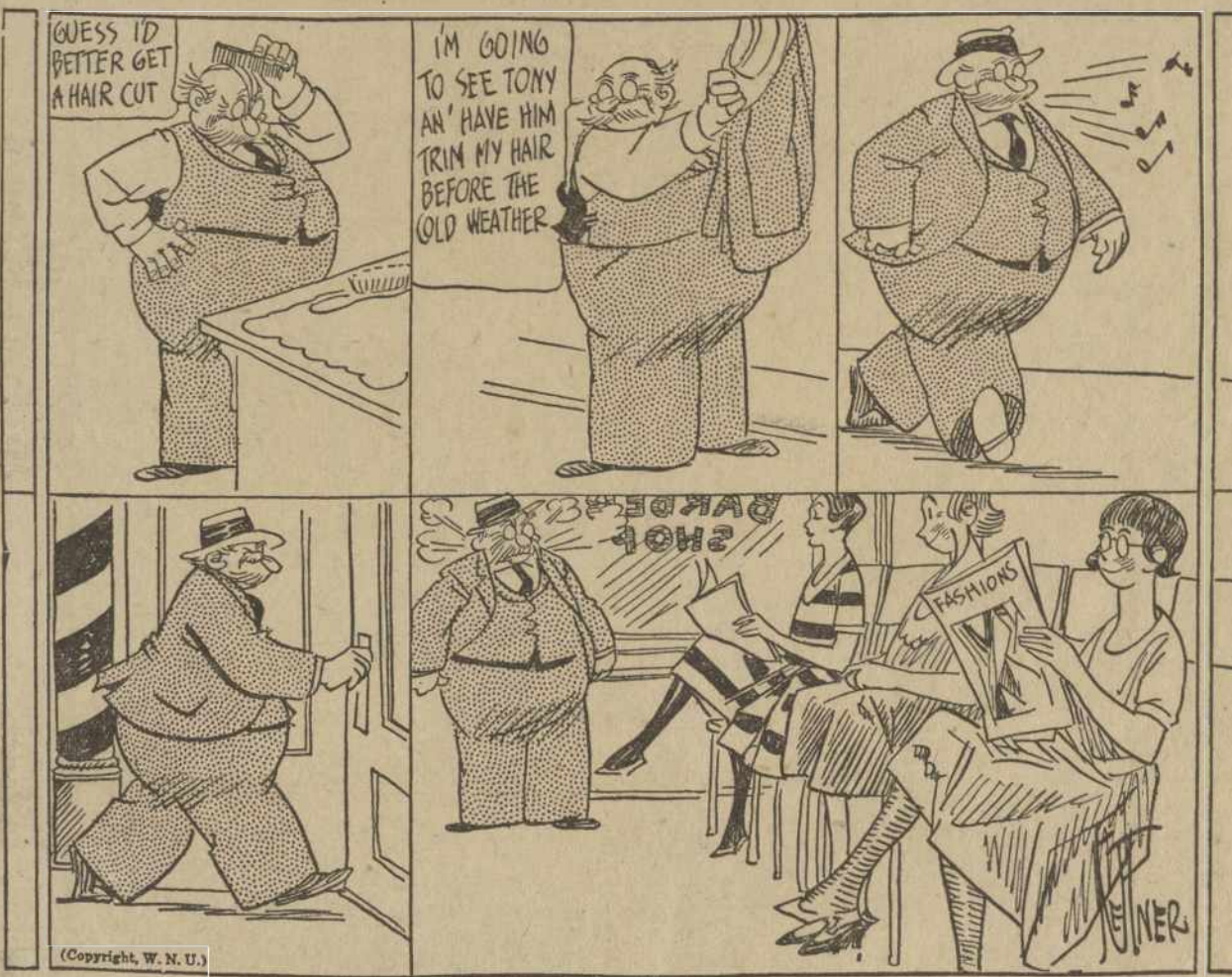
people and one time issued a silver coinage of their own. These coins, known as "galley half-pence," were broader than the ordinary English silver half-pennies but not so thick and strong. Their use was prohibited by an act of parliament in the reign of Henry IV.

Frenchman's Discovery

One hundred years ago Braconnot, a French chemist, while examining various vegetables and fruits, discovered the jellifying principle of fruit

OUR COMIC SECTION

Our Pet Peeve



THE FEATHERHEADS

The First and Great Commandment



MICKIE, THE PRINTER'S DEVIL

Dogs Will Be Dogs

