

# Humor, Sorrow Reflected In Names Pioneers Dubbed Many Mountain, Town Locations

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"Names make news—" an old editor on a paper on which I was learning the news-game once told me. "Get names, lots of them, and you'll always come out on top."

And, I've always heeded that bit of information—"Names make news." Names have always fascinated me, especially place names. Why was a place called what it was? What was the origin of the name? Who gave it that name? And possibly, if you had the time to dig deep enough you could uncover endless reams of copy.

I have always hoped that someone, someday would produce a tabulation or index of California names, and their meanings—and early this year, there was an answer to that hope.

Erwin G. Guddé's book, "California Place Names," came into being, produced one of the finest publications of its kind. The book is not only accurate, informative, educational and historical—it is entertaining.

Printed by the University of California Press, the publication covers a wide scope. Guddé lists it as a "Contribution of the University of California to the Centennial Celebrations of the State of California, 1948, 1949, 1950." And a wonderful contribution it is.

"Local names," says a quotation in the early pages of the book from Isaac Taylor, "—whether they belong to provinces, cities, and villages, or are the designations of rivers and mountains — are never mere arbitrary sounds, devoid of meaning. They may always be regarded as records of the past, inviting and rewarding a careful historical interpretation."

I was particularly interested in Humboldt county names, and some time ago compiled a partial list of county names, but never continued the project. I find that Guddé has many of those names in his book, their sources and their meanings, as well as their pronunciation.

## BOOK RECOMMENDED

For anyone interested in Californiana — or Humboldtiana (possibly bad usage in the latter), I would like to recommend this book as a definite "must" for their bookshelves. It may be obtained through local bookshops or from the University of California Press.

It has been a task in itself to pick out many of the following names which Mr. Guddé has compiled in his book, to give you an idea of what has been done, along with those that he has compiled, I have also added many from my own historical references, from the United States Coast Pilot, county histories, and other sources.

As a key, those names defined by Mr. Guddé are listed with a number, example: Arcata (12).

The number will serve as a key to the page in the book, where the definition may be found. Sources from the United States Coast Pilot will be found keyed "(cp)". Those sources which I have supplied or obtained from other quarters are unmarked.

Corrections or improvements on definitions, spelling, sources, etc., on any of the foregoing will be more than welcome. We also will state that the following list is far from complete.

## HUMBOLDT PLACE NAMES

### ARCATA

**Arcata (12):** The town, an offspring of the Humboldt boom of 1850, was founded and named Union Town some time before April 17 of that year by the Union Company. To avoid confusion with Uniontown in El Dorado, the name was changed to Arcata in 1860. Indian village on present Arcata site was named "Kori."

**Arrow Tree:** Old redwood tree located 2½ miles from Trinidad Highway, 1¼ miles from Arcata. Sacred Indian landmark.

**Alderpoint:** Settlement in Southern Humboldt's mountain country. Probably named for alder growth.

**Arcata Bay (cp):** Northern basin in Humboldt Bay, about 3 miles in diameter, with low, marshy shores, cut by many sloughs. One channel leads to old deserted Arcata channel and railroad wharf.

**Alliance:** Small rural settlement located near Arcata. Origin of name not determined.

### BAYSIDE

**Bayside (25):** A convenient name for a locality near a bay. Humboldt has a Bayside and a bay.

**Bald Mountain:** Promontory in eastern Humboldt with apparent appearance of baldness. Bald Mountain Creek takes name from same. Indian fort was located at Bald Mountain, and a war of two days' duration was fought there.

**Bear (25):** Of the many hundreds of locations in California using the name "Bear," Humboldt has an ample share. Bear River, so named because Lewis K. Wood

of Gregg party was mangled by a wounded grizzly in January, 1850.

**Bear Pen Flat:** Mountainous location in Northern Humboldt.

**Bear Rock:** Rocky area located in Southern Humboldt.

**Beatrice (26):** The original name, Salmon Creek, was changed to the present name to honor Mrs. Beatrice White, the first postmaster

when the postoffice was established in the 1830's.

**Bella Vista:** Located north of Arcata on the Redwood Highway, the name formerly pertained only to the inn located there. Now used in reference to the present residential area built up there in recent years.

**Benbow (28):** Named in 1926 for the Benbow family, who established a summer resort there.

**Berry's Summit:** Elevation 2871. High area located on Trinity highway west of Willow Creek.

**Big Flat (cp):** A narrow strip about two miles in length, located seven miles northwestward of Pt. Delgada on the coast.

**Big Bend:** Located on the North Fork of the Eel River, and in early days scene of an Indian war.

**Big Lagoon:** Body of fresh water impounded by sand dunes, located north of Patrick's Point. Name derived from size of lagoon.

**Blocksburg (33):** Named for Benjamin Blockburger, an immigrant of 1853 and participant in Indian fights, who established a store at this place in 1872. Postoffice listed as Blocksburgh in 1880.

**Blue Lake (34):** California maps show a number of "blues," among them Blue Lake, probably so named because of body of water of that color.

**Bluff Creek (34):** Named for the bluffs in that area. Used as an old-time campsite.

**Blunt's Reef (35):** The reef off Cape Mendocino was discovered by Vancouver but left nameless. In 1841 Wilkes named it for Simon F. Blunt, a midshipman on the USS Porpoise. Name was placed on map by Coast Survey in 1850.

Named for an Army officer killed in action in World War I.

**Briceland (40):** Named for John C. Briceland, native of Virginia, who about 1839 bought a ranch on which present town is developed. Postoffice listed in 1892.

**Bull Creek Flat (44):** So named because in the early 1850's Indians stole a bull from a white settler near Briceland, slaughtered it at the creek, and were killed by settlers in retaliation.

**Bridgeville (40):** So named because of its location at the bridge over the Van Duzen river.

**Brothers (41):** Group of bare rocks located south of Cape Mendocino.

**Buhne Point (44):** Named for Capt. H. H. Buhne, who entered Humboldt Bay on April 9, 1850, as second officer of the Laura Virginia, and later became a prominent Humboldt citizen.

**Bucksport (42):** Named for David A. Buck, formerly of New York, a member of the Gregg party of 1840. Town laid out in 1851.

**Bunker Hill:** High peak overlooking Eel River Valley, located about six miles south of Ferndale. Probably named after Revolutionary forebear.

**Bunker Hill Gate:** Intersection at Bunker Hill, which leaves Ferndale-Petrolia road for the Bear River area.

## CAHOTO CREEK

**Cahoto Creek (48):** Pomo word meaning lake. Located in southern Humboldt.

**Camp Nine (53):** One of a series of numbered camps which survived either lumber or railroad operations.

**Camp Grant:** Military post during Indian wars. Also private road at one time to railroad station.

**X Camp Anderson:** Bair's place on Redwood Creek, at one time serving as military post, and scene of Indian battles.

**Camp Bauer:** Logging camp near Korbel. Now park for picnicking, dancing and recreation.

**Camp Bemis:** Logging camp located in the Van Duzen country. In use today.

**Camp Weedt:** Located at mouth of Eel River. Americanized Indian name, applied to present settlement devoted to fishing and sports activity.

**Camp Grizzly:** Listed in mountainous country on Metsker's Map of Humboldt.

**Canon (55):** Names of creeks in Humboldt and Trinity counties are probably American renderings of Spanish term.

**Capell Creek (55):** Name is derived from Indian village, mentioned by Heintzelman in 1838. In 1841 Wilkes named it for Simon F. Capell, a midshipman on the USS Porpoise. Name was placed on map by Coast Survey in 1850.

**Carlotta (56):** When Northwestern Pacific built in 1903, John M.

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