There is general interest in the derivation of place names, mainly because of the historic significance, but also on account of an innate curiosity that is almost universal. In many instances the reasons for the designation are obvious, as, for example, the naming of a town "Mountainville" when it is located at the foot or on the top of a mountain; calling a stream "Rock Creek" when its channel or valley is conspicuously rocky; or naming a stream with numerous meanders "Crooked Creek." In other cases the reasons are not apparent and are not known even to the inhabitants of the region. It is also not unusual to find conflicting explanations. When this occurs, the different origins are given. It is probable that some of the interpretations offered here will be challenged. It is hoped that any disagreements of this sort will be made available to the writer and others interested in this subject.

In such an area as Lehigh County, with a recorded history of less than 240 years, it is usually, but not always, possible to discover why the place names have been assigned. In other parts of the world, toponymic investigators encounter almost insuperable difficulties.

The data for this chapter have been collected during an investigation of the maps and descriptive materials dealing with this area; individuals familiar with some phases of the study have also contributed. Both published and manuscript documents have been consulted, local histories, travel books, newspapers, etc. The more important of these are included in the Bibliography and Cartography which constitute another chapter in this volume and, in general, do not require specific mention here. A few are listed because of their especial value in compiling the data. They are as follows:


ESPENSHADE, A. HOWRY. Pennsylvania Place Names, 375 pp., State College, 1935.


The names given to the natural features of Lehigh County and to the settlements and political divisions reveal several different ten-