



Origin of a Name

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The origin of many curious geographical names has become an object of mere surmise, and this is the more the pity because they suggest such picturesque possibilities. We would like to know, for instance, how Burnt Coat and Smutty Nose came by such titles. The conglomerate that strews the fields south of Boston is locally known as Roxbury pudding-stone, and, according to Dr. Holmes, the masses are fragments of a pudding, as big as the State-house dome, that the family of a giant flung about, in a fit of temper, and that petrified where it fell. But that would have been called pudding-stone, anyway, from its appearance. The circumstance that named the reef of Norman's Woe has passed out of record, though it is known that goodman Norman and his son settled there in the seventeenth century. It is Longfellow who has endowed the rock with this legend, for he depicts a wreck there in the fury of a winter storm in 1680—the wreck of the Hesperus, Richard Norman, master, from which went ashore next morning the body of an unknown and beautiful girl, clad in ice and lashed to a broken mast.

But one of the oddest preservations of an apposite in name is found in the legend of Point Judith, Rhode Island, an innocent double entendre. About two centuries ago a vessel was driving toward the coast in a gale, with rain and mist. The skipper's eyes were old and dim, so he got his daughter Judith to stand beside him at the helm, as he steered the vessel over the foaming surges. Presently she cried, "Land, father! I see land!" "Where away?" he asked. But he could not see what she described, and the roar of the wind drowned her voice,

so he shouted, "Point, Judith! Point!" The girl pointed toward the quarter where she saw the breakers, and the old mariner changed his course and saved his ship from wreck. On reaching port he told the story of his daughter's readiness, and other captains, when they passed the cape in later days, gave to it the name of Point Judith.

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