

# MEMORANDUM



No. 8 1992

**The United States Board on Geographic Names,  
1890-1990  
Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow**



**Proceedings of a Centennial Symposium  
September 6-7, 1990**

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**Proceedings of a Centennial Symposium**  
**September 6–7, 1990**  
**An Introduction**

The celebration of the Centennial of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names in September of 1990 was an important event that brought new attention to this noteworthy organization. The decision to publish the proceedings of that celebration in *MERIDIAN* was another important event.

Created one hundred years ago, the Board has functioned to provide standardized spellings of geographic names to meet official U.S. requirements. It is the oldest body of its kind in the world. Without an independent budget, its programs reflected overall budgetary restrictions that affected its support agencies. Immediately prior to the Second World War, for example, the Board worked at a relatively slow pace. With the onset of that conflict, however, the Board's staff was greatly enlarged to provide names for new maps and charts needed by the U.S. armed services. In 1947 the Board was reorganized by Public Law 242 of the 80th Congress and given explicit missions to meet new requirements the nation had for geographic names on a global basis.

Since that time, and in the present era of new nations and changed names, the Board has functioned as the world's foremost body of experts dealing with geographic names. Its contributions not only to the United States but also to other nations and international organizations are of the highest order of accomplishment.

Members of the Board had long anticipated the Centennial as an occasion to commemorate. In 1988 a Centennial Committee was formed and both present and past Board members were tasked with planning. Gradually, they developed a program to address major milestones of the Board and to permit members and others who depend on the Board to describe their experiences.

The committee met many times and produced a daunting schedule of events. The program, scheduled for September 6, 7, and 8, 1990, included a two-day symposium with the title: "The U.S. Board on Geographic Names—Its Past, Its Present, and Its Future." The symposium included speakers from the Board, from Canada, the United Kingdom, past Board members and staff, and representatives of private, professional, and institutional organizations. It is appropriate to note that past members and staff provided recollections of their time with the Board. The principal speaker in this regard was Dr. Meredith Burrill, Executive Secretary Emeritus, who was appointed by the Secretary of the Interior in 1943 to

expand the Board's staff to meet wartime requirements for names. He served as Executive Secretary until 1973 when the undersigned succeeded him. He also acted as Honorary Chairman of the Centennial Committee. The total time of service past members and staff gave to the Board is over 200 years.

The Library of Congress, one of the Board member agencies, provided meeting space, mounted an exhibition, and published posters and pamphlets. That organization also hosted a reception for officials of member agencies and departments to open the symposium and the exhibition. Other member agencies provided funds and other support for the occasion.

A notable action was the tape recording of the entire symposium. Done initially for archival purposes, it led to a still more notable action: The magazine, *MERIDIAN*, long associated with geographic and cartographic topics, offered to publish the entire proceedings in a special commemorative issue. This opportunity brought a further challenge to planners of the Centennial as well as to editors of the magazine. It required hours to prepare and edit the typewritten transcripts. It also necessitated much correspondence and many discussions between BGN people and *MERIDIAN* editors.

In this effort, credit goes to Mr. Ralph Ehrenberg, chairman of the Board when the Centennial took place, who became heavily involved in the publication program. Speakers at the symposium who reviewed their manuscripts also deserve credit. Thanks go to Dr. George McCleary, editor of *MERIDIAN*, for his initiatives and patience in working with necessary papers and managing the production demands. My involvement in the publication effort was at times demanding but my main comment is that the experience was rewarding, for it again showed me how fortunate our country has been, and is, that we have the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

My hope is that this issue of *MERIDIAN* will convey the same message to its readers. My hope is also that this publication will reflect properly on the many contributions made by Board members, staff, and supporting agencies during the first century of its life. It is fitting to dedicate this issue to them.

*Richard R. Randall*  
*Executive Secretary*  
*April 15, 1992*



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# MERIDIAN

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A Journal of the  
MAP AND GEOGRAPHY ROUND TABLE of the AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
No. 8 1992 — SPECIAL ISSUE

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Meridian is published semi-annually by the American Library Association's Map and Geography Round Table. Meridian welcomes articles from all disciplines which discuss any aspect of the world of cartographic information.

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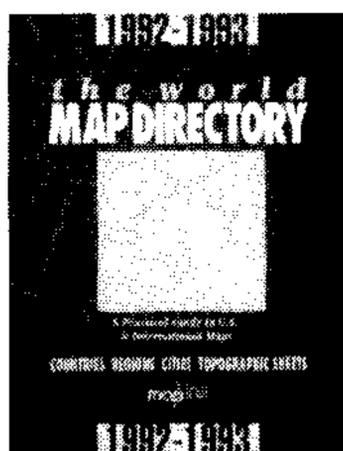
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## MERIDIAN

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# The Opening

Ralph E. Ehrenberg

Chairman of the Board of Geographic Names

Assistant Chief, Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress

On behalf of the US Board on Geographic Names, it is my honor to welcome each of you here today, as we



gather during the next few days to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the Board. I would like to thank the members of the Centennial Committee for the prodigious amount of work which they have accomplished during the last two years, not only in planning this symposium but also in preparing a

number of books, leaflets, posters, banners, exhibits, and even a tour that many of you will be going on this Saturday. These were all designed to commemorate and celebrate the centennial anniversary.

This committee was established by Rupert Southard two years ago during his chairmanship of the Board, and it has since been chaired by John Wolter. At this point, I would like to recognize properly the members of the Centennial Committee and thank them for their efforts: Meredith F. Burrill, Thomas Coghlan, Henry Tom, Sandra Shaw, Ronald Grim and Roberta Quigley. A few of the members of the committee were not able to join us this morning: Henry Frieswyk, formerly from the Central Intelligence Agency and now retired, and Gary North of the US Geological Survey. I would also like to thank Helen Dalrymple of the Library of Congress Public Affairs Office, Don Finley of the USGS Public Affairs Office, and Jim Sanders of the Forest Service Public Affairs Office for their assistance.

A number of the publications sponsored by the committee have been included in your registration packet. We will have a copy of the BGN poster for distribution to each of you, along with a centennial edition of the National Ocean Service chart.

I would like to point out a few of the publications: *A Century of Service*, a history of the Board prepared by Dr. Meredith Burrill, and *Geographic Names in the Federal Government*, a bibliography compiled by Donald Orth, which lists over 500 publications that the Board has prepared during its 100-year history. Later this year, the Geological Survey will publish a concise gazetteer of the US to commemorate the centennial of the Board.

I also would like to draw your attention to the two

exhibits along the south wall. The exhibition of BGN officials was prepared by Donald Orth and Rupert Southard, and the Forest Service exhibition, which is part of a larger, multi-region display, was mounted under the direction of Sterling Wilcox and Roberta Quigley of the Forest Service.

We have received a number of letters from colleagues who are unable to join us this morning, and I wish I could read them all. There are two that I would just like to read excerpts from. The first is from Wang Jitong, Secretary General, China Committee of Geographical Names, People's Republic of China:

Dear Chairman: Your invitation letter of July 26 has been duly received. First of all, please allow me on behalf of the China Committee on Geographical Names and myself to thank you for your kind invitation. The China Committee on Geographical Names hopes to continue strengthening our relationship and to exchange our experience on the field of geographical names. Finally, please convey my best regards to those American experts and our colleagues from different countries of the world. May the symposium succeed.

A second letter was addressed to Dr. Burrill from Bob Voskuil, a former chairman of the Foreign Names Committee. It reads:

Dear Pete: While I'm not able to be with all of you to help celebrate the BGN anniversary in early September, I will be there in my thoughts.

As you know, the work of the Board and its committees was an important part of my career in cartography. It was an area I thoroughly enjoyed, and I believe it helped standardize the spelling of geographic names throughout the government, both domestic and foreign. On the international scene, the Board played a vital role in cooperation among nations in organizing the part the United Nations came to play in the standardization process. To whatever part I was able to contribute, I will always be thankful. Most important was the opportunity it gave me to get to know and work with a group of outstanding persons both here in the United States and from overseas. Each brought a professionalism to the goal that was both noteworthy and constructive.

I send my regards to all and trust you will have a most enjoyable and stimulating meeting. And in closing, to Dr. Burrill: To you, Mr. BGN, thank you for your life-long donation to such a worthy career. You can take full satisfaction in the unique role played.

I'd also like to announce that in today's Congressional Record, Congressman Sidney R. Yates (Illinois) has placed extensive remarks honoring the Board:

(The version from the transcript)

Mr. Speaker. As chairman on the Sub-Committee on the Department of the Interior Appropriations and a member of the subcommittee that determines the Library of Congress appropriation. I rise to salute the United States Board on Geographic Names, on this, the centennial observance of that body's founding. The week of September 4-7 is the centennial observation. The Board on Geographic Names, Mr. Speaker, has served this country proudly and well for 100 years now, laboring largely in obscurity, without a budget, and often without thanks for an important job well executed. Because of the passions roused in certain local naming conflicts, Mr. Speaker, there are a few in this body who know the Board on Geographic Names, a very few. Had the Board on Geographic Names been even slightly less professional, less thorough, less fair through the years, we would all know a good deal about it. Its relative anonymity, in other words, is a tribute to the board's fine work.

(The version from the Congressional Record)

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take a moment to salute the U. S. Board on Geographic Names for 100 years of excellent service to the Nation. The Board, which has functioned without a budget and with little recognition, is a superb example of long-standing cooperation between government agencies. It has had remarkable success in resolving local "naming" conflicts and over the years it has given the country the standard names and spellings that we take for granted on maps and other officials' documents.

The Board on Geographic Names makes policy on place names. Every year, the Board reviews scores of new domestic names and suggested changes. In addition, the Board may approve several thousand foreign names in a year. The need for such a body became evident with the opening of the American West. Explo-

ration reports, mining claims, and surveys frequently referred to places and geographic features—mountains, valleys, rivers, settlements—by different names. As a result, President Benjamin Harrison created the U. S. Board on Geographic Names on September 4, 1890. President Theodore Roosevelt extended the Board's responsibilities in 1906, and the two great wars of this century greatly increased the Board's involvement with foreign names.

As it turns out, the Board has performed pioneering work in toponymy, the study of place names, and has earned for itself an estimable reputation among its counterparts the world over. The naming of places carries with it the implicit, fundamental human power of intellectual possession. The Board on Geographic Names has exercised that power with fairness, discretion, discrimination, taste, and sensitivity.

With no staff or facilities of its own and no distinct appropriation, the Board relies for those resources on the agencies from which its members are drawn: the Departments of Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, and State; the Central Intelligence Agency; the Government Printing Office; the Postal Service; and the Library of Congress. The Secretary of the Interior serves conjointly with the Board to standardize names. The U. S. Geological Survey, in the Department of the Interior, provides staff services for the Domestic Names Committee. Its counterpart in the Department of Defense, the Defense Mapping Agency, staffs the Foreign Names Committee.

The week of September 4-7 is the Board's centennial observation. The centennial is being marked by a major exhibition opening in the Madison Gallery of the Library of Congress. The exhibition, entitled "A World of Names," tells the fascinating story of how geographic places acquire their unique names. I urge you to stop by the Madison Building and visit the very informative exhibition. In addition, a series of symposia relating to the history and process of naming of geographic places is being held this week at the Library.

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# Greetings

Henri Dorion, Chairman  
Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names

Mr. Chairman, Chairmen and Executive Secretaries, dear friends from the United States Board on Geographic Names, Ladies and Gentlemen. On behalf of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographic Names, and all Canadians devoted to the toponymic mission, I would like to thank the organizers of this symposium for your kind invitation and for having permitted us to come here and express to you our admiration and respect for the magnificent achievements of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names that has been a source of inspiration and a model for us and for so many toponymic authorities throughout the world. Instead of delivering a long speech, we would need

hours to do it accurately, may we Canadians express our best wishes by presenting to you three tangible products that are the result and the expression of a century of cooperation and friendship between American and Canadian toponymic authorities. Three persons will take a few seconds of your time presenting these souvenirs at the occasion of this memorial centennial: Mr. Alec McEwen, Canada's International Boundary Commissioner; Mrs. Helen Kerfoot, Executive Secretary of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographic Names; and Mr. Remi Mayrand, President of the Commission du Toponomie du Quebec (the Quebec Place Name Board).

Alec McEwen  
Canadian International Boundary Commissioner

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my great pleasure to be here this morning. The more than 5,500 miles of land and water boundary separating Canada and the United States are portrayed on 256 official maps published by the International Boundary Commission at various scales. Some of these maps are 75 years old; many of them are out of date. A few years ago, the International Boundary Commission decided to re-map the entire boundary at appropriate scales. To this end, a pilot project was initiated to map, using digital technology, a portion of the boundary in the Corno, Ontario-Helginsburg, New York area. This new map was completed in early 1988 through the cooperation of the various international agencies, the

two sections of the International Boundary Commission, the National Mapping Division of the United States Geological Survey and the Topographic Mapping Division of the Department of Energy, Mines, and Resources in Canada, and of course, the two national names authorities. I have here today a framed copy of two maps, the old and the new, the original map published in 1922 and the new digital map published in 1988 showing the same area. In appreciation of the very fine assistance we have received from the US Board on Geographic Names, and also, of course, from their Canadian counterparts, I would like to present these two maps to the Board as part of the celebration of its centennial year.

*En l'honneur du centenaire du  
United States Board on Geographic Names  
1890 - 1990*

*Avec nos bons compliments*  
COMMISSION DE LA FRONTIÈRE INTERNATIONALE  
CANADA - ÉTATS-UNIS

We certify that this map is one of the quadruplicate set of sixty-one (61) maps adopted under Article III of the Treaty between Great Britain and the United States, signed at Washington April 11, 1808, and that we have marked thereon the Boundary Line as re-established by the Commissioners designated above, in accordance with the provisions of the said Article.

Signed June 23, 1988.

  
His Britannic Majesty's Commissioner

  
United States Commissioner

Helen Kerfoot, Executive Secretary  
Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names

On this festive occasion, I bring greetings from the members of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, from its Secretariat, and from the staff of the offices of the various members right across Canada. We congratulate you on the first 100 years, and we certainly look forward to continuous, harmonious cooperation in the years ahead. In 1975, the CPCGN started publication of a twice yearly national toponymic newsletter, cum journal, called *Canoma*. Today, I am de-

lighted to present to the chairman of your Board the bound copies that we have had made of the first 15 volumes of *Canoma*, duly inscribed to suit the occasion and also, hot off the press, the latest edition of *Canoma* that includes articles on topics of interest to both Canada and the United States, in particular concerned with the international boundary. So, our very good wishes for this centennial celebration and for, of course, your second century.

Remi Mayrand, President  
Commission du Toponymie du Québec

Mr. Chairman, dear friends, the BGN is, in all likelihood, the first structured national organization in the world set up to administer geographic names in its territory. Your organization was founded 100 years ago; the first centennial certainly calls for great rejoicing. The Commission du Toponymie du Québec is very honored to have been invited to participate in these celebrations. To meet again with friends like Donald Orth, Richard Randall, Roger Payne, and Gerd Quinting; to be introduced to other members and colleagues of the BGN; and to participate in your discussions on the history and future of your organization is indeed a very great privilege for me. For our commission, it surely constitutes an exceptional opportunity to express its feeling of fellowship with your organization, and the American people, and to pay a toponymical homage to the United States.

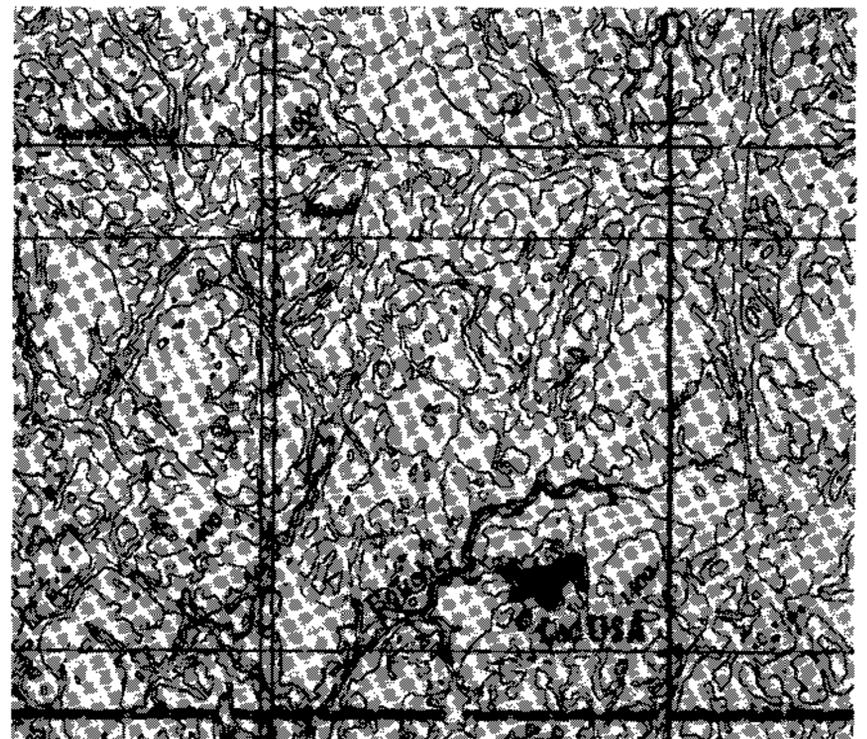
As you know, the geographic territory of Québec is full of lakes, perhaps close to one million. If Mother Nature gives them all kinds of shapes, and many of them are named according to their physical features, it may not be a total surprise to learn that one of them, on the Cote Nord of Québec quite resembles the shape of the United States, and is already known by the name of Lac USA.

It is a small lake, about one mile long by one-half mile wide. It is, however, with the greatest pleasure, that the commission, at its meeting November 16, 1989, officially gave official status to the name of this lake in honor of the United States. Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to present you with a certificate which officially confirms the new commemorative toponym and a wall plaque which contains all the topographic data about the lake. I must say that this certificate is hand made, it is pure cotton, no chemicals added, so it should last as long, perhaps, as papyrus. So I wish it a long life in the USA.

The certificate reads:

Des Québec Commission du Toponymie Commemorative Designation Certificate. Wishing to partake in the

celebrations commemorating the 100 anniversary of the United States Board on Geographic Names, wishing to acknowledge the significant contribution of the United States of America to the standardization of geographical names around the world, wishing to give concrete expression of the spirit of cooperation that endures the relationship between our two organizations, and the strong and numerous affinities among our neighboring communities, wishing to pay toponymical homage, the Commission de Toponymie du Québec, at its meeting of November 16, 1989, officially gave to a lake on the Cote Nord of Québec whose shape resembles that of the territory of the United States, the name of Lac USA. Certificate presented by Mr. Remi Mayrand, President of the Commission du Toponymie du Québec, to Mr. Ralph E. Ehrenberg, Chairman of the United States Board on Geographic Names, at the centennial celebration of the organization in Washington, September 6, 1990.



Lac USA

## H.A.G. Lewis, Chairman United Kingdom Permanent Committee on Geographical Names

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen. I cannot express sufficiently the pleasure of being here as a guest, at this, the 100th birthday—because that is what it is—party of the United States Board on Geographic Names. As many of you know, the Board on Geographic Names has two functions; I needn't tell you that. One is in relation to the geographic names in the United States of America, so called domestic names; the other is responsibility for advising official bodies of the United States on geographical names other than those of the United States, in other words, foreign names. That second function is what brings me here.

I come as a representative of my country's Permanent Committee on Geographical Names—I have to be very careful about that, and I shall mention that later—of which I am the chairman. My direct connection with the Board goes back to 1955. My connection with the US mapping agencies, the mapping community, goes back even further.

In the period since 1955, I have come to know a great many members of the Board and the staff of the Board. That long association allows me to speak of the valuable work performed by the Board in a way which, I think, only those who are intimately connected with the subject of geographical names, can comprehend. The work of the Board, as you know, is not some esoteric preoccupation with abstruse aspects of toponomy. It is, and I emphasize, all practical work. I think that is not often appreciated in the mapping community or in the wider community. In fact, work on geographical names is seldom appreciated properly until there is an emergency, like disaster relief, like war or the threat of war. Then the first question asked always: Where is it? Which is the correct spelling? How is it pronounced? What sort of thing or place is it?

In the Iraq/Kuwait emergency, reports referred to a place on the Iraq/Jordan boundary called Ruyashid. Now, the maps available to people on the spot did not show such a place. What is it? Is it a village? Is it a town? Is it just a crossing point? Is the name related to a wadi, a dry river, a dry water course of the same name a considerable distance away? These are all the types of

questions that are asked of the people of the Board on Geographic Names and the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names.

The Iraqi government announced the renaming of the city of Kuwait, reverting to an old Arabic name. A new administrative area was created, renamed for Saddam himself. Now, the first question people are asking, is: "What is the actual spelling of that old name? To what did the name refer? What really is the nature and extent of the new administrative area? These are the questions placed on people like the PCGN and the BGN. I do not need to verify that the PCGN views on all these questions have already been communicated to the BGN. That is automatic action in the collaboration between PCGN and BGN. I hope that illustrates that PCGN and BGN are addressing real issues.

Now having told you a little about the work done on geographical names by the two bodies, I mean topical work, which is in fact typical work, I can now get on with doing what I am supposed to be doing and that is to present the chairman of the BGN, and the BGN itself, with a kind of birthday card. It says: "Presented by the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use to the United States Board on Geographic Names, on the occasion of the Board's centennial. And in recognition of a long and valued association." At the bottom left is the date and on the right is my eminent signature.

You will perhaps have noticed that the Permanent Committee uses "geographical names" whereas the Board employs "geographic names;" in fact, my badge is incorrectly written. I hope that the members of the Board take note. Now that does not mean that the Committee and the Board are divided by language. On the contrary, it really infers that whatever may be the differences between us, we are united in our aims. The last line of the plaque expresses it all for me, "in recognition of a long and valued association." Now, had I worded that personally, instead of formally, I might have said, "In recognition of a long, valued, and very happy association." I wish the Board a very happy birthday, and many happy returns. Thank you.



## The Keynote Address

### On Geographic Names

Kelsie B. Harder, Professor

Potsdam College of the State University of New York

The study of place names has been mentally and professionally rewarding for many years. A few years



ago, in 1929, when I was in the fourth grade, my teacher asked us to draw maps of the areas we were studying in our geography classes. My ability in art is a degree less than non-existent. But I did know how to trace. I would tear a sheet of lined paper from my tablet, pour kerosene over it, place it over a map so that I could see the map,

and then I would trace. Now, the fact that my tracing, the textbook, and I all stank of kerosene was beside the point. Except that my mother never really did figure out why I walked around smelling like a high wick lamp.

But I did get an interest in place names, and it has never stopped. Although other types of names, as has been noticed here, have also attracted me for I very early learned that Kelsie is a formidable name, usually feminine, and I get my mail "Miss, Ms." and so on. There are jokes that have been played on this one. Harder, of course, used to produce giggles from telephone operators; why, I never knew. Names, however, did not quite have the erotic effect that they had on John Donne. He wrote a poem called "To His Mistress Going To Bed," and here is a rather meaty passage:

License my roving hands, and let them go before,  
behind, between, above, below. Oh, my America. My  
new-found land. My kingdom safe list with one-man  
men. Then where my hand is set, my seal shall be.

Well, the name of America has probably never been written so well. Names do have almost that affect. The lure of names, a phrase used by T.M. Pearce, tugs essentially at our most profound heart-felt desires and can lead to indulgences that go beyond obsession. The borderline is often crossed. The sensation is almost, maybe not quite, caught in some lines from Stephen Vincent Benet. All of you are familiar with these, I'm sure, but I'll read them again.

I have fallen in love with American names. The short names that never get fat. The snakeskin titles of mining claims, the Plumed War Bonnet of Medicine

Hat, Tucson, and Deadwood, and Lost Mule Flat.

Today, we celebrate the hundredth anniversary of a practical and necessary body, now actually an institution. The United States Board on Geographic Names, or Geographical Names, whichever you prefer, was brought into existence on September 4, 1890, by an executive order signed by President Benjamin Harrison and made legal under Public Law 242 of the 80th Congress, July 25, 1947. My remarks so far suggest the added-on value of work of the Board, above and beyond the official standardization of names and usage and spelling, which apparently is a function of the Board. The Board has influence far beyond this important task. Here then is an occasion for enumerating cursorily, the impact of the Board on persons and areas beyond standardization and beyond making decisions as to what name and spelling, among many, to choose for use as the official name of a designated area. We know, of course, that standardization of usage and spelling is an ideal. The form that acts as does the icon in the haunting short poem by Wallace Stevens, called "Anecdote of a Jar," two quatrains which I will quote here.

I placed a jar in Tennessee, and round it was upon a hill. It made the slovenly wilderness surround that hill. It took dominion everywhere. The jar was grey and bare. It did not give a bird or bush, like nothing else in Tennessee.

Now Stevens was, no doubt, an orderly, neat man, as insurance salesmen who rise to be vice-president of the Hartford Insurance Company surely have to be. Standardization is orderly, holds dominion and has around it the slovenly exonyms, local names, dialect variations, and pronunciations curious to the outsider. The need for one name to cling to in the midst of all this sprawl is paramount, although it need not and does not extend to the elimination of the other names.

To the uninitiated, and sometimes to the initiated, the work of the BGN appears repetitious, trivial, and even boring: long lists of names, bare notations, usually with a row of numbers that pin-point places in degrees, minutes and seconds. No plot, no imagery, no characters to speak of, and, without a map reference, no place. I know of persons who derive a kind of perverse pleasure out of reading gazetteers and telephone directories. But I admit that in hotel rooms, when I am confronted with no TV and either the

telephone directory or the Gideon Bible, the Gideon wins. Maybe there is really something about the hallucinatory scraps of adobe and metal that men designate as cities, or the places of dirt, rock and water designated as the Great Plains, the Great Rockies, the mighty Mississippi. Maybe they are simply a transitory imposition of syllables, a trick of the mouth and of cartographers, which will be erased by an army or a decade of unprecedented stormy disasters.

So then, what is the value-added component? Well, it is the work of the Board that influences activities other than standardization. George R. Stewart came close to it, when he wrote about naming in the United States in the first chapter of *Names of the Land*:

This is written then, as the story of that naming. How the great names, one by one, came to stand large on the maps. And how the little ones—the little names—in their thousands, rose on the tongues of the people after the varying customs of time and place, of blood and language.

So names, then, do add up to be considerably more than their bare recording intimates.

Now let's detail some of these. The importance of the BGN in military matters may have been a major reason for its creation in the first place. We've noted that already this morning. The foreign branch is constantly and continuously concerned with names on maps because names tend to be more memorable than a string of coordinate numbers, absolutely necessary for pin-pointing exactness but of little use for identification when that is necessary. We still have not learned how to rely on numbers. The Department of State needs information on local foreign names, their variance and local usages, in order to carry on diplomacy in a diplomatic way. Our names for even prominent places are not always the same ones that are used in those places. Hence an agency has to be aware of the differences and supply the information needed to promote efficient diplomacy.

We can enumerate quickly the government agencies that rely on the board for information. The domestic branch serves Agriculture, Commerce, Interior, Government Printing Office, United States Postal Service, and Library of Congress while the foreign branch assists the Central Intelligence Agency, State Department, Department of Defense, and Library of Congress. Dick Randall and Don Orth can detail the many kinds of information furnished. Providing for the needs of government agencies may be listed under practical added value.

Another added value is the knowledge that derives from the compilations furnished by both the foreign and domestic branches. Once a president said, "The business of the United States is business." Well, he was, in a narrow sense, right. Business institutions use the

BGN for locating marketing areas, finding cluster areas dotted with names which are congested locations ripe for marketing strategies. Indeed, the state gazetteers now being compiled by the Geographic Names Information System, and published by the United States Geological Survey, contain valuable information for businesses.

This series of gazetteers was initiated by Donald Orth and was directed by him and Roger Payne not for any one particular reason that I know of, but for many reasons. A major consumer of these gazetteers, in both printed and tape form, is the business community.

The academic community has benefited enormously. The geographers obviously come first, although I often wonder why so many geographers simply ignore geographical names. For my view, the best do not. I speak here of the work of Wilbur Zelinsky, Meredith Burrill, Donald Orth, Roger Payne, Gardner Barnum, and William Loy among others. Indeed, Orth and Zelinsky have been my mentors. I have even copied from Orth's books.

Orth's theoretical papers deriving from his work in the USGS and on the Board deserve collecting and publishing, and I hope they will be someday. His studies of the way we look at landscapes are major ones and need wide dissemination among geographers and the rest of us, too. Wilbur Zelinsky's cluster studies of religious place names, "Cemetery and World Beyond Imagery," one of the best articles I've ever read, and "Names of Patriotism" cross the boundaries of geography and move into full cultural and national psychology. As was said of S.T. Coleridge's poetry, Zelinsky's essays deserve to be bound in gold.

The gazetteers now being published furnish raw material for the practice and writing of history. There is no need to stop here to list the many recent historical works that I have looked into that make extensive use of names from the BGN; I will single out two or three in particular. A recent one is Murray Heller's "Call Me Adirondack." Heller used, generously, the thousands of names that the BGN listed for the area. George R. Stewart, in *Names on the Land*, cites the Board eleven times, with many pages devoted to his reliance on information provided by the Board. This was before the gazetteers became available.

Dozens of papers prepared in recent years refer to help given by the BGN. Now, of course, degrees of use of materials from BGN cause many of the texts to be classified as either history or onomastics. The occasional use of onomastic facts, as in C.A. Weslanger's "The Man and His Ship," are both history and onomastics; George R. Stewart's works are onomastics; so, too, are Heller's, where an occasional use of history occurs. Now, those three are the three types that generally occur when onomastics would be used in the

study of history.

Now, I dwell on this because that is the direction in which academic use of BGN is moving. Historical psychologists, I call them, attempt to place intent into events, and we are seeing more and more articles like this since the names became more easily available. Taking the names supplied by BGN, researchers then find out the conditions that lead to the event of naming, gaining insight into motive and historical intent rather than merely recounting the event as it took place. Through this then, we can see the conditions that motivated the act, but do not have to be concerned with the act itself. This would be the geographical, we call it onomastic, fact. Sometimes reaction to the name, such as in the Kennedy/Cape Canaveral affair, counts, too, so that the onomastic fact is continuous from inception to ever after.

Linguists have conceded that a name has an importance beyond that of being a label, a label that is generally opaque and semantically meaningless. By the linguist searching through form changes, sound changes and cultural deviations, an original and meaningful name can be found, unearthed so to speak. The linguist and the archaeologist have much in common because they both work with artifacts, the linguist with diachronic, how it was used, and synchronic, how it is used now, investigation of the name. The result of this sort of work can be used in many disciplines, all across the board, especially in the academic area by historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and so on.

Also, through the historian, we especially find the studies of settlement history and can show survival through geographic names. W.H.F. Nickelison is a master at this sort of thing. He has demonstrated the value of linguistic findings in major papers; his "Scottish Place Names" is a model of such investigations.

Specific work in onomastics now depends heavily on the work of the Board. Indeed, the projected place name survey of the United States relies almost entirely, at present, on compilations derived from the Board's decisions. The major person in this survey is Donald Orth, who for many years has been the catalyst behind it. All of us here are aware of the contributions of Orth, Roger Payne, and their co-workers to the possibility that the survey will get started and will eventually be finished, probably some 50 years from now. Great scholarly projects, of course, take a lot of time. *The Oxford English Dictionary* took over 100 years or about that. *The Dictionary of American Regional English*, which is being published at the present time, began in the 1940s although it was projected back in the 1920s, as Frederick Cassidy can tell us. He is the editor, and he still has some years to go with it. The end is in sight but is still

going on. Some volumes are being published next year. The U.S. Place Name Commission is meeting here now. Grant Smith, the commission chair, gave the particulars of the work for the BGN in his paper, "The Place Name Survey of the United States," which was read at the 1987 meeting of the International Congress of Onomastics, and has been revised for presentation in Helsinki.

I also need to mention the wisdom of the Board in avoiding making decisions on how to pronounce a name. How do we pronounce a name? That there are differences in pronunciations cannot be denied. *The Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States* by Raymond McDavies, Jr. found forty different pronunciations for the name of the state of Georgia, the informants being inhabitants of that state. For Tennessee, nineteen different ones are listed, and I'm sure that there are others.

Locals will have a different pronunciation from what we would have outside, and I will detail a few of those. The outsider, especially in English, tends to approach a name through what we would call spelling pronunciation; at least I do. There are a number of them I'll mention here. H-o-p-k-i-n-t-o-n is, locally, "Hopkitten." I was corrected once when I said "Hopkinton." "You mean 'Hopkitten.'" Okay, "Hopkitten" it is. Pyrites is "Parties." N-o-r-f-o-l-k is N-o-r-f-o-r-k; M-i-l-a-n, Tennessee, is "Mylun" instead of "Meelawn;" and L-i-d-o, Ohio, is "Liedough," not "Leedough."

Furthermore, this local pronunciation may be the correct one in the area but it might not be the dominant one everywhere else. For the outside, pronunciation has numbers on its side. Then, too, dialect variations make a great difference. A-l-b-a-n-y is "Albany" in New York and "Albaney" in Georgia. There also are arguments about "Missoura" and "Missouri," "Illinois" and "Illnoi," "Arkansaw" and "Ar-kansas," and "Ohio" and "Ohia." "Ioway" and "Iowa" is another good one. I'm glad to let the phonologists, the Sunday supplementers, and the rigid pronounciators worry about that sort of thing.

Next, perhaps, entertainment is important, maybe necessary. Obtaining knowledge about a name is enjoyable, informative, and educational, perhaps all the same thing. Two weeks ago, a member of the American Names Society sent me a map of what Raven I McDavid, Jr. used to call "Two Headed Cows." These words are names that are quaint, strange, exotic or quirky and include things like Dutch John, How, Bunny Run, Horse Heads, Checkerboard, Green Grass, Ten Sheep and Norbon. To be sure, these qualities are results of states of mind, and of course, one living in Intercourse, Pennsylvania could possibly consider, although unlikely, the place merely as "my home town." As a boy,

I spent many a Sunday in Toad Suck, a place where young adults met to mingle. It wasn't exotic to me, but when I mentioned it to someone outside the community after I left there they thought it was a very strange name. Of course, we know now that it's not that strange. Another one near by was Frog Jump. Now that was strange to me because I didn't use it very often; I didn't go visit it very often but I always thought about Frog Jump, and I had all sorts of images of frogs jumping around. So differences do exist in our attitudes, the way we are, the situation in which we live.

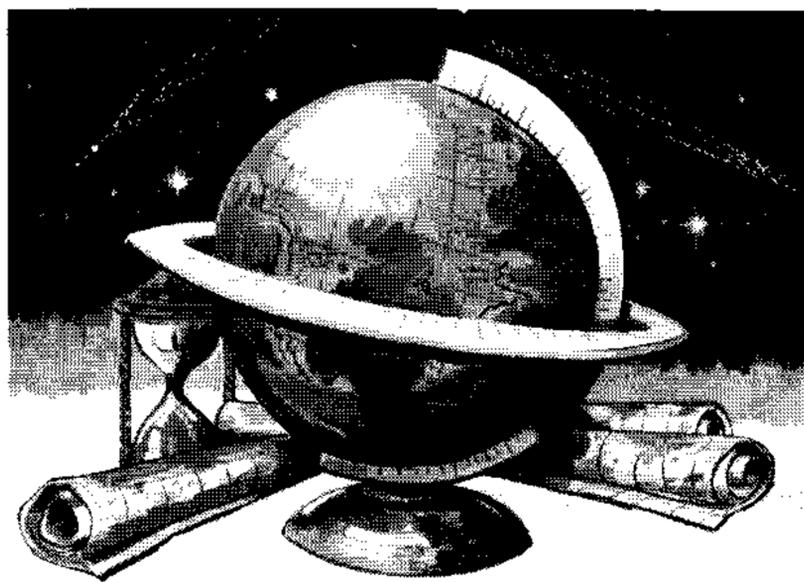
Everyone who works with names tends to notice differences, or what they would perhaps call deviations. When I moved to upstate New York, there was a town near by named "M-a-d-r-i-d." I now pronounce it "MAD-rid," just like everybody else there, and when Dan Rather, or someone else, says that we don't know how to pronounce the name, then I get a little bit excited. That did happen. He said, "They don't know how to pronounce their own name at that place, Madrid (he pronounced it MuhDRID), New York. They call it 'Madrid.'" And they do. Very few, of course, call it "MAD-rid;" lots of people call it Madrid. A little bit of Spanish can ruin you forever.

Browsing through BGN's alphabetical listing of Connecticut geographic names, I have to wonder how the following came into existence: Above All, Aqua

Vista, Ball Wall Brook, Baltic, Bantom, Dividend Brook, Misery Hill, Nibbling Brook, Mount Rat, Terradiddle, Lake Wind Wing, among dozens of others. This kind of curiosity, trivial within itself, leads to the study of names, to recognizing them as human functions and mental states, and leads to better understanding of what makes humans human.

On this day of celebrating the 100th anniversary of the US Board on Geographic Names, the only federal body that has names for its subject, existence, and yes, value, we acknowledge, gratefully, the work of its chairs, the executive secretaries, committee members, and staff members over the years. We know that the Board has no budget. People have to connive when they don't have budgets. I know about that sort of thing. But all those serving the Board are not real connivers. They simply have to find resources among federal agencies which are sympathetic to their needs and aims, which, over the years, have been the US Geological Survey and the Defense Mapping Agency.

I believe that, on September 4, 5 or 6, 2090, the 200th anniversary will be celebrated. Who knows, the Geographic Names Information System may have a file of all place names of the United States with onomastic facts for each name, just as Donald Orth visualized in the 1970s. I wish the board a "happy 100th birthday," and may it have many more such birthdays. Thank you.



**"Journey all over  
the universe  
in a map."**

*—Cervantes, Don Quixote*



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# The Creation

Donald J. Orth

BGN Executive Secretary for Domestic Geographic Names  
US Geological Survey

Because the title of my talk is "The Creation," it motivates me to start with "In the beginning." Actually in the beginning there was confusion, I think. That's a good way to start. But I'm not going to start in the beginning. I'm going to start before the beginning.



The story of the Board on Geographic Names did not begin on September 4, the date the decree was signed. By that date, policies which we still honor

today were in place and a fair number of name decisions had already been made. The beginning of the Board, in a real sense, had been about eight months earlier, sometime during the winter of 1889-1890. The setting and time were ripe. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Washington, D. C. witnessed a renaissance of academia in a political environment. There was a surge of creativity and interest in the sciences in our national capital, motivated to a considerable degree by the territorial expansion that occurred after the American Civil War. For example, during this period, the Anthropological Society of Washington and the National Geographic Society were founded in 1879 and 1888, respectively. Interestingly, the early members of the Board on Geographic Names were also members, and in some cases founders, of some of these organizations.

The purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867 seems to have been the principal event that led to the eventual organization of the board 23 years later. This event, along with the exploration of western territories, during the 1870s, created a situation where the accuracy of geographic names and their spellings became a constant problem to government scientists and chart and map makers. The problem was so serious that two men decided to do something about the matter.

Thomas Corwin Mendenhall, Superintendent of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, which has now changed its name to the National Ocean Service, and Lieutenant Richardson Clover, newly appointed Hydrographer to the United States Navy, met sometime shortly after New Year's Day in 1890. At that meeting these two men agreed to standardize the names used on the charts of their respective agencies. Mendenhall

had held the chair of physics at Ohio State University and at the Imperial University in Japan before coming to work for the government. Clover, who later became a rear admiral, spent his early naval career directing Alaska coastal surveys. These men were especially concerned about the Alaska charts where, using Mendenhall's words, "hardly a name did not admit three or more spellings and many features had more than one name."

They then took the idea of standardization a step further. It was realized that the effort would be more effective if other federal agencies joined in an agreement to standardize names. On January 8, 1890, Mendenhall wrote to the heads of several federal bureaus, and also to the newly organized National Geographic Society, explaining the name problems and suggesting a meeting to consider the possibility of creating a board of some kind. He wrote: "A board made up of representatives from different but interested government agencies, to which may be referred any disputed question of geographical orthography, and the decisions of which shall be finally accepted by all interested therein."

Almost all bureau chiefs responded favorably to the suggested meeting and the idea of a special board to deal with geographic names problems. John Wesley Powell, director of both the U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of American Ethnology at that time, was particularly interested in the creation of such a government body. He requested the attendance of Otis T. Mason, Chief Curator of Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution, and Henry Gannett, Chief Geographer of the Geological Survey, at the meeting on March 18, 1890 in Mendenhall's office.

On that day, six government bureaus took the first steps toward a national program to standardize geographic names. Mendenhall was elected chairman and Clover secretary of the organization which was given the title "United States Board on Geographic Names." A small committee was selected to investigate the method, scope and organization of the new body. Besides Mendenhall and Clover, other founding members were Rear Admiral Henry Howison, Lighthouse Board; Major Thomas Turtle, Army Engineer Corps; Herbert G. Ogden, Coast and Geodetic Survey; Andrew Allen, Department of State; Pearson H. Bristow, Assistant Postmaster General; Marcus Baker, National Geographic Society and U.S. Geological Survey; and Henry Gannett, Geological Survey.

These founding members of the Board represented a cross section of the professional community found in Washington at the time—physicist, explorer, geographer, anthropologist, historian, military officer, and political appointee. They were leaders, no nonsense men, who took a pragmatic approach to a problem. Board members served without compensation. The agencies or departments that they represented contributed their services and defrayed all expenses of the Board. Although the members had other full time positions of considerable importance, they spared no effort in focusing their collective experiences on the problems at hand.

An overall objective was to develop a program to standardize geographic names used on official government maps and charts; resolving known conflicts between these publications was of immediate concern. These goals were met by the formulation of principles of nomenclature for a national program that for the most part are with us today.

Three days after the March meeting, geographic nomenclature was the main topic for discussion at a meeting of the National Geographic Society. Comments made at that meeting, delivered in part by members of the new Board, were published in the August 1890 issue of the *National Geographic Magazine*. It is here that we get an insight into the developing philosophy that led to the principles of nomenclature adopted by the Board by the summer of 1890. Remember, all of this is happening before it was formally organized by Presidential order.

Four concepts in particular became the foundation of Board policy: recognition of present day local usage; recognition of the reference function of a name; one official name for each geographical entity; all official names will be written in the standard English alphabet. Actually these concepts were not new. Most have been used by mapmakers for centuries. But they now were formally recognized and used as a basis for a set of policy statements devised to deal with specific name problems. These problems were at once discretionary and practical—an approach parallel to efforts to standardize the spelling of English words a hundred years earlier.

The policy statements adopted on June 5, 1890 and applied to both domestic and foreign names were:

1. The spelling and pronunciation sanctioned by local usage should, in general, be adopted.
2. Where names have been changed or corrupted and such changes or corruptions have become established in local usage, it is not advisable to attempt to restore the original form.
3. In cases where what was evidently originally the same word, but now appears with various spellings, sanctioned by local usage, when applied to different

features, these various spellings should be regarded as, in effect, different names.

4. As a rule it is inadvisable to attempt to produce uniformity in spelling.

5. Where a choice is offered between two or more names for the same place or feature, all sanctioned by local usage, that which is most appropriate and euphonious should be adopted. The possessive form should be avoided whenever it can be done without destroying the euphony or changing its descriptive meaning.

6. Geographic names in countries that use roman characters should be rendered in the form adopted by the country having jurisdiction, except when there are English equivalents already fixed by usage. The terms “exonym” and “conventional name” had not been invented yet.

7. Last, the spelling of geographic names that require transliteration into roman characters should represent the principal sounds of the word as pronounced in the native tongue, in accordance with the sounds of letters in the following system: a) Approximation only to the true sound is aimed at in the system, which can never be duplicated. b) The vowels are to be pronounced as in Italian and consonants as in English. This transcription system essentially follows that recommended several years before by the Royal Geographical Society in England.

Business came early to the Board. In May, less than two months after its formative meeting, John Wesley Powell wrote to the gentlemen of the National Board of Geographic Names requesting a formal decision on a name of a body of water in Connecticut. Its Indian name was spelled 19 different ways, and its English generic element was variously given as either lake or pond. Although the Board members were not quite ready to deal with the complexity of native American names, they did decide on a short or clipped form of the name and came up with Winonsko Pond. A decision made 20 years later gave it a longer form, and the name today is Winonskocopomac Lake.

Another early case involved the name Shoalwater Bay in the state of Washington. Senator John Allen of that state wrote in June 1890 asking that the name be changed to Walapah Harbor. It seems that the name Shoalwater worked injury to the maritime interests of the community. The board was sympathetic and changed the name. But showing early independence in adherence to its new rules, the name approved by the board was Walapa, spelled without the final “h” that had been recommended by the senator.

By the way, I should mention that Board rules were not devised arbitrarily. Board members contacted leading word scholars and linguists throughout the country for practical input as to how they should

develop their principles.

During the first months of its existence, the Board stepped into what was to become one of the great name controversies of all times. In 1868 a developer located a town on Commencement Bay in the state of Washington in view of a magnificent snow-capped mountain named Mount Rainier by Captain George Vancouver in 1792. The town was called Tacoma, which was reportedly the Indian name for the mountain. One of the early decisions of the Board was to support the name Rainier over Tacoma, an action that precipitated a 35-year struggle with the good citizens of Tacoma who wanted the mountain's name changed to that of the city.

The struggle eventually involved the state legislature and the U.S. Congress; there were several hearings, and a number of publications and reports were produced. The Board declined to reverse its 1890 decision from Mount Rainier. The name had excellent ancestry by geographer's standards and was preferred by most persons outside the city of Tacoma. Both the state legislature and the U.S. Congress found it expedient not to decide on the issue, and they seemed very thankful that a little known obscure federal board was willing to decide the matter for them.

After several months during which the newly established principles and procedures were tested and 100 name decisions were decided, members of the Board felt that the work would be more effective if it was given official sanction. The matter was brought to the attention of President Harrison who agreed and signed an executive order the first week in September, on the fourth. The order reads in part: "It is desirable that uniform usage in regard to geographic nomenclature and orthography obtain throughout the executive departments of the government, particularly upon the maps and charts issued by the various departments and bureaus. I hereby constitute a United States Board on Geographic Names. To this Board shall be referred all unsettled questions concerning geographic names which arise in the departments, and the decisions of the Board are to be accepted by those as the standard authority for such matters. Department officers are instructed to afford such assistance as may be proper to carry out the work of the Board. The members of this Board shall serve without additional compensation and its organization shall entail no expense on the government." (This last phrase, by the way, often was used throughout the Board's history to keep Congress from giving it a permanent budget.)

The newly established official Board retained all former members and officers. Decisions and principles decided before September 4 were readopted. Its first bulletin was published in December 1890 and contained 226 decisions and a two-page note on the orthography

of Bering, supporting the decision on the Bering Sea. There were 153 decisions for names in the territory of Alaska, 39 for the United States, and 34 foreign. The Board published its first report in 1892, a cumulative listing of all decisions made through 1891. It included an introduction with the history of the Board, bylaws, principles for special application of both domestic and foreign names, a complete list of official county names, and a set of new policies that reviewed an effort to effect a compromise between local spoken usage and concepts of standard written usage.

It was learned quickly that the spoken and the written word do not relate equally to each other, and this applies also to names. Different communication systems are involved, each having different cognitive characteristics. The Board members decided early that certain liberties can be taken with the written forms of names without affecting local usage. It was considered desirable "to depart from local domestic name usage in certain cases in order to effect reforms in written nomenclature."

These reforms included the adoption of standard generic spellings, the discontinuance of hyphens and other writing marks in the body of names, combining into one word the specific parts of names consisting of two words, and the avoidance of diacritical marks. These rules were an effort to hasten what was then considered to be the direction of development, namely the natural process of geographic name simplification. Although some of these early rules were modified through the years, the principles, policies, and procedures laid down by the Board during the first year of its existence have left their imprint on the geographic name cover of the United States.

Geographic names are an important component of language, written and spoken. They carry complex perceptual and emotional content and have political, legal and social implications. Americans have a vested interest in the names they use and often have a definite opinion as to how these names should be treated by their own government.

But the Board has been viewed with mixed feelings by Americans through the years. It was once described as the oldest language control organization in the United States. This Orwellian description especially reflects the feelings of those who found cause to disagree with some of its policies and decisions. On a more positive side, it has been said of its founding members that the clarity of their perception of the basic questions and the foresight evidenced by the principles laid down are deserving of our admiration. The soundness of these principles arose from their foundation not only in observed trends of place-name evolution but also in the practical experience with map compilation, map reading and the writing or transmis-

sion of names.

During its 100 years of toponymic stewardship the Board has been praised, ridiculed, and ignored. It has locked horns with presidents, cabinet officers, congressmen, special interest groups, and persevering

individuals. There have been victories; there have been defeats. Throughout it all, the work of the founding fathers and of its subsequent contributors has given this country a uniform, non controversial system of geographic nomenclature equal to any in the world.

## The Board and International Programs

Richard R. Randall

Executive Secretary of the Board of Geographic Names  
Geographer of the Defense Mapping Agency

I am happy to turn your attention from what are very important aspects of the Board—its origin, its



people, its impact, its work in the domestic names of the United States—toward another area that is important, the Board and its international programs. It is important not only for the Board and the work we do but also for the rest of the world. Pardon me if I am a little self-congratulatory, not personally, but about

the Board, because this is a time when the Board is celebrating; and it will be that at the end of our three days we will truly have celebrated a noteworthy occasion for an illustrious organization.

To set the stage for this presentation, permit me to define the term “international.” A typical dictionary definition is “common to or affecting two or more nations.” There might be another definition that says that when two nations work together it is “bilateral,” and when several nations work together, it might be “multilateral.” Sandra Shaw, from the State Department, can correct me on terminology that might not agree with policies of that agency.

With regard to the Board and international programs, I suggest that we have yet another kind of meaning. “International,” as a term, covers any arrangement or program that the Board has with one or more countries, or with an international organization, which results in representatives of the Board and of these other organizations working together either for a single task or for a long continuous program related, of course, to geographic names. The Board can either initiate these programs or be responsive to them.

Of course, the Board does not initiate these activities without due consultation with our supporting agencies. We cannot live or go far without their support and blessings. Naturally the benefits from these programs to

the U.S. must be seen as very important because they continue to receive backing from our support agencies.

Within the scope of our work it is possible that an international program can be managed or worked on by only one or two people. We cannot expect to send a whole Board to meet with the international organization of whatever it is going to be. One individual or two or three can do it, depending on the nature of the activity. Of course, it is again appropriate and essential that the sponsoring agency, which probably would be either the U.S. Geological Survey, the Defense Mapping Agency or, in the case of United Nations programs, the Department of State, will be funding what we are doing. So we need to make sure that we are not going off at all angles. Actions should be based on and should implement our program goals and objectives.

The original mission of the Board, as many of us know, was aimed principally at problems affecting what I am going to call domestic needs. Of course, Alaska was a major generating factor in this because of the problems associate with identifying names there. But at the same time it was neither truly foreign nor completely domestic at that time.

It is also true that concern about foreign names was registered at an early date. Foreign names and non-roman writing systems occupied the Board’s attention early on. In its first report for the year 1890 to 1891, decisions on about 80 foreign names were included and about three times that many variant foreign names were listed.

Another early action relating to foreign names was our adoption, as has been mentioned, of the Royal Geographical Society system for pronunciation. The fact that early Board members included people from the U.S. Hydrographic Office and the Department of State with interests in charts covering foreign coasts and adjacent areas also points out the Board’s non-domestic inclinations. They needed assurance that official U.S. maps, charts and communications applied names that conformed as nearly as possible to those in local usage by other countries. We also adopted

romanization systems used by other countries to make sure that our spellings conformed with those used for general communication purposes.

So with this general introduction and definition of the term international, let me describe the work of the Board in the international field. I'm going to discuss some of the international programs we have been involved in. I'm not going to describe the programs in great detail and how they began nor am I going to mention many names.

### **Antarctica**

I will begin with Antarctic names. International? Yes, in a sense. In 1912 the report of the Board included decisions on twelve names in Antarctica. Later, during the middle of the Second World War, our interest in that continent increased. At that time the country realized it had a national requirement for maps of Antarctica, and an effort was launched to deal with the problem of naming features.

Initial work covered a range of related concerns in developing acceptable nomenclature for basic feature types and eliminating confusion about locational data concerning names already assigned by other countries. The Board, after its re-establishment in 1947, created the Advisory Committee on Antarctic Names (ACAN). ACAN began a systematic procedure for collecting names in this important part of the world.

Active collaboration was established with our British counterpart, the Antarctic Place Names Committee (APC). Members of the U.S. and the U.K. bodies have had active correspondence discussing proposed names, thus assuring maximum concurrence. Each committee informs the other of actions taken and, as expected, there is a collegial atmosphere, or perhaps mild debates if we find any differences.

New Zealand also has a names authority and communicates with ACAN and APC about general principles, policies and procedures for naming features in areas of interest in Antarctica. Germany recently expressed a desire at a United Nations meeting to create international standards for Antarctic toponymy. Other countries, including the USSR, are active in naming or recording names of features in Antarctica.

Some people have expressed the view that naming in Antarctica should be coordinated exclusively by an international group. One thought is the function should belong to the nations belonging to the Scientific Committee for Antarctic Research (SCAR) which is a part of the International Council of Scientific Unions. Nations participating under the Antarctic Treaty Organizations perhaps could play a role.

Another thought is the United Nations should set up a program. These ideas have some appeal. But the U.S. believes that the work carried out by the Board, in

collaboration with other nations, meets its national requirements. We are open to collaborating and we do collaborate, but we are not quite sure yet that we want to get involved in an international organization. Incidentally, as background information, ACAN work, and all U.S. work in Antarctica, is supported by the National Science Foundation; whether it is research, whether it is mapping, or whether it is names, NSF is very important to that activity.

You also might be interested to know that ACAN is comprised of people who are not members of the Board but who are selected individually because of their expertise in things Antarctic—pilots who have flown there on missions, people who have wintered over, people who have gone down there on research expeditions, even people who have been associated in planning activities in the United States are eligible to be members of ACAN. We have had members of very great and outstanding scientific and research credentials. The Defense Mapping Agency provides an individual to do secretarial work in support of the committee.

ACAN just recently produced a gazetteer of the Antarctic. This is really hot off the press and includes some 6,000 names with attributes and coordinates. This is an abbreviated effort; we will be coming up with an expanded work which will have text about discovery, dates, even officials involved in the naming procedure. This will be produced as a collaboration among the Defense Mapping Agency, the U.S. Geological Survey and the National Science Foundation.

### **The United Kingdom**

Another area of international work is our continuing collaboration with the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use (PCGN). We have been working with them in two major stages; the first was somewhat informal and began before 1947 when the Board was founded again. The second stage began within a few months; after the Board was reestablished, Dr. Meredith Burrill made a trip to the U.K. and talked to officials of the PCGN. There was in that fall the first BGN-PCGN conference; these conferences have been held about every two years since then.

A factor driving these conferences is joint U.S.-U.K. mapping activities. As might be expected, these mapping activities have a military purpose. But in any case, we do have close ties with our British colleagues in a variety of areas. The aim of our work is to assure that common nomenclature appears on our maps.

Another factor is the continuation of the many benefits which both our organizations realize as a result of our discussions. The U.K. preceded the U.S. in developing certain romanization systems, and we have

adopted a number of these. Since that time, we have worked together and now we have and use 29 joint BGN/PCGN romanization systems.

We have also collaborated to develop positions for other purposes. During these meetings, we study agendas for sessions sponsored by the United Nations, and we elaborate views that we believe will benefit not only the U.S. and the U.K. but also the entire United Nations assembly. While we have played an important role when U.N. names programs were first being initiated, we also believe it is useful to register certain views at U.N. meetings if we feel that they would benefit the greatest number of U. N. members in the long term.

Thus while holding to different national requirements in various regards, the U.S.-U.K. history of international cooperation in the field of names ranks high as an example of how benefits accrue to both our countries.

### **Canada**

Our programs with Canada have been very important. Our ties have been characterized by congenial and productive cooperation for a number of years. Perhaps the most significant program now concerns names of features that cross our common boundary. The Canadian-U. S. International Boundary Commission (IBC) realized that many features crossing the border—such as lakes, rivers, mountain ranges and ridges—had different names in the two countries; so we talked with the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPGCN) about a way to solve the problem, and we have been meeting regularly since that time. We have issued a paper of understanding on principles and policies we should follow. We naturally have to work with the IBC because they are producing maps of that area.

We have revealed some interesting data about names as well as reasons for their differences. Things like why does this river have two different names, and is there justification for different names? There may be an ethnic or traditional reason that the name on one side cannot be changed.

Several years ago, BGN representatives of our Advisory Committee on Undersea Features (ACUF) met with our Canadian counterparts in an effort to develop common principles for our work. Agreement was reached in major areas, but one item remains outstanding. ACUF decided that the basis for defining undersea features should be appearance only. What kind of shape does it have? What does it look like bathymetrically? What do the contours tell us? Is it a canyon? Is it a hill? Is it a mound? A knoll? A seamount? Canada felt that origin might play a role in defining some of these terms. Pingos are a good example; these

small hills with ice cores are sometimes subaerial and sometimes submarine. In our terminology, this is just a mound or a hill, but the Canadians continue to use pingo. In areas we find topics where we may not agree totally, but within the UNGEGN we work together as a U.S.-Canada division, where representatives of both authorities meet periodically to discuss national and, if you will, bilateral programs related to UNGEGN business.

We had a meeting about a year ago in Washington, and we may have a very brief meeting during this activity here to take advantage of our being together. These meetings have been productive, and they mark the good relations between our two countries. Recently the requirement in the United States to capture native American names generated several discussions with our Canadian counterparts who have a similar program about what we should do in this area and, as a result, I think that we have shed more light on this large-scale problem.

### **The United Nations**

The United Nations has been a major area of international work for the Board. Over the years, individuals interested in name standardization for practical reasons began to see how their national programs would be enhanced if all countries began to develop internal standards for national names work. By 1958, after hearing from a group of national names experts, the U.N. expressed interest in supporting an international program which could provide rational guidance to all nations concerning their geographic names.

The U.S. provided a statement; Dr. Burrill was very instrumental in this, which, along with other commentary, led to the creation of a committee on geographic names. This was later termed a working group, and it subsequently recommended that the U. N. hold a full conference on geographic names. The first U.N. conference on geographical names took place in 1967 and produced a series of statements or resolutions which played a vital role in establishing basic principles and defining goals and objectives of national and international name standardization. Since that first conference, and because of its recommendations, four additional U.N. conferences have taken place; the last was in Montreal in 1987. The sixth is scheduled for 1992.

An important early action was to create the U.N. Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) to meet between conferences and to implement its various resolutions. The chairman of that group of experts, Henri Dorion of Canada, is with us today.

Board members and staff have played an effective role in these U.N. programs. In addition to his early contributions, Dr. Burrill also served as president of

the first conference in 1967 and as chairman of the group of experts for a number of years afterwards. Dr. Burrill and I, along with staff and members of the BGN Foreign Names Committee, attended a number of these, and I hope we all played useful and leadership roles and prepared reports that contributed to international programs. Since 1977, we have been fortunate to have more representation from the domestic side of the house, namely Don Orth and Roger Payne, who have played effective roles.

BGN has indeed been active in U.N. programs. For example, there was a UNGEEN working group on undersea features, and I inherited the chairmanship of that body from another good Canadian friend, Gordon Delaney. Since I had been involved through BGN in undersea feature activities, I thought it would be useful to recommend what the U. N. working group should do: establish principles, policies and procedures; have them approved and adopted for universal application; and then go out of business. That is exactly what we did. We set up regulations and guidelines which the UNGEEN endorsed and the next U.N. conference approved, and the working group was dissolved. Since then, those policies and procedures have been widely used.

Several years ago a few of us began a review of the UNGEEN, and of the entire U.N. program as well. Our premise was that since we had been in business since 1967 it was appropriate to look at ourselves, review what we had been doing, examine our procedures, analyze our activities, and see whether improvements could be made. We have been doing that, and Henri Dorion and I and others are working together on a program to analyze where we are. Can we do the job better? How can we do it?

### **The International Hydrographic Organization**

There is another international body which discusses names, the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO). This is a body where maritime member nations discuss a range of common interests including navigation, marine safety, and many other matters relating to ocean or sea shipping. One of the major activities of IHO is the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans, or GEBCO. It is now in its fifth edition and provides general maritime information on eleven charts covering the world at a scale of about 1:10,000,000. Within GEBCO, there is a subcommittee on the nomenclature of ocean bottom features and geographical names. Its function is to approve names which will appear on the GEBCO series and to apply them on these sheets.

When the U.N. dissolved its working group on undersea features, it was agreed that IHO would be the appropriate international agency to keep records. I agreed to serve as a U.N. liaison with IHO to provide

counsel as required. In working with GEBCO, I felt it useful to press the things that ACUF already had done successfully. One of the things that GEBCO was doing was listing undersea-feature names with only the specific part of the name identified. The generic part of the name was put in a different column. In other words, column one would contain "Ajax" and in small letters in column two would be "seamount." We recommended keeping the specific and generic parts together as the name.

We also recommended that their principles, policies and procedures reflect those espoused by the U.N., which in turn reflected, to a large degree, those used by ACUF. They accepted them. They also accepted a series of terms and definitions of names that varied slightly because IHO feels it must follow the academic community. For example, if the academic community calls a large plain on a sea floor an "abyssal plain," then that is what IHO uses. ACUF would call it a "plain" because all abyssal plains are plains; there would be no reason to refer to "abyssal."

### **The Pan American Institute of Geography and History**

The Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) was founded about 65 years ago as a group of nations in the Western Hemisphere to carry out studies and research in geography and history. About 50 years ago cartography was added, and geodesy and geophysics were added more recently. PAIGH programs also cover geographic names. Dr. Burrill was involved with the PAIGH Committee on Geographic Terminology and when he retired, I moved into that position. (I didn't replace him; you can't do that. I just came next.) I began to follow the same program. In 1978, PAIGH adopted a new mapping series at 1:250,000 for member nations. This mapping program was carried out in cooperation with the Intra-American Geodetic Survey, now part of DMA, which has been dedicated since 1946 to fostering better surveying and mapping techniques in Latin America. It occurred to me that each country should also have a gazetteer of the names appearing on the maps. The idea of a gazetteer was approved by PAIGH authorities in 1982. Then it was realized that the countries generally lacked organized systems for putting names on the maps.

I generated the idea of a working group on gazetteers and geographic names coordinated with the United Nation's group of experts, and PAIGH endorsed this activity. We also developed a training course to assist countries to form more effective methods of standardizing names. I think this program is highly effective. The course lasts two weeks and its four annual presentations through 1991 in four different countries have been attended by 80 students, approximately 20

at each course. This activity is another important aspect of the board's international work. We report to the Board on our activities, and of course our travel and per diem are provided by our respective agencies as part of their BGN support.

### BGN Educational Activities

Another international program is educational. In 1967 the Board agreed to bring individuals from other countries to work in an office situation, shirtsleeves up, with the Board's committees for up to six weeks. The goal was for these individuals to learn new techniques and skills which they could bring back to their countries to help establish or refine their own names organizations. We could not do this on a frequent or full-time basis because the BGN staff and members working with these foreign experts were also heavily involved in their own activities and programs. So we have not been able to provide continuous training. But over the years, we have had students from Nigeria, Thailand (on two different occasions), Indonesia (four people on two or three different occasions), and Australia.

It is difficult to know how effectively their new skills

have been applied at home. But we know the seeds have been planted. This program was a result of two factors. First of all, we wanted to help create or improve other names authorities so the Board's needs in foreign areas might be served better. Secondly, we thought other countries should realize how the U.S. benefits from the work of its own names agency. So it was a two-fold activity. The goals of this program remain valid but we have had to curtail our efforts for the time being.

### Summary

The Board is now 100 years old. Its programs have persisted, despite periodic reorganizations and recurring budget limitations. While designed to meet U.S. goals, its members and staff, supported by member agencies, have successfully upgraded its vision to include the larger global nation by pursuing principles laid down by men of perception and integrity and further improved by literally hundreds of successors. The Board and the country it serves can take just pride in its contribution to the fields of communications at the international level.



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# Voices from the Past

Richard R. Randall

As the Centennial Committee discussed plans for the Celebration, we covered a number of possible themes. One decision was to demonstrate how the Board is now carrying out its mission. This topic already has been addressed, and there will be more later. We also decided to try to look into the future, if not for another century, then for the next decade or so. Another decision was to present a picture of how the Board operated in the past. The committee agreed it would be most proper that a background of this unique body be part of the celebration. That is the subject of this segment of the symposium.

Research of a large archive of minutes, reports, and correspondence would have provided much information from the very first day of its operation. But we decided that the former members and staff in the Washington area were a primary resource of history, particularly of that important part of the Board's life since its recreation in 1947. We have maintained good contact with a number of retired people and we felt comfortable in seeking their participation. Fortunately, several of them agreed to appear and give testimony.

The people before you will give you personal insight about the Board and its operations, focusing mainly on the time since 1947. Later, Dr. Burrill will add further background from his perspective as Executive Secretary of the Board for thirty years. The testimony you will hear from panelists will cover not only some of the Board's achievements but also some of its challenges. You may hear an opinion that conditions regarding some aspect of the Board's work could have been improved.

Finally, I ask you to keep in mind that these individuals represent a proud heritage. While they speak of their own experiences, their statements reflect views of, and contributions by, a sizable number of their colleagues. Most of the people today represent former staff. With due respect to Board members and deputy members, I can say that we owe a great debt of gratitude to the staff. They work tirelessly—often on a full-time basis—on the many technical questions coming before the Board. While they made no decisions to approve or reject names, their advice, expertise, and recommendations on names and on overall policy matters often were accepted.

## Theodore Liard

Former Chief of Names Staff for the Foreign Names Committee

Going back 41 years ago, between the wars that I participated in, I was the geography instructor at Boston College. Now Jesuitical nicety requires that you fit into some faculty department. So they decided, in their infinite wisdom, that I should be in the language department, which I guess was a foretelling of what was to come.

The faculty meetings were at once interesting and disheartening. The learned men speculated on the future of the nearly two-thirds of the students studying economics. Predominant opinion was that they would all go down into Boston and get jobs selling soap with Proctor and Gamble. However, they seem now to become TV pundits, and they daily proclaim that the recession is coming, the recession is coming. The expectation of the remaining third of the students, who were studying Spanish and all dying to become State Department's aficionados, was that it was equally grim. Little or no success was noticeable, and the professors dejectedly asked, "Why can't we teach Spanish to students after four years of study?" They could hardly read a newspaper at the end of the four years.

I kept my counsel on all of this and later, after long years of working for the Board and attending conferences, I acquired the suspicion that all the Spanish speakers who agree on the fine points of the language could ride to Tijuana in a Volkswagen.

When I came to work for the Board as a geographer, I little realized that I was going to be immersed in the matter of languages. Of course there was a substantial component of physical and political geography in the work that we did. But out of it, if I were asked to give a one word description of the names effort that we engaged in over the thirty years, I would say linguistic effort was the main object. Even though one has but a minimal language background from college years, one does develop smatterings of knowledge from worldwide map study and from the give-and-take with co-workers and specialists. As a consequence, I have developed an enormous respect for those who exhibited expertise in foreign languages and particularly those who fall into this unusual specialization of scientific linguistics. It seemed most interesting, most critical, to the foreign names work. I have quite a few heroes

along this line including John Mutziger, a great scholar who not only had a vast lexicon of languages in his brain but could also name every classical music composition you ever heard and tell you an amazing amount of detail about the composer.

Harold Lidden was an interesting fellow, a mainstay of the Arab-Persian Committee, an intimidating sort of fellow and not one to suffer fools lightly. But it always seemed to me that he had washed his socks in every water hole in Arabia because there seemed never to be one that he had not been in. Pat Geelan, Bunny Lewis, and other experts of PCGN were always a joy to listen to and to learn from. Their facility with languages and depth of knowledge was just astonishing to me.

I can recall one self-deprecating event at a meeting with the PCGN. We were sitting around the table; I think it was Carl Page, myself, and seven or eight of the British delegates, and they raised a question, "Why don't we press for Esperanto?" Being the kind of a guy that always opens his mouth before he thinks, I said, "Good Lord, who knows Esperanto?" and every hand went up except mine.

There were many others who made me feel like going back to school and starting all over again. Carl Page, Charlie Hayda, Ed Bonzak, and another great gentleman and a scholar that I practically revered, C. Sumner Spaulding. From this experience I was strongly convinced that the staff should contain the scientific linguistic specialty, and I fought a hard battle to maintain such a specialty in the face of considerable opposition in my last working years. I hope the capability still resides in the Board's research staff.

I take great pride in the work accomplished over the years. We produced a very useful and I think important product, the gazetteer. Some librarians fault it, however, because the gazetteers do not fit nicely on the shelves. One aspect of the work which gets only passing

attention is the great effort expended answering inquiries from government and the public. Although this activity was resisted in later years on a cost basis, I feel it ought to be thought of as a good advertising method, giving the taxpayer something for his or her buck.

I was convinced of the reason for the existence of the Board, the rationality of its policies, the wisdom of its decisions, and the high standards of the members. I have always been proud of the Board's publications and the services rendered through the agencies of government and the taxpayers. The accomplishments of the last half century resound to the leadership of Dr. Burrill and the late Allen Belden. Theirs was the vision, the initiative, the insistence on quality, and the missionary zeal to view the standardization of names as a worldwide desideratum. They had to struggle with meager and unpredictable funding and the ever present threats of elimination of the activity. My hat is off to Dr. Randall, who came into a very difficult situation, got up to speed in an astonishingly short time, and spread the gospel with charm over much of the world.

Often overlooked is that small group of attaches who toured the world collecting source materials for our work at considerable personal risk. As a long-time retiree, I would pass along this thought: it has never been easy to explain to people just what we did for a living. I am not sure my own family quite understands it. I recall being on the "Today" show in New York and trying to explain it in about 15 minutes; the Alpo dog got more attention and probably got its message across better than I did.

So, my last remarks to you, those of you who are contemplating retiring, when people ask you what you did for a living, don't try to explain it, because by the time you say Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic/Topographic Center they'll have gone around the corner, and you'll be alone.

## Lester Dingman

### Former BGN Executive Secretary for Domestic Name

I retired from the board in 1973, 17 years ago. Since then I have been occupied trying to run a railroad, something quite different from geographic names. I retired from active management of that two months ago, so we shall see what comes next. Railroads seem to be a long way from geographic names, although we did deal with a couple of things. For instance, one of our stations, the only one in Pennsylvania as a matter of fact, is Blue Ridge Summit. It is on top of a mountain which the Board on Geographic Names insists is not the Blue Ridge. They claim it stops much further to the south. We still call it that, and so do the people who live there.

As far as pronunciation of names is concerned, which Kelsie Harder referred to, we have one place up there that is spelled "Taneytown," but the natives all say "Tawney Town," and if you don't use that, they won't know what you're talking about.

I did not realize that time was going by so fast, this 100th anniversary and all, until I looked on this Board over here this morning and saw the picture commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Board on Geographic Names. That was held in Secretary Udall's office in the Department of Interior. I was surprised to notice that I am in that picture and that the only other person here today that I know for sure was in that picture was Pete

Burrill. So, some of us have been around a long time and have been gone a long time, too.

I first got involved in geographic names when I went to work for the Soil Conservation Service in 1941 as a cartographer or cartographic engineer. In preparing the soil maps you had to put names on them, of course, and it became my job to find out what the right names were and get them on there. We referred to Board decisions as far as we could but in those years the Board was not very active, and it was pretty hard to get much out of the Board, except a beat-up copy of the old Sixth Report. So we had to wing it some of the time. At that time you could not go to the Board and ask for a decision, because there was no one to ask.

Subsequently, I went to work with the Geological Survey and a few different functions but drifted back into geographic names again, which is where I ultimately ended up. I guess during my particular time in Geographic Names and as Executive Secretary for Domestic Names was pretty much the period when derogatory names were coming to the fore, and it was quite an impetus to change names which might be considered in any way derogatory, racially, nationally, sexually or otherwise. There were a lot of interesting names that came up; I will not try to remember or tell you about all of them.

In the course of that, I did prepare a couple of papers on the subject and gave some talks at different places, and at least one of them was published by East Texas University as one of their papers under the title "Naughty Names." It was later used in newspapers; one of the Texas reporters came up with a better name for it, "Which Way to Willy's Bottom?" I later expanded on it a little bit for a meeting of the Association of American Geographers just about the time I retired. So derogatory names was a big issue; I guess it still is to some extent.

I understand from some of my former colleagues who are still around that maybe they have slacked off a little bit on this where local usage is very strong. I know we had a very tough thing going with the Oregon Geographic Board; I'm sure that Lewis McArthur remembers this. They had a Whorehouse Meadow up there, and the Board insisted on naming it Naughty Girl Meadow but the Oregon board would not go along. From what I hear, they finally got their way, didn't they? There were a lot of things like that. The Board is pretty insistent.

I don't know how many of you remember Arthur Baker, who was Domestic Names Committee Chairman for quite some years. His attitude was rather firm about his role. In fact, he refused to become chairman of a full board because he didn't want to relinquish his work in domestic names.

One other thing in the course of all this —about the

time when we had our moon landing and the moon became quite a hot topic, I had prepared a paper for the meeting of American Names Society in New York on selenographic names in which I tried to promote the idea that the Board on Geographic Names ought to assert its authority and take hold of this subject before people ran too hog wild with naming features on the moon. I didn't succeed in convincing them. As far as I know, they've never done anything about it. I still think they ought to. Extraterrestrial names are bound to be the wave of the future, and I think the Board ought to get involved in it before it's too late.

I was interested to note today that the Domestic Names Committee is still publishing their decision list with the cover that I developed when I was Executive Secretary of the committee. I don't know whether anybody has been aware of it, but the map on that front cover of the decision list is a section of Pennsylvania which has those colorful Pennsylvania Dutch names, one of which Kelsie referred to this morning, and they're still using it. I think it's a good choice, but now that I brought it up they'll probably change it.

Well, I guess I should mention something about Mount Rainier. I was hiking up there two weeks ago, and a lot of them up there still think that name ought to be changed. But they don't go along with the city. They don't think it's Takoma; they think it's Tahoma. They claim that's more Indian. But some of the people up there say that really is not the name for that particular mountain; that's the Indian name for any big mountain. But they do call the smaller subpeak Little Tahoma, and that's quite a prominent little peak there.

The principal thing that came up during my tenure was the famous Cape Kennedy-Cape Canaveral problem. This was a case where the Board didn't really want to go with Cape Kennedy, but when the boss says something, what do you do? There was a lot of resistance. The committee chairman, Art Baker, was pretty stubborn but didn't want to talk about it very much. But the state of Florida and the people in Florida were very strong, and I think we built up a bigger file, or at least as big a file, on that as we did on Takoma-Rainier which, up to then, had been the biggest file that we had. Personally, I was prejudiced in favor of Canaveral but, of course, in that job you don't let your prejudice show, hopefully. But we did work on the case and encouraged the Florida people to make their wishes known through their Congressional representatives and everybody else. A case was finally built up so that the Board reversed the decision in October 1973 and renamed it Cape Canaveral to the joy of the people in Florida. That being one of my goals, at that meeting when the Board approved the name Cape Canaveral again, I turned in my resignation as Executive Secretary.

Cyril Barsky  
Former Staff Member of the Foreign Names Committee  
and Member from the Department of Defense

I'd like to go back to the year 1946, which is long before my tenure on the Board, and give you a little bit of an insight just how much this obscure body held the influence over other government agencies. I'd just gotten out of the army and was hired by the Army Map Service (predecessor of the Defense Mapping Agency) and placed in the Geographic Names Group. Before a sheet went to press, we got the names copied and we checked every name against policies of the Board to make sure that everything was correct. That went on for about a year or two and then somebody decided that was a waste of time. "We have qualified photographers, we have good typesetters, your people are wasting time." Well, we fought that, but as Don Orth said, "Some you win, some you lose." We lost.

A few months later, we were looking at a map of Central America and what did we see? In big 14-point letter type, "Tegoosegalapa," and we said, "Look, that's a national capital. You can't do it." "Yes we can. The map just came off of the press." It was an A-1 map, period, end of argument. A couple of months later, what did we see on a map of the U.S.S.R.—"Leningard." We said, "Look, the second largest city in the country, it has four and a half million people in the area and you . . ." It was another A-1 map, just off the press. That happened yet once again. That time we stopped them. We were looking at a map of Central Europe, and we realized that Vienna was the capital of Australia. The following week the function of checking names was returned to us and I hope it is still there.

Several years would pass before I had the opportunity to visit Dr. Burrill's domain in the Interior Department. I guess the year was about 1950 and I was very much impressed. A staff of 150 people were collecting, analyzing, researching, evaluating, and recording their findings on little 4-by-6 cards. Those cards still constitute the very backbone of the Foreign Names File. Since then, I have become acquainted with Dr. Burrill. It's been 38 years and I have had the greatest respect for his leadership during his tenure there. It was really terrific, and my association with him has been a pleasure.

To go on a little further, another 17 years would pass before I actually became a member of the Board. My early remembrance is that the first thing I learned, after being in the names business for some 20 years, was the difference between an approved name and a standard name and how these names were established. Al Belden used to come to our foreign names meetings carrying what we called "Al's shoebox," one of those govern-

ment-issue dark-gray marbled white boxes with cards in it. He would pass a piece of paper around listing source material and would say, "I'd like your blessing on this. This is the file for Lower Slobovia. This is the order in which we prefer to use the sources." We would say, "O.K." and the names established using those listed source materials became "standard names;" we did not look at the names on an individual basis. The names that we studied individually became "approved names," and we submitted those to the Board every quarter for some sort of a rubber stamp approval.

Some interesting things happened. I had a few peevish moments. I still do not like how "Romania" is spelled. I fought hard, and I was the only one. At that time we got in touch with Pat Geelan, and he was nice enough to go around London and he sent a letter back to inform us that the embassy there said R-U, Rumania; the chancery used R-O, Romania; and the trade mission preferred R-O-U, Roumania.

A couple of other things peeved me—nothing with the Board, mind you—things that happened outside the Board over which we had little control. It never bothered me when a country such as Indonesia, Norway, or the Netherlands would change its orthography. They're roman alphabet countries, and that's great. We went along with that. What disturbs me is when a non-roman alphabet country devises a new system of writing, and China is an example of this. In my own opinion, it was strictly a political move when Pinyin was developed to replace the Wade-Giles system. If you look at a map of China today you see a proliferation of unpronounceable Q's and X's and undesirable J's and H's. We had a perfectly good romanization system, and I often wonder what non-roman alphabet countries would say if the board wrote a letter suggesting which ideographs they should use for Fond du Lac, Wisconsin; Truth-And-Consequences, New Mexico; Salome Where She Danced, Arizona.

I am reminded of Winston Churchill at this point. When the allies were getting ready to attack "Fortress Europe," he was looking at a map of Italy and what did he see? Venezia, Firenze, Livorno, and Napoli. He turned to an aide and said, "Get this thing out of here, and bring me a map I can read." So, a few minutes later he had his map. He beamed. He saw Venice, Naples, Leghorn, and so on. He looked up and his comment was: "You know foreign names are for Englishmen, not Englishmen for foreign names." It may be a chauvinistic approach, a somewhat parochial attitude of toponomy, yet it's very useful. If there's a name we

don't like, we respell it the way we want it. If we don't like Venezia, we make it Venice. If we don't like El Quahirah, we make it Cairo. I can't imagine somebody belting out the "Marine Corps Hymn" this way: "From the Halls of Montezuma to the shores of Terrabulos El Garb." Somehow, it doesn't play.

On another occasion I remember sitting with Charles Rouse. We were sitting during a lull in a Foreign Names Committee meeting, probably looking at some Somali maps or something. Anyway, one of us had the DOD directive that said, "Henceforth we are going to use only the short form of the country name and the conventional form on all DOD products." Charlie turned to me and said, "Cy, you know, the Federal Republic of Germany, that's a country name. Where's Germany; that's where they make toys." That will be resolved sometime this fall, hopefully.

I have many other memories, very fond ones, of the Board working with Pete Burrill and now with Dick Randall, and I want to ask you something. I remember Les mentioned that—he said something about selenographic names. As I recall, I served on the Advisory Committee on Extraterrestrial Feature Names. Is that still in existence? And we did approve lunar names and also names on Mars.

R. Randall: When DMA was in the lunar mapping business, it was very active because it was the only agency with that capacity. The requirement to put names on features was very great. The International Astronomical Union had that general responsibility, but their procedures were very slow and ineffective. They met every four years to approve names that had been proposed by their various organizations. We, in the meantime, through the Board, set up an Extrater-

restrial Features Advisory Committee. We had members from NASA, Geological Survey, and DMA, and we began to provide names for these features. Two things happened. The requirements against our staff were increasing more and more for production of maps and charts other than of the moon and Mars and this meant that the staff working on Board programs had other jobs in addition to Board support to satisfy. The second thing was that the IAU streamlined their activities and began to be much more effective, much more productive. With time our function as a Board Advisory Committee simply became less and less relevant and that of the IAU increased enough to satisfy the requirement. It's not a perfect solution, but it was a practical resolution.

C. Barsky: Bob Lewis, in what was then ACIC, did, in fact, prepare a map with lunar names. It's the famous map, the only decent map of the moon, with all the topographic and selenographic features in the right places, and all with names. And in 1970, at the International Astronomical Union meeting in Brighton, those names were submitted to a panel of which I was a member and there were certain amendments made, relatively few, but that map was then approved. So the majority of the names on the far side of the moon were done by this committee, experts not part of the IAU, and they have international approval.

Well, just in closing, I would like to say that I not only appreciated my association with the Board and the privilege of serving it, but I certainly enjoyed also working with Bunny Lewis and Pat Geelan. I would like to say once again "happy birthday" and thank you for the time you have given me.

## Ernie Berringer

### Staff Member of the Domestic Names Committee

It was said that behind every famous man there was a woman: Napoleon had Josephine, Louis and Clark had Sakajawea, Heinz had his tomato. An organization like the Board needs a good staff to help it function. As a member of the Domestic Names staff since 1964, I'd like to give you a little run-down of what the staff does for the Board.

Currently, the staff is part of the National Mapping Division of the Geological Survey. One of the staff functions is to take care of all correspondence about domestic names. If it is a request for information, a new name approval, or a name change, we quickly respond. We call people on the phone, and we do everything we can to help them.

When I first came to the Board, we answered between 250 and 300 inquiries a month. We have an-

swered inquiries from everybody imaginable: From the heart of the country, the White House, to the loins of the country, Playboy and the National Enquirer. We get them; they come out of the blue. They can ask anything and we do our best to answer them.

That has decreased because all of the Federal, state, and private agencies have our Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) printouts and gazetteers. So instead of calling us, they just look in the GNIS for the answer.

In the 1960s we considered ourselves highly automated because we had a tape punch machine. It would punch out the name, description, and application of every Board decision and would appear on a tape; we would proudly show that tape to every visitor we had in the office. Then in the 1970s the Mag Card came into

existence and then finally in the 1980s we became “computerized.” I can remember when we first computerized; we used to run a job with a thick stack of IBM cards and if one card got out of line the whole job was out the door. The GNIS is something we are really proud of. It helps both geographic names and publications people. They can just look in that publication to get the correct name and data.

What else has changed with the Domestic Names Committee and the staff? When I first came, we worked with approximately 12 state boards or organizations and now today we deal with 34 or 35. Also, the Domestic Names Committee has been meeting with the Western States Geographic Names Council since 1977.

In the early 1960s the Board really was obscure, especially the Domestic Names Committee. Over the years, through a series of press releases from the Geological Survey, newspaper and magazine articles, and radio, we are better known. Hardly a week goes by that we are not called up by newspapers or radio stations for interviews or information. Some of the press releases about the GNIS have had humorous consequences. For example, when people found out that particular names could be searched, we had a request for how many names in each state included “turkey.” A newspaper article appeared titled “Texas leads the United States in number of turkeys.”

Recently we have been called by a lot of radio stations in Mississippi because of a movement to change the name of a river. On all federal maps the river name is “Bowie,” and everyone assumes it was named for Jim Bowie, but the people in Mississippi say that he never came within a hundred miles of that stream. So a petition was submitted to the local commissioners, and they’re recommending the old name “Bouie.” That case is in one of our recent documents, and it will be reviewed soon.

Les Dingman was responsible for the name Mather

Gorge for the gorge along the Potomac River below the Great Falls. The Park Service had to identify a feature in the Washington area for the first National Park Director, Steven Mather. Changing the name of Bear Island in the Potomac to Mather Island was one recommendation. Well, Bear Island has been an old, established name for many years and is used in all the literature. The Board and the Park Service were at a stalemate. Les had an idea and said, “Why not name the gorge for Steven Mather?” The Park Service agreed and so today in all their brochures you will see Mather Gorge. That was one of the more easily solved problems.

Over the years, the Domestic Names Committee has come into closer contact with today’s people. For years, the name “Paul Bunyan’s Potty” in Utah would come before the Board repeatedly for approval but the chairman would absolutely refuse to discuss any name like that. In the early 1970’s Paul Bunyan’s Potty was finally an official decision. Also in the early 1970’s, we had to review Acid Factory Brook in New Hampshire. The only reason the name was submitted to the Board was to change the application (i.e., location coordinates) of the stream. This was at the time when LSD was in all the newspapers, and somehow the chairman thought that if we approved Acid Factory Brook that people would associate that name with LSD. The name was changed to Factory Brook—it sort of lost something in the interpretation.

The size of the staff has fluctuated over the years. At one time, when we were producing the Alaska gazetteer during 1966-1967, we had 20 some people on our staff. Today we have about 12, but we still prepare agendas and papers for monthly committee meetings and otherwise give the committee and the Board our full support. I’ve worked with quite a few people over the years, many of whom are here today, and I’ve enjoyed meeting all of them here again. Thank you.

## Walter Ristow

### Former Member from the Library of Congress and Chairman of the Board

My connection with geographical names goes back a little farther than my association with the Board on Geographic Names. Back in the 1930s I was at the New York Public Library in the Map Division; some of you people here may recall your grandparents talking about the Depression. There was a depression then and you, those of you who have long memories, may remember that there were several government agencies established, PWA, WPA and so on. The WPA was set up to help people have jobs or at least get paid for the time they put in. A center for some of the projects

was near the public library. We had several of the WPA workers come into the Map Division everyday. One young man came in everyday and would take down an atlas and sit there for seven or eight hours writing down in long hand all of the physical features that were listed in the index. I am sure at the end of the week he took those to his supervisor, and the supervisor dropped them in the waste basket. I am sure you will all agree that the government has advanced beyond this infant stage of giving money away for nothing. We do it in large quantities these days.

In 1947 I came to the Library of Congress as an associate with Burt Adkinson; and the small town boy from the big city began to learn about how the government operates. This was in the days when President Truman had just passed the law on the reorganization of the BGN. Burt had been on the BGN staff during the war. For weeks, Burt would come back to the Division and discuss all the things that had happened during the hearings on the "new" Board; eventually, proponents and opponents had to compromise, and the Board was established as it is now. Within a short time I was attending meetings of the Board as Burt's deputy, and I subsequently represented the Library on the Board.

One of the very interesting things at that time was about one of our chairmen, George Rainow who was a representative from the Government Printing Office. Rainow, a native of Russia, was chairman of both the Board on Geographic Names and the U.S. Style Manual. It is a very unusual circumstance that a Russian native headed two of our major organizations concerned with names.

This was also the period when Sam Boggs of the Department of State was on the Board; it was during his later years when he was beginning to feel the effects of his illness and used to fall asleep on occasions. There were also rumors that some of the Board members had mastered the technique of sleeping while sitting up, particularly during some of the members' monologues. This was also the period when Sophie Saucerman was on board; she was a deputy to Mr. Boggs.

As chairman of the Board for two years, I think the most memorable part was when I incurred the wrath of the staff. Someone mentioned earlier today that there never had been a budget for the Board. I don't know whether Pete ever understood that because he submitted a budget to the appropriations committee year after year; nothing ever happened on it. Fortunately, the foreign names were very well supported with Defense Department and CIA appropriations, but domestic names suffered. Art Baker from the Geological Survey and Larry Swanson from the Coast and Geodetic Survey became concerned about the lack of support for the Domestic Names Committee, and they developed a plan where the Geological Survey would have authority for the domestic names agenda. They approached me as chairman of the Board. I saw nothing wrong with it and, having gone through a number of years of no appropriations for domestic names, ap-

proved it, and the plan was passed by the Board. Some of the staff were critical at the time, but I think subsequently that the situation turned out very well.

I have published a number of papers over the years, but despite my association with geographical names for almost fifty years I have only published one paper on names. This was through an invitation from the Fish and Wildlife Service when it decided to publish a book called *Birds in Our Lives*. There were a number of chapters in it which were not about birds but there were also chapters about birds in the Bible and birds in this and birds in that. I wrote a chapter about birds and geographic names. I think that I learned more about names while writing that article than I learned in any other research I ever did. The main thing I learned was that geographic names derived from birds are usually from game birds. This is perfectly logical because most of the game birds are large, they fly in flocks, and they live on lakes. So many names were given like Duck Lake and Goose Lake, but virtually no names were for songbirds. Again, it is logical because many of the songbirds on our continent had not been named before many of the places were named. So, this is my only contribution to the literature of geographic names.

Finally, I should say that I have not completely abandoned work on geographical names. Two years ago I moved to Collington, a retirement community in Maryland. I lived in Northern Virginia for a long time, and I am now a Marylander. This retirement community has about 127 acres of land, and one of its features is an artificial lake which the residents call "The Lake." Finally, someone said "Why don't we give it a name?" A number of people wanted to call it Lake Collington. I said, "Oh, no" because when it's alphabetized it would be mixed in with a lot of other lakes and suggested Collington Lake instead. I volunteered the fact that one of my colleagues was now chairman of the Board on Geographic Names and that maybe I could write to him. But, you know, that is not as easy as it sounds; we had to go through our own board. So I drafted a letter for the Collington Board of Trustees, and in due course, the letter went off to Ralph Ehrenberg. As it always happens, our request ended up in a Domestic Names Committee, and we got a return reply requesting more information. So that is where it stands now. We hope that our little lake will have a name by the end of the year. So someday in the future, you will know that Collington Lake has been added to the geographic names of our country.

# The Wonderful World of Geographic Names

## Things Learned and Things Yet to be Learned

Meredith F. Burrill  
Executive Secretary Emeritus

Things learned and things yet to be learned. What is so wonderful about geographic names? How have



they led me and my colleagues over almost half a century to wonder, to get excited by these new understandings and by unanticipated challenging kinds of problems? How have they led us to deal more objectively with our own onomastic behavior by mustering sufficient intellectual humility to open

some mental windows? Let's go back and look at a few selected events and their learning consequences.

Before I was old enough to go to school and learn to read and write, I had mastered the concept of being comfortable and knew how to talk about it. Then one day my family gently but firmly informed me there was no such word as "comf-table." The word was "comf-ort-a-ble." I would have none of it. I was stunned. I reminded them that they, too, said "comf-table." I had heard them. They denied it. I felt betrayed. How could my own family do this to me? To this day, I remember the scene of my trauma, our kitchen, the family gathered around, and my shattered confidence in both them and myself. Little did I realize then that my preparation for a career in geographic names standardization had just begun. I had learned that ear recognition of words can differ from eye recognition, that communication requires agreement by people on the significance of sounds and symbols, and that people resist giving up an idea that is mentally set. These are all significant parts of the standardization of names. Of course, I had to learn these things all over again as you will hear, but the next time it wasn't traumatic, it was stimulating.

War is hell to be sure, but the notion of survival may call for some extraordinary activities insupportable in peace times. In 1943, war maps and charts needed two and a half million Chinese names converted into Roman letters, 90 percent of them for the first time. The armed services couldn't agree on how to do it. They tackled the problem, and they all disagreed. They never did agree, really. There was no precedence, and none of the services had authority over any of the

others. However, Interior Secretary Ickes did have authority, and there was a BGN. So the problem was laid in Ickes' lap with a blank check and two years to do the problem. He found he had a geographer in the department, yours truly, and left the problem in my lap. About all Ickes knew at that time about geographic names was that naming for living persons was unwise, to put it mildly. He felt especially strongly that it would be particularly unwise for Boulder Dam to be named for Hoover. But he knew how to support a program, and he did. I didn't know all that much more than Ickes did about names, but I got taught real fast. Time was a-wasting. A procedure had to be agreed upon for China. A long all-day meeting of the agencies concerned with this problem who were knowledgeable about Chinese settled the basic elements in one day. The next day the Hydrographic Office raised objections challenging the proposed romanization system. Their problem turned out to be that they didn't see how they could re-engrave their copper plates fast enough. They were told they could do their revisions on paper pulls from the plates that we would promptly restore.

We had the first of many challenges and the first of many lessons on constraints imposed by machinery, equipment, and vested interests. We quickly saw that since we would be breaking new ground with this interface of geography and language that we had to have on the staff some top flight descriptive linguists, not polyglots but experts on the structure and workings of languages. BGN is unique in having had scientific linguists and geographers working together day by day for almost fifty years on a huge and varied corpus of names from all over the world. The team enabled BGN to withstand early challenges and to initiate international cooperation on many fronts. The linguists learned to do practical problem solving, and the geographers learned to do astonishing things about their own behavior in manipulating language.

The linguists taught us about the reluctance to believe something different from what you had always thought; let us call it "mental set." It is normal subconscious behavior in linguistic matters, and other matters, too, and gives us examples in language starting with the relation of mental set to the sound system of the language. Out of the myriad of sounds that human beings can make with their vocal systems, only

a few form the core, the stock of sounds for a given language, and no two languages have identical stocks. All sounds not in the stock are non-significant noises to be disregarded. Children learn to make the stock sounds and to ignore the others at an early age. Once an individual masters the sound system, and as long as he is linguistically naive, he will normally experience difficulty in mastering other sounds in speech. Not only does he resist making sounds, he often doesn't hear them having learned to ignore them as irrelevant noise. Languages also have finite sets of permissible sound sequences which are learned along with the sounds themselves. The naive speaker will regard any of the sequence as unpronounceable and will leave the bulk of the non-permitted sequence or will add, drop or modify sounds to make the sequence fit his system.

For example, in our own system, we may not start a word with "ng." When we are confronted with a word like "ngola," we do something to make it pronounceable such as prefixing the vowel to alter the word to say "angola." That is how Angola got its name. When the Portuguese sailed around Africa, they found a region where the natives were painting their bodies red with a mixture of powdered red wood and palm oil. The wood was "ngola." The Portuguese called the place "Angola" because they had to do something to fix "ngola" so they could say it in Portuguese.

Within days after the start of the Chinese project, a challenge came in connection with the impending publication of the nautical chart of the Antarctic, full of the names of living sponsors of expeditions, both American and foreign. The Board had sat on the problem for a year not knowing how to deal with Ickes. He was not an easy person to deal with sometimes, particularly if your ideas were different than his. The Hydrographic Office had decided to wait no longer, and to take care of the living names question, they put Ickes' name on a mountain range and Roosevelt's name on a sea. Ickes hit the ceiling; he made them take his name off before the chart could be released. A quickly formed committee found in a Norwegian language publication that Norway had already named the sea "Albertson." An exchange of "pleasantries" between the Secretaries of the Navy and the Interior did not resolve the problem so it was referred to President Roosevelt for a decision. He replied that, of course, Albertson's name had priority and should be used. A piece of frozen ocean was inappropriate for him anyway. A smoking volcano would be better, and he proposed to send Admiral Byrd back down there to find one. But the one down there had already been named Mt. Erebus. That's too bad; he never got his volcano.

If the President had not known about BGN before, he did now. Ickes had good practice in defending the program and had learned that the no-living-name

policy wouldn't do in Antarctica. BGN had launched into the tangled hedgery of Antarctic naming. Information on Antarctica was scarce, fragmentary, often conflicting. Sailors had kept their knowledge to themselves, and for a long time, American explorers did not make maps on their return. So while some naming was done, it was difficult to find. In some cases, important features named by one expedition could not be found where they had been reported by another expedition. Most of the continent had yet to be seen. Only a part of the fringes and the route down to the pole had been seen. Explorers put the name of important persons on unimportant features that they saw early, like the name of Queen Alexandra; a number of nunataks off the coast were named this way.

Therefore, a broad policy framework was drawn up matching kinds of features with kinds of people after discussion with explorers from the Antarctic and polar explorers elsewhere. This was published and was adopted and applied internationally. For each name that it approved, the BGN weighed all the evidence it had on who named what, where and why with a promise to reconsider if anybody had better information. It kept the promise. Adversaries promptly became converted and cooperative. After that, the United States and Britain worked out most naming problems informally before either took official action from which it might be awkward to withdraw. As BGN's files grew, explorers increasingly sought and gave help. In less than two decades, the mess of Antarctic names had been essentially standardized internationally. The procedure was in place for assimilating new naming. From this experience, the BGN learned that international standardization is both indispensable and feasible.

After the Chinese program was launched in early 1943, an inventory of domestic name decisions in the 1934-1936 report told us how many of what kinds of entities had been covered by decisions. During the process, we found a number of "towheads." The nature of these features was unclear, and we didn't look in an unabridged dictionary, which we should have. We didn't know what to do with them until the new staff member from Missouri, Al Belden, identified them as river islands with cottonwoods. Rivermen needed names for them because they were dangerous; they didn't stay put but migrated upstream, accumulating on their upstream end and washing away on the downstream end. This was the first of many encounters with unfamiliar generic terms and domestic names.

One day, one of the board members brought in an example of an unusual generic term, "mirth," in the name "Siennaga Mirth." It turned out that "mirth" wasn't generic after all; it was a specific, and "siennaga" was the generic. This started a collection of "rare"

generics. After I had enough samples to attempt to make a generalization and write a paper, I had to conclude that they weren't rare after all. They were just "regionalisms." So I tried mapping the currents of some regionalisms starting from a known location and working outward. One of the terms was our old friend "towhead." The region for towhead turned out to be the Mississippi and lower Ohio rivers. Other terms kept turning up far outside the starting region. Finally I collected all of the names, all of the generics, from all of the topographic maps then published and plotted their occurrence on United States base maps. Starting in the northeast corner of Maine, which is my native state where I knew all of the generic terms, surprises came thick and fast. "Hope," "folly," and "gurent" appeared to be generics, and they are. "Hope" and "folly" are included in the dictionaries. Although "gurent" is not, a man who lived beside one informed me that it is a tidal channel too swift to navigate except when the tide is right. I have taken a picture of one when the tide wasn't right.

Other terms not recognized as generics on first encounter were picked up later after repeated occurrences, and definitions were published to establish why they were or were not generics. I used to wonder why my grandfather's chickens, when they found a particularly choice tidbit, would not quietly enjoy, but instead would go running around the barnyard showing it off. You have all seen them do this. I found myself doing the same thing. I did the generic study at home on nights and weekends, and I could hardly wait to get to the office to share my discoveries. I probably cackled and flapped my wings. Sometimes my colleagues had trouble believing what I had found so very interesting, and I found that interesting.

Some maps included terms that were normally generic as specifics. This was recorded to show aerial distribution and brought out that practically all generics also are surnames of people—hill, wood, dales—very common. Even mountain, creek, prairie, town and, village are surnames of people in the Washington telephone book along with plenty others that you wouldn't expect. Occurrence as a specific indicates that at least the word is known at a location, but not whether the Marsh Creek got its name for associated wetlands or from a person. Some wonderful aspects of generics are the sheer numbers, the variety of things called by the same term and the variety of terms used for the same thing. My list of terms totaled more than two thousand. Everyone who saw that list knew less than half of the terms and disagreed with other people on what some of them meant. There are meadows that are good fishing places, highways that are water channels, bayous with a slope of 250 feet to the mile, glades that are streams or wetlands or bare rocks.

Nearly all generics are applied to entities that I would put in different categories. Same thing, different thing; same generics, different entities. Examples include: Donart Pass in the Sierras; Passa Luch, a Mississippi delta tributary; Passa Gril, the strait between Florida islands. I would put them all in different categories because I do not have a category for plessus of repeated action; the name is dead. The category was pass, a place where you pass.

Two concepts, topocomplex and *Bedeutungsfeld*, contributed to BGN understanding of toponyms and the two practical problems of standardization—identification, what the entity is as the name applies to it, and designation, the single word that would best describe it. A topocomplex is a geographic entity of topographic scale made up of more than one discrete and separately namable element but which is identifiable by a single term or toponym. Pemaquid Point in Maine refers both to a six mile long peninsula and to its tip. Peak often refers both to a mountain and to its pointed top. These are combinations of a protruding mass and its extremity. There are all kinds of other combinations.

*Bedeutungsfeld* is a field or range of the meaning of a word or term, a concept developed by German linguists and adopted by BGN and exploited for its applicability to toponymic and geographic terminology. We all know that words commonly have more than one meaning, and this is true of toponymic terms. Bay means one thing in the case of Chesapeake Bay and something else in the case of the Carolina bays. We also have found that common toponymic terms have great variations in meaning for different people, not just different groups, but different people. Some have a much wider *Bedeutungsfeld* than others. Wider *Bedeutungsfeld* have greater ambiguity and less effectiveness as a designated term. Linguists pointed out that the meanings of specific words are less important than we fondly fancy, and that we are all mistaken in our common belief that any word has an exact meaning. Sentences, not words, are the essence of speech just as equations and fractions are not mere numbers or the real meaning of mathematics.

Much is known about the ways in which *Bedeutungsfeld* develops, but little had been done in connection with topographic terms. Some processes that have not been described before, so far as I know, are gradually being uncovered by experimentation and theorizing. In a paper read at the AAAS meeting in 1954, I reported that I had noticed certain biases in my mental set in regard to names and meanings, that subsequently I had noted similar mental sets in others, and that this eventually might shed some light on the processes; it has. Discovery that mental set was referenced as terms and meanings is apparently universal,

and akin to mental set in other aspects of language. This was followed by a more or less sophisticated attitude toward it and permitted us to look at our own mental processes relating to terminology with a measure of objectivity, to enable new ideas that previously might have been rejected, to entertain some previously rejected ideas, and to ask ourselves more meaningful questions. Some of the processes that were tentatively identified seemed to have counterparts in other parts of the world, even places with quite unrelated languages, which led us to believe that there may be a whole body of toponymic principles that transcends even families of languages and approaches the universality of language. This we found very exciting.

Few individuals know many terms of a wider *Bedeutungsfeld*. For example, few know that "creek" can mean a narrow strip of land. We found many unfamiliar connotations by comparing definitions from a large number of glossaries and dictionaries; some of this was quite illuminating. More important to the immediate problem of identification and designation was that terms will have different *Bedeutungsfeld* for each individual. We learned to be very cautious with language dictionaries, especially the dictionaries that give one word definitions. If the English equivalent is "meadow," we don't know what kind of meadow the author had in mind, and we don't know whether he had any more knowledge of the variations of meadows than we had at first.

Semantics can be a problem, particularly when communicators come from different cultures. At the first United Nations experts meeting in 1960, the first half day was spent agreeing on terms, like transcription and transliteration, that we knew were going to come up and deciding upon the meanings that we would use for the purposes of that meeting only. At the ensuing full-scale first international congress in Geneva six years later, all of these definitions were reviewed. Only two were modified; these provided that a generic had to be currently used as a generic to really be a generic. All the other terms were agreed to after the meanings of the words that it had been suggested be changed could not be agreed upon. Those terms and definitions are still being used thirty years later.

We learned to look at geographic names and terms of both group and individual human behavior. As an example of group behavior, earth scientists and laymen tend to name things differently. The scientists categorize natural features on the basis of genesis; the laymen never does this because he doesn't know about the genesis of features. He bases his categorizations upon features' appearances or relationships to human activities. As we moved around the world in the program, the name files began to take on menacing size. We asked ourselves how big a tiger we were trying to

ride. To get some kind of horseback figure, we made counts of names at various scales in the same area covering different named density areas and then extrapolated. We concluded that the number of entities with geographic names then in use was at least as large as the world's population, estimated at about three billion. A little quick arithmetic with pencil and paper indicated that no human being could ever look at all of the world's names, even if he just sat in a chair and stared at the names all day, all week for forty years, as they went by on a tape; he wouldn't even be able to focus on them because they would go by him faster than a movie film and would be all one blur.

Obviously, we learned that cooperation by many people and many countries over a very long time was in order. BGN is still recruiting people and countries. We came to see that it is normal in behavior to regard our categories as things that had always existed independent of human invention, even when we invented them ourselves because, of course, they are all constructs, devices for ordering knowledge. This is true of all disciplines or chemistries. There is no such thing as chemistry per se. It is just an agreement by people about a certain batch of human collected knowledge that we call chemistry. This took a little absorbing, but it was helpful. But such an attitude toward categories can impede acceptance of other people's categories different from ours. How can you say that somebody else's categories are just as good as yours?

We found that there was disagreement about whether a particular group of islands qualified as an archipelago. Some thought that the islands had to be arranged in one particular way while others thought that a different arrangement was necessary. Still others thought that arrangement was irrelevant. No one recognized the Greek element, *great or chief sea*, in the word. No one knew that the first definition in dictionaries was about a water body, a body of water studded with islands. The definitions go on with uses of the term including islands in a broad sea of water and finally islands in a group anywhere. As another example, in deciding how to distinguish swamps from marshes and other wetlands, we found that people differ as to whether a swamp has to have trees in it to qualify.

I have had brothers, life-long friends, husbands and wives give me opposite answers to questions like these. Then they would rear back and look at each other inquiringly and incredulously. How can people who are in close contact for a long time have opposite views and not discover it? We think that people begin forming connotations of geographic terms at an early age by observing what authorities call things in real life or in pictures. These authorities can be parents or other

older people, contemporaries that seem to know, teachers, authors, perhaps TV. Observing is followed, or accompanied, by visualizing an archetype such as Niagara for falls. Once a meaning based on just an archetype is adopted and reinforced, mental set prevents it from being readily given up. This would explain why some people insisted on a certain arrangement in the archipelago case. They had seen an archipelago, maybe the Aleutians, with an arch and thought that all archipelagoes had to be arches.

In communication with geographic terms, if you can see what is referred to, there is little confusion about what is meant. But if the reference is not in view, you simply assume that other people share your understanding of the term, which may be assuming too much. So the brothers and others never realized that they differed on whether swamps had to have trees. In the process of early fixation of archetypes, connotations are acquired as revealed truths rather than through the process of reasoning. This also happens with religion and political beliefs. In such cases where your mental set ideas are subject to rational attack, you have no rational defense because you didn't develop them through rationalization. You got it as revealed truth. You'll get frustrated and react with typical signs of frustration and anger. That is why people get red necks, and their hair bristles, and they almost come to blows over differences of interpretations of words and features.

Looking ahead, there are a lot of relatively small additions to our collective knowledge that I would like to see attempted. Like, what is the relation between mispronunciation and comprehension? How badly can you mispronounce a place name and still be understood? By whom, to whom? If somebody tells me about the Mississippi "Walley," I know what he means. He is probably German and always says "walley" for "valley." What is the relationship between pronunciation and comprehension?

We also need a comprehensive study of populated place name change sequences. Practically all of the inhabited places in the United States do not now have the name they started with. Many populated places have gone through a whole series of changes. What do we know about these changes? What can we generalize about them? What can we learn from the process?

Yet another thing to investigate is why people react to place names sometimes emotionally, sometimes rationally. This has a lot to do with standardization. Standardization, after all, is a matter of agreement. The first requirement for standardization is that many people want it. If enough people want it, they will have it. If they don't want it, nothing you can do will get it. We have had samples of that galore. The Board got stung with Pittsburgh with "h" which they tried to take

off and had to put back and Martha's Vineyard, when they took out the apostrophe and had to put it back. A Senator got stuck with "Porto" Rican instead of "Puerto" Rican, and had to go back. Somebody else got stuck with Cape Canaveral and Cape Kennedy and had to go back. People will accept an action to standardize if it makes sense to them. If it doesn't make sense to them, you can't make it. We watched Brazil go through this spectacularly when they came up with a law that stipulated if any two places in Brazil had the same name, one or both would have to change. A period of three years was provided for changes to be made, then five years when changed names could be reconsidered. If three Buena Vistas all picked San Antonio, then all of them would have to change again. Nuts! This didn't last very long. Two or three attempts to change and Brazil gave up. The program was turned over to the states and was promptly dropped in the waste basket. You can't do it, and we learned it.

But why sometimes emotionally, why sometimes rationally? Up to now, it has not been easy to see enough of the name corpus generalized. Now it is. What are we going to do about generalizations? Everyone has a personal stock of generic terms from personal experience and not exactly like any other person's stock. How big and how different are these stocks? What kinds of generic terms or features do you know that I don't, or that I know that you don't? How do you stack this up? What do you learn from these different peoples' comprehension of terms?

We have found that some concepts appear to approach universality and that there are many concepts appearing to cross language boundaries, such as the designation of springs by the word for the organ of sight—eye. This happens in English, Spanish, Arabic, Turkish, Scandinavian, maybe more. One of the problems posed by the advent of any new powerful tool, technique, or concept is visualizing a project big enough, and significant enough, to be worthy of all that power. We now have powerful new tools—computer, Fax machines, satellites and dishes—and a huge corpus of names to work on, at least three billion. Maybe now it's ten billion. We don't know. Now, we need a big, challenging project. Think fast. Something like a comparative study of the world's naming systems using all of the world's names, geographic and personal names. The geographic names could include the names of streets, neighborhoods, and regions of all sizes and types. We don't know all of the world's naming systems, but we know some. We don't know all the distribution patterns, but we know some. We don't have a full complement of broad hypotheses, series and laws covering geographic names, but we have some. If you don't like this suggestion, you think of one.

The current effort to inventory all of the U.S. place

names is a great idea, a great start. But I have faith that someone will come up with a really big project involving many people, much time, much sloughing of mental set, much fun, and in that faith I am, as in preschool days, "comf-table."

*After finishing his presentation, Mr. Burrill was asked about the earliest Board member that he could remember.*

I guess probably it would be the members of the Board at the time I came along. At the time I joined up with BGN in 1943, there were three active board members: Wolfgang Joerg, chairman; Nick Carter of the Forest Service; and K.T. Adams of the Coast and Geodetic Survey. There were other Board members, but the full Board had not met for two years. Only those three on the executive committee were doing the work. There was a staff, but it was a staff of one man, George Martin, who died within months after I arrived, and one clerk. He was a retired petroleum geologist whose contribution to the Board was to restrict its operations to the barest minimum. Only those names which were actively referred to the board by somebody were acted upon; associated names were not acted upon because they weren't submitted. If the town of Husack was up for decision, they would do that but they wouldn't do Husack River or Husack Mountain, only the barest minimum. Those were the ones that I knew earliest as members of the Board. There were people that became associated with the Board whom I knew earlier in some other capacity, but these are the first of the people I knew on the Board.

I would like to make a comment about the Board being started in 1947. Actually, when the bill came up

in Congress to legitimize the Board's activities, it was not done because of a point of order against the Board's appropriation on the grounds that it was not supported by legislation; it was done by executive order. Congress is very antsy about agencies established by executive order. Everything has to have legislation or die. So we had to have legislation or die, and we got legislation. There was some trouble, but we got it. In the committee hearings on the bill, one of the congressman said, "We can't create something that already exists. So we'll make a creation by changing the name. Instead of 'geographical,' we will say 'geographic.'"

Along with that, you might be interested in how it became "geographical" instead of "geographic" in the first place. It was originally "geographic." When Ickes was asked to provide a name for when the Advisory Committee on Geographic Names and staff in his office acted together, the suggestion was to vote on "geographic names." Ickes asked Isaiah Bowman what he thought of this, and Isaiah did not think much of it. He thought it should be "geographical names." He was a very stubborn man, too. He and Mr. Grosvenor had not been quite as one on the question of "geographic" versus "geographical." So they didn't do anything. The next year, the subject was brought up again as "geographical names," and it was done. That's how we went from "geographic" to "geographical" and back to "geographic." But in 1947 we got the legislation; nothing changed except the name. It was the same people, same staff, same procedures, and the same everything. While legally things started in 1947, that was not really the actual start.



Past chairpersons of the Board (from left to right): Ralph Ehrenberg, Sandra Shaw, Robert McArtor, Rupert Southard, Walter Ristow, John Wolter.

# A World of Names

## An Exhibit Review

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The exhibit, "A World of Names: Celebrating the Centennial of the United States Board on Geographic Names," was mounted in the Madison Gallery of the Library of Congress from September 6, 1990 to April 28, 1991. While the exhibit explored the naming of geographic places throughout the world, it did encompass the activities of the Board as one element of this process. Nearly 300 items were displayed, including a variety of contemporary as well as rare maps, three-dimensional relief models, globes, explorers' journals, case files, books, photographs, posters, T-shirts, sheet music, whiskey bottles, and a video. This variety of objects was used to document four themes: the romance and curiosity that are associated with place names; the process by which names are applied to the landscape; conflicts of motivation in selecting new names; and the process by which names have become standardized.

A world without place names is difficult to imagine! Humans, from their earliest days have named places, giving them identity, location, and character. These names, whether they are applied to landscape features, populated places, or administrative units, identify and differentiate particular places from their surroundings; provide a means of locating specific features; and characterize places through the use of descriptive, possessive, or connotative terms. The process of applying names to the landscape is complex. Starting with a blank slate, each succeeding generation and culture adds to and revises the toponymic data base as a particular place is explored, surveyed, and settled.

Geographers and cartographers have developed precise methods of expressing location (latitude and longitude, arbitrary grids, or zip codes), but none is so full of color and meaning as the use of place names. Whatever the motivation for the original name, places take on a character of their own, evoking connotative images for outsiders and deep-seated emotions for natives. These emotions have often resulted in conflicts, sometimes leading to wars, while the diversity that can be found in any region is a subject of romance and fascination to the many students of place names.

### Romance of Names

The infatuation that Stephen Vincent Benet expressed in the first lines of his poem, "American

Names," provides the introduction to the first section of the exhibit, "Romance of Names." Evidence of the romance or fascination that has enthralled those people who have "fallen in love" with place names is portrayed in a variety of media and situations.

In its simplest form, this fascination is displayed in the commercial art of posters and t-shirts, advertising tourist attractions and promoting hometowns; "Jim Beam" whiskey bottle decanters, celebrating anniversaries of states and towns; and map postcards, emphasizing selected, humorous categories of names. This

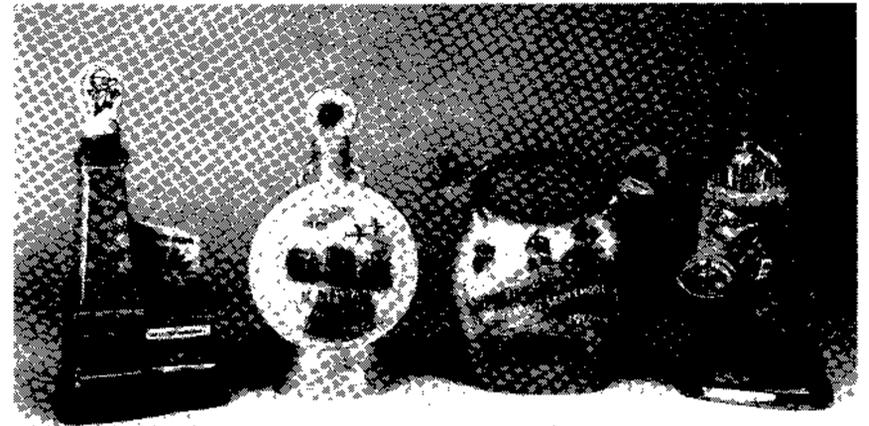


Figure 1. Four examples of "Jim Beam" whiskey decanters commemorating, among other things, countries, states, cities, places, events, animals and oil wells. Ceramic. James B. Beam Distilling Co. Michigan, *Wolverine Beam Bottle & Specialties Club*, 1975, 1975; *New Mexico, 60 Years of Statehood*, 1912–1972, 1972; *The E. E. "Pop" Harrison No. 1—Permian Basin Oil Show, Odessa, Texas, Oct. 18–21*, 1972, 1972; *Kansas Centennial*, 1861, 1960.

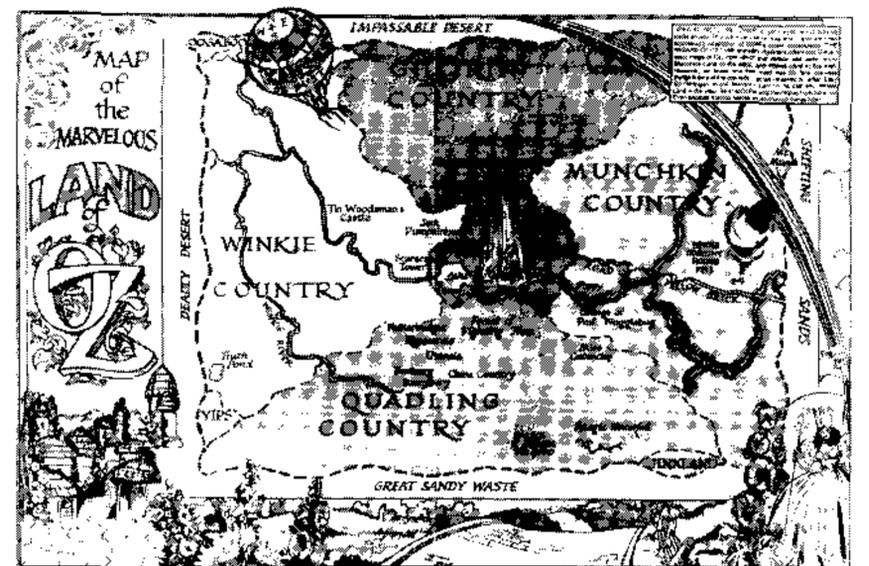


Figure 2. Comic-book map of the fictional Land of Oz, complete with its own place names. Color reproduction. From *Marvelous Land of Oz*. New York: Marval Comics Group, 1975, pp. 80–81. Copyright Office.

romance has also been expressed in a more literary fashion, in works such as Benet's poetry, or in extended accounts of fictional places, such as J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-Earth or Frank Baum's Land of Oz, where the geographical setting, complete with an array of memorable place names that have been mapped, forms an integral part of the story. Still, others have expressed their feelings about particular places in the lyrics, melodies, and rhythm of music such as Blue Danube Waltz, The Globe Polka, Abyssinia, The Road to Mandalay, and Pike's Peak Gallop.

The ultimate fascination with names, however, is expressed by those people who play with names when naming actual places. This has taken the form of creating melodic hybrid names for towns, particularly in border locations. In other cases, urban planners have made deliberate efforts to select street names derived from a common source. Another unusual practice is the selection of names from exotic or esoteric time periods, cultures, or places. Some names are even bestowed in jest, often referring to profane or bawdy associations. Amusingly, one place in Texas, where the local residents were frustrated in finding a suitable name, has remained "nameless."



Figure 3. U.S. government map locating the crossroads community of Nameless, Texas. Color reproduction. *Nameless Quadrangle, Texas*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Geological Survey, 1962. Geography and Map Division.

### Municipal Names

Town founders and urban planners have displayed a fascination with names as they selected the most appropriate name for their town or developed a pat-

tern of street names that is unique or distinctive. For these decision makers the naming process was a very conscious effort as they played with or manipulated the selected names.

Border towns present an interesting situation where names are often coined by combining elements of two geographical names. For example a town founded on the Texas-Arkansas border in 1873 was named Texarkana, combining parts of both state names. Similarly, two towns located on the international boundary between California and Mexico are named Calexico and Mexicali, respectively, incorporating inverse portions of the names for the two geographical entities. Texarkana is illustrated by an 1888 bird's-eye view published by Henry Wellege, and Calexico and Mexicali are shown on a 1916 manuscript map.



Figure 4. Bird's-eye view of Texarkana, a combined name for the city straddling the Texas-Arkansas border. Lithograph. *Perspective Map of Texarkana, Texas and Arkansas*. Milwaukee: Henry Wellge & Co., [1888]. Geography and Map Division.

While street names in many cities are simply numbered or lettered, in some urban centers, considerable thought has been given to developing a rational pattern of street names. In the New Jersey seaside resort of Atlantic City, popularized by the game of Monopoly, the streets parallel to the Atlantic Ocean are named after major bodies of water, while the streets perpendicular to these represent the states of the Union. A bird's-eye view published about 1900 by Landis and Alsop documents this street pattern.

In the newly planned town of Columbia, Maryland, urban planners had the opportunity to develop an intricate street pattern with unique names. Working within the restriction of not duplicating existing street names in the Baltimore metropolitan area, Columbia's planners selected street names from various literary and artistic works. Examples of these unconventional street names are highlighted from four villages where the names were derived from the literary works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Paul Laurence Dunbar, American folk songs, and the artistic works of Andrew Wyeth.

## Grand Canyon Exoticism

One of the most unusual and exotic groupings of place names in the United States is found in the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River, where the names of religious and mythological figures from the major pre-Classical and Classical cultures have been applied to the awe-inspiring towers, buttes, and mesas of the canyon. The center piece of this display is a 12x14 foot scale model of the Grand Canyon (without names!) constructed by Rauda Scale Models of Seattle, Washington, and borrowed from the Museum of Science in Boston, Massachusetts.

This practice appears to have originated with John Wesley Powell, who led two expeditions by boat through the canyon in 1869 and 1872, and Clarence E. Dutton, who conducted geological investigations in 1880 and 1881. The majesty and grandeur of this exotic landscape, which inspired these early surveyors as they named various features, is portrayed in William Henry Holmes' panoramas of the canyon, which were used to illustrate Dutton's geological report published in 1882. The practice was continued by other early Geological Survey employees such as Charles E. Walcott, Francois E. Matthes, and Henry Gannett. In this manner an exotic nomenclature was created, representing most of the ancient to classical religions and mythologies. Included in the exhibit illustrations are photographs of a sampling of buttes and mesas matched with images of their respective gods or goddesses: Isis (Egyptian), Zoroaster (Persian), Buddha (Indian), Vulcan (Greco-Roman), and Wotan (Norse).

While the U.S. Board on Geographic Names approved a large number of these exotic names in 1906, not every one found them appropriate. For example, Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, who served as artist and assistant topographer on Powell's second expedition, expressed in a 1908 letter on display his displeasure with these exotic religious and mythological names. He much preferred Indian names, and names commemorating early Spanish explorers or the members of the more recent Geological Survey topographic and geological expeditions.

## Naming the Land

The second section of the exhibit focused on the historical processes by which places are named. This is an ongoing process reflecting the settlement history of an area. Each successive generation and each successive culture selects, revises, adds, and deletes names to or from its cultural landscape. The participants in this process involve many individuals, but the major decision makers included explorers, surveyors, cartographers, early settlers, politicians, town planners, and entrepreneurs. Their motivations may have ranged from simple, unconscious selections to deliberate, well-

debated decisions.

A number of examples, drawn primarily from the European settlement experience in the Western Hemisphere are illustrated in this section. In these examples, we see European explorers entering a number of regions, most of which were inhabited by native Americans who had already named those features that were important to them. The explorers adopted some of these native names, and added new ones reflecting their perceptions and associations. In addition, selected features were often named in their honor, commemorating their important discoveries. Surveyors and cartographers continued this process. By recording names on graphic documents they helped to perpetuate the usage of commonly accepted names. On the other hand, early settlers added names in their mother language, often duplicating settlement names from where they emigrated, personal names identifying land ownership or place of residence, or commemorative names honoring individuals who sponsored or were influential in the settlement process. As settlement intensified, political and administrative units were defined and delimited, towns were founded, and transportation networks were constructed. Consequently, politicians, town founders, and entrepreneurs became influential in the naming process. While these names often reflect the personal experience of the decision makers, their selections became more conscious as they attempted to commemorate political or military heroes, selected names from exotic cultures or historical time periods, or applied names of major European cities which they envisioned their new settlements would emulate.

The naming process has not ended. As we move into new frontiers, particularly through the exploration of polar regions, undersea realms, and the moon, planets, and stars in outer space, there is a continuing need to identify places. In many cases, the naming of features in these modern-day frontiers has become more deliberate as committees of experts select and approve names.

## The Strait of Magellan

An explorer, by virtue of being one of the first people in an unknown or unmapped area, is a primary participant in the naming process. His contributions can be as simple as giving new names to the most prominent landmarks that he encounters, or subsequent chroniclers and cartographers may commemorate the explorer's discoveries by naming selected features after him.

An interesting example of the explorer's role in the naming process is that of Ferdinand Magellan, the Portuguese explorer who sailed for the King of Spain from 1519-21 with the objective of finding a route to the

Orient by sailing westward around the tip of South America. The route of this first circumnavigation of the globe is depicted on the world map included in Battista Agnese's ca. 1544 portolan atlas. During the course of this expedition, Magellan and his men had the opportunity to add many new names to previously unmapped areas of the world. Unfortunately, Magellan was killed in the Philippine Islands and his record of the voyage was lost. However, Antonio Pigafetta, a passenger on the one surviving ship, kept a diary recording the various places visited and the names that were given to these features.

Magellan named the strait that he discovered at the southern tip of South America, "Channel of All Saints." According to the map of the Patagonian region in the facsimile copy of Pigafetta's account, the channel was also named the "Strait of Patagonia," after the natives who supposedly had big feet. Other names have been applied to the strait, but this feature has come to be known by the name of the man who first discovered it—"Strait of Magellan."

The land on the southern side of the strait Magellan is named "Tierra del Fuego" (land of fire), because the natives kept fires burning at night. This island was also known as Magellanica, as indicated on Jan Jansson's early eighteenth-century map included in the display. After navigating through the tempestuous waters of the strait, Magellan encountered a very calm sea, which he appropriately named "Pacific." Interestingly, when Vasco Nunez de Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama seven years earlier, he named this same ocean "Mar del Sur" (South Sea). Although both names appear on Jansson's map, it was Magellan's designation that eventually gained acceptance!

### Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg

The adoption of native American place names by European settlers has enriched our language immeasurably. In addition to such unforgettably euphonious names as Mississippi and Monogahela, some that we have gained have proved less manageable and even humorous. Among these, one of the most memorable must be the 45-letter Nipmuck Indian name of a lake near Webster, Massachusetts, called Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg, as depicted on a 1970 Webster town map.

Although the original spelling and possibly the original meaning have been lost or corrupted, the name has traditionally been translated as "You fish on your side, I fish on my side, nobody fishes in the middle." Put more simply, it has also been interpreted as "boundary fishing place," reflecting a compromise between two Indian tribes who camped on either side



Figure 5. Webster, Massachusetts (1970), with Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg, a Nipmuck Indian name meaning "You fish on your side, I fish on my side, nobody fishes in the middle." Reproduction. *Map of Webster [and] Dudley, Massachusetts*. Boston: Map Corporation of America, [1970]. Geography and Map Division.

of this three-part lake and disputed fishing rights in the lake.

Local residents of Webster often refer to the feature as "the lake" or "Lake Webster," as a matter of convenience. However, the longer name has become a matter of civic pride as reflected in two 1953 cartoons from the Boston Herald. While many nineteenth and twentieth century maps, including a 1892 bird's-eye view of Webster, use only the last 17 letters of the Indian name (Chaubunagungamaug), the town residents applied to the Board on Geographic Names in 1981 for approval of the 45-letter name as the official name.

While it is likely that Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg is the longest place name in the United States, it is not the longest in the world. It is reported that there is a 58-letter name in Wales (Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrob-wlllantysiliogogoch, which means "Church of St. Mary in the Hollow of a White Hazel, near to a Rapid Whirlpool and St. Tysilio's Church, near to a Red Cave") and an 83-letter word in New Zealand, Taumatawhakatangihangakoauauotamateaturipukakapimaungahoronukupokaiwhenuakitanatahu, which means "The place where Tamateakokaiwhenua, the man with the big knees, who slid, climbed and swallowed mountains, known as landeater, played his flute to his loved one."

### Moscow, U.S.A.

Using the names of European cities and towns has provided a significant source of names for communities within the United States. For example, since 1800 there have been at least 47 places in the United States that used Moscow as part of their name. In some cases, this name choice reflects the cultural heritage of settlers emigrating from Russia, while in other cases, the

name selection reflects a desire by the town founders to commemorate or even emulate a major city, such as Moscow, that became well-known to Americans during Napoleon's 1812 invasion of Russia.

The largest Moscow in the United States is Moscow, Idaho, which is illustrated by a 1904 Sanborn fire insurance map. Settled in the 1870s, the community was originally known as Hog Heaven, because wild hogs fed on "camas" roots in the vicinity. As the settlement prospered, there was strong sentiment, particularly among the women residents, to change the name to Paradise Valley. According to one story, the name Moscow was selected by the acting postmaster, Samuel Neff when submitting a post office permit. Apparently, Neff, who was not of Russian descent, had originally lived in northeastern Pennsylvania near a town named Moscow and on his way West, lived for a short time in Moscow, Iowa. Further justification for this name selection was the town founders' desire for the community to become a large town like its Russian counterpart.

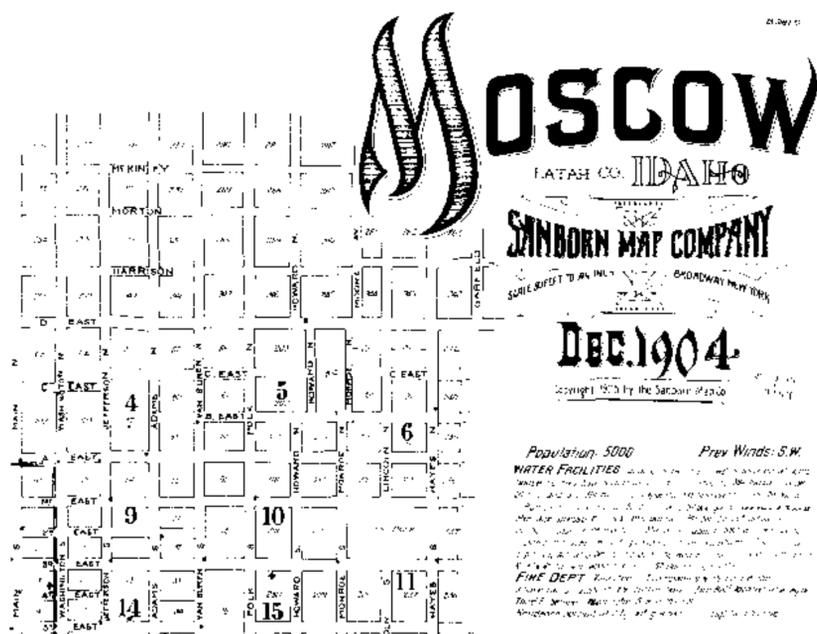


Figure 6. Title page for the 1904 Sanborn fire insurance coverage for Moscow, Idaho, the largest community in the United States bearing that name.

The Pennsylvania Moscow, which is depicted in an 1891 bird's-eye view, is located near Scranton in Lackawanna County. This town, which was founded in the 1830s, was most likely settled by Russian-German immigrants.

### Names in Conflict

Just as the world political situation is in a constant state of change, so are place names. The conflicts that are inherent in these name changes present the focus for the third section of the exhibit. As military, political and cultural circumstances change, place names are affected, often creating confusion and conflict. As a

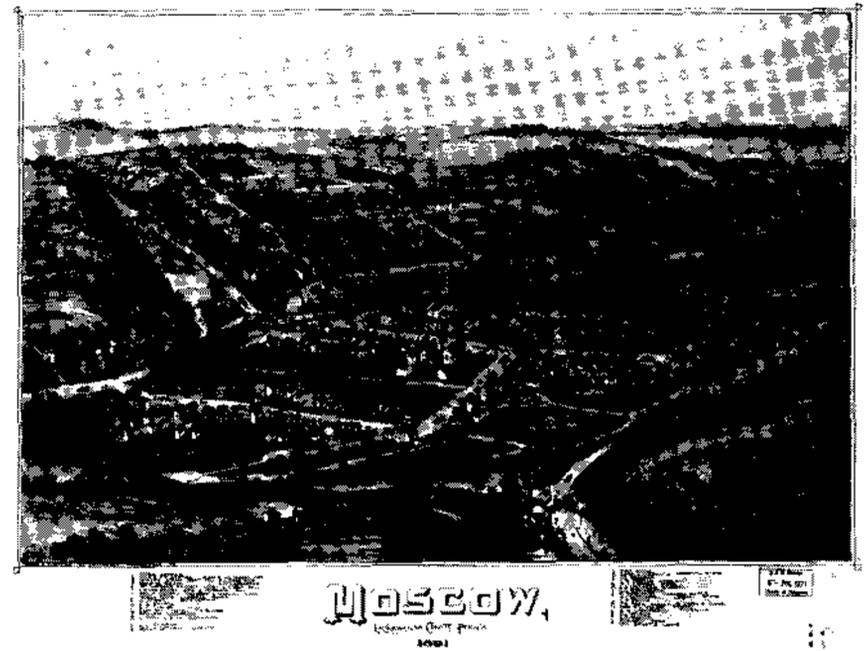


Figure 7. Bird's-eye view (1891) of Moscow, Pennsylvania, probably named after Moscow, Russia. Lithograph. *Moscow, Lackawanna County, Penn'a. 1891*, by T. M. Fowler, Morrisville, Pa. Geography and Map Division.

result, these places may be known by more than one name. On the other hand, simple, supposedly innocent, name changes can also arouse deep-seated feelings, particularly for names of long-established usage or for those with strong historical and emotional associations.

One of the most obvious name changes associated with conflict are those names resulting from military conquests, when the victor imposes names in his own language on the newly-acquired landscape. For example, settlements and physical features in the Falkland Islands are known by their British names, although the Argentineans, who also claim the islands, have their own nomenclature for these islands. In another example, German place names in East Prussia were changed to Polish and Russian place names after World War II when these two countries divided political control of the area. In a similar manner, the name changes associated with the ancient city of Istanbul (Byzantium, Constantinople) reflect the competing influence of eastern and western cultures as various political powers sought control of this strategic location between the Asian and European continents.

As various African and Asian colonies have gained their independence during the last several decades, they changed their names as an expression of their incipient nationalism. In Africa, new countries, such as Ghana and Zaire, quickly adopted new names that were more expressive of their natural surroundings and cultural heritage. Similarly, Asian countries, such as Sri Lanka and the former colonies of French Indochina, dropped names that had ancient origins, but were still associated with 19th and 20th century colonial regimes.

While the latter name changes followed military and political conflicts, some relatively simple name changes actually incite conflicts or controversies. These conflicts, although not of a stature that requires military intervention, result from attempts to change names

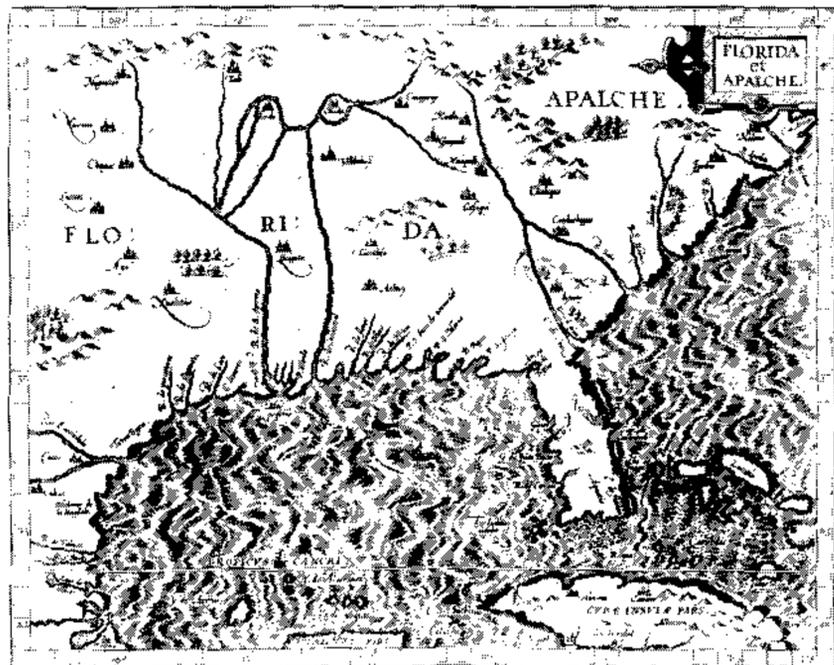


Figure 8. A sixteenth-century representation of the Florida coast using the name Canaveral, which is identified as a “cape.” Engraving, *Florida et Apalche*, by Cornelis Wytfliet, [1598]; Lowery 83. Geography and Map Division.

of long-standing usage or names with strong connotative associations. While the renaming of Cape Canaveral to Cape Kennedy in 1963 was thought to be a simple matter of commemorating the recently assassinated president, the proponents of the new name did not take into account that Canaveral was based on a Spanish name dating back to the sixteenth century. On the other hand, the conflict involving Mt. Rainier and Mt. Tacoma in the state of Washington, focuses on a century-old debate, placing a commemorative name bestowed by Capt. George Vancouver in 1792 against a name of native American origin.

### Falkland Islands

A recent conflict in which place names symbolize the opposing sides, was the Argentine 1982 invasion of the British Falkland Islands. Although the British have effectively occupied and controlled these barren South Atlantic Islands since 1833, Argentina has also claimed the islands, calling them *Islas Malvinas*. This conflict is appropriately portrayed in two modern maps included in the exhibit. A British tourist map promotes a bucolic setting featuring sheep herding, seals, and penguins. On the other hand, the Argentine map, sparse in place names, is designed in the blue, white, and yellow colors of the Argentine flag, subliminally underscoring that country’s claims.

The Falkland Islands, which were named in 1690 by an English sea captain, were the location of a succession of short-lived French, British, Spanish, and Argentine settlements during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The French influence, which was strongest during the middle of the eighteenth century, is evident on J.N. Bellin’s 1771 hydrographic chart, where the islands are named “Isles Malouines” or “Isles Nouvelles.” While physical features have been given French names, the chart maker did acknowledge the English name for the islands.

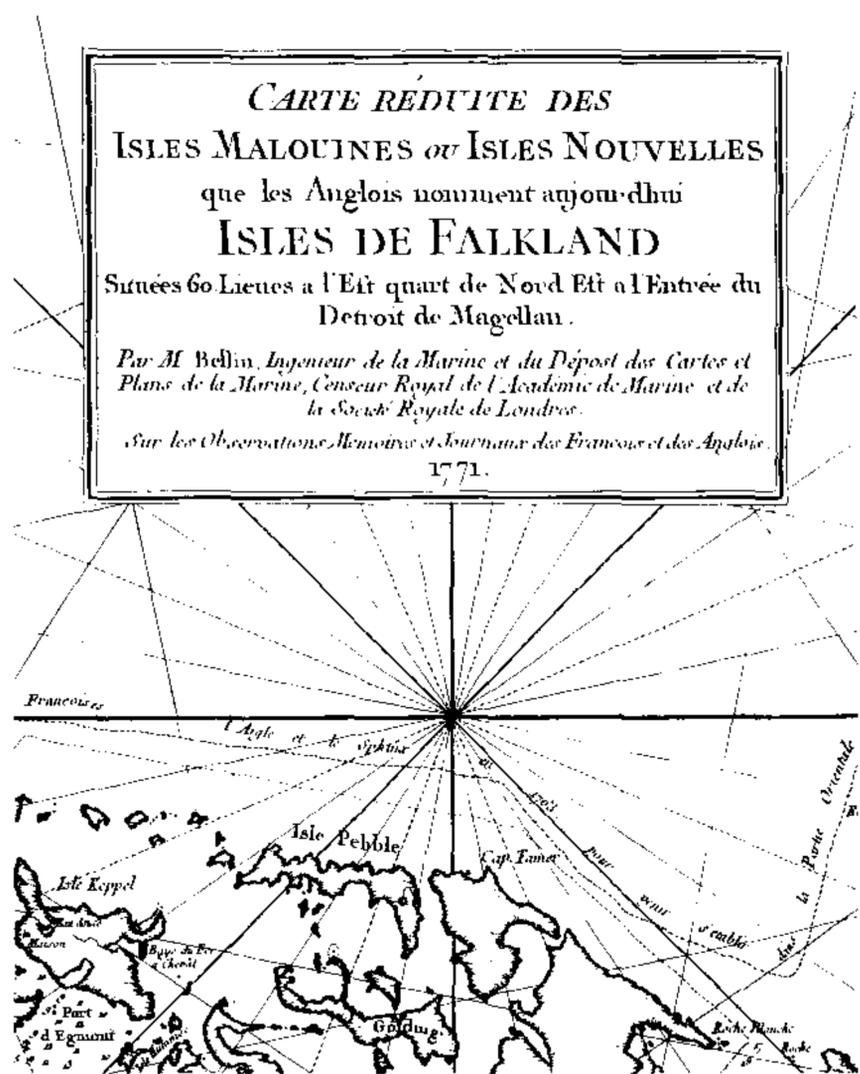


Figure 9. J. N. Bellin’s 1771 hydrographic chart of “Isles Malouines” or “Isles Nouvelles” where the title block also recognizes the English name, Falkland Islands.



Figure 10. J. B. Homann’s 1743 map of western Africa, showing the Gold Coast (“Cote d’ or”), which after independence was named Ghana after an ancient kingdom located in interior Africa.

## Ghana and Zaire

Since the late 1950s, cartographers have had to redraw the map of Africa, relabelling almost every newly independent African nation. In the process of Africanization, most of these countries have discontinued using names associated with the European colonial powers, who partitioned the continent among themselves during the nineteenth century. Most of these colonial names have been replaced with names more expressive of the countries' cultural and linguistic heritage.

The first sub-Saharan country to undergo this change was Ghana, which gained independence from Great Britain in 1957. This West African colony was originally known as the Gold Coast, reflecting seventeenth and eighteenth century European trading patterns in which specific coastal areas were known for the commodities exploited—ivory, slaves, and gold. While the name Ghana is not indigenous to the new country, it is derived from an ancient African kingdom that flourished at an interior location (present-day Mauritania) from the seventh to eleventh centuries. The supposed location of this ancient kingdom is shown on J.B. Homann's 1743 map of western Africa, where it is placed too far east!

In Equatorial Africa, the eighteenth-century Europeans encountered a region known as the Congo which was drained by a river called the Zaire, as portrayed on Frederick de Wit's 1708 map of central Africa. By the end of the nineteenth century, this region came under the control of the Belgians and was appropriately called the Belgian Congo. When the country gained independence in 1960, it took on the name, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Eleven years later, however, the country's name was changed to Zaire, in order to avoid confusion with the neighboring country, the Republic of the Congo, a former French colony. The

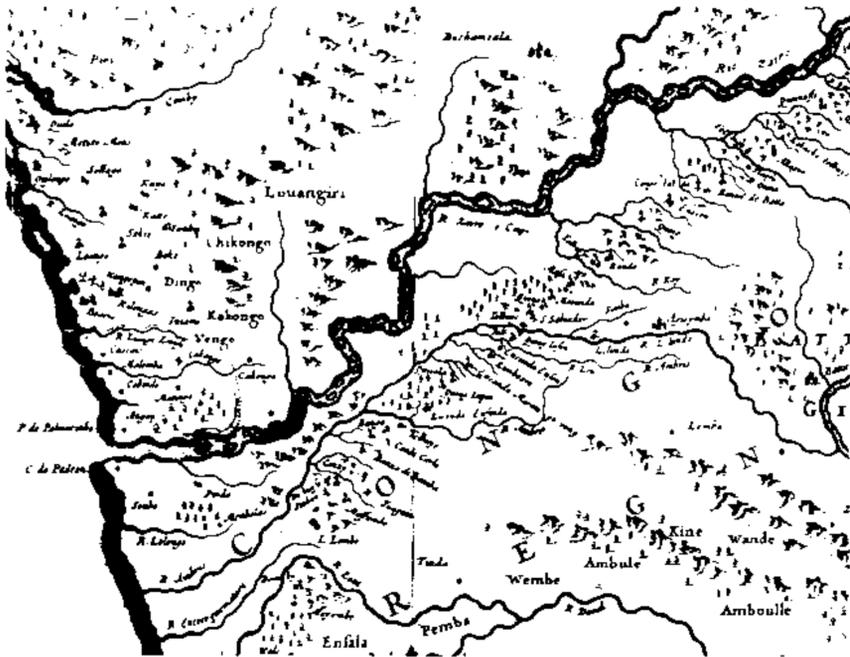


Figure 11. Frederick de Wit's 1708 map of Congo and Angola showing the river named Zaire or Congo.

country's new name was based on the ancient name of the river, which is now known as the Congo, a complete reversal of the eighteenth-century situation. As part of the Africanization process, the major cities (Leopoldville, Elisabethville, and Stanleyville) were also renamed (Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, and Kisangani). Maps prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency record these recent name changes.

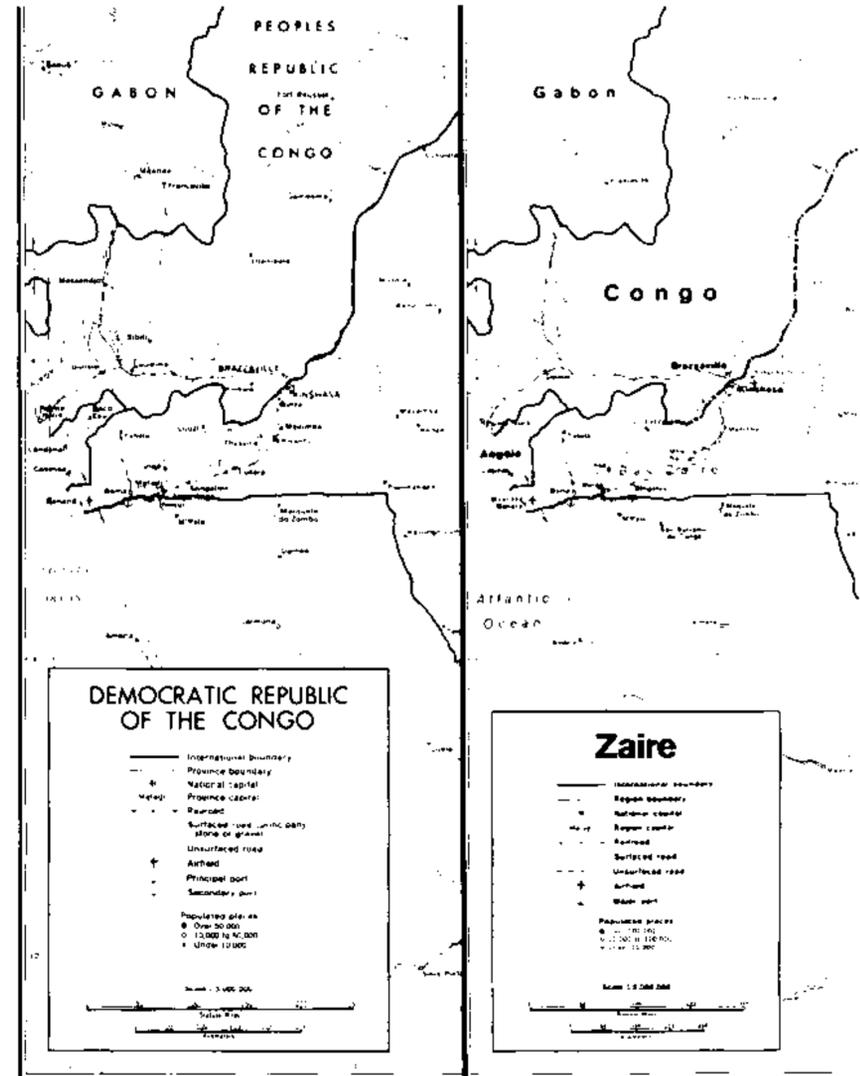


Figure 12. Central Intelligence Agency maps naming the former Belgian Congo the Democratic Republic of the Congo and eventually Zaire.

## Mount Rainier

A place name controversy of long standing in the United States involves the highest mountain in the state of Washington. In 1792 while exploring Puget Sound, Capt. George Vancouver named this majestic mountain for his friend Rear Admiral Peter Rainier of the Royal Navy. This name was readily accepted and appeared on almost all published maps during the nineteenth century.

By the 1880s, however, a controversy began to develop as the two towns of Seattle and Tacoma competed for economic dominance in the Pacific Northwest. In 1883 when the Northern Pacific Railroad chose Tacoma as the western terminus of its rail line, the railroad company announced in its promotional literature that thereafter it would call the mountain Tacoma, not for the nearby town, but because it was

the Indian name for the mountain. Obviously, the Seattle boosters preferred Mt. Rainier. The essence of this argument is captured in bird's-eye views of the two towns. Both views were published by the same company (J.J. Stoner) in 1884 and were drawn by the same artist (Henry Wellege). Interestingly, the Tacoma view has an inset of Mt. Tacoma with an elevation of 14,444 feet, while the Seattle view has an inset view of the same mountain which is appropriately labeled Mt. Rainier at an elevation of 14,440 feet.



Figure 13. Bird's-eye view of Tacoma (top) and Seattle (bottom) including vignettes of the mountain with the opposing names "Mount Tacoma" and "Mount Rainier." Lithographs. (Top) *View...of Tacoma, W.T....*; (bottom) *Bird's-eye view...of Seattle, W.T....*, both by Henry Wellege. Madison, Wis.: J.J. Stoner, 1884. Geography and Map Division.

When the U.S. Board on Geographic Names was founded in 1890, this controversy was one of the first cases that the Board reviewed. Even though there has been a strong tradition in American naming practice to use native American names, the Board decided in favor of Mt. Rainier because of the overwhelming cartographic evidence and the fact that the name had wide local usage. With this decision, however, the controversy did not die. The case was brought to the Board's attention again in 1917 and 1924, spawning a variety of propagandistic literature outlining the merits of either name. Incidentally, the Tacoma Academy of Sciences, which published one of the pamphlets included in the display, only ever issued this one publication.

### Standardizing Names

As the body of world names expands and individual world views become more global, the need to

standardize the usage of place names can be easily appreciated. Many places have more than one name and numerous places may be called by the same name. Problems involving the consistency of spelling, the translation of names from one language to another, and the transliteration from non-Roman alphabets also add to this complexity. It is this issue of place name standardization that provided the theme for the final section of the exhibit.

Although the creation of government agencies with the responsibility for standardizing place name usage is a phenomenon of the last century, the process of standardization parallels the compilation and production of gazetteers, atlases, maps, and globes. Place name usage may vary from one cartographic publication to another, but the fact that these cartographic works were eventually printed and disseminated widely, provided a vehicle for the standardization of limited groups of names.

Since it was not the purpose of this section of the exhibit to present a complete history of the publication of gazetteers or the standardization of place names, only selected examples of early attempts of listing names were included. At the early end of the spectrum,

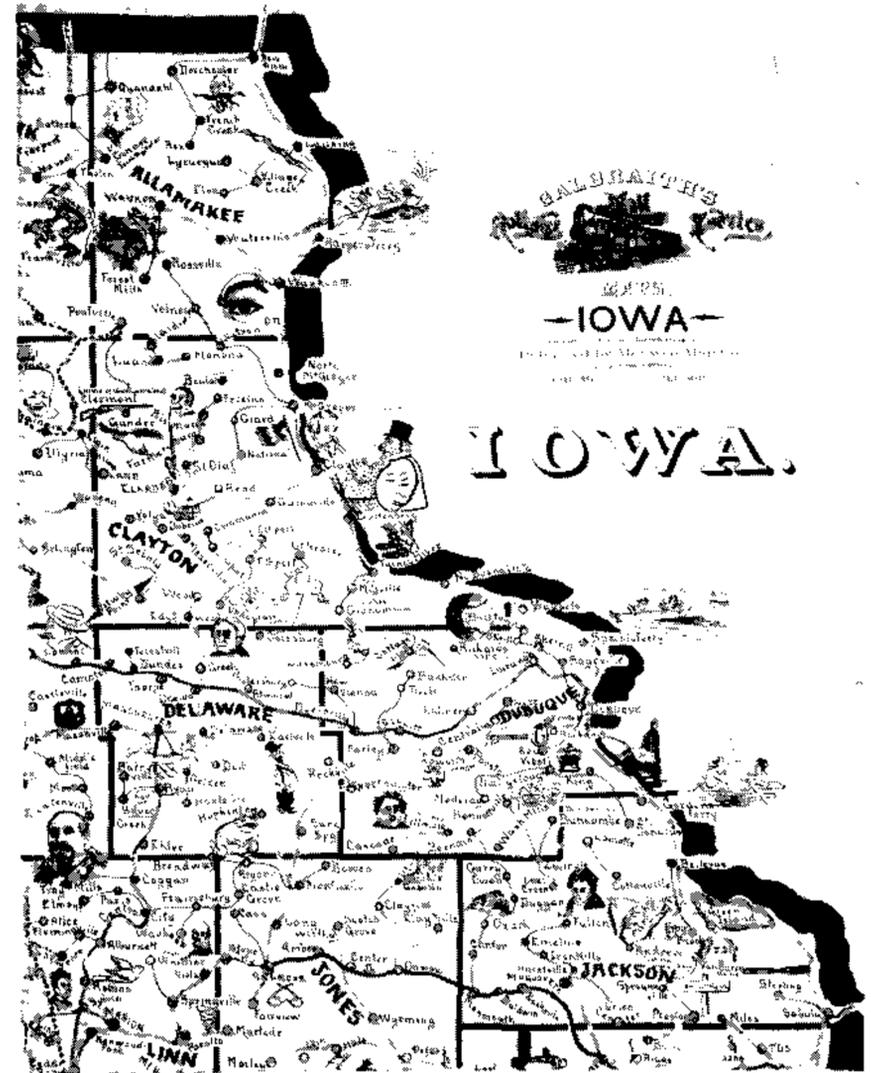


Figure 14. Galbraith's Railway Service map of Iowa, one of a series, in which he represented post office names in caricature as a memory device for the company's mail clerks. Pen, ink, and watercolor. *Galbraith's Railway Service Maps. Iowa*, by Frank H. Galbraith. Chicago: McEwen Map Co., 1897. Geography and Map Division.

there were the writings of the second century A.D., geographer, Claudius Ptolemy; the medieval portolan charts; and the first atlases published in the sixteenth century by the talented Dutch cartographers. At the other end of the spectrum were nineteenth century educational tools, such as pocket globes, puzzles, school atlases, and maps constructed as memory aids, such as Frank H. Galbraith's Railway Service map of Iowa in which post office names were represented in caricature as a memory device for the company's mail clerks.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the need for standardization of place names was felt very strongly in the United States. At this time several major mapping programs were getting under way, but there was still much confusion in the American West and Alaska with a mixture of names applied by Indians, explorers, and early settlers. Consequently, in 1890, President Benjamin Harrison established an interagency board with the responsibility of reviewing and standardizing place names for use in the Federal government, the first such agency in the world.

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names, as it is known today, now reviews names on a world-wide base, setting the standards not only for Federal government usage, but also for most mapmakers throughout the country. This portion of the exhibit briefly reviewed the origins, publications, and work of the board, showing examples of early twentieth century work cards, samples from current case files, and an interactive monitor allowing access to a sample data base derived from the Geographic Names Information System, a computerized data base pertaining to place names within the United States.

### Sample Cases

The Board reviews a variety of cases. They may be as simple as changing one or two letters in a name in order to standardize spelling, such as dropping the "h" from names ending in "burg." Or they may be as complex as resolving such controversial issues as changing Cape Canaveral to Cape Kennedy or Mt. Rainier to Mt. Tacoma. In the course of its deliberations, the Board has developed a series of principles and policies that serve as guidelines in making these place-name decisions.

A long-established policy of the Board maintains that names established by an act of Congress are official and are not subject to the Board's approval. For example, the Board decided in 1891 that the official spelling for one of the Caribbean islands should be Puerto Rico. However, after the United States acquired that island in 1898, Congress enacted a law designating the spelling as "Porto Rico." In 1932, Congress determined that it had made a mistake and reaffirmed the spelling as Puerto Rico. In response to the former name change, the Board had to accept the spelling

legislated by Congress rather than its own preferred spelling. Maps of the island published in 1899 and 1905 reflect these spelling changes.

The Board does not initiate naming of unnamed domestic features, but does consider new name proposals from local authorities, the public, and Federal agencies. On the average the Board receives fifteen new name proposals per month. One interesting case involved a second-grade class in northwestern Iowa. After determining that a nearby stream was unnamed, the class submitted their name proposal of Bluebird Creek, which was subsequently approved by the Board. Samples of student letters, newspaper articles, and a class picture illustrate this class project.

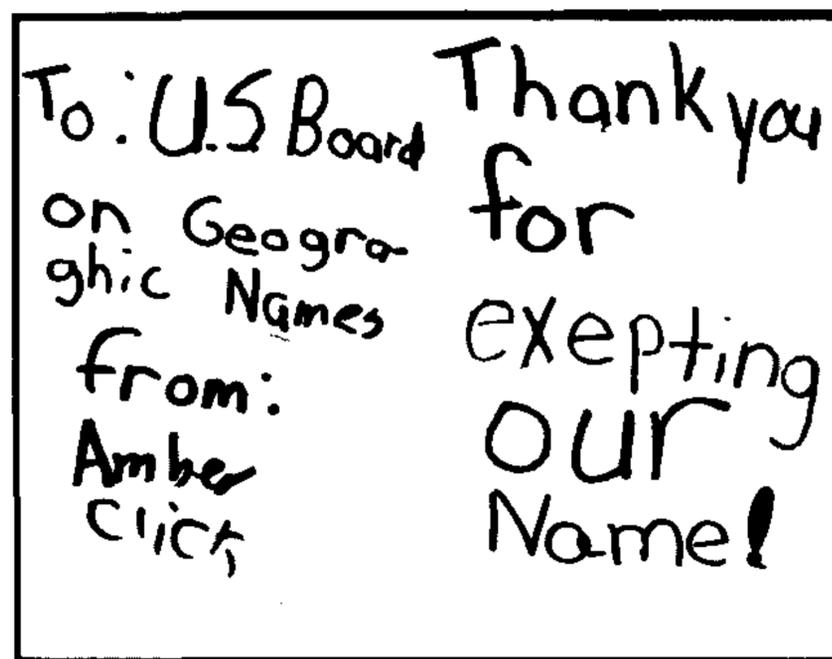


Figure 15. Amber Click's letter to the United States Board on Geographic Names, [March 1988], in gratitude for approving the name of BlueBird Creek. Screened mural of a holograph letter. U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

In terms of foreign names, the Board does not participate in selecting new names. Rather, it records and standardizes names for use within the Federal government, particularly as countries undergo political changes that result in name changes. Reflecting the recent changes in Eastern Europe, the exhibit documents the Board's decision to change the conventional name of the Socialist Republic of Romania to simply Romania.

Unlike personal names and momentous events, on which great thoughts have been lavished, place names have remained relatively unsung. Yet great battles have been fought over naming, that is, possessing the land, and almost everyone has some story to tell of place names they know, from Kennebunk, Maine, to Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. Although "A World of Names" explored place names throughout the world, it was possible to present only a sampling of stories, based on the legibility of place names on exhibitable maps and the availability of space.

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The preceding exhibit review concentrates on the four major sections of the exhibit as well as a selection of subsection vignettes, with brief references to specific items in the exhibit. Full section texts (but not subsection vignette texts), as well as a listing of the individual items in the exhibit are found in the 24-page checklist entitled, *A World of Names: Celebrating the Centennial of the United States Board on Geographic Names*. This

publication is available free of charge from the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

The exhibit was organized, designed, and produced by the Library's Interpretive Programs Office, headed by Irene U. Burnham. Andrew J. Cosentino, of the Interpretive Programs Office, served as the Exhibit Director, and Ronald E. Grim of the Geography and Map Division, served as the Curator.

For the reader who is interested in the naming process, two books by George R. Stewart, which were used as source material for the exhibit, are suggested for further reading: *Names on the Land: A Historical Account of Place-Naming in the United States* (4th ed., San Francisco: Lexikon, 1982) and *Names on the Globe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

Two other useful reference tools are the quarterly periodical *Names: Journal of the American Name Society* (subscription information is available from Prof. Wayne H. Finke, Department of Modern Languages and Comparative Literature, Baruch College, 17 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10010) and a listing of place name literature, *Bibliography of Place-Name Literature: United States and Canada*, compiled by Richard B. Sealock, Margaret M. Sealock, and Margaret S. Powell (3d ed., Chicago: American Library Association, 1982), which has been updated by Margaret S. and Stephen D. Powell in "Bibliography of Place Name Literature, United States and Canada, 1980-1988," *Names*, v. 38, nos. 1 and 2 (March-June 1990), pp. 49-141. From these sources, many more stories about "the world of names" can be gleaned and appreciated.



This is the second in a series of World War II 50th anniversary stamp sheets being issued by the U.S. Postal Service from 1991 through 1995.

# How the Board Works with Foreign and U.S. Agencies

## United Kingdom Permanent Committee on Geographical Names

H.A.G. Lewis, Chairman

Yesterday, we were given a most interesting series of comments relating to the history of the board since its establishment one hundred years ago. My own committee, the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names came into being only in 1919 and is in its late middle age according to the prevailing view of what constitutes old age.

I went through the back minutes of the PCGN, and I found this from 1944. The chairman of the PCGN said to "attach the greatest importance to effective cooperation with the USBGN." Also, there is a remark that the BGN had 150 staff members and that "the 150 included many specialists." The PCGN had at its disposal in its heyday during the war 42 specialists; everyone was a specialist. But they did rather different things that I won't dwell upon today. There was a slight difference in the orientation of the way BGN was largely devoted to the practical aspects of names and our use of consultants which included, for instance, the Crown Princes of Siam and the King of Iraq. They didn't get down to the dirty work of dealing with names formats but helped us in guiding principle. After the war, we ran the committee down so that it had only one permanent staff member, the secretary. That doesn't mean that was all the staff available for names. Private consultants were hired, which we still do today for work in names transcription or transliteration.

I think it is important to reminisce a little bit because geographical names have been such an important part of map making. You might imagine that it would be the land mapping people who would have been responsible for creating the committees or boards to do geographical names. But I think that the hydrographic services, in both the United States and United Kingdom, also played an important part in establishing the board and the committee. This is because of the fundamental difference between land mapping and multiple charting. Each hydrographic surveying vessel is, in a way, its own self-contained hydrographic office. The charts which record the service are the property of the ship and remain in the ship. They were always a source of great pride for the captain of the ship and its crew. The original documents never left the ship but stayed on the ship until it was decommissioned. Hydrographic surveyors had the right to name newly discovered features, something which few land surveyors had the chance to do when they did detailed mapping. The first explorers named places, and the others didn't.

This reminds me of the story about the British hydrographic surveying vessel that surveyed the island of Lenmos. The southwest peninsula had not been properly surveyed; there were hills that needed names. A young officer was put ashore on the waterless terrain and left there while the ship went around the island for several days. When the ship returned, the chart had been prepared by the officer, and it included four hills named Yam, Yrroc, Eb, and Denmad. Lenmos Island was under Turkish sovereignty at that time, and the names collected by the officer looked a little bit like Turkish. But if we turn those names around the other way and read them from right to left they say "May Corry be damned." Corry was the captain of the ship, and he had to sign that chart to approve it, so the captain in fact signed his own imprecation. That's the sort of fun and games that hydrographics have had.

It is understandable that rules for name collection became necessary because the hydrographic surveys were operating a long way from home and were entirely self-contained. If you look at the situation one hundred years before the board was formed, you will find some very remarkable spelling of the names from the Pacific; this was the time when Australia, Africa, and New Zealand were all opening up. Hawaii, for instance, was spelled Owhyee, and Tahiti began with O—Otahiti. Fifty years after Captain Cook's surveys, names were in a reasonable state of chaos, or unreasonable chaos, in the Pacific. It is not surprising, therefore, that some concern was expressed and that somebody finally decided to do something about this problem.

In 1788, one hundred years before the board was created, Sir William Jones published a paper called "On the Orthography of Asiatic Words and the Roman Alphabet and Roman Letters." He recommended that the consonants used for writing foreign names should be English and that the vowels should be Italian. That is the basic principle which we follow in the BGN and PCGN today. Nobody has ever challenged it seriously. Over half a century later, that same principle was adopted by the Royal Geographical Society for rendering geographical names in the Roman alphabet, including names hitherto unwritten. The unwritten language is the world of many.

The system was used for recording Eskimo, today Inuit, names in 1831 and in Labrador. It was also used in 1853 in Greenland by a very enterprising hydrographic officer, and as a result, the Admiralty devel-

oped procedures for the collection of names during hydrographic surveys, and they were issued as firm instructions to surveying ships in 1862. It was not until 1884 that somebody finally addressed the question of how to spell the names. Spelling rules were also based on the principles of Sir William Jones. This was also adopted by the Royal Geographical Society; as you heard yesterday, one of the BGN's first acts was to adopt this RGS system. The Colonial Office also adopted the same system and used it for collecting and writing aboriginal names in Australia.

There was a point that didn't come out yesterday which I want to make because I believe it is very important. There were three sessions of the International Geographical Congress between 1871 and 1881, and the question of names was addressed at all three. The United States Hydrographic Office acted on its own initiative and conferred with every maritime nation in the world. Although they were unsuccessful in creating a system which would be adopted worldwide for writing names, I am sure that this activity was a major factor in the creation of the board.

In my own country, the Hydrographic Department was responsible not only for the first initiatives in names but also for directly founding the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (PCGN). It was entirely on their initiative in 1919 that the PCGN was created after the First World War experience that names collected in a hurry were not always what they should have been. One of the first tasks of the PCGN was to revise the RGS system; the result was called the RGS-2 system. This is important because the first direct contact, I mean physical contact, person-to-person between the BGN and PCGN, was in 1928 because the board wanted to consider adopting the RGS-2 system. There wasn't any other direct contact between the board and PCGN until October 1947 when we had the first BGN-PCGN meeting.

People will be forgiven, I think, for thinking that the United States has always had a great capacity for producing maps of foreign parts but this is false. When the United States entered World War II, I think there were only one hundred people devoted to foreign mapping, and the miracle to me is that in that short period of the war, and it is a short term in comparison to the periods that I have been discussing this morning, that the Defense Mapping Agency grew up from the merger of the Hydrographic Office, the Army Map Service, and the Aeronautical Chart Information Service. By the end of the war, the whole world had been mapped in 1:1,000,000-scale aeronautical charts with large areas at 1:500,000 and 1:250,000. Everyone had all of the Far East mapping that Pete Burrill mentioned yesterday. There was a tremendous output of mapping in that short period of time all built from nothing.

World War II was a world war in a sense that no war had ever been; geographical names in every part of the world were used. If you look at some of the maps before, during and after the war, you will see what a complex problem that really was.

Many questions were left unanswered and so we had our first BGN-PCGN meeting, called an "informal conference," in 1947. The committees refer to the conference in this way: "The short report of the conference could be disseminated, but the full report of the conference was classified secret." The war was still hanging over in 1947. At that time, BGN tried hard to make the PCGN, with the PCGN's cooperation I may say, into the kind of organization that the BGN itself was with permanent legal authority. In a tactful way, they said, "Of course, we don't want to do anything that upsets the PCGN's agenda. Any help we can give, we will give you." The PCGN, on the other hand, finally decided that it liked its amateur status better than its professional status, and so we never achieved the same kind of status as the Board on Geographic Names. But from 1947 onwards, there was a great deal of activity in the United States and the United Kingdom. Russian, Amharic, Bulgarian, Thai, and a great many other languages were under discussion partly as a result of the war, but partly from looking ahead. The discussion was by correspondence; not very effective I may say.

In 1955 another conference was called between BGN and PCGN in London. I remember that conference as being very, very impressive. It was a very good conference, and we decided to meet every two years to discuss names in many different languages. The latest meeting was about a romanization system for Maldivian. We also discuss languages like Greek, Russian, Bulgarian, Thai, Lap, Amharic, Burmese, Japanese, Chinese, Persian and so on. Arabic is a constant topic of discussion. We have found ourselves often isolated at United Nations meetings where people's opinions are formed not by academic factors or by practice but by politics. Sometimes that is a very uncomfortable feeling but we have had to live with it nonetheless.

The BGN-PCGN meetings also have illustrated what a proper understanding of geographical names really involves, a knowledge of a variety of other subjects such as countries' political status, international boundaries, administrative structures, and correct titles of nations. The United Nations took ten years to prepare a list of country names, and it is still full of errors. Even with the cooperation of all the countries concerned, this kind of task is very difficult. We also have to know about the population of places, the nature and geographic extent of the physical features, and the answers to a host of similar questions. There is

also the need to consider which language has precedence over another in bilingual and multilingual areas. Our meetings have addressed, and continue to address, all of those questions.

When I mentioned yesterday that the Iraqi government had stated that a new administrative area had been formed, someone asked for details. I didn't give an answer yesterday, and somebody chided me last night for not providing the requested data. Yesterday, I just wanted to show that there were questions and that you could think of answers although they are not easily arrived at. But, in fact, that new administrative area is not, as was first believed to be, a province of Iraq. There is a little bit of territory named after Saddam Hussein which probably includes, but we don't know for sure, part of the northern territory of Kuwait. Of course, there would be a need to change the name of Kuwait. I don't want you to think that I approve of that from what I said yesterday. It was a question. If you can imagine the Gulf of Kuwait as looking like that (pointing to a map), there is a name up here called "Kasimat" and there is a little headland of the same name; that is the old Arabic name which had been given to the city of Kuwait which is over here. As for the other place I mentioned, to give you the answers, Ruwayshid, in my view, is not on the border crossing where the press describes. It's further down the pipeline near the wadi of the same name. Anyway we have written to BGN on all this, and I just mentioned it for the benefit of all those here today.

Now, when countries change their names, how should we react at the BGN and PCGN? Should we accept them or not? I think that it is important to have an English speaking usage. Czechoslovakia recently changed its name to include the word "Federative." Our own embassy in Prague used "Federal." I regret to say that the United States State Department did the same thing. The PCGN is corresponding now to try to change this because "Federative" is a better term for Czechoslovakia than "Federal." We have written to the Czech gov-

ernment asking them to support us in this.

How should we treat the economic regions of France? Are they first order political divisions? This is a question that Gerd Quinting (BGN staff) and I have discussed many times. Is it important? Well, yes it is because it affects maps; it is what you put on the maps. So these are very important questions which we have to know about because they have to do with maps and, therefore, with names. You will appreciate in all this that we have to get the political authorities of both countries to support us, and that is not always easy. It is really sometimes very difficult; even on questions of country names we don't always get an agreement the first time between PCGN and our Commonwealth Office.

Finally, field collection of names is one of the more challenging things, especially for mapping people. Field are rarely able to cope with languages other than their own, and sometimes not very good at that. BGN and PCGN have made great efforts to provide guidance for the field collection of names but the mapping authorities haven't always listened as carefully as they might; that's their loss, not ours. I tried to implement guidelines because I am a mapper, and I am not just dealing with names. I insist on rigorous measures being followed in field collection and in office processing. Nothing is more costly than trying to correct errors on maps. It's a disaster. You should get it right the first time. The difficult thing is convincing mappers that the time spent getting the names right is time well spent. Instead, they leave the names to one side and then try to do them in a hurry, and the names are wrong and a mess. Then all the maps have to be redone at great cost and sometimes at great operational hazard.

Well, I really must bring this to a close. I hope I have given you some idea of the complex issues which face people who involve themselves in geographical names. I also hope that I brought out how important it is that the BGN and PCGN collaborate as two English-speaking countries with a common cause and bonded by deep friendship.

## Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names

Henri Dorion, Chairman

I would like to thank the board for inviting me and my Canadian colleagues to assist with this magnificent occasion including the magnificent exhibition which I have visited yesterday. I should say that I spent about forty-five minutes looking at this exhibition with two eyes. My right eye as a toponymist and my left eye as a musicologist. From both points of view, it is very well done, a very precise scheme and an interesting exhibition.

Going back to geographical names, Mr. Lewis just underlined the importance of geographical names in war time, and this reminded me of the definition of the French geographer, Jacques Anselme for boundaries. He defined boundaries as political or military isobars, equal pressure isolines. I think this is realistic but a conflictual approach to boundaries; we also should understand that borders are friendship lines, lines of convergence and exchange. So the longest terrestrial

line in the world, between our two countries, is our common boundary, our friendship line. Along and across that line, both countries have experienced problems and solutions, projects, and realizations in many fields including the field of toponymy. In the late 1880s, sharing the challenge of naming the Alaska-Yukon area with American authorities, Canadians were led to prepare rules of nomenclature and then to establish the first Canadian names board in 1897. This reveals the fact that, to a large extent, the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN) owes its very existence to the work of the United States board. In the minutes of the Canadian board, one may find many references to joint ventures in the process of naming transboundary features from the beginning of this century up to last year, precisely when the most useful document of understanding was signed by both our boards on the treatment of transboundary names. We can foresee a further development of exchange procedures on names standardization for our common features. This document of understanding is both a practical tool to settle toponymic problems occurring along a common boundary and a symbol of the good will and reciprocal generosity which characterizes the relations between our two countries.

Another practical and concrete achievement resulting from that attitude is the project of producing a new series of international boundary maps. Due to the coordinative toponymical input of the board to CPCGN, a new map has been issued showing parts of New York State and Quebec and Ontario provinces. The Cornwallall-Hogansburg map is a pilot project of the International Boundary Commission, the first product in a long series of international boundary maps. Over the years, members of the CPCGN have been glad to welcome our American friends from the board to discussions at our annual committee meetings. Participants have been able to give us useful insight into a variety of subjects, among them the treatment of names used by the Amerindian people, naming policies and federal parks, the possible content of gazetteers and cartographic implications of geographical naming. Last year, Mr. Randall and Mr. Orth participated in CPCGN's annual meeting in Winnipeg.

The Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names has held various symposia and workshops on toponymic topics including gazetteer production, automation of geographical names, and native names. We are looking forward to further cooperation. We must share experiences to answer questions that deserve further consideration: the treatment of generic terms in gazetteers; the definition of different types of features and the selection of comprehensive class features in the gazetteers; the definition of

reference points by juridic ordinance in the gazetteers of the different features. One question is whether we give one reference point for rivers or two. Another is if we should go down to the detail of seconds or only to minutes. Some provisional answers have been brought to those questions, but further thought will have to be devoted to these aspects of gazetteer production. The assistance and experience of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names will be very important for us in these matters.

The treatment of native names is also a wide field for cooperation. The variety of solutions which have been proposed and tested on various aspects of that delicate and challenging question offer fertile ground for the exchange of experience. Many topics have to be looked at such as the methodology of field work and collecting native names; the treatment of generic terms in native toponymy; the use of diacritic marks; the question of cutting or dividing agglutinated words in native toponymy; the question of orthographic form which varies according to the function of the geographical name in a sentence; the treatment of parallel naming which occurs very frequently in multilingual native areas.

For these different questions and many others, we have received support from the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, and from the staff we have been able to count on the presentation of useful and pertinent papers from participating individuals, and we have been more than happy with their contributions to debates and recommendations. For several decades, the United States board has cooperated with the Canadian Dominion Hydrographer's Office and the CPCGN Advisory Committee on Names of Undersea and Maritime Features. Exchange of documentary materials relating to undersea feature naming has assisted the Canadian authorities in their decisions on appropriate nomenclature for official approval by CPCGN, and hence for use on federally produced marine charts.

In recent years, we have received information and advice on treatment and appropriate use of international names. The depth of knowledge and wide area of expertise of those involved with the use and application of toponyms across the world have been of considerable value to Canadian staff. For example, in our very recent circumpolar regions map project, being produced by the Federal Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, the CPCGN secretarial sought and received most valued help from our American colleagues in resolving questions of name discrepancies.

In association with international activities, we have been delighted to have many useful tools produced by the board. An example is the gazetteers of undersea

features published by the Defense Mapping Agency containing information approved by the United States Board on Geographic Names. Under the auspices of the United Nations and its working group on the standardization of geographical names, the United States Board on Geographic Names and its Canadian counterpart have worked together as a division of the Group of Experts working to further United Nations goals of international toponymic standardization. The representatives from the board have participated actively in the work of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, particularly in identifying its direction, in supporting toponymic training programs and in developing standards for romanization, terminology and gazetteer contents. Yesterday, Mr. Randall gave us a very good account of the work done by the USBGN in that field. Here again, cooperation between American and Canadian authorities and staff members has been active and productive. American and Canadian specialists are active members of each of the specialized working groups which have been set by the Group of Experts to deal with specific aspects of standardizing geographic names. These working groups include a working group on training in applied toponymy, the working group on terminology, the working group on evaluation of the United Nations program in order to assess and evaluate the achievements of the United Nations Group of Experts and conferences, and a working group on romanization systems.

Both our countries have been active on these working groups, and I am sure it will not be taken as being unduly self-congratulatory or as a case of blowing our own horn if I recognize, as chairman of that working group, that the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom have been the three leading countries in the development of ideas and concrete achievements in

the field of standardization of geographical names at both the national and international level. We hope that our cooperative efforts will keep on driving our involvement in the Group of Experts work toward a very practical direction because it is a field where practical and concrete considerations must take precedence over ideological considerations even if respect for differences remains a basic and universal principle. This attitude, I think, reflects our common involvement in the national and international standardization process. I am sure that Canadian and American cooperation in this field will continue to flourish and develop.

To the United States Board on Geographic Names and its participating departments and agencies, we owe much, for in many fields of geographical names work they are truly among the world's leaders. In the development of policies and procedures, the board always tries to address the practicalities of standardization and cartographic representation. In the production of domestic and international gazetteers, they have provided valuable guidance from which others may learn. In their knowledge of romanization issues, they have demonstrated their expertise, and in the automation of the country's domestic geographical names records, they have given us all many useful ideas and have developed a sophisticated system which is the envy of many. No one from Canada visiting the board will quickly forget the cordial and warm hospitality offered to them by its members and its support staff. Such meetings are always a pleasure and an excellent occasion for a lively exchange of ideas and information on common toponymic interests. Our friends do not hesitate to share the wealth of their experience and always have given unselfishly of their time and expertise. Once more, many thanks for inviting us. My very warm congratulations. Thank you.

## Western States Geographical Names Council

Jay Haymond, President

We are happy, if I may speak on behalf of the Western States Geographic Conference, to be invited to appear on this panel today. I also appreciate the courtesy of the symposium planners in placing the Western States Conference with the esteemed representatives of two international groups. I must say that, at times, we in the West do feel like we might be a foreign country. However, that's not a serious impediment because for the past twelve years the United States board has held forth with us in our annual meeting, has been helpful in guiding each separate state board, and has guided and helped the Western States Geographic Names Council in conducting our business.

I am indebted to many other people, two of whom, David E. Miller and James Jacobs, were important in establishing the states conference. Dave Miller was a history professor and one of my many mentors, and James Jacobs was a retired Forest Service official, supervisor of the Mantei National Forest. He had a great story about a woman riding the branch of the Denver/Rio Grande Railroad out of Santa Fe County who decided she had to give birth to her first child on route from Ephram to Thistle. Fortunately, there was a doctor present, and she delivered safely. Everyone was well. She named the child Denver and Rio Grande Western; I'm not certain of the last name but I think it

was Tingly. Well, nobody really believed him until he took out the Salt Lake City telephone book and produced the name of the gentleman who's name is in fact listed as D & RGW Tingly, living proof of the story. Jim was a member of our state committee and was a great student and advocate of names and a great champion of geographic names. As a forest supervisor and a representative of the United States government to local people, he was a hero to a lot of us.

The Western States Geographic Names Conference is an annual meeting which brings representatives of western states' names committees or coordinators together with members of the board to discuss names issues common to the western states. Attendees also have the opportunity to observe a meeting of the host state's name committee and participate in a meeting of the Domestic Names Committee of the United States Board on Geographic Names which is held as part of the conference. As has already been said, September 5, 1990 was our 14th annual meeting.

In 1982, those attending the sixth annual conference in Denver decided that a formal planning mechanism was desirable to ensure continuity for the conference. At that meeting a committee of attendees, including Don Orth, drafted by-laws which received tentative approval from the conference. Subsequently, an improved version was circulated to all potential members, and after a satisfactory response, the Western States Geographic Names Council was formed and later incorporated.

The purpose of the new council was, and is, to provide a dependable planning mechanism for the annual conference to carry out work directed by the conference and to provide a central office for the purpose of communication. There is one voting member from each of these state geographic names authorities: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Other voting members are the chairman and the executive secretary of the Domestic Names Committee, Board on Geographic Names, and the national director of the Place Names Survey of the United States. Officers of the council are chairman and executive secretary. The chairman of the council is the official whose state is hosting the conference, and the executive secretary is appointed by the council.

The council's by-laws also provide for advisors from Canada, Mexico and key agencies of the United States Federal government, but we have not been successful in keeping the advisory groups active. We have had attendance from Canadian provinces from time to time and consistent representation from two United States Geological Survey mapping centers in the West, the Western Mapping Center and the Rocky Mountain Mapping Center. In addition to the purposes of the

council stated above, the by-laws state the purposes of the Western States Geographic Names Council to be 1) to preserve and protect geographic names as evidence of our unique cultural heritage; 2) to promote the standardization of procedures for dealing with geographic names in order to save money at all levels of government and in the private sector; and 3) to improve the availability of names information to the public, government agencies, business, and others.

There are some character elements that tend to make geographic names work differently in the West. Size is the first and perhaps the most important. Most of the western states have a large land mass over which to adjudicate controversial names; Hawaii is the exception. Secondly, except for California with its large urban areas, most Western states are thinly populated with vast open lands and few people. Third, there are large tracts of public land in the state boundaries, meaning the presence of federal officials from several agencies as land managers, with whom names authorities must deal to settle controversial names disputes; Texas is the exception since it has very little public land. Fourth, a rapidly growing population, suggests place name application changes from land use change. Finally, a large, but minority population of native Americans live in each state who consider themselves members of a sovereign nation within the United States and are therefore citizens of two sovereign nations at once. Hawaii may be the exception here again, because it does not fit the description precisely. In the last 30 years, various tribal governments have learned how to use the levers of power in the dominant culture to recover control of land and to better the lives of their members. A change in control of the topography usually means changes in place names.

In contrast to common elements of our situation in the West, there are important differences in the cultures of the member states, and the names committees that represent them. Alaska, the state with the largest land mass in the U.S., has one of the smallest populations. California is the state with the largest population and also has a large land area. Both Alaska and California use names committees made up of people representing state and federal agencies. Wyoming and Montana's committees come from the state engineer's offices, reflecting the importance of place names to land and water rights; water is a scarce commodity in most parts of the West. Oregon's committee is composed of private citizens and representatives of state agencies; but the committee regularly consults with federal land managers. Texas, a state with few federal lands, has a coordinator appointed by the Texas Natural Resource Information System Task Force and conducts investigation and obtains recommendations from key state agencies, local governments, and citizens

about place names usage. We enjoy our diversity.

As we come together each year in our annual conferences, there are several layers of problems to discuss, and it's not really fair to consistently to call them problems. First, coordination with the Domestic Names Committee is a housekeeping challenge to keep the flow of work moving without sacrificing the integrity of the review process. State committees are organized to be involved in a complicated process that provides reliable information for maps and other forms of geographical sources. The theory is that the people at the local level know more or have access to more reliable information about names than is available to the members of the Domestic Names Committee, mapping centers, or their field investigators.

Integrity of the process depends on everyone doing a credible job and cooperating with persons ahead and behind in the linear process. On the part of the local organizations, there is a temptation to distrust the professional cartographer, land manager, or bureaucrat who often is far away or lacks involvement in the immediate situation. But patience is encouraged and required if this process is to work.

On the other side of the process, there is the temptation to succumb to pressure from bureau chiefs to get the job done, even if the reliability of some information is sacrificed. This is not to castigate government workers or allege wrongdoing but reflects my attempt to characterize the way that I see things. Cartographers under pressure in the process might be tempted to bypass local names committees, feeling that local committees take too long. We are indebted to the Domestic Names Committee staff, and others, for help in overcoming these potential barriers to cooperation and achievement of our goals.

The Domestic Names Committee has a policy of holding one of its monthly meetings at our annual western states conference. The agenda for this meeting tends to reflect controversial names in the West and gives partisans a chance to appear before the committee in person, which would be unlikely if the meeting

was being held in Washington, D.C. This also lets members of the board see those who have petitions or grievances and maybe hear about problems from the aggrieved parties' point of view. During the hearing, the parties can appeal directly to the committee; that is part of the American way, and the rules form a check. The network grows and the results tend to be better services for the public.

At this point I want to say how important it is for the Domestic Names Committee of the Board on Geographic Names to meet with us each year. It makes the meeting, in fact. I think we could meet as representatives of western states, but the opportunity to have the Domestic Names Committee meet and hold forth on western names issues is a very big draw. We appreciate this policy; we can meet and discuss issues as we view them but being able to talk to those who have the authority to make decisions is very desirable.

In addition, we are especially grateful to the state cartographers for their part in the process and the service they provide to stimulate better communication.

The preparation of state name gazetteers, phase two, as part of the process of creating the national gazetteer by using the Geographic Names Information System, is avidly followed by state names authorities and contracts are undertaken through contacts at this annual conference.

Finally, we always need to discuss where we will hold our next meeting. Our council chairperson is the host of the conference and, as we attempt to rotate to all states in their turn, we try to line up meeting sites a few years in advance so plans can be made by conference organizers and those hoping to attend.

The Western States Geographic Names Council is a communicating and planning group to make the Western States Geographic Names Conference happen. The conference is a coming together of people of good will approaching a complex process with good intent and good humor. It is really my privilege to be associated with this group. Thank you.

## **Names and Automated Data Processing, 1**

**Clare Durand, Computer Systems Analyst**

**Scientific Data Department, Hydrographic/Topographic Center, Defense Mapping Agency**

I'm going to be discussing what we call the Geographic Names Processing System which has been in development for awhile. It's not a completed system at this point.

Back in 1978 we began investigating the idea of names automation. Currently all of our names information is kept on specially formatted index cards; it's

a very extensive file of geographic names that are foreign names. So you can imagine when you're covering everything in the world, that's a really large file of index cards to try to manage. We want to get away from the labor intensity of the cards and into an automated setting. Unfortunately, when you're dealing with that many foreign names, there are a large number of

diacritics and foreign writing systems that we use in our office, important to us for source history and for historical records of names of features, that are difficult to automate. It's difficult to put that many different languages into one system. So this has been a stumbling block for the agency over the years in its attempts to develop a system.

In 1981 we had a system that demonstrated the ability to do this, but because of the special purpose hardware and the set up that we used, it ended up not being something that would evolve easily into a fully automated system. By 1987 there were more rapid systems on the market, and a rapid work station idea had come up in computer terms which made it more feasible to actually begin automating some of this work. So the Defense Mapping Agency put together a requirements document, and at that point we coined the term GNPS for the Geographic Names Processing System. We contracted to have a system built that would automate our entire foreign place names file.

In 1989, in preparation for this system coming in, we began having the information that was on index cards keyed onto magnetic tape. That consists of approximately 4-1/2 million names at this point, currently residing on 260 tapes most of which are a result of that keying effort and a few of which are simply gazetteer tapes from regular gazetteer production support. However, in late 1989, it turned out that the current effort had run into some complications, again related mostly to diacritic processing, that led us to step back, stop that effort where it was, and reanalyze our approach. From that, we came up with a new phase approach.

The first thing we did was analyze what we'd gotten. As a result of the requirements that we had put out in 1987, we received a delivery of hardware and the utilities that came along with it. This included a microvax processor and some Sun 386 I work stations which are very nice interactive graphic user work stations. If you're familiar with Macintosh, it's that set-up in terms of the graphics that you get. It included 1.6 gigabytes of disc storage and a tape drive for loading the tapes that we had gotten keyed. We had laser writers and digitizing tables. We're running on a Unix operating system. We have an Oracle database management system, and Transcript which is a postscript utility for sending defined special characters to the laser writer.

Now this is what we received without all of the other special purpose set-ups that we intended. So at this point, we analyzed what we could do with this and decided that it was a sufficient set-up to build an interim system that would allow us to, at a minimum, maintain the data that we had keyed onto those tapes. We had spent a lot of time getting all of our data into

a digital form, and we wanted to be able to make sure that stays up to date.

That's what we're calling our Phase II system. It does maintenance of our names information tapes. This is currently in development inhouse and is scheduled to be delivered to our office in November of this year. This system will provide us with some minor data base processing capabilities. The tapes have the kind of information that exists in a gazetteer, name, latitudes and longitudes, designations and area codes. We're going to have a system that allows us to query against those records to pull up certain names that we're interested in editing, to edit those records, and then write them back out to tape. The system is well designed for error processing. One of the big things here was to maintain the tapes. There are some key errors on the tapes because there was some missing data in the cards that were input. This will give us an opportunity to very quickly pick up names in error on the tape and fix the ones that we know are wrong so that we know that we've got good data when we're ready to move on to a fuller system.

To get around the problem that we consistently run into with diacritics, we are not printing diacritics to either screen or printer with this system. Instead, we're converting the diacritic code that exists on the tape into a set of numbers that will appear on the screen. The operators will be able to tell that diacritics are in the names, looking them up on a table, and will be able to add new diacritics by putting numbers in. That will allow us to go ahead and process these names, even in all of the foreign languages with diacritics, without needing to develop all of that special purpose software for printing those diacritics to the screen and to the laser writer.

We're hoping to be able to enhance this system to the point where the tapes that we output actually will be in our gazetteer format. That involves some additional alphabetizing and sequencing rules that aren't currently in the requirements for the Phase II system.

In the long term, we're going to go for what we call Phase III which is the full system as we had originally intended it. This will include a full data base, including source history on all of the names. The Phase II data base simply includes an entry as it would appear in a gazetteer. The Phase III data base will contain all of the variant names associated with features and the information about which sources those variants have been found on. We use that information in our research when trying to determine what name should be the approved name for a feature. We intend to, in Phase III, include full diacritic processing, so that diacritics will appear on the screen and be printed by the laser printer. Eventually, we hope to enhance the system to include non-Roman writing

systems also.

We intend to begin using digitizers to increase the accuracy of the coordinates that we currently keep in our data base. This system will be integrated with the responsibilities of the names office, including support to the mapping and charting production requirements of the agency. In filling that function, we look things up in our geographic names file and provide data to the cartographers. The new system will have some excellent query capabilities and some special output formats designed specifically for cartographic support.

In addition, it will contain Board on Geographic

Names support functions, the ability to generate the Foreign Names Committee recommendations which our office is responsible for, and the Board on Geographic Names approval announcements that we produce. Also a data base like this should help us immensely in answering inquiries that come into the office. When we get this kind of source history information and have a full data base capability, it will allow us to satisfy queries which are more complex than what we currently can with a manual card file.

That's basically where we're headed with our Geographic Names Processing System.

## Names and Automated Data Processing, 2

Roger L. Payne, Chief  
Names Branch, U.S. Geological Survey

All Features Great and Small is a nickname for the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) which was developed at the U.S. Geological Survey in cooperation with the U.S. Board on Geographic Names for a number of purposes.

The nickname indicates what we really intend to try to do, to have a record of all known named features in this data base. It is about a 25-year project, and we're a little over halfway complete.

I presume that I do not have to sell geographic names work and the automation of geographic names to this audience, so I'm just going to proceed and give a little bit of background about how it came into being and some of the activity and milestones of what we've done. One might collapse all of the reasons that the GNIS was developed into four basic categories: cartographic support, of course, was one of the paramount reasons; a standard reference and national standardization, which are the main reasons for the existence of the Board on Geographic Names; and, of course, a complete inventory of the nation's names. We will include everything eventually except roads and highways.

Over the years we have tried to keep track of how our many and varied users use our data. We have determined some general categories of how the data is used. I want to emphasize at this point that GNIS, or any automated names system, is not a panacea for all of the problems that involve names. But it is a very viable way of processing large quantities of data and also for analyzing this data. We found that most of our information is used for these purposes.

At present, the data base uses Gypsy on an Amdahl 5890 mainframe. Gypsy is a relational-like data base management system; it employs Boolean logic, integer processing capability, multiple output media options; we use magnetic tape and cartridge for backup

only. Our system resides on three random access discs in the mainframe environment and uses 1.1 Gigabytes of storage at this time. It also is available interactively nationwide through a local telephone computer network called Geonet. This means that one can dial a local telephone number in practically any city in North America and gain interactive access, or log in, to this system. We track our users electronically; we know who's using it, when they last used it, what files they're using, and so forth. We also have four level security at this time but we will increase the security level with the next system enhancement.

Access and maintenance are very simple. Everyone at the Federal level who wants access has it right now. But only selected GNIS staff can alter information in the system; there are four people who have the keys to the system.

There are three data bases; the National Geographic Names Data Base is, of course, the paramount data base, the one with all the geographic names. There are two other support data bases at this time. One is the official USGS Topographic Map Names Data Base, and another is a reference data base, which is a miscellaneous area of support information from the other data bases.

Now, because of the theme of this symposium, I thought you might like to see some milestones in the development of GNIS. The basic information structure was determined between 1968 and 1970. The BGN domestic names staff had gone to a great deal of trouble to compile a comprehensive list of names in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to use as a prototype. The next big project, in 1975, was the automation of Don Orth's *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names*; it is still available. 1976 was really the year that we completed the overall system design in the way that it still exists, although with some modifications. We tested the pro-

totype of the Colorado and Kansas state files from 1976 to 1978, and also in 1978 we compiled the Rhode Island file in house to see what problems contractors would encounter. From 1978 to 1981, we compiled names from the 55,000 topographic maps published by the U.S. Geological Survey; this was our first phase of compilation.

We established our interactive capability in 1980. In September 1981 we extended this to the USGS National Mapping Division, Mapping Centers.

When we began our second phase of compilation in 1981 we thought that about 50 percent of the known names were published on the 55,000 topographic maps. As we've moved farther into the second phase of compilation, we have found that only 30 percent of the known names are actually published on those topographic sheets. So, during this phase, which we estimate should be completed about 2002, we are checking all other possible geographic name sources on a state by state basis with a two to three year period per state or per project.

Most of our other milestones involve extending GNIS capabilities to other offices in USGS and in the Federal government. This includes training given to our Earth Science Information Center offices in Reston, Virginia and nationwide so that we could gradually transfer all product generation and distribution from our office to the Earth Science Information Center.

GNIS was incorporated, in 1983, into the Earth Science Information Network, a collection of data bases accessed by one piece of software, with which people can gain access to the science information data bases.

In 1982, we designed a maintenance program that had problems for several years and never operated properly. So, in 1985 we scrapped that maintenance program, completely redesigned it, and made it operational in late 1987. Today it functions very efficiently. In August 1988 FIPS 55, which is probably one of the oldest standards in the Federal government, was incorporated into the National Geographic Names Data Base. The FIPS code is a five digit number assigned to anything that is a place, or an administrative unit, in the

United States. There are about 193,000 entries. Associated with these five digit codes are other fields of information, making demographic analysis very feasible.

In March 1989, the U.S. Forest Service was given interactive access. The National Ocean Service was also given interactive access in 1989, and the Antarctica names file was incorporated into the National Geographic Names Data Base. This past May we began a study to modernize, that is completely update and modernize, the entire automated names system. This could mean taking it off of the mainframe and giving it its own dedicated machine. This study will take a couple years to complete.

I would like to add to what Mr. Haymond said; we do use the Western States Names Conference as a forum to advertise the fact that we do encourage all comers to bid on the contracts to digitize names on a state-by-state basis. Anyone may bid; the one that is most technically capable with the lowest bid will win the contract.

We offer products for sale through our Earth Science Information Center at USGS. These include interim gazetteers, computer listings printed with a laser printer of high quality. The interim gazetteers list all of the names in the state in alphabetical order, as of the time of purchase. Specialized listings, any search of the system, can be generated and printed in hard copy. Microfiche and data on magnetic tape in any form, or any specifications are available; interactive or online access is also available.

We are publishing the *National Gazetteer of the United States*; we have published six volumes so far with two more scheduled for this year, one of which is the *Concise Gazetteer of the United States* which we had hoped to have available at this meeting. It will be out in about a month.

We are going to create a compact disc very soon, hopefully in about three months. It will contain almost everything that we can extract from the entire system. We are also interested in producing discs for personal computers, and digital gazetteers will be coming soon.



## Cartographic Citations A Style Guide

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Up until now, no style manual has given more than superficial attention to the problem of citing maps, map series, remote sensing imagery, and other cartographic materials. This guide covers the field comprehensively and concisely, in an easy-to-use format. Citation guidelines conform to general style guidelines in the *Chicago Manual of Style*, so citations created with the help of this guide will be compatible with citations for non-cartographic materials. This manual is indispensable for libraries of any size and will be a great help to students or researchers as well.

By Suzanne M. Clark, Mary Lynette Larsgaard, Cynthia M. Teague

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# What Do Federal Agencies Require of the Board?

## Mapping Agencies

Defense Mapping Agency, Department of Defense  
Richard A. Berg, Chief  
Scientific Data Department, Hydrographic/Topographic Center  
DOD Member on the Board

I have a three-fold presentation today. One, I want to make some introductory remarks, then I will have some prefatorial remarks, and then I will have some remarks about what I want to say. I will start with introductory remarks. When you come to this point in a program, you know you've heard everything once already, and now it is time to hear things over again. You also have the advantage of hearing what other people said, and so you can tailor the kind of presentation for that history of earlier presentations. I was struck by a couple of things yesterday that I wanted to remark about in my introductory remarks. Someone said that "Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic Topographic Center" was a real mouthful and very hard to say. It came out not quite as euphonicly as "Army Map Service." Well, you know, if you say it over a couple hundred times, it really becomes much easier to say, and so we say "HTC." It is very easy to say "HTC."

The second thing is for Mr. Lewis. I remember Bob Carder, too. I worked for him, in fact, in 1964 and 1965. I was a little bit younger than Roger Payne. Bob grew up in Virginia, in Orange County; I thought that was interesting.

The last little thing that I wanted to say by way of introductory remarks was with respect to Professor Harder's interesting talk yesterday. I have 630 people who work in my organization at HTC, and you can group their names in very interesting ways. I have a zoo, for example. I have a Badger, Bird, Guernsey, Hawk, Martin, Hart, and Mallard in my organization. But I also have some map and chart features. We have a Hill, Lake, Lane, Marsh, Pond, Poole, Stone, Grove, Ford, Corner, Bush, Geyser, Dale, Brooks, Branch, Reef, Meadows, Weed, Wells, and Wood. You can do this with your own organizations and see what you come up with.

Now on to the preface remarks. Again, I would say you heard most of this already. There is no need to justify the existence of BGN to people in an audience like this. But you know the Defense Mapping Agency provides mapping, charting and geodetic data and services to military customers around the world. Our customers include the unified and specified commands,

military departments, and we provide products to other federal agencies as well. We also have a statutory obligation to support the safety of navigation. To meet that mission, DMA has a product line of over two hundred individual products, and they include hydrographic, topographic, aeronautical, and geodetic products at a variety of scales and as paper or digital products. The main difference between USGS mapping requirements, NOS mapping requirements, and DMA mapping requirements is that we cover the earth (except for the United States and the coastal waters). Of course, currency of world mapping conditions that you read about today make important news. For example, "These maps stink." That was an infamous remark by a field commander in Desert Shield, recently quoted in the Washington Post. It is difficult to produce maps all over the world all the time. Our production program is very heavy. In a typical year, we print 50 million copies, 50 million sheets, of maps. In the last three or four weeks in support of Desert Shield, we printed approximately six million sheets. So in three weeks we accomplished a very significant portion of what we would normally print during the year. We print 50 million copies in a usual year of new or revised maps or reprinted maps and charts and generate a million or more square nautical miles of new digital data in support of all military requirements.

Of course, all products require foreign geographic place names to deal with foreign areas of the world. There are two thousand or so new or revised maps and charts that we produce each year that require tens of thousands of names to go on them. Names also appear in sailing directions and port indexes and notices to mariners and notices to airmen and other miscellaneous items as well. Any map and chart, as you well know, would be useless without names on it. For the DMA, the BGN is the principal source of the high quality foreign place names that we require on our products.

You also know that there is a wide variation of spellings of names on the foreign produced products which are sources for our products, and it is the BGN's business to select the best of those possible names as a standard name and we put it into our data base of the

numerous various spellings that analysts encounter. Those standard names are just what DMA needs to put on its products. For us, the important factor in describing real estate, at least by name, is the absence of name variance. We may not be able to pronounce these names.

The commander in the field who thinks maps stink can't pronounce the name; the map may stink but the names are right. So, in a military operation for example, there must be no confusion between the names on a map for a guy who is sitting in a fighter plane travelling over the earth at 40,000 feet and using a tactical piloting chart at 1:500,000. The name on that product needs to be just the same as the name on the map of the 1:50,000 scale map that the fellow on the ground is using to move his troops into place. Wrong names and you might do a lot of damage to the wrong people or the wrong territories.

Well, I feel particularly fortunate as the chief of the Scientific Data Department to manage the employees who are the BGN support staff for providing foreign place names for our products. Their names' expertise is readily available to me, of course, and it is conveniently available to respond to the special needs that DMA has in dealing with a lot of different things like romanization issues and conferences that go on periodically on that subject. The staff maintains the centralized file of 3-1/2 million unique names and many additional spellings. They maintain that file and all its associated data, and I depend on, the DMA depends on, the BGN staff for continuously reviewing that information, applying new information from new source materials that we collect all the time, foreign

maps, newspapers, other gazetteers and atlases—and validating those names, updating the information or entering the newly identified names in the file. Again, the important aspect is the maintenance of this file, and it rigorously adheres to the body of long-standing, thoroughly proven BGN rules about naming foreign places.

There are other offices of DMA that also benefit from the BGN. The librarians and catalogers who work there also refer to the BGN foreign names files and foreign area gazetteers to establish proper identification and sheet names references. We have a number of resource materials, or foreign produced maps that come into our organization every year, many thousands every month. There are cross-referenced entries in the gazetteers, and these are especially helpful in tracking down proper names. An important factor is that there are few gazetteers other than the BGN gazetteers where there is a significant amount of cross-referencing, and cross-referencing is a clear benefit for our products and our mission.

Cartographers in our organization who actually compile maps also use the gazetteers and the resources in our BGN files to answer questions and resolve problems that come up in the compilation of maps and charts. The inquiries office responds to a couple of hundred inquiries each month in the BGN arena. I would close by saying that we are able to provide, because of the BGN, current and timely products that cover all areas of the world, and we rely on the BGN for that support. I thank them and wish them "Happy Birthday, BGN."

## U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture Mark Flannery, Cartographer Pacific Northwest Region

I am a cartographer in the Pacific Northwest region of the Forest Service, and I have been in the geographic names business for nine years. I woke up at my desk one morning, and there it was. I think I had the reputation for knowing where people were from, but forgetting who they were, and that's why I ended up managing the geographic names program for the region. I serve as a coordinator among the national forests, the Chief's office here in Washington, and the two state boards for Oregon and Washington.

The Forest Service will be celebrating its centennial next year; so we invite all of you to join with us in that celebration. In 1891 the president was authorized to establish forest reserves, and in 1905 these reserves were transferred to the Department of Agriculture and the Forest Service was formally established.

The Forest Service manages 191 million acres of

land in forty-four states; these are administered through nine regions, 156 forests, and 644 ranger districts. (These numbers might not be up to date because the districts tend to consolidate every now and then.) Our mission is to manage these lands for multiple uses, which means that we are not tied to one particular use, but that we are dedicated to sustaining yields of renewable resources such as water, forage land, wood, wildlife, and recreational areas.

The Forest Service produces many types of maps, but I think the map with which the public is the most familiar, is what we call the "Secondary Base Series," or the "Forest Administrative Map," and its derivative, the "Forest Visitor Map." The "Secondary Base Series" has, until very recently, served as one of the official base series maps for the BGN, but it is now being superseded by our "Primary Base Series," which is more

or less the standard USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle, with Forest Service information added.

So we do have a keen interest in assuring that geographic names are accurately spelled and applied on our maps, and I think our display here at the south end of the room shows that. It shows the close relationship that we have maintained with the Board, and we feel that they have served us well.

We do have areas of concern where we would like some clarification. One of our primary concerns is that we apply the board's principles, policies and procedures consistently to all geographic names proposals. That's why we occasionally ask questions of the Board; we want to stay in close touch. We don't want to be incorrect in our application of these principles, but we don't want to be too strict either. We try to apply the principles evenly and consistently as much as possible.

One issue that has come up is native names versus non-native names. Normally, we give no preferential treatment, either to a non-native name or to a native name, because the principles, policies and procedures don't instruct us to do otherwise. But in some areas, there is sentiment to redress perceived imbalances in the number of non-native versus native names; this could result in an agenda that would tend to favor native names over non-native names. That, of course, would conflict with the intent of the principles as we understand them. We need some clarification.

A second issue, pertaining particularly to our Alaska region based in Juneau, is about the Board's intended interpretation of the phrase "area of native American tribal jurisdiction" in Sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 of Policy 11. Can this be interpreted to mean "native corporation lands" also? Our Alaska region has extensive lands within the proclaimed national forest boundaries that have been conveyed by the Bureau of Land Management to various native corporations engaged in business profit. These lands are considered private, not part of the national forest system, although they are within our boundaries. Virtually all of the shareholders in these native corporations are, of course,

native Americans. Do these native corporations equate with tribal governments and counsels, and is it the board's intent to give the corporations the same proprietary rights regarding geographic names in those areas?

There is a third concern: Should the long-names policy (Policy 10) apply to native names, such as Naucestaarwikcak Point, or not? I think that a good native American names policy would probably address that issue. Also, may names other than those of persons be correctly called commemorative names and be subject to Policy 3?

The fourth issue is that the state boards sometimes need to provide better documentation to back up the decision-making process. Occasionally, extensive research and effort on the part of agencies is negated by what appear to be arbitrary decisions by the state boards. (Of course, I'm not referring to either the Washington or Oregon state boards!) The Board of Geographic Names needs to be consistent in its consideration of state approved and disapproved names.

We are excited out in the field about using GNIS as a tool for a variety of naming questions. But we are going to need clarification of our responsibilities, as we become active users of the program within the next year.

Finally, USGS should consider maintaining a separate data base which would include names that are submitted but not approved. These names often become *de facto* names, especially in remote areas generally used only by hikers or mountaineers, who often publish works such as hiking guides that include non-approved names. Therefore, the names are in print, and they become the *de facto* names. So that is another issue that we might consider, getting those names in some sort of data base so that we do have a reference point.

I would like to say that, in general, we are very happy with our relationship with the board, and we hope that it will continue to be as profitable as it has been. I agree with the others; I hope you have a "happy birthday." Thank you.

National Park Service, Department of the Interior  
Tracy A. Fortmann, Program Analyst  
Office of Policy

I have been asked to speak briefly about ways in which the Board might serve my agency, the National Park Service, but before doing that, I would like to introduce several individuals in the audience representing the Park Service; they have come a long way to be here today. One was previously my boss, Dwight Rettie, who I succeeded as deputy member representing the Department of the Interior on the Board. Hank

Warren, Chief Park Naturalist from Olympic National Park, and Tom Tankersley, Historian from Yellowstone National Park, are also here. At the end of my remarks, I invite them to make any points or suggestions they would like.

The National Park Service, just for background information, was created by Congress in 1916. We are going to be celebrating our 75th anniversary in 1991. A

previous speaker representing the Forest Service mentioned they would be celebrating their 100th anniversary. I would just like to say here that we may not be quite as old as the Forest Service, but we are just as good! The Park Service is responsible for the management of the National Park System, a system which comprises over 350 areas covering almost 80 million acres in forty-nine states, the District of Columbia, America Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, Saipan and the Virgin Islands. The only state without a national park unit is Delaware. In keeping with the Service's mission to manage, protect and preserve areas for enjoyment by Americans today and in the future, we look to and work with the Domestic Names Committee of the Board on Geographic Names to resolve conflicting name usages, identify proper application, and consider new name proposals within or adjacent to areas of the National Park System.

I think there is no question that in dealing with geographic name proposals concerning National Park System areas, the Board has acted both promptly and effectively. There are, however (and there is always a "however"), a few areas of concern which the field has suggested may require some additional support from the Board. Last night Hank Warren mentioned to me that he had never seen a Board that did not have at least a few splinters. Well, Hank obviously meant that in a very positive way, I might add. Those splinters are as follows: Although not a frequent situation, at times the Service finds itself in disagreement with state boards concerning proposals. In some of these situations, the Service has felt that the Board has not placed enough weight on our position. In addition, at such times, the Board appears to be at a kind of impasse, unable to determine whether to support the Service's or the state board's position. As an example, at least a year ago, actually I think it has been two or three years ago, we submitted a proposal to which the state board strongly objected. Although both the Service and that state board have subsequently reviewed their positions, neither party has changed them and we continue to disagree. Unfortunately the Domestic Names Committee still has not acted. This is about Lindsley Glacier, Washington. I believe Hank has had the opportunity to speak with Frank Smith. Hopefully, we will be able to work this one out, but the ability of the Board to resolve such differences still needs to be addressed.

Another concern is the Commemorative Names Policy. The Service, as well as many other Federal land

management agencies, is increasingly receiving commemorative proposals. Many such proposals are not in keeping with board policy. The ability to deal appropriately, as well as consistently, and I would like to emphasize consistently, with these emotionally charged proposals is becoming of great concern to the Service. Informing proposers early on about the Board's policy, providing suggestions of alternative ways to commemorate someone, and handling such proposals consistently, would greatly alleviate the problem.

HANK WARREN: The purpose of the National Park System particularly in the legislation, or at least the legislative history for Olympic National Park, mandates that we manage it for the recreation and inspiration of people. In court, our mission includes the interpretation of the features in the park. So, geographic place names are especially important to us because they help us tell a story, or not tell a story in the park. So whenever a proposal for a geographic place name change is presented to us, it undergoes extensive review. This is especially true in recent times. And so we have, for example, a park historian on the park staff. We also have people who are in contact with people who have lived in the area for decades, with people who write and recommend geographic place names. We always contact these folks before we make a recommendation. Then in our regional office, there are the same kinds of reviews of our proposal and it goes up the line accordingly. So, when we take a position on geographic place names, it is pretty carefully thought out, and we try and keep it tight to the mission of the park. I think that is probably the bottom line.

TRACY FORTMANN: The mechanism of review is three levels. It goes from the park to the region and then from the region to the Washington office. Another point worth making is that we're not big proposers. We take a more reactive position, but when we do initiate a proposal, I think it is because we feel that there is a real need, and we always do so in keeping with the Board's policies and guidelines.

TOM TANKERSLY: I am going to speak as a journalism major as much as anything, and reiterate the interpretative values of Yellowstone, as well as any other national park. I personally deal constantly with the apostrophe issue. I understand the Board's position with regard to the difficulty of using apostrophes in mapping, but as a journalist, I have another opinion on that, and I just threw that out for consideration.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce  
Charles E. Harrington, Geographer  
National Ocean Service

To give a little picture for some of you who are not familiar with National Ocean Service, the big umbrella for National Ocean Service is the Department of Commerce; and under the Department of Commerce is NOAA, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and under that you have National Marine Fishery Service. We are the old-timers in the government. The National Ocean Service's predecessor, Coast and Geodetic Survey, was formed in 1807. So we came about eighty-three years before the board's existence which means that in another seventeen years we will be two hundred. We began producing hydrographic surveys, maps, and charts, in the mid-1830s when the nation was in its infant years. We were domestic in nature, as Richard Randall pointed out. The National Ocean Service produces nautical charts and bathymetric maps. We also produce tide and current tables and nine volumes of coast pilots that cover a large variety of information important to navigators of U.S. coastal and intercoastal waters including the Great Lakes and several other large inland lakes. Subjects in the coast pilots include channel descriptions, anchorages, bridge and cable clearances, currents, tide and water levels, prominent features, pilotage, weather, ice conditions, dangerous routes, small craft facilities, and Federal regulations. We also produce aeronautical charts of the U.S. and various related publications. We have field parties performing hydrographic, geodetic, and photogrammetric surveys in support of the National Ocean Service. These field parties are required to record new names and local usages or names that are in conflict with those shown on our maps, charts and publications.

Geographic names are an important aspect of mapping and charting, and any navigational product

without names or with incorrect names loses a lot of integrity and, consequently, has little value to the mariner. I feel that a nautical chart without names would be worthless; it would be similar to a nautical chart without soundings of depths.

National Ocean Service, as a part of the mapping community, has a great concern for accurate geographic names. One of our goals is to keep our products as current as possible and this includes geographic names. Through the Board on Geographic Names as well as our field parties, through U.S. power squadrons, Coast Guard auxiliary and other users, we can work together to accomplish this goal. National Ocean Service needs the board, and I feel the board needs the National Ocean Service to help keep the Federal community current in the area of geographic names.

In the area of requirements, I feel there are three basic areas. One is timeliness; we need often a quick turnaround of a name approval or of a term definition. Secondly, we have a lot of inquiries at our office like: What's an inlet? What's a bay? So, the definition of generics is very important. Lastly, accuracy is necessary. Our charts are often legal documents and end up in courts. We may have problems with vessels grounding, with people violating fishing regulations and with search and rescue, so they are often brought into court as legal documents. The names play a very important part in that area also.

I will just close with this, told to me by a lawyer. The National Institutes of Health is going to change the way they do experiments. Instead of rats, they are going to use lawyers. There are three reasons for this: there are more lawyers than rats in this area; scientists don't get attached to them; and there are just some things a rat won't do. Thank you.

U.S. Geological Survey, Department of the Interior  
Rupert B. Southard, Chief (retired)  
National Mapping Division

Immediate Past Chairman of the Board on Geographic Names

The Geological Survey's National Mapping Division is the primary civilian landmapping organization in the Federal government. Our responsibility is mapping the area of the United States, its territories and possessions, and Antarctica. Our products are maps, of course. There will still be paper maps for some time to come. But now we have a new responsibility, the formation of a national digital cartographic data

base which at the moment is in production. That digital data base will include the data that is on the maps. It will also include updated data that is not on the map.

We will finish the 1:24,000-scale once-over coverage of the lower forty-nine states this year. The last few maps are still in production, and I am not sure which one is going to be last. But, it is going to happen this

year. We are proud of our maps. But they are out of date; I suppose that, technically, they are out of date as soon as we print them.

In the last few years, the Geological Survey, in an attempt to get data out to map users more quickly, has been making provisional editions which have had less geographic names research work done on them than we would like to see done. So, my first suggestion to the Board is that they watch that very carefully. Remember that the function of the Board is standardization. Of course, there can be partners in the standardization effort, but the standardization stamp is the Board's function, and it is an important one. If you all knew how many important decisions were reached in the Domestic Names Committee with a vote of three to two, you wouldn't be so confident about how well things are going. Differences in opinion will occur and, again, my suggestion to the Board is to press each other to make sure everyone does his homework.

There is a symbiotic relationship between the Geological Survey and part of the Board's function. You heard Roger Payne talk this morning about the Geographic Names Information System which the Board has adopted as its standard reference source. Things happen fast, vibrantly, and dynamically in the GNIS because it is computerized. Maybe the Board can keep up with it, maybe it can't.

My suggestion there is: watch it carefully. Don't let the bus pick out the route. GNIS can be, perhaps is, the best idea anybody ever had in this business. But don't

forget: standardization is the Board's business. When the digital data base is finished for the country, we want a GNIS that is as strong as possible at the same time. Again, I suggest something that somebody else mentioned: strive for as much consistency as possible. Consistency will send the Board's message most clearly. There are people in the field collecting names who haven't quite understood the message. And maybe it hasn't been sent clearly enough. So send it again and again until they say "Don't tell us anymore; we understand it now."

The Board should maintain sensitivity to the impact of their decisions on not just one direction, on local authorities, mapping agencies, land management agencies, and the public. Don't forget the public. That's who we're doing this work for.

The Board does good work. I know that; I have seen it done. I think that there are some splinters but not as many now that I have retired. For those of you who haven't been on the Board and haven't watched it work, I want to tell you that they're honest. That gets in the way sometimes, and that's why the three to two decisions turn out to be very important. Wilderness decisions are a good example. I can remember one that hung up for a couple of years; the vote was two to two and the chairman didn't want to make a vote, but it finally swung with a little courage on his part. So, my advice is keep up everything you are doing, and do it better. Be consistent. Be strong and be communicative. Thank you.

## Standardizing Agencies

U.S. Government Printing Office

Robert C. McArtor, Chairman, GPO Style Board

USGPO Member on the Board

I am Robert McArter, Chairman of the GPO Style Board. Last night I had the honor of having the Public Printer here with his wife, and he asked me what I did. So today I wrote down a few of things that I do, and I think I will send him a copy of this tape. Maybe it will help; he's new at the game; he'll soon learn. I may be the splinter guy in mine; I am a loner, the Maytag repairman of the government, and sometimes I frankly wonder what I do. I have the *GPO Style Manual* under my loving care. I answer the telephone and style questions throughout the government. I was very disappointed with the presentation of Clair Duran because I could not find one typographical error. We comma chasers live that little tunnel vision life and make a big deal out of things that are probably not important at all. But I notice that you use a "k" on the spelling of disk, and you have workstations and data-

bases as one word which we should be doing soon, and you double space after colons which we don't, but...

So what am I doing on the board with an attitude like this? I have one advantage over many of the folks on the board which is that we are under really no political pressure. I am not important enough to pressure. So being a Virginian and a state's righter, I have a view maybe a little more sympathetic to the states when they do present a name change. I am torn so many times between the wilderness policy on the one hand and the right of a state to name anything within its boundaries as it sees fit.

Today is my anniversary with the government; I am starting my thirty-first year. At seventeen, I decided to go to Kansas and join the United States horse cavalry. While there, I found out that I didn't speak a language that was acceptable throughout the country, and I

learned to say “There is a mouse in the house. Get it out” without a lot of effort. But I feel more at home in Canada saying “There’s a mouse in the house. Get it out.” My comrades in the First Cavalry Division had me say that every night to amuse them. We were at a loss for amusement.

The GPO Style Board has the job of monitoring style, particularly in the Government Printing Office, but our government style manual does go to all Federal writers. I don’t know who decided I would be in charge of this good printer’s bible, but I am indebted to the Board on Geographic Names for their input to our manual. My job would be much lonelier without them. It was very helpful for me to call the State Department recently to find out which of the three ways Saddam Hussein wanted his name spelled. It wasn’t but about a week after I made that telephone call that we had trouble. Why would we be concerned with this?

We are looking for consistency, particularly in the *Congressional Record*. Personal names have a way of becoming placenames, and I am certain that Baghdad will be called Saddam City one day. Everything else in Iraq seems to be named after him—the airport, the schools, the hospitals and so forth—and we want to be ready.

One of the contributions the board makes to the style manual is a chapter called “Useful Tables” in which all the countries of the world are listed—their forms of government, their heads of state, their capitals, their currencies and symbols used for currencies, the adjective and noun forms to be used when referring to an inhabitant of that country. But unfortunately, style manuals are not printed yearly. In fact, ours is already six years old; 1984 was a long time ago. We have probably had six or seven countries who changed their names since then.

The late newspaper, the *Washington Star*, for instance, used to refer to anyone from Quebec as “Quebecker” and they used the “k” device as we do in the word picnic, we add a “k.” I have seen it with single “c”ers for the inhabitants, and sometimes a double “c.” So maybe our Canadian friends can enlighten me today before we leave as to the preferred form to be used. You better have had all of your shots before you ever come into my office. I am a pack rat and a saver of many newspapers, magazine articles, and style manuals all in quite a bit of disarray.

In looking through the style manual last night, I noticed that the BGN also furnishes us with a list of guidelines and meridians, and we have a chapter listing all of the counties in the United States. We

talked about the apostrophe a few moments ago. The late Gladys Spellman called the public printer one day about the fact that the GPO refused to put an apostrophe on Prince Georges County. I was called up to the office to explain without being told why I was being called up there. So it was just lovely for me to say that the BGN doesn’t do it and that we always follow the BGN. That satisfied her. But if you look at their police cars, school buses, and signs, you will see the apostrophe sometimes and sometimes not. Once we put that apostrophe in one county, we would have many other counties to place an apostrophe in.

But we are interested in the forms of words. I am particularly interested in spelling, naturally, and compounding. Is this placename one word or two? Is it hyphenated? What is capitalized? So again, the BGN is a major support for our manual. Baron DeKalb has been honored in a great many states by having a county named after him. But some of the states insist upon the two-word form, some on the one-word form.

One of things that some of us would like to see is a pronunciation standard. Yet I voted for the dissolution of the committee to decide pronunciation of names because we didn’t seem to be getting anywhere. I lost ten or fifteen minutes sleep that night thinking about that. Did I make the right decision? Perhaps the GPO would benefit more than any other agency from knowing the pronunciation of terms. Take, for instance, the little town of Arithmetic, Georgia. Is it A-rith-me-tic’ or is it Ar-ith-met’ic; and in Texas the little town of In’va-lid or In-val’id? That would determine how we would hyphenate those particular terms. Before you rush to your dictionary and atlases and all that, there are no such towns as far as I know. But yesterday, we talked about “Arkansaw” and “Arkansas.” I hope they don’t change the pronunciation, but if they do we will change the hyphenation because we differ with Webster’s Third International on the method of breaking words at the end of a line.

I will close this with a commercial. The Government Printing Office is only three or four blocks from here, and I made certain that there are enough copies on hand for purchase if you are interested in buying the *GPO Style Manual*. I would suggest that you not buy our paperback which is \$11.00; it is biodegradable and will do so before your very eyes. The hardback is only \$4.00 more, and I think it is a bargain. In closing, I will say I made certain my name and telephone number are in that manual, and you are certainly all welcome to call the loneliest member of the board at any time with suggestions. Thank you.

## National Institute of Standards and Technology, Department of Commerce

Henry Tom, Computer Specialist

Commerce Department Deputy Member on the Board

NIST is the National Institute of Standards and Technology. We have had this name for about three years. For eighty-seven years we were the National Bureau of Standards. I think we were formed in 1903, so the board has an advantage over us. We don't standardize geographic names, the board does. However, we do in a very indirect way in that we work with the board in the various agencies that make up the board. We provide standardized geographic codes which are alphanumeric codes that the computer can understand. One of the main areas which the National Bureau of Standards, or now NIST, works in is standardizing the use of computers within the Federal government.

There are three major standardization bodies. There is IOS, the International Organization for Standardization, which does it on an international basis; the American National Standards Institute which does it on a national basis; and the Federal Information Processing Standards Program which is mandatory for all Federal agencies to follow. We have a number of "maintenance" agencies working on geographic coding standards. The United States Geological Survey is the maintenance agency for two or three of our standards and the Department of State, Census Bureau, and others also provide assistance. I might mention that we have geographic codes for states, counties, places, metropolitan statistical areas, and congressional districts. We also have formats called geographic point locations which really are formats for latitude and longitudes, state plane and UTM coordinates, hydrological unit codes, and countries of the world.

Recently I got a standard which has been nominated

to become a Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS). It is the work of many groups over the last eight years and is called the Spatial Data Transfer Standard (SDTS). This is the one that all the geographic information systems people want. A good portion of this, too, has to do with cartographic features, and includes two hundred generic names for features as well as about 1,300 variant names. It is going to be very important for a lot of the geographic names work.

I picture geographic names in the next century as being concerned with digital toponymy. You guys have done a great job in establishing the basis. Now, we are going to move from automation into an analytical phase. I think it is only because people like yourselves have spent a hundred years establishing this firm foundation so that we can move quickly in that area. If we were to try and start this effort now, it would just be chaos. There would be no way to have it done.

I think in the next century we are going to see a lot more standardization in the areas of digital gazetteers, digital cartography, and GIS. This is an area which is really going to move geographic names into the forefront. What's happening is that geographic names have been traditionally used by cartographers and geographers, but I think the geographic information systems people are going to really extend it to the general public. You are going to see a lot more people using geographic names from an analytical point of view, not just as an inventory list. In geographic systems, one of the basic ways to ask questions is by geographic names, and names are also used to provide the answers.

## Library of Congress

Robert M. Hiatt, Assistant to the Director for Cataloging

Library of Congress Deputy Member on the Board

I don't want you all to get the wrong idea about what the Library Congress is. It is not just a place to hold symposiums, mount exhibitions and give real good receptions. We do other things around here, too. We are primarily exactly what the name says: a library that supports the Congress in its legislative work by providing information for it on all aspects of human endeavor except in the areas of clinical medicine and technical agriculture. We will leave that to the other two national libraries. By doing this, we have also become the *de facto* national library in the areas other than medicine and agriculture. As a *de facto* national

library, we work both nationally and internationally on the creation and promulgation in many areas of standards.

One of the areas in which the library is most active, and has been for the last 90 years, is the area of bibliographic control of library materials. Now what do I mean by library materials? Everybody knows the books that they see in their libraries, but there is a lot more to library materials than that. There is the book material, the printed material like books, serials or periodicals. We have cartographic materials; everybody here knows what cartographic materials are. We have visual ma-

terials, both moving and still images including motion pictures, slides, prints and photographs; music, whether it's popular or classical, and sound recordings on discs, CDs, tape; and manuscripts. We deal with all of those materials here at the library.

There are many areas associated with bibliographic control of these materials, but the four principal ones are: descriptive cataloging; the physical description of the items, the choice of the access to those items through those persons or bodies which have contributed to the intellectual content of the items, and the manner and forms of the names of those persons or bodies.

The second area is subject cataloging which is an analysis of the content of the material, the choice of the terms to represent that content for retrieval, and the forms that those terms should take. The other two areas are classification, usually by content so that on the shelves similar subjects are grouped together; and the formats used to represent these materials and the necessary machinery for data retrieval.

One of the basic principles of bibliographic control of library materials is having a single uniform heading for each name or concept associated with the material, regardless of the language or the format in which that material was issued. For this reason, the Library of Congress depends very heavily on the Board on Geographic Names. Because the library uses geographic names so extensively in its bibliographic control of materials throughout the world, it is the only member agency of the board that has representation on both the Foreign and Domestic Names Committees.

Geographic names are used in a variety of ways to provide access to library materials. Many materials by or about government agencies are approached through governmental jurisdiction. Materials about geographic areas or features are approached primarily through the names of those areas or features. The content of material can be limited to a specific subject as it relates to a particular geographic area. All of these use geographic terms. By standardizing geographic name usage, BGN has in essence provided the Library of Congress, in most cases,

with its uniform headings.

In fact, the board provides even more for us. When one or more of our more obstreperous constituents complains about a particular geographic name that we have used, this is usually because there is some political sensitivity to it, it can be quite useful for us to "blame" somebody else, the BGN, for that decision.

There are cases, however, because of the work that the library does in bibliographic control with other national and international standards, that there are a few exceptions to board approved names which we need to follow. First, the library uses, in a very few cases, additional conventional English language forms that are currently not approved by the board. This is done for primarily two reasons: to cater to the wide audience that uses libraries, users from the relatively unsophisticated to the highly educated; and to gather together places of varying jurisdictional levels in those situations when there are multiple jurisdictions with the same name but only one location has a board approved English-language conventional name.

A second area where the library does not necessarily follow board approved names is when names written in non-Roman scripts are romanized using schemes different from those used by the library. In these cases, we convert to our preferred form of name using our romanization schemes and provide variants from the board approved names. This is done primarily to create consistency with the romanization used for the other names on our products. This is our consistency as compared to the consistency of the board. Consistency of application is one of the fundamental standards in bibliographic control of library materials, just as it is important in the standards that the Board follows.

If there is anything that I hear from library staff members, it is that they would request only one thing of the Board. Strangely enough, it is exactly the same thing that the library's constituency says of its products: provide the information requested, whether it is through gazetteers, correspondence or telephonically, even faster and faster. Thank you.



# Foreign Policy Agency

Department of State

Bradford L. Thomas, Geographer

Office of the Geographer, Bureau of Intelligence and Research

I have the dubious distinction of coming from the oldest organization represented here today. The Department of State celebrated its bicentennial last year. Founded in 1789, the Department exists to assist the President in the conduct of foreign affairs. The responsibility is the President's and the State Department does not actually create foreign policy; policy is created by the President with the State Department's counsel and advice.

Now I think I'm a little older than Roger Payne, but contrary to the impression, I was not around when the State Department was founded. However, my father told me all about it. The State Department, of course, deals with areas beyond the United States and its territories and possessions, and consequently, is one of the U.S. Government's prime users of foreign geographic names. In addition to that, the State Department is also responsible in certain cases for ensuring that the geographic name that is used for a foreign area or place is in accord with United States government foreign policy. There are occasions when that is a critical issue. Consequently, we have a number of areas where our dependence on the Board of Geographic Names has been very useful, and the board has met our requirements quite well.

The primary requirement the State Department has of the Board, of course, is standardization, the board's primary function. We need accurate and unambiguous names in our voluminous communications on foreign areas, from Washington and from the field, so therein is our first and most important requirement of the BGN. It is also important that the decisions on geographic names be disseminated to as wide an audience of users as possible, especially within the federal government. We depend on the board for some of that dissemination as well.

The office in which I work, the Office of the Geographer, is the maintenance agency for Federal Information Processing Standard 10-3; Henry Tom mentioned it earlier. As the maintenance agency for that publication, we must have the most current information on changes in political entities around the world, most particularly the first-order administrative divisions of foreign countries, because we have to constantly update the FIPS 10-3 publication as these change.

We need a source for that information, and the work that the Board does, in particular the preparatory work of the BGN foreign names staff (at DMA), is very useful for us in acquiring that information. It is a frustration and a constant worry, this business of first-order administrative divisions, because it seems, from my brief experience on the Board, that too many countries—not only Third World countries, but in Europe and the Developed World—are reordering their internal administrative subdivisions, making many headaches for all of us. If they would just be content to leave things as they are, we would all have an easier job.

The information on administrative subdivisions is also important from time to time within the State Department, as consular districts are drawn in certain countries where we have more than one consulate operative. It is important to have the latest version of the administrative divisions so that when we assign portions of a country to a particular consulate general we have our facts together and know just exactly where that district will be. We also have a lot of inquiries about places from within the Department, particularly through the Bureau for Consular Affairs. These tend to come up most often when a person born in a country that no longer exists has listed that as his or her birthplace, and Consular Affairs is trying to straighten it out and verify not only where this place is but also what the current country name is for it. Occasionally our office can answer those questions. We trot out the 1905 edition of *Stielers Handatlas* and look in the index. But often these things are beyond our ability and the materials that we have in our office, so we field these requests to the BGN staff, which I'm happy to say, usually comes forth with some kind of an answer. So there is a need also for the research abilities of the BGN and its very able staff.

So I would summarize our needs as: for standardization, for accurate unambiguous foreign names, for dissemination of foreign name decisions, for information on political entity structures around the world, and for research backup on often obscure places and names around the world. I will end by saying that the U.S. Board on Geographic Names does a terrific job of support on all the things that are requirements for our department. I wish us all a happy birthday.

# What do State, Professional, Commercial and Institutional Organizations Require of the Board?

## State Organizations

United States Place Name Survey, Eastern Washington University  
Grant Smith, Director

I'm a citizen member of the Washington State Board on Geographic Names, and I was invited to speak here on behalf of the state boards.

State boards are quite varied. Their structures and their relationships to their constituencies vary considerably. So I feel somewhat intimidated by the weighty responsibility of speaking on behalf of all state boards. What do we require; how do we work with the U.S. board; how can we facilitate our mutual interests and goals? Of course, our mutuality is in serving the public interest, and creating standards is one of our central goals.

When I was a child, it seemed very easy to create standards and names. When I was in school, I grew up in Bellingham, Washington. I was taught that Bellingham got its name from Bellingham Bay which was named by Captain Vancouver when he came through on his voyage. Of course, he also named Mount Baker, Birch Bay, and a number of other places in the area including Mount Rainier. As a youngster, it seemed very easy to have a standard, and the authority of Captain Vancouver was just unquestioned in my mind.

It wasn't until quite a bit later in life that I began to see that maybe when Captain Vancouver named those features that those names were not necessarily used by the people who were living there. The native Americans, of course, didn't get a chance to meet Captain Vancouver very often. He just kind of sailed in, looked up at the mountain, and then sailed away. The natives kept using their language the way they wanted to. But, of course, the maps were made by Arrowsmith, other people used the maps, and settlers who moved into the area then used those names. Now the land is developed, more or less, and we have Natives Americans included on state boards to decide about naming.

The Washington State Board is structured so that it has citizen input. The general public is speaking up and talking back a little bit, most effectively, I might say. I asked Bonnie Bunking, our executive director, about the history of the Washington Board when I came onto the board. And she said, "Well let me tell you about some of the horror stories," and she filled my ear with some of the controversies.

One example: When Bonnie first took over the job in 1986 there was a little disagreement over a place called Porcupine Bay. It seems that there was a difference of location; the U.S. Board wanted to put this name in one place but Porcupine Bay Campground was about two miles away. There was conflicting research; let's just say it was research, not fact finding. The research by the BGN didn't agree with the research of our state people and the people of the area who were using the name—the restless natives again. Well, we didn't reach agreement; the U.S. Board went ahead and did what it wanted to do, but not without Bonnie's squawking and yelling.

I think that this led to better relations, and we have learned that finding standards is not a case of Captain Vancouver's authority but of finding agreement and consensus and communicating with one another as to what we're going to call something. The standardization of names requires a coordinated effort of federal agencies, state boards, the U.S. board, and everyone who is interested. Certainly we have to arrive at decisions, but there are procedures to enhance the dialogue, the communication, and that is the focus of my concern, trying to enhance the flow of information.

We had a little controversy last year at our meeting, up at Timberline Lodge, about Lindsley Glacier. I think this is illustrative, not of the contention which was there, but of our communication, and, of course, the improvements that we still need in the communication processes. When the name came before the Washington State Board, the members of the board just didn't agree with all the research that the Park Service had done. Of course, we didn't understand all the research that the Park Service had done either, and they hadn't bothered quite enough, I guess, to get it to us. We needed a little more communication on that particular issue. I'm glad it's not resolved yet, because that issue may provide a vehicle for improving the flow of information, interest and needs. Let us hope so.

Insofar as the U.S. Board can defer their questions until these things have been discussed, insofar as the U. S. Board can help other agencies, local, state and national, come together, the Board is doing us a service

and doing themselves a service, too, because they want the names that are approved to be the names that the people are using.

I'd like to refer to one other issue. Mark Flannery mentioned that there are a lot of people going out there into the wilderness areas of the forests, naming things, and putting them in their guidebooks. That doesn't necessarily mean that the general public is using those names. We've got all kinds of people writing guidebooks, and one person putting a name in a guidebook doesn't mean it's going to catch on and be used by other people.

Well, who can field the different constituencies? How can we best bridge the gap between the natives and the official map makers? I suggest the state boards

have ready access to many constituencies within the region, hikers and climbers, commercial and business interests, service organizations and many other areas of our population. No one has done a better job of soliciting the interest of the various constituencies than the executive director of the Washington State Board, and that's the way I think that state boards work effectively: by reaching out to the local people, finding out the degree to which they are using those names and which names they want to use. When names are being used extensively, they should be put on the map. It is always a matter of degree, and state boards need to work with the U.S. board in assessing the usage of names and, of course, the appropriateness of names. Thank you very much.

## Professional Organizations

### Association of American Geographers

Meredith F. Burrill, Former President

The relationship between the geographers and the BGN is a relationship with individual geographers, with geography departments in educational institutions, and with the AAG as an organization. As an officer of both the BGN and the AAG at the same time for about half a dozen years, I personally kept the two organizations pretty much in close contact by knowing what each was doing. The BGN for quite a number of years was one of the principal employers of students who graduated in geography. We recruited lightly at the bachelor's level, trained them for a couple of years, and then after they were ready to move on, they got spread throughout the whole government because we didn't have space in the ladder to take them up as fast as they were ready to go up. So we had a very large alumni organization within the government.

Of course, we also furnished the top staff when we expanded from a minimum of two people to 150 in 1943; this meant that we hired all the geographers around that were already loose or could be pried loose. There was not only a job market for geographers but also for staff.

There was no geography exam in the Civil Service. So a group of us in BGN wrote the geographer exam for Civil Service and actually did the rating on the register; we were the official board of expert examiners for Civil Service for the geographer register. So we had other agencies that were recruiting off the register who got

the results of the BGN's work.

We shot a lot of arrows in the air, and we don't really know where they went. But all the geographers were principal users of geographic names, and I think most of them used our names insofar as they could get them. For a long time we gave the gazetteers away to increase the availability of names, and geography departments in practically all colleges got these gazetteers and presumably used them. We don't know; that's one of the arrows in the air. We found it was cheaper to give the gazetteers away than it was to sell them; it cost us more to sell them than we got for them. This has all changed now, and we have fancy prices for the BGN gazetteers, and I do not know how many of the geography departments in the country have them.

The AAG has been a very useful forum for the dissemination of ideas about geographic standardization. A number of us in the BGN gave papers at national and regional meetings which spread the word in the geographic profession. My past presidential address for the AAG was on the language of geography; a great part of it had to do with our experience in the BGN with names and language. As an organization, AAG gave some support. They gave me a research grant to help do a study of generics, which greatly shortened the process of putting the stuff together.

# American Congress on Surveying and Mapping

John P. Snyder, President  
American Cartographic Association

The American Congress on Surveying and Mapping (ACSM) was formed in 1941, almost 50 years ago. Although we're not quite one hundred, we're pretty proud of that, and we now have about 10,000 members. Its headquarters have been on the Renewable Natural Resources Foundation property in Bethesda, Maryland since last October, and it is "the professional organization representing those who communicate earth's spatial information using precisely prepared plats, charts, maps and digital cartographic and related data systems." ACSM is a congress for three member organizations; the largest is the National Society of Professional Surveyors and the other two are the American Association for Geodetic Surveying and the American Cartographic Association, of which I am the current president.

The members of ACSM obviously make great use of geographic names in their professions. Surveyors, either plane or geodetic, use the feature names on existing topographic quadrangles to prepare their own maps, and they should follow the proper procedures for naming newly designated features. As we are well aware, many of the names in the western United States originate from early surveyors.

For cartographers, the placement of names on maps, either on large scale topoquads or in world atlases, is extremely important. For them, even more than surveyors, the positioning of names and the type style and size are involved, but the most important thing is the selection of the right name in the first place. The ultimate source for all these names, of course, needs to be the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, either through its Domestic Names Committee via the USGS, GNIS or the Foreign Names Committee via DMA.

Perhaps hidden by these more obvious uses of the services of BGN are other valuable services. Normally, I prepare maps, illustrations of projections, that have no names. But recently, I found myself deeply involved in using the BGN transliteration system to standardize the 300 Russian and Bulgarian entries for a published bibliography.

What can BGN do to make itself even more useful to ACSM and its member surveyors and mappers? The

ACSM does not necessarily prepare maps. It publishes maps, but they're usually in journals having been sent in by authors to accompany articles. ACSM publishes three periodicals: the *ACSM Bulletin*, *Cartography and Geographic Information Systems*, formerly the *American Cartographer*, and *Surveying and Land Information Systems* which was formerly *Surveying and Mapping*. Each is published four to six times a year.

In talking with others in ACSM about BGN, I find that the two needs which keep reappearing are higher visibility and greater speed. ACSM would welcome more notices and professional papers about BGN activity and especially about the features and accessibility of files which could be prepared as journal articles for publication in one of the journals. An entire issue of *Cartography and Geographic Information Systems* was devoted recently to the Bureau of the Census TIGER files, for instance. Perhaps surprisingly, many ACSM members are hardly aware of the existence of BGN.

To ask for greater speed is to ask for the nearly impossible in times of budget trimming. Gazetteers of the U.S. states are in various stages of completion. All states are available as tape or computer printouts, but only a few states are available as printed, formally bound volumes in a project that's over 10 years old. The remainder will not be available until 1998, according to one estimate I saw. Is this being overly optimistic? The files of 4-1/2 million foreign names present numerous problems with their many diacritical marks and necessitate involved updating and filing on either cards or in computer or perhaps both. But the users still want the information.

Are the meetings of BGN sufficiently open to the interested public? Or do too many take place, for one reason or another, behind restricted doors in DMA? Can BGN be more autonomous, or should it essentially remain as an arm of the USGS and DMA, subject to their priorities? None of these questions should be treated as serious criticisms.

ACSM salutes BGN on its centennial, and we certainly offer the best wishes for the next hundred years of BGN. Thank you.

## American Geographical Society Mary Lynne Bird, Director

It is a pleasure to be invited to share in the birthday celebration of an institution that has attained and achieved extraordinary authority the old fashioned way, by earning it. It is clear when you hear and read the history of the BGN that it has indeed earned its way through competence, through consensus building, through building a reputation for doing things the right way, and for doing them thoroughly. That's why it is continuing to do what it is doing today. It is also clear that the predecessors of today's Board were functioning even before they were established by an act of the President. Obviously, this was simply because they were doing it well enough that people cared about what they were doing.

The American Geographical Society and the Board have been associated closely right from the beginning of the Board, partly through people and partly through the exchange of information. Some of the people who have been close to both organizations include: Isaiah Bowman, legendary director of the American Geographical Society, who was a consultant to the Board on a number of instances; Wolfgang Joerg, BGN Chairman from 1940 to 1947, member of the board from 1937 to 1947, and Chairman of the Antarctic Names Committee from 1943 to 1947, who was a member of the research staff at the American Geographic Society for 26 years; Ray Platt, another member of the American Geographic Society research staff, who also served on the Board. These are only a sampling; there have been others.

The exchange of information was really, I'd say, a matter of circular motion. It went both ways and often came back. The American Geographical Society, and the people at the American Geographical Society, supplied the Board with a great deal of information over the years about placenames, particularly for Antarctica (through William Breisemeister) and for Alaska.

Some of the Antarctic information came from the Finn Ronne Expedition which was the last privately backed expedition to Antarctica and which was endorsed by the American Geographical Society. Many individuals affiliated with the AGS provided placename information. One of our long time councilors, Rafael Picó, provided a great deal of information on Venezuela. O. Maitland Miller provided much information. Others included Isaiah Bowman himself, Vivian Bushnell, Charley Hitchcock, Lincoln Ellsworth, and Ben Eliason. I would have to assume that was a very happy relationship both ways, because if one looks at maps of the world, one will find the names of many of these people on some of the places in the world,

which I would suggest that the Board was happy with what they did and wanted to honor them in that way.

Now that could sound as though we were talking about the American Geographical Society serving the Board, but I contend that it's the other way around. I think that if somebody has been out sitting on an icefield or slogging through a jungle identifying areas and naming them, and that person comes back and submits these names, that person might be jolly annoyed if nobody recorded and took note of those names, and it got done all over again later on by somebody else. So I think it was very important for American Geographical Society connected people to feel that the work that they had done was looked over, confirmed, duly recorded, and therefore incorporated into the body of toponyms.

From the other point of view, the Board has served the American Geographical Society repeatedly through the cartographic work done by the Society and through its many publications. That work continually called upon the resources of the BGN. The Board's data banks were used extensively in the preparation of the Latin American "millionth" map that the American Geographical Society did the first half of this century and in the preparation of the *Columbia Lippincott Gazetteer* for which the American Geographical Society executed much of the research.

I spoke with Miklos Pinther, a former director of the AGS cartography laboratory, and he said that the work of the board was essential for us in map making, that there was a continual checking with the board on data that was going onto the maps. He said also that the AGS cartography laboratory relied heavily on BGN, in particular, for transliteration, for romanization of the names that were going to go on the maps. This was an ongoing and continual relationship of relying on the board. That goes on today in the publishing of the *Geographical Review and Focus*. The editors have to rely continually on the materials that the Board produces.

I was interested in and very glad that Pete Burrill explained how the Board's name went from "geographical" to "geographic" and Isaiah Bowman's involvement in that because we at AGS do not often think of Dr. Bowman as having lost many battles. That is a little bit more understandable when one hears that Isaiah Bowman's championing of "geographical" was defeated only after the fact and by a legalism. I think that's the only way you could have gotten him.

I'm glad to say and see that the Board has never allowed itself to be tied up by legalisms. It is obvious

that its style of operating is to pursue a common sense solution rather than a legalistic solution. That is part of the way in which it has built its authority. It's clear that for an organization like the American Geographical Society, a constant producer of publications, the BGN is an invaluable source of information on a day-to-day basis. But it's also clear that it is a very important lightning rod—I think Robert McArtor referred this morning to that role of the board. He said it is marvelous to be able to say, "Well that's what the board says." I was talking with Douglas McManis, editor of the *Geographic Review*, before I came down, and that's exactly what he said; "they're our lightning rod." If we're not sure, we can simply say, "That's what the Board said," and it gets us off of an awful lot of hooks.

The only thing that I would urge the board to do better than it does now is to move a little more quickly on the items that are most controversial. I almost don't like to say that because we're talking about an organization that does so well that—let's say that I'm just nudging them a little bit to move closer to the platonic

ideal, and let it go at that. Now that's very difficult, because obviously part of the reason that the board has built the authority that it has is that it has been so adept at consensus building. Well, how do you reconcile consensus building and moving quickly? I don't deny that is an internal contradiction. But I would simply say that if the board temporizes on the tricky ones, if it tries to wait for the dust to settle, the users will be buried and choked by the dust. War time certainly mobilizes everybody. It's a crisis, and you have to get things done; but I would suggest that publishing deadlines can be just as relentless. If the editor of the *Geographical Review* or the *Annals* or some other publication has an article in hand, and there is a particularly touchy and tricky item, that editor has to make a decision one way or the other. That editor is going to be eternally grateful if the board deals with that item sooner rather than later. So, that is about the only suggestion and plea that I leave with you. I certainly congratulate the board on its first centenary, and wish you well as you start down the road toward your second.

## Commercial Organizations

Rand McNally and Company  
Patrick Healy, Cartographic Manager

I have a number of items that we would like the board to consider, but before doing that I would like to describe briefly the depth of the use of our names material and how we use it. At last count, we had 160 BGN gazetteers in-house covering, in essence, the world outside of the U.S. and Canada and all the decisions lists which have been published. We also have all of those published gazetteers and the decisions lists that have been published for the United States as well. These materials form the backbone of our names reference sources. Information extracted from them appears in the many world atlases published, or supplied, by Rand-McNally to a very extensive market. Since 1980, for example, we have sold over 3 million major world atlases in the United States and over a million in the foreign market. So we distribute the BGN's word to a pretty wide audience. With few exceptions, we follow the names, polices and forms advocated by the board.

Gazetteers covering foreign areas are always used during our in-depth revisions of our maps, and they are often used when we answer the many requests for locational information that we get from the general public on a recurring basis. Decisions lists are scanned immediately on receipt and any necessary resulting changes are incorporated into our products on a priority basis. In addition to that, board staff provides in-

formation and responses to our written and full inquiries. Although we attempt to keep these requests to a minimum, seldom does a month go by without us inquiring a few times. Our most intensive and extensive use of board material deals with foreign areas, although we acquire all the board generated materials which we know of. Because there are few domestic gazetteers and we routinely acquire names information on our own from a variety of other sources, our use of domestic information is relatively limited.

While we value and appreciate all of the materials that the board provides already, there are some things that we would like the board to consider. First, we would love to have more active updating of existing foreign gazetteers. At the present, there are 150 countries or political entities that are covered by gazetteers from the sixties or earlier.

Secondly, it would be really wondrous if, when second or succeeding editions of the gazetteers were issued, lists of changes in names which had been previously approved could be included as some type of a supplement. Another recommendation is to publish foreign and domestic decisions lists more often, not less often as the trend currently seems to be. Also, make the foreign lists, especially, more easy to obtain; we have a very difficult time both finding out that they

have been published and getting them. This is one of our map librarian's largest problems.

Next, and this is a reiteration, devote more attention to changes in name or form of major features, larger cities, political entities and administrative units, especially those which appear in the media. A good example would be that we still can't find out about Karl Marx Stadt; the Germans are using the former, and now correct name, Chemnitz.

After confirmation of changes, distribution of the information immediately to known users by fax or other means of transmission would certainly be a help. Incidentally, I certainly can tell you that we would be willing to pay for some kind of a subscription for that type of information service if routine publishing of decisions is difficult or impossible. Perhaps this is an alternative that could be tried.

It would be nice to be able to know which foreign areas the board is working in advance so that we could tailor our revision programs as much as possible to the pending availability of information. I know nobody wants to commit to production schedules in advance

because they are very difficult to adhere to. But any information we can get on this type of information would be a help.

Is there a possibility of getting the foreign gazetteers in diskette or magnetic tape format rather than printed format? It would make use and analysis of the materials much easier. Possibly including seconds of arc in locations would help in digital data re-use. There are many BGN coordinates which populate digital databases, including our own.

Finally, increase the speed of editing the domestic names database and the publication of the state gazetteers. It would be nice to have a full set of those, too.

In conclusion, please do not interpret these points as a list of complaints. They aren't intended as such. Consider them only as testimony to the value of the work already done by, and being done by, the board and its staff from an organization which intensively uses and greatly appreciates the results of that work. I would simply like to be able to more easily access more of it. Thank you.

## Institutional Organizations

### National Geographic Society

John B. Garver, Jr., Senior Assistant Editor and Chief Cartographer

I am honored to be here representing the National Geographic. We have worked very closely with the board ever since our establishment in 1890; I think most of you knew that we celebrated our centennial two years ago. We have been in the placename business for a long time. The first map that we produced, a large supplement map, appeared in May 1918 on the western theater of war. This morning, I asked one of my staff to count the names; there were 15,000. It was a tradition at the National Geographic, and perhaps sometimes we are recognized today for the same tradition, to cover the map with names.

We did our first world map in 1922, and since then we have done thirteen more. The major activity that we are involved in at the moment is a new 6th edition of our world atlas which will have approximately 150,000 names in the index. We are definitely in the business of nomenclature, and we certainly appreciate very much the continuing guidance of the BGN. Now, I used the word guidance because as, and I give you a generic definition of the National Geographic Society, a private, non-profit scientific and educational institution, we sometimes don't listen to the board. But that's very, very seldom, and we base most of the names that we choose for our maps on what we find in the BGN gazetteers.

But I would like to mention an example of where we chose not to use the board's name, and I think that as I tell the story you will understand why we didn't. When I joined the National Geographic in 1982, one of the first things that happened was that I was called to the office of the emeritus chairman of the board, Thomas W. McKnew. He was a very vigorous 86-year old man who came to work everyday and spent eight hours doing National Geographic work. He loved the place. He had on his desk our most recently published world atlas, the fifth edition, opened to a page showing the big island of Hawaii. Dr. McKnew pointed to the map and said, "Young man, you see that town there called Kia Lua (the largest city on the island of Hawaii)?" I said, "Yes sir." He said, "That's wrong. It should be Kia Lua Kona." I replied, "Yes, sir, I am sure it should." Then he said, "I'll tell you why," pulled a plane ticket out of his pocket that clearly said Kia Lua Kona, and said, "Everyone calls it Kia Lua Kona." So I said, "Dr. McKnew, I appreciate that, and I will go back, and I will do my work, and I will come right back and let you know what we have found out." I went back, and I found out that name of that town is Kia Lua, not Kia Lua Kona according to the BGN. I think the best way to describe it is that perhaps, in this case, "discretion was the better part of valor," and I went back to Dr. McKnew and

said, "Dr. McKnew, from now on it's Kia Lua Kona." So it has been, and I think that many other mapmakers have used Kia Lua Kona, too. So that's the only time we ever disagreed with the BGN.

Our demand for names is even more critical today than it was in past, I suppose. We at least think it is because of this fast changing world that we are in. We have had to change the name of the East and West Germany to just plain Germany; Karl Marx Stadt has reverted to Chemnitz, and Wilhelm-Pieck-Stadt Guben has returned to plain, old Guben. Then there's Burma to Myanmar, Rangoon to Yangon, and Kampuchea to Cambodia. We were honored recently by the board, and there will be a letter confirming this, with a new name, the Grosvenor Sea Mount in the Mapmaker's Chain. We appreciate that very much; it was a thoughtful thing to do.

One of the things that Gil Grosvenor likes to say when he's talking about geographic education is, "if you don't know where you are, you are nowhere." So after about the fifth lecture I had heard, I said, "I am going to find out from the BGN if there are places called nowhere and how many, and I am going to map it and give it to him." So we did; we found out that there are over twenty-five places in the world called "No Where"

or "Erehw on," which is "No Where" backwards. I gave him a world map showing this "world of No Where," and he was in charge of it.

We also are in the process of slowly developing a geographic names database. It is a very labor intensive exercise, but we have used the BGN gazetteers as a bible for that effort. We are very appreciative of them.

I think if I were going to make a suggestion, I would repeat what was said by Mary Lynne and by Patrick Healy. We need more expeditious or faster action in acknowledging name changes because all three of us, as Mary Lynne said, are on a schedule. If we are going to publish that particular map or article, we need to know. We can't wait so we have to make a decision, and sometimes that decision moves in a different direction. Again, I think the idea of faxing information to major users would be extremely helpful, and everything that Pat said, I second. On behalf of the National Geographic, I would like to express our gratitude to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, past, present and future, both domestic and foreign names for their wonderful efforts in the past, and we know it is going to continue in the future. We are excited about seeing you celebrate your 100th anniversary and being a part of it. Thank you very much.

## Song for the BGN Centennial

One hundred years ago they met,  
Those stalwart men of fame.  
They took an oath we'll ne'r forget:  
To standardize each name.

All hail that day so glorious!  
All praise the cause victorious!

On that great day our President  
Did heed their just request  
(E'en though there was no precedent):  
Our names must pass the test.

All hail our leaders with a cheer!  
All sing their praises loud and clear!

To pass the test of quality  
That charts and maps did lack  
They made a brand new polity:  
Each name will be exact.

Let's sing some songs and raise some hymns  
For standardizing toponyms.

'Gainst names confusion did they fend,  
Though heavy was the traffic,  
So people now can comprehend  
Each feature geographic.

All hail each single standard name!  
All features now uniqueness claim!

And now each day we celebrate  
Consistent nomenclature.  
Name joined with place: It's truly great!  
Grand toponymic stature!

Cheer we now our grand old state  
Its names now do communicate.

We know precisely where we are  
And where we want to go.  
Though trips be short or be they far  
Our place we'll always know.

Hail we now each gazetteer  
That world placenames reveals so clear.

One hundred years ago they met,  
Those stalwart men of fame.  
They took an oath we'll ne'er forget:  
To standardize each name.

On bended knees with hands in prayer  
Our gratitude to them declare.

*Lyrics by Richard Randall  
Music: "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"*

UNITED STATES  
BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES  
BULLETIN NO. 1

ISSUED DECEMBER 31, 1890.



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# CartoFacts

Do you have an interesting, whimsical, fascinating, or just useful CartoFact? Send it to the Editor, snail or email, and we'll probably use it.

## CartoFact #1

### Most Frequently Occurring Street Names (in TIGER)

Name	Subt	Total	Name	Subt	Total	Name	Subt	Total	Name	Subt	Total
2nd	6207		10th	3492		East		3056	Poplar		2645
Second	3969	10868	Tenth	879	4371	Chestnut		2994	Locust		2618
			Spring		4165				Woodland		2615
3rd	6564					13th	2610				
Third	3567	10131	North		4074	Thirteenth	367	2977	Taylor		2613
									Ash		2589
1st	6047		Ridge		4048	Franklin		2892	Madison		2578
First	3851	9898	Lincoln		4044	Adams		2856			
4th	6183		Church		4031	14th	2536		15th	2317	
Fourth	3007	9190	Willow		4017	Fourteenth	315	2851	Fifteenth	240	2557
									Hillcrest		2547
Park		8926	Mill		3975	Spruce		2821	Sycamore		2533
5th	5532		Sunset		3929	Laurel		2780	Broadway		2511
Fifth	2654	8186							Miller		2488
			Railroad		3853	Davis		2769	Lakeview		2487
Main		7664	11th	3109		Birch		2754	College		2468
6th	5097		Eleventh	669	3778	Williams		2682	Central		2450
Sixth	2186	7283									
			Jackson		3725	Lee		2669			
Oak		6946	Cherry		3669	Dogwood		2663			
7th	4635		West		3656	Green		2662			
Seventh	1742	6377									
			South		3570						
Pine		6170	12th	2957							
Maple		6103	Twelfth	489	3446						
Cedar		5644									
			Center		3402						
8th	4172		Highland		3347						
Eighth	1352	5524	Johnson		3325						
Elm		5233									
			Forest		3309						
View		5202	Jefferson		3306						
Washington		4974	Hickory		3297						
9th	3793										
Ninth	1115	4908	Wilson		3268						
			River	3220							
Lake		4901	Meadow		3193						
Hill		4877									
Walnut		4799	Valley		3082						
			Smith		3076						

T. McDowell  
12/10/92 (rev.)

## CartoFact #2

The editor notes with interest that the earth is shrinking. Literally. It seems that Mt. Everest has been remeasured by the surveyors and found to be seven feet shorter than previously reckoned. The new measurement involved laser beams, satellites, reflective prisms, and massive calculations to correct for temperature, air density, and gravitational pull. The result: Mt. Everest has shrunk from 29,029 feet, 3 inches, to a mere 29,022 feet, 7 inches. Somehow, it still looks the same.

# GEORGE RITZLIN

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## Corrections

Ed Dahl, of the National Archives of Canada, called your editor shortly after the publication of *Meridian 7*, to gently point out that Carolyn Martin, in her review of *Cartographic Citations: a Style Guide* (pages 47-49) stated that *Archival Citations: Suggestions for the Citation of Documents at the Public Archives of Canada*, dealt only with printed maps, when in fact there are extensive references made to manuscript material therein. He sent along a copy of *Archival Citations...* to make his point.

Carolyn Martin replies:

In my review of *Cartographic Citations: a Style Guide* (*Meridian 7*, pages 47-49) I stated that *Archival Citations: Suggestions for the Citation of Documents at the Public Archives of Canada* "...printed maps are the only cartographic medium addressed." Ed Dahl has kindly pointed out that this is not exactly the case. I would like to go on record as stating that my use of the term "printed maps" was incorrect. I was trying to point out that media such as aerial photography or digital imagery were not covered, but that "printed" maps, either machine printed or hand printed material such as manuscript maps were the only type of image covered. But the term "printed" is too limited in a meaning to get that distinction across. *Archival Citations...* does cover manuscript maps in some detail, and so my review should have recognized that. My apologies for any misunderstanding.

**Carolyn Martin**  
**Westmont College**  
**Santa Barbara, CA**

*Note from the Editor:* I believe that the problem arises from Carolyn's education and training as an artist. The term "printing" carries some broader connotations in that world than it always does in ours, and therein lies the confusion. We could

mention any number of librarian authored books which routinely include discussion of maps in with "Non-Print Media" but perhaps we will leave that for another day.

## Corrections to *Meridian 8*

Due to errors in the transcription process, there are some misspellings in "The Wonderful World of Geographic Names: Things Learned and Things Yet to be Learned" by Meredith F. Burrill, Executive Secretary Emeritus of the Board on Geographic Names. They are as follows:

Page 32, column 1, paragraph 2, line 3, read "cumpstable" for "comfortable," likewise for lines 5 and 7.

Page 33, column 1, paragraph 3, line 16, read "Amundsen" for "Albertson," likewise line 19.

Page 33, column 2, paragraph 4, line 3, read "Cienaga" for "Siennaga," likewise line 4.

Page 34, column 1, paragraph 1, line 15, read "gurnet" for "gurent," likewise line 18.

Page 34, column 2, paragraph 1, line 4, read "Donner" for "Donart," and "Pass a Loutre" for "Passa Luch."

Page 34, column 2, paragraph 1, line 5, read "Pas a Grille" for "Passa Gril."

Page 37, column 1, paragraph 1, line 5, read "cumpstable" for "comfortable."

Page 37, column 1, paragraph 2, line 17, read "Hoosac" for "Husak," likewise line 18.

A slightly different version of Mr. Burrill's article appears in *Names 39.3* (September, 1991), pages 181-190.