

The United States Board on Geographic Names: Standardization or Regulation?

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The United States Board on Geographic Names was created in 1890 to standardize the use of geographic names on federal maps and documents, and was established in its present form in 1947 by public law. The Board is responsible for geographic name usage and application throughout the federal government and its members must approve a name change or new name before it can be applied to federal maps and publications. To accomplish its mission, the Board has developed principles, policies, and procedures for use in the standardization process. The Board is also responsible legally for the promulgation of standardized names, whether or not these names have ever been controversial, and today this is accomplished by the universal availability of electronic databases for domestic and foreign names. This paper examines the development of Board policies and the implementation of these policies to achieve standardization with a view to relating these policies and activities to questions of standardization or regulation.

Introduction

Established by Executive Order No. 27-A, the United States Board on Geographic Names (USBGN) has been rendering decisions since 1890 for specific problems associated with nomenclature in the United States and for names throughout the world affecting the interests of the United States. From its inception, the Board has been charged to ensure the standardization of geographic names “throughout the Federal Government” (Harrison 1890). The Executive Order creating the Board was the culmination of more than six months of discussion and informal meetings regarding the serious and growing problem of applying different names to the same geographic feature on the proliferating maps and charts produced by the various bureaus of the federal government.

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There is no specific point at which it can be stated that a debate began as to standardization or regulation. In fact, to many, the matter was a non-issue, a question of semantics; however, to others, it has clearly been an issue. Changes in the level of visibility and discussion seem to have coincided with the announcement, change, publication, and interpretation of the Board's principles and policies. This paper presents highlights of the Board's policy development, showing how each policy and associated activities relates to standardizing or regulating. There is no doubt that some members of the Board have viewed the policies as having more enforcement authority than do others, who have tended to lean more toward regarding the policies mainly as recommendations. This has certainly been true over the past 20 years, and was no doubt just as true during the previous 90 years. Although foreign names activity was included from the beginning of the Board (with a separate, informal committee for a brief time), this paper presents the issue of standardizing versus regulation from a domestic names view only.

The Problem

Language is an abstract means of communication, and meanings of words are interpreted differently even in the same language. Standardization, according to *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* (WUD), is "having the quality or qualities of a model, gauge, pattern, or type. Hence generally recognized as excellent and authoritative," and the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) indicates "authoritative or recognized exemplary of correctness, perfection, or some definite degree of any quality,"...and "includes uniform size, strength, form of construction, proportion of ingredients...." The concepts of standardization began with weights and measures and were then extended to ensuring the interchangeability of a variety of items associated with today's lifestyle. The word was then adopted and applied to more abstract concepts, such as language, and hence, geographic names. Regulation, according to WUD, is "a rule, law, order, or direction from a superior or competent authority." The OED states it is "a rule prescribed for the management of some matter...a government precept or direction." It is also apparent from various thesauri that "standardize", "regulation", and "rule" are close enough to be used as alternate words for one another. Since the meanings are close, the problem then is one of perception, and perception is related to interpretation of the Board's policies. "Regulate" tends to suggest more control than does "standardize."

Historical Setting

By late 1889, it had become apparent to certain individuals responsible for mapping and charting in the federal government that the confusion surrounding numerous forms of geographic names and their application to the same features was rendering the maps and charts useless. This seemed especially true for Alaska. Further, the same problem was prevalent on maps produced by various government-sponsored expeditions to the western territories in the decades following the American Civil War. As a result, Thomas C. Mendenhall, Superintendent of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, sent a letter to the heads of appropriate bureaus of the federal government stating the problem and inquiring as to their opinion regarding the establishment of a "Board ...to which may be referred any disputed question of geographical authority" (1891). After this invitation received a favorable response, several informal meetings were held during 1890. Administrative matters were arranged, and principles of standardization were formulated. Although all present agreed that each bureau would follow the recommendation of this Board, they quickly realized that such an interdepartmental arrangement by individuals of authority from various departments might lead to rivalries. The Board concluded that executive authority should provide the necessary vehicle to ensure universal adoption of the Board's recommendations throughout the federal government. The matter was brought before President Benjamin Harrison, and on September 4, 1890, he issued Executive Order 27-A "constituting a Board on Geographic Names." In defining the periods in the history of the Board, Meredith "Pete" Burrill drew attention in 1990 to those policies that have affected the perception of the Board as either a standardizing body or a regulating authority.¹

Policy Development and Evaluation

The Board's first policies were formulated in 1890 just before the Executive Order was issued by President Harrison.² At the first formal meeting of the Board, the policies that had been developed were reaffirmed. The first policy listed states that the spelling and pronunciation in local use should be adopted. No further elaboration was made, but this seems to imply that from the outset the Board was primarily interested in achieving standardization by using local forms of names for all federal publications and other products. It was implied that these forms might be different in grammar, orthography, and style even when

used within close proximity. This philosophy was further enhanced by the second policy, which addresses the issues of changing and evolving names, and reinforces the concept that present local use should prevail even though an original form of a name, through whatever means, has changed. Policy 3 introduces the concept of variant names and indicates that some may be in local use as well. The policy declares that these names should be considered as *different* names no matter how minor the difference in orthography. Policy 4 formulates a remedy for policy 3 by stating that when there are two or more names in local use, the most appropriate and euphonious should be used. Unfortunately, there seems to be no attempt at explaining what is meant by "appropriate." These first four policies, which could easily be expressed as one policy with four sections emphasizing the local-use factor, clearly indicate that, from the beginning, the Board's initial thought was to standardize, meaning one name and spelling should be used for each feature; it did not intend to regulate by decreeing universal change based upon any precept related to grammar or orthography. Policy 5 clearly indicates that the possessive form should be avoided but does not provide reasons. Some might argue that in the case of this one particular concept, the Board flirted with what many term regulation and may even contradict or at least provide an exception to the local use concept. Policy 6 states that Roman characters should be used in foreign names, and Policy 7, the last one, makes a somewhat less than scientific stab at transliteration (Mendenhall 1891). It is apparent that the Board, considering the needs of the federal government and the advice of appropriate scholars, set policies designed to solve the confusion plaguing federal maps and documents by using the locally preferred name. Most would agree that this is problem solving and not regulating.

Universal Changes

The Board's members did not seem content simply to develop procedures to implement policy, because very quickly they made specific decisions of a policy nature and decreed these universally, thereby starting the argument as to whether the Board standardizes or regulates the Nation's toponymy. In May 1891, the Board "suggested" that all compound words used in geographic names be simplified by combination, and the use of hyphenation was abolished (Mendenhall 1891). Examples included La Fayette becoming Lafayette and El Dorado becoming Eldorado. Further and specifically, the Board announced that

throughout the country Vermillion or Vermilion will be spelled with *only* one "l," and in similar fashion, the Board determined that New Castle or Newcastle would *always* be written in the one-word form. As late as October 1903, the Board decreed that all forms of the name Big Horn or Bighorn would be the one-word form. No doubt the members were attempting to use standard orthography in the case of Vermilion. In the case of Newcastle, it is likely that the reason was based upon the desire to display an obvious placename and to avoid the confusion of a descriptive term that the two-word form might suggest.³ However, to many, the Board was treading beyond the area of avoiding confusion and into the realm of making universal decrees and dictating orthography.

Later in 1891, the Board made even more sweeping decisions that finally caused local protests regarding its actions. In June of that year, the Board ruled that geographic names in the United States containing the word "center" would always be spelled "center," not "centre." Further, in the suffix "burgh," the final letter "h" was to be eliminated, and similarly in the suffix "orough," the "ugh" was to be removed. This was too much for the general public, as well as for some private map and atlas companies. Clearly, to some, the Board had overstepped its charge of standardization and had begun the blatant regulation of names. The authorities in Pittsburgh started a campaign to restore the original form of its name. Finally, in July 1911, the Board issued a terse statement indicating that "burgh" may be used if there are compelling reasons to do so. The 1891 decision for Pittsburgh was reversed and the spelling restored to Pittsburgh (USBGN 1911).⁴ However, in September 1916, the same universal ruling regarding the use of "center," "burgh," and "borough" was reaffirmed (Braid 1916).

Existing evidence suggests that the Board may have been heavily influenced by the Post Office Department in its quest to shorten and standardize names of populated places. Even so, the Post Office Department had only one vote. Apparently, the Board was still reluctant to abide entirely by its original policies of local use adopted in 1890. In 1891, the Board also made its first statement regarding diacritical marks for use with domestic names, indicating that the use of these marks in the United States was rapidly disappearing and it would be impossible, even if desirable, to oppose this change (Mendenhall 1891). The Board illustrates this supposition by implementing the universal change from "cañon" to "canyon." At the time, there was no opposition to this change.

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There were only a few universal decrees later in the Board's history, such as stating that Russian names in Alaska ending in "off," "ov," "ow," or "of" would all become "of." Also, all occurrences of the word Blackfeet in geographic names were changed to Blackfoot.

In 1932, a synopsis of these universal changes was reported in the Board's *Sixth Report* under the title "Elimination of Inconsistencies." It was noted that these changes had been applied to geographic names "to affect some reform in geographic nomenclature which seemed highly desirable." The summary indicated "in a rather large number of instances, that local usage was firmly established and would not change to accord with the proposed reform in spelling" (Bond 1933). This was, of course, a rather gentle way of addressing the public outcry and accusations of Federal toponymic regulation. The summary further indicated that the policies of 1891 and subsequently reaffirmed were meant to be guidelines and not rules, and that the Board reserved the right to depart from these as deemed necessary. None of these universal changes were rescinded specifically, but many of the decreed changes were gradually restored by the Board's policy of processing each controversy case-by-case on its own merits. Also, with a few exceptions to be examined later, local use once again became paramount, restoring confidence in the process of standardizing, rather than regulating.

Thus ended the Board's period of universal changes. In fact, most of these decrees were made during the Board's second year. Since this early period, such universal changes have not been issued except in cases regarding pejorative names. In 1962, the Secretary of the Interior asked the Board to change the word "nigger" universally to "negro." The Board readily agreed and approved the change in 1963. This action was a result of the continual and growing universal acceptance of the offensive nature of this word. In 1974, the Board took similar action regarding "Jap," the pejorative form of "Japanese." The Board was petitioned in 1997 to do the same with the use of the word "squaw" in geographic names. The Board, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, reiterated its policy against offensive names, and encouraged proposals to change such names. In this case, there is no one word that applies universally, and all interested parties, including various tribal councils, have indicated a desire to submit specific name changes.

Individual and Specific Policies

Throughout its history, the Board has developed specific policies that affect the namespace in a more subtle manner than the universal,

blunt changes previously discussed. The case of the genitive apostrophe is discussed here, even though it resembles a universal application. It was first mentioned in the original policies developed in 1890, which advised that it be avoided unless euphony or description was adversely affected (Mendenhall 1891). In 1893, the policy was reaffirmed, and the issue of whether the possessive form (with an "s") should be allowed at all was first discussed, although no decision was reached. By 1906, the recommendation was to eliminate the apostrophe and the "s" because "the possessive form of names is rapidly disappearing except in rare cases where good reason exists for its retention" (Gannett 1906). Whether the possessive "s" should or should not be present was discussed several more times, but it eventually became a non-issue in favor of retention. The practice of retaining the "s" without the apostrophe has been reaffirmed many times over the years to the present.⁵ Myth surrounds the reasoning behind this practice; for example, it appears as an obstacle to navigation on charts, or in the days of stick up type it was often lost, leaving a space. In addition, there is the connotative versus denotative argument. Specifically, when forming geographic names, words lose their connotative aspects; the name is merely a label, and therefore ownership or association is no longer relevant. There are actually no definitive statements in the Board's records, so it can only be inferred that generally the original members were loathe to endorse association or possession. There has been little movement over the years, particularly by Board members, to review or change this practice. There have been only four cases since 1890 where the Board has approved the use of the possessive apostrophe.⁶ Does this practice constitute regulation? Certainly to many (often with passion), it is nothing less than control and manipulation. To others, it is only a means of emphasizing that ownership is not relevant in the process of standardizing geographic names. It would seem that this practice might be a surviving vestige of universal decree or regulation although it was one of the original policies of 1890.

Policy regarding diacritical marks used for domestic names illustrates practicality on the part of the Board, but at times throughout its history, the Board has tended toward regulatory aspects. As previously mentioned, the universal change from "cañon" to "canyon," was made in 1891, along with the sweeping "regulatory" statements. By 1906, the inclusion of such marks from the Spanish and French languages was implied by indicating that names of Indian, Spanish, and

French origin should be retained if warranted by local use. However, later that year, the Board reaffirmed that diacritical marks should be avoided whenever possible. Perhaps the earlier statement in 1906 did not mean the inclusion of the diacritical marks? The first erosion of the policy against the use of the marks occurred in 1931 when a difference of opinion among Board members caused the matter to be referred to an advisory board created the previous year. That Board included professors and specialists from organizations such as publishing houses and museums to assist the Board in matters of policy and to make other practical recommendations. The advice of the advisory board led to the approval of three names with the tilde (~) in New Mexico. During the years from 1932 through 1949, the use of the tilde in names of Spanish origin became generally acceptable. Spanish names were not only allowed but also encouraged in Puerto Rico as early as 1937. This non-regulatory action was based upon strong local usage, and it was the only issue regarding diacritical and special marks before the Board.⁷ Diacritical and special marks were disallowed in the names of American Samoa and the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1954 and 1958, respectively; an example of these special marks occurs in Hawaiian names as the glottal stop, or okina “‘” in the name “Island of Hawai‘i.”

In 1978 the Board issued, for the first time, a statement noting that it now accepted all diacritical marks from the Spanish and French languages. The following year a subcommittee was created to examine the use of diacritical marks in domestic geographic names. The final report of the committee recommended that diacritical marks be examined on a case-by-case basis and approved if there is evidence of “active” local use (Forstall 1981). However, in January 1986, the Board voted that special symbols used for stress are not diacritical marks and cannot be used. The policy was related specifically to names from the Hawaiian language. In 1993, as the result of a growing number of requests regarding these marks, and at the special request of the Hawaii State Board on Geographic Names, a second committee was formed to evaluate the special marks used for stress and other such marks used in languages of American Indians and indigenous Alaskans. On the recommendation of the final report of the committee, the Board changed its diacritical marks policy regarding domestic names to include all diacritical and special marks regardless of the language, so long as the name is rendered into the Roman alphabet and is based on a standard and widely accepted orthography (Ehrenberg 1994). Although some view

this policy as at least partly regulatory, it seems that the Board made every attempt to accommodate names not of English origin, and simply needed some additional advice on accepting special marks as well as diacritical marks.

The Board has been accused by the public of regulatory action because of its stance on commemorative naming. The matter was discussed in the early years, but no definitive statement was made until 1916 when the Board stated “names of living persons should be applied very rarely” (Braid 1916). Interestingly, in 1910, the Board issued a statement that names for living people should be disallowed except in the Territory of Alaska. The Board upheld its policy over the next 25 years with some exceptions; most notably in Alaska.⁸ By 1934, the Board had been reorganized and the then Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes, clearly indicated to the Board that geographic names should not be reflective of living people. The Board welcomed his opinion.

The commemorative names policy remained unchanged until 1951, when the Board stated that an existing name should not be changed to a commemorative one unless there was an overwhelming reason to do so. This added to the distaste already existing among some for the policy. This enhancement was reiterated in 1955, with the addition of disallowing full names even when commemorative names are approved. By 1974, the policy had evolved to the point that the Board agreed that “there will be no exception to the policy of not naming features for a living person” (Henson 1974). This was a milestone, establishing the rigidity of the policy in reference to those who sought exceptions. The Board became labeled as regulating at least one aspect of naming. Commemorative naming is a phenomenon considered as a right of explorers and first visitors to a feature (hikers and climbers), and now the Board was disallowing this right absolutely. The reversal in the 1920s of Board decisions in the area of Alaska’s Mount Katmai went against this policy. This certainly seems to be government regulation to some. To the majority, the evenhanded application of a nationwide policy that precludes a lasting memorial during one’s lifetime is a natural evolution of the naming process and is at the core of standardization; that is, regarding the proliferation of naming features for people. In fact, by 1982, the Board began to hint at discouraging commemorative names altogether. When the present policy was drafted in 1984, the disallowance of nicknames and a waiting period of one year had been added. Also, either direct association with the feature, demonstrated

contributions to the community, or some degree of positive notoriety was required for approval. In 1995, the waiting period was increased to five years. Clearly, the Board now seeks to discourage commemorative naming, and many consider this to be in the realm of regulation, but the Board tends to view it as a series of checks and balances to ensure that those being commemorated are really deserving of the honor.

In 1964, the U.S. Congress passed the Wilderness Act, which provides for, among other things, protection and preservation of a wilderness character. According to the introduction to this act, "a fundamental characteristic of elemental wilderness is that features are nameless and the cultural overlay of civilization is absent" (Orth and Payne 1997). The Board has taken a strong stance on this policy, only allowing new names to be approved for purposes of safety, education, or area administration (Orth and Payne 1997).⁹ The problem first arose in 1971, when the Board indicated that no special conditions apply to wilderness areas. The guidelines for proposing names in wilderness areas were amended in 1979, imposing stringent criteria for approval. Early in 1980, strong objections to the policy were received from various state geographic names authorities in the western United States. In 1989, the policy was amended to preclude names not already on a base map series.¹⁰ There were heated debates within the federal government over this little publicized but highly significant change. The requirement that names in wilderness areas must be published on a base map series to be considered official was dropped in 1998. The Wilderness Policy is a long-standing and often emotional topic at the State/Federal Roundtable session at the annual conference of the Council of Geographic Names Authorities (COGNA),¹¹ whether or not it is on the formal agenda. A large contingency argues relentlessly that this is blatant toponymic regulation by the federal government. Others believe that cultural pollution and artifacts are forbidden in wilderness areas, and names are considered cultural artifacts, at least by the architects and supporters of the policy. There is constant argument that it is impossible for Board members to evaluate with the proper degree of objectivity as to when an exception criterion is met. Also, the user community argues that of these three criteria for exception, safety and education can be demonstrated by anyone, but area administration is the "government safety net," a factor to be used should a federal agency want or need to approve a name in a wilderness area. It is argued that the general public can never use that criterion. This policy has passionate supporters and opponents identifying it as both standardization and regulation.

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It is impossible to convey every nuance and policy decision of the Board, but some miscellaneous indicators of activity may assist in determining toward which end of the spectrum the Board leans, standardization or regulation. For example, the Board has always refrained from standardizing the use of generic terms universally. During the early period, the Board mostly determined that the generic term is part of the name and should be capitalized. Discussions involving individual terms did not really surface until the 1950s, when there were questions regarding a definition for "cape," and whether the spelling "fiord" or "fjord" should be used (it was decided that local use should prevail). During this period, the Board decided that either "reservoir" or "lake" was acceptable for the water feature impounded by a dam. This is still troublesome for some state geographic names authorities, and there was a request as recently as February 2000 to rectify this "problem."¹² The Board has even been asked many times, especially in recent years, to issue a standard, official set of generic terms with their definitions. The Board does not regulate the application of generic terms, nor does it even standardize them. It even declines to discuss the issue, emphasizing that application of generic terms in the naming process is based upon perception, which varies widely from region to region and even locally. Further, specific requirements are application driven; for example, the requirements for a feature to be classified as a "river" can be very different, depending upon the activity of a particular office or organization. A "river" can flow into a "creek" and a "hill" can be higher than a "mountain." The Board did urge caution as late as 1967 regarding the use of generic terms not peculiar to a region, primarily because of the potential for confusion and lack of understanding, but even so, if such a term were suggested, it would most likely not satisfy the local use and acceptance factor.

Although pronunciation has always been of interest to the Board, the concept of providing a key to pronunciation was discussed only incidentally until the Board voted in 1930 that the pronunciation should be provided if it was not readily discernible. The matter was referred to the newly created advisory board so that such a key would be available for the forthcoming *Sixth Report*. The scheme used a modified phonetic alphabet with sounds that are generally familiar to English-speaking people (Bond 1933). The guide was little used for domestic names, and not until 1976 did the Board's Domestic Names Committee mention the need for such a guide. Finally in 1987, a committee was appointed to examine the feasibility of a pronunciation guide. For two years the

committee did research, conducted interviews, and received expert testimony from linguists in academia and from the Board's Foreign Names Committee. There was a bitter division over the issue within the pronunciation committee, the Domestic Names Committee, and the Board. In February 1987, upon the recommendation of the Domestic Names Committee, the Board voted to rescind the Pronunciation Guide as published in the *Sixth Report* (Shaw 1987). That was followed by a recommendation of the pronunciation committee (by a vote of 2 to 1) *not* to develop such a guide. The committee thought that a phonetic system would not be understood and a non-scientific system could easily misrepresent sounds. Further, "it was not the business of the Board to indicate pronunciation" because such an act might be construed to be a federal regulation (Lang 1987). The final report of the pronunciation committee to the Domestic Names Committee was bitterly debated and barely accepted. The Board made a statement later that it would not even suggest pronunciation of domestic names.

Summary and Conclusions

The creation of the Board was prompted by the concern of a group of federal government officials. They were having trouble fulfilling their mission of making accurate maps and charts because various expeditions and field parties were recording and using different names for the same feature. In late 1889 and early 1890, these officials held several meetings and drafted a set of policies. When they realized that the inter-governmental nature of their committee might promote rivalry, they sought a single authority for their work. On September 4, 1890, the Board was created by Executive Order. The intent of the committee was one of standardization to eradicate problems and controversies involving geographic names on federal maps and charts. The first four of the policies emphasized local use and acceptance. In their zeal to accomplish their tasks, Board members may have lost sight of their original premise of acceding to local use; they decided to implement universal changes without fully realizing the nature of naming practices, the sometimes emotional response to toponymic issues, or the often idiosyncratic nature of the naming process. After all, this was the first time this had been done. No doubt with the best intentions, and probably without intending to do so, the Board found itself facing a public outcry, and denunciation of toponymic regulation. It was not until the publication of the *Sixth Report* in 1932 that the Board, while still indicating that these things were done in the interest of clarity and correctness, admitted that local

use had not accepted these changes fully and made some amends. The Board was back on its original track, the standardization of naming features based upon local use. The Board did make other universal changes in 1963 and 1974 regarding pejorative naming, but all agreed to these changes. The reputation of the Board has mostly been beyond reproach as a standardizing body. Following the period of universal changes, some individual policy exceptions have fed the standardization versus regulation debate. The insistence that the genitive apostrophe not be used for names that the Board considers under its purview angers some and mystifies others. Still, the Board has consistently applied this restriction since 1890, even in the face of ridicule. This practice will be debated continuously and provides evidence for some that there are regulatory aspects of the Board. The Board discouraged the use of diacritical marks in domestic names until the 1930s, although the Spanish tilde had been occasionally approved earlier. Generally, these marks (except for the tilde) were allowed very sparingly until 1978, but by 1981 all marks were allowed. Most likely this was not an attempt at regulating language, just applying the local usage factor at the time. Commemorative naming has always been discouraged, and this policy has only been strengthened over the years. The Board does not view this as regulation, and the evenhanded application of this policy is, in the opinion of the Board, in the best interest of the nation. The Wilderness Policy is meant to support the Wilderness Act by controlling the number of new names or cultural artifacts applied in wilderness areas. This does have overtones of regulation because strict criteria must be met that new names applied in non-wilderness areas do not have to meet. However, the Board believes that the policy supports the intent of the Wilderness Act, but the Board's members are usually in accord if the name is needed for purposes of safety or education. There is no doubt that the Board is not interested in regulating generic terms or pronunciation. The Board makes it very clear that there are no official generic terms or definitions at any level of government. The use of such terms is based solely upon perception and need where they are application driven.

During the past 110 years, and through the service of many members, the Board successfully executed its mission. It may have taken a few wrong turns at first (by today's standards), but that can be expected as part of the learning process. Some later diversions were soon corrected, and for the most part, the Board has followed its mission and has, on the whole, standardized, and has rarely regulated.

Notes

1. This publication is based upon and updates a pamphlet issued to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Board in 1965.

2. During the informal period of discussion and formulation of policy, advice was sought outside the federal government from numerous university scholars, field and editing personnel for maps, and the National Geographic Society (NGS).

3. These reasons are inferred at best, surmised at least, since documentation never existed, is lost, or is sketchy. This remains true until the 1960s except for what was published in the *First* through the *Sixth Reports of the United States Board on Geographic Names* and scattered references in material at the U.S. Archives.

4. There is some confusion regarding the correct date, which is either July 9, 1911 or September 15, 1911 probably stemming from the difference between the general statement and the specific action for Pittsburgh.

5. It is not one of today's 10 formal policies but is discussed under editorial guidelines in the Board's *Principles, Policies, and Procedures: Domestic Geographic Names*.

6. The following are the four cases where the genitive apostrophe is approved: Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, 1933, overwhelming local lobbying; Ike's Creek, New Jersey, 1944, to preserve euphony; John E's Pond, Rhode Island, 1963, to preserve euphony and pronunciation (note the lack of a period); Carlos Elmer's Joshua View, Arizona, 1995, at the specific request of the Arizona Board on Geographic and Historical Names so as to differentiate the third given name as a stand of trees. (There are hundreds of names in the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) using the possessive apostrophe. These are names broadly classed as administrative, and the Board of its own volition has determined such names are best left to the organization that administers them, and therefore the Board's policies do not apply. However, the Board is still responsible, by law, for the promulgation of these names).

7. However, in 1952 the Board voted to remove all such marks from names in the Canal Zone with no reason provided. This decision was rescinded in 1967.

8. Between 1915 and 1919, several National Geographic Society (NGS) expeditions were made to the Alaska Peninsula near Mount Katmai. Numerous names were applied by and for members of the expedition. When the U.S. Geological Survey mapped the area, the NGS asked the Board to approve these names. The Board approved some, but none for living persons. The president of the NGS enlisted the aid of President Coolidge, who asked the Board to reconsider. The situation rapidly deteriorated into questions of integrity and intent. Under considerable pressure, the Board approved the names.

9. It is often incorrectly assumed that names cannot be changed in a wilderness area or existing names based on credible sources are not allowed because they do not appear in the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS). Neither condition is true. The Wilderness Policy does not apply to changing existing names or names collected by approved GNIS procedures.

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10. The base map series includes U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps at a scale of 1:24,000 or 1:25,000, U.S. Forest Service (USFS) topographic maps (now part of the USGS & USFS one-map initiative), Office of Coast Survey charts, and National Park Service maps.

11. Originally founded in 1976 as the Intermountain Names Council, it expanded in 1979 to become the Western States Geographic Names Council by incorporating the states along the Pacific Coast. In 1991, all states west of the Mississippi River were admitted, and in 1998, the name was changed to the present name, COGNA, and all states and territories of the United States were admitted.

12. There are more than 70,000 entries in the Geographic Names Information System classified as *Reservoir*, of which just less than 22,000 use "Reservoir" as the generic part of the name while almost 23,000 use "Lake." There are about 15,000 using the term "Tank," and the remainder use miscellaneous terms, such as "Lago" and "Impoundment."

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