

John F. Atchison

Australia and Toponymy

Onomastics is, by a century old tradition, a strong field of research and publication in Nordic, Slavic and European countries. It is, as yet, little developed in countries of recent European settlement.

For a variety of reasons, social, cultural and, not least, political, toponymy in Australia is still in a pre-scientific stage. A bibliographical review and analysis of the academic, governmental and general public communities within which toponymy is nurtured will establish that this important field of study is ripe for sharper focus and substantial development.

It is useful to note that the scholarly divide is not simply one between northern and southern hemispheres. If active participation at XVI International Conference of Onomastic Sciences (ICOS) is any bench mark there is little evidence of sustained scholarly attention to historical, linguistic and contemporary naming processes in African, Asian, Oceanic and Latin American countries. Australia was represented, along with its geo-political neighbours and trading partners Japan and India. The only other Pacific Rim countries participating were the United States of America and Canada. The strength of their representation lay closer to the Atlantic. Within the southern hemisphere South Africa was the only other participant. Its achievements in scholarly endeavour in this field are well known through enviable publication. These books and monographs preceded and parallel its formal access to the work of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.

If participation at V United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (UNCSGN) is taken as a barometer of public and private sector interest in such co-ordination and planning for efficiency in communications, transport and defence a different picture emerges. Countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Peoples Republic of China, with massive developmental projects in process in these areas, were well represented. P.R. China, with its breakthrough in romanisation of its geographical nomenclature system is seen as a model for national, and thence, international standardization.

The nurturing of international standardization out of ICOS some three decades ago has now reached a point wherein, for many countries, the need for closer working relationships between the scholarly and the applied is critical for both domains. While there are philosophical and pragmatic arguments in favour of separate and distinct institutionalisation of the functions, it is clear that in these days of difficult funding formulas and a volatile, restructuring international economy mere survival of activity in both areas may impose imperatives different to those of recent decades.

As well, the scholarly thrust is needed to enhance the professional reputation and credibility of much governmental activity in this field. It is also clear that the methodological endeavours of established scholars such as W.F.H. NICOLAISEN are needed not only to offset a perceived crisis in the disciplinary bases of onomastics and toponymy but also to build bridges of mutual respect and understanding between the practical, yet clearly conceptually based, objectives of the mapmakers and the less applied motivations of many toponymists. Indeed, one of the strengths of Canada's successful hosting of the two conferences, ICOS and UNCSGN (1987) was the opportunity it afforded of joint sessions and shared concerns.

Also, it is argued increasingly that names assignation, standardization and research has implications far beyond the needs of mapmaking and geographical referencing. This is evidenced most obviously with various cultural groups in the heritage industry, in genealogy, in the anthropology of indigenous peoples, in industrial archaeology as well as in establishing the patterns of settlement expansion. The politics of naming is becoming an ever more urgent concern, especially with indigenous peoples, for example, in New Zealand, Greenland, United States, Canada and Australia. Canada's 1986 Native Geographical Names Symposium is being emulated by similar conferences in South Africa and Australia in 1989.

When these discussions and pressures overlap institutional arrangements and career ambitions then the common good imposes the need for well-argued theoretical frameworks and clear objectives. The growing political process with indigenous place names, the valid concerns of the scientific communities with long-established index and reference systems for field data, the innate tensions between national standardization and cherished local preferences and a host of linked concerns reflect a changing social environment. The dominance of public sector, usually ministerial or executive/advisory geographical names authorities, in the domain, especially since 1945, may have camouflaged a hidden agenda of assumptions. These will exert increasing pressures in all communities given the symbiosis between local and international with the contemporary revolution in communications and transport technologies.

Just as the technology of the telegraph last century created the imperative for geographical names standardization so, now, another era of technology is heralding an information age. This, and a renewed, intense sense of place and localism plus a concomitant concern for conservation of the environment, is leading us into a new, even puzzling, phase on these matters which strike deep resonances in human beings psychological, emotional and spiritual dimensions.

The sound principles of preference for local usage and prohibitions against using the names of living persons will need to be argued, and lobbied for, in more public arenas than in the past. Controversy in 1989 over one politician's attempts to rename features in The Grampians region of Victoria has shown a growing awareness on these matters within Australia. If only to shield hard pressed surveyors-general, directors of mapping and ministers from needless criticism and pressures, there could be added reasons for articulating the varied needs of different clienteles with geographical names.

One authority in Australia receives two hundred inquiries a week on geographical names. Much of this impossible, extra-jurisdictional work is associated with tourism. Given that tourism within Australia has increased exponentially and in 1987 was five times the O.E.C.D.'s world average of 5.6 % it can be anticipated that these pressures will not diminish.

This is because tourism is linked increasingly with education and productive, socially cohesive use of leisure time. An increasingly sophisticated travelling public is using tourism as an extension and reinforcement of formal schooling and as a means of continuing education. The Elder Hostel Movement, as much as Rotary International Exchanges and The Experiment In International Living are examples of such activity. Similar, but at different levels, are the Erasmus Project and the European University Institute. People actively expect, and rightly demand, a genuine and solid return on their investment in travel, accommodation, subscriptions, entry fees and so on. Such a practical expectation cannot be guaranteed unless the scholarly base is sound. Commentators, guides,

and brochure writers cannot be expected to provide this. Their skills in interpersonal communication and promotion are of a different order. They will also need the important linking skills in popularising provided by the journalists, media commentators, teachers and museum staff who broker the world between calm scholarship and the energetic public.

For a nation state such as Australia it has to be said, from the outset, that a major retrieval and archival effort is needed in registration, documentation and identification to secure the foundations for scholarly research, interpretation, and publication. The sources are more scattered and invisible than in any field of Australian Studies. A major challenge in specialised archival work linked to eventual dictionary making faces a nation which is now showing signs of realism in understanding its dilemma as a nation: a small population occupying uniquely a large island continent, with roots deep in Aboriginal and European pasts and moving rapidly to economic integration in Asia-India-Pacific. It needs to deepen and revitalise its memory and appreciation of its roots while securing its purpose in its geo-political future. This is a tall order but one facing its restructured education system and one that provides the continuum between its past, present and future. Only then will the concomitant sense of identity emerge. Thirty years of psychological inversion following the withdrawal of imperial links have left deep scars of cultural cringe and an obsessive focus on identity which, inter alia, have slowed the development of mature scholarship in Australian Studies. This is now a thing of the past in its creative elites even if popular culture lags behind the frontier of the mind.

Australians can assert, quite safely, that in no other study are the sources of scholarly activity so scattered as they are in toponymy. It is now clear, on the basis of the hard experience of so many countries, that the established five stages of toponymic scholarship (registration, documentation, identification, interpretation and publication) will only result if particular attention is paid to the foundations. This was confirmed by a pilot project sponsored by the Australian Academy of the Humanities 1971-1974.

Australian mapping achievements since 1945 have been impressive by international standards. The landscape has been mapped completely by 1:250 000 scale topographical series. Field work at 1:100 000 series is completed and partially published. Increasing coverage exists at 1:50 000 and 1:25 000 while some specialist coverage exists at 1:10 000 and 1:2500. For a country the size and nature of Australia this is a major technological achievement, spurred mainly by the role of minerals exploration in its post-1945 economy.

This map coverage means that a secure data base and essential reference tool now exists for substantial, preliminary work in registration. It is possible from such a foundation to incorporate for archival, as distinct from immediate mapping, concerns, the vast storehouse of obsolete, discarded but linguistically important evidence. This evidence is also useful for the growing armies of genealogists and family historians who invest archives and libraries. The "Genies" may well represent toponymy's most numerous ally for the future development of the study. Liaison from this register to the various official naming authorities will help build up a useful bank of names for possible use with smaller map series if Australia develops such a need.

The task associated with registration is the basic work of documentation. Compilation of relevant information on the method and motivation underlying the naming process should be accompanied by the completion of a 14-point questionnaire for each place name. Clearly such a task is

formidable, but necessary. The undertaking and completion of such a task presents an exciting challenge in co-operative effort and liaison at many levels. It can be done as countries such as Denmark have shown. This will have wide ranging spin-off effects in all areas of dictionary making.

The success of the W.S. RAMSON (ed.) The Australian National Dictionary: A Dictionary of Australianisms on Historical Principles, (1985) and the subsequent approval of the Australian National Dictionary Project in Canberra provides an excellent opportunity to put toponymy in Australia on a scientific and scholarly basis. Conceivably, this national effort could also network with growing Indian and Japanese endeavours to sponsor and stimulate regional developments in onomastics and, especially, toponymy. In 1974 K.S. INGLIS remarked that that grand work the Australian Dictionary of Biography is helping Australians to stop the tunnelling habit in historical writing by showing again and again how much richer were the lives of Australians than most of us knew. With strong insight he urged that historians would get further encouragement to stay out of their burrows with a proper dictionary of Australian English and a thorough study of place-names (INGLIS 1974: XI-XII). The first two projects are established. It remains to secure the third, perhaps the most ambitious. Certainly, it entails strong co-operation. It would need to be comprehensive, rather than selective.

Toponymy is one of two topics with universal appeal for the media. Journalists report that interest in place names as well as stories of language in general, like stories about manipulation of water supplies, is universal and constant. For this reason popular journals, newspapers and radio programmes on place names evoke considerable interest. A file of letters to the editor columns of daily newspapers and weekly journals reveals over any sampled year an unexpectedly, and surprising, large number of items. The democratic principles that place names belong to the people and that the role of geographical names authorities is to encourage the development of sound naming practices and to co-ordinate, rather than prescribe, is evidenced time and time again.

The full implications of this interest, combined with the primacy of local usage, are not yet fully realised in any Australian state or territory for reasons linked with the earlier scales of mapping; the nominated, rather than elected or negotiated, composition of many, if not all, nomenclature authorities; the slow development of field work in linguistics; an adequate national archives policy and proper attention to scholarly study of Australia. This is now changing. An assumption here, as in perhaps some other areas of Australian life, is that patronage or seniority, rather than qualifications, experience or competence may reflect an earlier, developmental stage in the process towards full democratic participation and informed input. Many Australian organisations now feel the tension, not always creative, between the amateur and the professional. Perhaps, both are needed!

In recent years signs of increasing growth in both arms of toponymic activity are evident. Although individual state and territorial nomenclature authorities have existed for decades, formal contact and liaison between them has been minimal. The Committee for Geographical Names in Australia was brought into being in 1984 and is helping to build bridges of communication and understanding, as well as to provide a technical forum, between the official state and territorial authorities, charged continually with assigning and standardizing geographical names within their jurisdiction. It is fostering Australian participation in the United Nations Divisional Group of Experts on Geographical Names for Asia, South-East Asia and Pacific, South West Division. Australia may

soon seek full, active membership of United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, thus filling a void noted by other nations in the past.

During 1987 and 1988 significant breakthroughs have made it likely that Australia is poised for critical, positive development in toponymy scholarship. As noted earlier, an important pilot toponymy project was sponsored by the Australian Academy of the Humanities. This was set up "to establish guidelines for research and to help co-ordinate work in this field". While thwarted by the decline in the Australian economy during 1974 the project did establish the need for sound archival process before one could proceed to rigorous interpretation and publication. It was only at this time that the important report of former Dominion Archivist of the Public Archives of Canada, Dr. W. Kaye LAMB, was helping to push forward proper archives development in Australia.

There are now hopeful signs that a more politically and culturally sensitive environment, accompanied by an upsurge of interest in such infrastructural areas as local studies, genealogy and languages study, may help to establish a long term project in the area of study "at the crossroads of the humanities and the social sciences".

Two recent publications are especially significant and indicative. Paul CARTER, The Road to Botany Bay An Essay in Spatial History (1987) is a pioneering, evocative study penetrating the intellectual and cultural perceptions of Australian place naming process. It has enjoyed widespread readership and provided strong interest. It is possible Australian History will never be the same after this path-breaking publication.

Dorothy TUNBRIDGE, Flinders Ranges Dreaming (1988) signals the work which should emerge increasingly from within Australian scholarship in coming years. Her extensive collection of the traditional stories of the Adnyamathanha people of the Northern Flinders Ranges and adjacent plains of northeast South Australia shows the incredible richness of Aboriginal Australian place naming process, the densely packed levels of meaning guiding all areas of the human experience and the encoding of important environmental knowledge. Her patient field work and scholarship, based on the needed threefold partnership of Aboriginal community, trained linguist and skilled carto-toponymist provides a beacon light for future endeavours.

The publication of this latter work symbolises an important issue not only for Australia but for all indigenous peoples if immigrant derived neighbours are to attain a responsible and proper understanding of their adopted landscapes. In Greenland, Canada, United States of America, India, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa such emphases have been long, if slow, in articulation and clarification.

It is not generally known or widely appreciated that Australia was the first country in the world to accord priority to indigenous place names. This had its roots in surveying policy in 1828 but was adopted fully in 1885 at an Inter-Provincial Conference of Geographers. It was reconfirmed in 1912 at a Conference of Australasian Surveyors-General. For a variety of reasons this thrust lapsed.

The Committee for Geographical names in Australia has picked up again this complex, but important, theme for policy development and refinement. Liaison with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies is helping to formulate an overall set of guidelines.

The 1986 Ottawa Symposium and the publication of the McGill University Gazetteer of Inuit Place Names of Nunavik (1987) are indicative of what can be expected. Inuit priorities in American Alaska, Canada, Greenland and the Soviet Union, Indian names in Canada and the United

States of America find parallels with Koori names in Australia, as with the Hottentot in South Africa. Maori recognition in this area has followed a strong line of development in New Zealand, epitomised perhaps by the 1985 controversy over Mt Taranaki - Mt Egmond.

The major objective at present within the Committee for Geographical Names in Australia is to bridge two divergent tendencies. Linguists have used more and more orthographies to capture the qualities and subtleties of the hundreds of Aboriginal Australian languages and dialects. The map-makers and nomenclature authorities require a standardized and uniform script, whether it be for transliteration or transcription.

The chief players in the field, the Aboriginal communities as owners of the languages and custodians of traditional homelands, are concerned increasingly at the brutalising and corruption of place names by media announcers, politicians, tourists and migrants. Pronunciation may offer the compromise between academic purity and official pragmatism. The government authorities own, ultimately, the writing system for mapping purposes. It is as yet a little early to predict the outcome. Progress is advanced in South Australia and, to a lesser extent, in the Northern Territory. More state working parties, similar to that operating in South Australia, are needed.

The individual Koori communities need to establish for themselves a total register of individual language group place names. This should be a priority. With such a register particular communities can then negotiate from a position of strength with the nomenclature authorities for the assigning of selected toponyms as officially recorded geographical names. There is clearly a case for producing, for completed language domains, a set of maps featuring only Aboriginal or Koori place names. The precedent for such parallel production exists with British Ordnance Survey practice on Roman, Saxon and Celtic Britain.

No reliable estimate of the percentage of Australian place names that are Aboriginal in origin or inspiration can be made at present. The data base and analyses of pilot areas simply do not exist. Robert McCURM (1987) has suggested 30 %. This author has hypothesised 70 %. Perhaps by the year 2089 with the advantage of systematic, rigorous study behind us we will be in a position to know.

It can be asserted safely that the Aboriginal Australian place names which evoke the distinctive qualities of this ancient landscape and capture its spirit so much more strikingly than the application of immigrant transfer names from the cultures of other places and other times will have entered more profoundly into the more developed culture of all Australians.

A nation state with the world's largest overseas born population of any country except Israel will have resolved its present dilemma. Its immigrant descendants will have understood that through Aboriginal place names and folk-lore, that they have inherited an indigenous tradition which extends the history of their country thousands of years beyond the short timespan of white settlement (Australian Council on Population and Ethnic Affairs 1982, 5).

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Maria Hornung zum 70. Geburtstag

Am 31. Mai 1990 feierte Frau Professor Dr. Maria HORNUNG geb. Jechl ihren 70. Geburtstag. Sie wurde in Wien als Tochter eines Beamten geboren und genoß hier auch ihre Schulbildung. Nach der 1938 abgelegten Matura nahm sie in Wien ein Studium der Germanistik, Anglistik und Romanistik auf und promovierte 1942 bei J. NADLER mit einer Dissertation über "Die Probleme der Nachkriegszeit in der deutschen Frauendichtung". Bald folgte die Anstellung bei der Wörterbuchkommission der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, der die JUBILAREN bis heute verbunden geblieben ist. Sie arbeitete aktiv am "Wörterbuch der bairischen Mundarten in Österreich" mit und war von 1971 bis 1980 Redaktor dieses Werkes. Als enge Mitarbeiterin von E. KRANZMAYER betrieb sie umfassende Forschungen zu den Mundarten in Österreich, bezog früh auch die Namenwelt ein und interessierte sich vor allem für die einst von Österreich aus besiedelten deutschen Sprachinseln im heutigen Italien, Jugoslawien usw. Im Jahre 1964 habilitierte sich M. HORNUNG an der Universität Wien für ältere deutsche Sprache und Literatur unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Mundartkunde und hatte von 1980 bis 1985 eine außerordentliche Professur an der Universität Wien inne. Unter ihrer Leitung entstan-