

Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHER

Ottawa, AUG. 22 1905

DEAR SIR,

I wish to obtain information respecting the derivation of the place-names of Canada—of the names of the villages, towns, cities and of the natural features, such as rivers, lakes, capes, bays, mountains, etc.—and shall be much obliged if you will give me any information that you may possess or can procure, respecting the below-mentioned name and also respecting the names of any other features in the vicinity of your residence concerning which you have knowledge.

In many localities, the older generation is passing, or has passed away, and unless steps are taken to collect this information, it will, in many instances, be too late. In most communities there are persons who take an interest in things of this nature or that have been connected with the early settlement of the locality. If there are any such in your neighbourhood, will you kindly submit this to them.

Below I have indicated the lines along which I desire information and also the commoner derivatives of place-names in Canada :—

(1.) Whether named after a village, town, or city, or natural feature in any other province or country ; if so, the name of province or country in which the original locality is situated.

(2.) Whether named after a person ; if so, the person's name, occupation, spelling of name as rendered by the person and any details of interest respecting him (or her) such as (a) Whether alive or, if dead, approximate year of death ; (b) Whether at any time a resident of the locality and, if so, whether still living there.

(3.) Whether named after a natural feature ; if so, any details respecting the origin of the name as applied to the feature and the geographical position of the latter.

(4.) Whether the town, village or city ever had any other name or names ; if so, at what dates, approximately, and the origin of these obsolete names.

Any information bearing on the above will be deemed a courtesy.

Yours truly,

JAMES WHITE,
Geographer.

Kindly write your reply on the attached sheet.

To ensure free transmission of your reply I enclose herewith an addressed envelope which will come free of postage.

"Pakau" ✓
Alta

The proper name of this Settlement is "Victoria" and it has been known as such for more than half a century, being originally an important buffalo trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company.

There is no settlement or place known as "Pakan" except the Post Office here, which was given that name to avoid the confusion which arose out of too many Post offices bearing the name Victoria.

The name "Pakan" was therefore selected for the Post Office only and is the Cree name of the Chief of the Band of Cree Indians occupying the Indian Reservation known as Whitefish Lake, some 50 miles north of Victoria.

This Chief is the principal Chief in this portion of Alberta and bears the name of James Seenum on the records of the Indian Department.

His Indian name, "Pakan" signifies "The Nut" in English. He is still living.

In this connection I would like to point out that all recent issues of Maps make the mistake of showing "Victoria" and "Pakan" as being two separate places, a short distance apart. This is entirely wrong and misleading. "Pakan" is simply the Post Office, that is to say, the ~~same~~ small place set apart for that purpose, in my Store here. The name "Pakan" is however becoming now very generally used among business firms, who have occasion to use it as the P.O. address, and thus is displacing the original name "Victoria" which, in my opinion, is to be regretted.

J. A. MITCHELL
Postmaster.

Victoria,
Pakan Postoffice.
September 6th. 1905.