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# Department of the Interior

## OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHER

Ottawa,.....

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.

*Beacon Hill  
rather localities near Victoria, B. C.*

PLACE NAMES.

Sir—Having for the last few years been compiling a record of the names of islands, passages, points and mountains on the coast of British Columbia, probably a short extract giving the origin of the names of Beacon Hill and Cordova Bay, both near Victoria, may be of interest to readers of the Colonist.

JOHN T. WALBRAN.  
Marine and Fisheries, Victoria, B. C.,  
October 28, 1905.

Beacon Hill, Victoria.—Named by the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company from the fact of two beacons being placed on the hill, one where the flagstaff now stands, the other near the shore, which beacons, when in line, marked the position of Brotchie ledge, then known as the Beacon rock—1843. Captain Kellett on his arrival at Victoria, 24th June, 1846, with H. M. S. Herald and her tender Pandora, Lieut. Commander Wood, to make a survey of the Straits of Juan de Fuca and the harbors of Victoria and Esquimalt, noted these beacons as he passed the hill to an anchorage in Cordova Bay (Cormorant Bay of chart), but was ignorant at the time of their use, mistaking them for Indian signal posts, and therefore paid no attention to them. The two men-of-war returned to Victoria on the 27th from Cordova Bay, having on the 24th passed the port without noticing the entrance.

Cordova Channel, Haro Strait.—The early name of Cormorant Bay was Cordova, and by this name it was known on the arrival of H. M. surveying vessels Herald and Pandora. The Herald was taken in tow by H. M. steam sloop Cormorant in the Straits of Juan de Fuca for Victoria, but the port not being recognized, the vessels continued on to Haro Strait, anchoring in Cordova Bay, 24th June, 1846. A day or two afterwards the Cormorant towed the Herald and Pandora together back to Victoria, and they anchored off the harbor, noting Brotchie ledge, under the name of Beacon rock, by the beacons placed on Beacon Hill to mark the danger. Hence the name Beacon Hill. Lieut. Manuel Quimper, a Spanish naval officer commanding the sloop Princess Royal, gave the name of Puerto de Cordova to the harbor of Esquimalt in 1790, probably after one of the viceroys of New Spain or Mexico, Don Antonio Maria Bucareli Villacis y Cordova, lieutenant general of the royal armies, 46th viceroy. The name Cordova, transferred by the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, circa 1842, to the bay now given on the chart as Cormorant Bay, but yet locally known by the old Spanish name of Cordova. The channel between James Island and Vancouver Island named by the Admiralty surveyors, 1858, doubtless from Cordova being used in the vicinity in the early days of the colony.

*Daily Colonist, Victoria  
Oct. 29/05*