

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 who 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.

*Birch Bay
B.C.*

Victoria Colonist
18.12.05
THE NAME "BIRCH BAY."

Sir—Probably a short account, in connection with the name of "Birch Bay," of the meeting of Vancouver with the Spanish exploring officers, Galiano and Valdes, in June, 1792, may be of interest.

The meeting took place off Spanish bank, Burrard inlet, when Vancouver thought he was quite alone in these waters.

JOHN T. WALBRAN.

Victoria, December 9, 1905.

Birch Bay.—United States territory. Named by Vancouver in 1792, owing to the quantity of black birch seen growing on the surrounding shores, or what Vancouver and his officers took for black birch. Vancouver's vessels, Discovery and Chatham, laid at anchor in this bay from 11th to 24th June, 1792, whilst his boats examined the continental shore line as far as Malaspina strait. It was on returning from one of these expeditions, 22nd June, that Vancouver's boat met, to his astonishment and annoyance, the two small Spanish exploring schooners, Sutil, Commander Dionisio A. Galiano, and Mexicana, Commander Cayetano Valdes, at anchor off what is now known as Spanish bank, hence the name. The Spanish officers received the British officer most courteously and showed him their charts and the work they had accomplished. They expressed surprise when Vancouver stated that though he had examined the coast from some distance to the southward, he had not met with a large river said by the Indians to exist in the region he had explored, and named Rio Blanca by a Spanish officer, Lieutenant Eliza, in compliment to the then prime minister of Spain, Don Josef Monino, Count of Florida Blanca, and which river they had sought for thus far to no purpose. This was the Fraser river which Vancouver missed finding. Having had a hearty breakfast with Galiano and Valdes, Vancouver proceeded on to Birch bay with the promise to meet again with his vessels in a day or two.