

Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHER

Ottawa, SEP 25 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.

Ans'd
Auriprior
Renfrew Co. *Old*
Madawaska river
Dochert creek
Lochwinnoch
Glasgow
Loshen
Lesnaun

Ampryor, 5th Oct 1905

Dear Sir, In reply to say that Ampryor received its name in 1831 when the location was still a wilderness. It was named after an estate in Scotland. In 1823 Chief Wnah having come to Canada to better his fortunes, he prevailed on the then Government to give him a tract of land on which to settle his clansmen and others from the Highlands of Scotland. A township had just been surveyed on the banks of the Ottawa and this was transferred to the Chief on certain conditions of settlement. The Chief named the township "Wnah" after himself. His first party of settlers from Scotland arrived in the Spring of 1825. In 1831 the Chief induced two young men of means to settle here, (named Buchanan) and gave them some land and the water power on the river Madawaska at this place on condition that they would build mills, etc. Naturally he expected that a village would spring up near the mills, and he suggested that the place should be named "Ampryor" after the Buchanan estate in Scotland. This being agreed on by the Messrs. Buchanan - the name was duly proclaimed by the Chief by giving a grand banquet, and the firing of muskets and a ^{admirable} demonstration as possible - including martial music by the Chief's piper decked off in new tartans and ribbons for the occasion. The village grew and in 1862 it was incorporated as a separate village municipality. In 1892 it was incorporated as a full fledged town. The last census gives the population as 4137.

The river Madawaska runs through the town and joins the Ottawa river (Chato Lake) at this place. I am not positive as to the meaning of the ~~word~~ Indian name - Madawaska - but understand it means "hidden river". I can readily understand the appropriateness of such a name - for the Madawaska at its mouth surges up stream against the Ottawa through a somewhat narrow passage in rock, and when the banks were wooded the entrance would not be easily noticed until directly opposite. Nearly all the rivers on the south bank of the Ottawa have that peculiarity of entering the Ottawa against the stream. Just half a mile west of Ampryor a good sized creek enters the Ottawa. This creek is named "Dochart" after a stream in Scotland. The Chief and the Highland settlers were fond of perpetuating the names of places in the Highlands they were familiar with - as for instance Chief Wnah called his dwelling at Ampryor - "Kennel Lodge" after his own Kennel estates in Scotland - and we have settlements in the township to this day known as Lochwinnoch, New Glasgow, ^{etc} and also Scripture names - such as "Canada Hill" - "Land of Goshen", etc.

The Township of Wnah in its early history is of more than passing interest owing to the attempt of Chief Wnah to establish a feudal system something after the clans. But the proximity of the Wnah settlers to adjoining townships where settlers were independent of individual lordships and had no yearly tithing of their grain etc. for the chief's benefit, raised such unrest that finally the Government had to buy out Chief Wnah's rights and he returned to Scotland. Yours &c Geo. C. Neilson, Town Clerk.