

31F/4

Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHER

Ottawa, SEP 30 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.

Birds Creek
Hastings Co. Ont

Birds Creek Feb 9th, 1906

James White Esq
Ottawa, Canada

My Dear Sir

Having found your letter a short time ago amongst the papers delivered to me by the late Postmaster of this Office, I determined to make inquiries regarding the origin of the name "Birds Creek." In the course of my inquiries I selected the pioneer residents which are few indeed. In fact not one of the first settlers here remain in the place, but made inquiries from an old settler who moved here some forty three years ago, and he gave me the following story.

Somewhere in the fifties there was a road built through this region from Madoc in this County to Victoria Lake (which I think is in Nipissing District) a good many miles north of here. This road was and is still, called the Hoastings Road. It forms the boundary line between the Townships of Dungannon, Montangle and Wicklow on the east side and, Faraday, Herschel and McClure on the west side of it, and I suppose it forms the boundary for the Townships south and north of those named. The superintendent of the construction of this road was a Mr Bird, and this man while crossing the Creek a half mile from where I sit one chilly morning in the Fall of the year (the Creek was crossed by means of poles stretched from bank to bank) he slipped and fell into the water

which was high at the time, and on being pulled out by his men he uttered an exclamation and declared that it should be named "Birds Creek". I have interviewed others who corroborate the above story, and from my own knowledge of the veracity of the parties spoken to I think it is very reasonably correct.

I might add that Birds Creek has been used by lumbermen to my own knowledge for the last thirty two years as a waterway for driving their timber out to the York River. It runs through a small lake a rifle shot from here and this lake is called "Birds Lake"; and I suppose when the Post Office was instituted the name "Birds Creek" was the most natural and appropriate.

I have the honour to be

Yours
Your obedient servant
John Spence