

Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHER

30 m/16

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.

Cobourg, Ont.

Northumberland Co

Extract from "Historical Reminiscences of the Town  
for the Past Hundred years".

Mr. C.C. James, Deputy Minister, Department of Agriculture, Toronto, referring to the origin of the name has this to say:-

"My next question is as to the naming of Cobourg— the time, the occasion and the spelling of the name. I have recently had the opportunity of reading copies of the letters of Robert Wade who came out from England in the summer of 1819. He and his family landed at Port Hope on the 22nd of August. He says, 'On the evening we would have landed at a small village named Cobourg in this township but could not land us, and we put off for Smith's Creek a distance of six miles where we arrived on Thursday morning'.

"This is the earliest mention I have found of the name and, as it is from a letter written in 1820, I think we may conclude that the name 'Cobourg' goes back to the middle of the year 1819.

"This fact proves that the town was not named after the Prince Consort, for the naming of the town goes back at least to the year of Queen Victoria's birth. We must look elsewhere.

In 1818, Charlotte Augusta, Princess of Wales, daughter of George IV, married Prince Leopold of Saxe-Cobourg-Saalfield, and no doubt it was at this time or soon after that the name Cobourg was chosen for the little settlement in Hamilton township. The Rev. Mr. MacAulay was ordained in 1818 by the Bishop of London, and when he came out to take up his work in the new village on the lake he may have been influenced by the rejoicings of London in the marriage of the popular Princess.

The spelling

*See over*

"The spelling of the name is due to the fact that for some reason or other the announcements of the engagement and marriage spelled the name in the Prince's title 'Cobourg' and not 'Coburg' as in Germany. Perhaps it was thought that the insertion of the second 'o' would assist the Londoner in pronouncing the name in accordance with the German method".