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# Department of the Interior,

OFFICE OF GEOGRAPHER,

Ottawa, APR 17 1906

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.

✓ Kewatin

Algoma Dist. Ont.

Keewatin, Ont 2nd May 1906

Dear Sir,

The present village of Keewatin was originally known as Rat Portage, so called from a portage at this point between Lake of the Woods and Winnipeg River.

The contractors for the construction of the Railway had the Post Office at this point and when they moved East in 1880 they took the outfit with them and established the post office at the present site of Rat Portage or what is now known as Kenora.

After the post office was moved Mr John Mather, of Ottawa, who was then building a sawmill at this place, applied for a post office and was asked for a name when he suggested "Keewatin Mills" which was adopted and later changed to Keewatin.

The name Keewatin signifies "the North wind" or more precisely "the North wind coming back" applied by the Indians to a very cold wind which comes down Lake of the Woods from the South in winter.

Yours truly,

*J. A. Mather*  
*J. A. M.*

James White Esq.

Geographer, Ottawa, Ont.