

**NOMENCLATURE.** Nomenclature refers to the system of names used to identify geographical features, including the names of settlements. Toponymy, derived from the Greek words *topo* (place) and *onama* (names), is the study of geographical names, or toponyms. The toponymy of our Province in both written and oral forms is the product of historical forces and influences, and reflects many aspects of our cultural background and heritage. The European naming of features, for instance, dates at least to the Icelandic Sagas recording happenings from about 1000 AD and has a well-documented record of voyages of exploration to our shores going back five centuries. From these beginnings naming has gone on right up to the present. The current gazetteer (dictionary of place names) of Newfoundland and Labrador (1983), published by the Canada Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, contains nearly 25,000 entries. This name inventory represents our officially approved names. It is, however, only a small proportion of the total nomenclature in use; numerous names in oral usage around the Province have never been recorded. In addition thousands of geographical features, especially in wilderness areas, have never been named.

The rich variety of our nomenclature has long been a source of attraction to visitors. Keenleyside found here the most delightful and imaginative nomenclature he had ever encountered, observing that "In no other country with which I am acquainted is there so great a variety of unusual place-names". Most articles on place names, particularly those by popular journalists, have tended to focus on their more whimsical aspects and especially on the more unique and unusual names such as Come-By-Chance, Ha Ha Bay, Joe Batt's Arm, Dildo, Nameless Cove, Chase-me-Further Pond and Damnable, names that evoke humour or mystery. Much of the early writing on nomenclature was done by antiquarians such as M.F. Howley *qv*. But the research of scholars such as Seary, Story, Kirwin and Hollett of Memorial University has elevated the study of toponymy to a more serious academic level. The work of E.R. Seary *qv* stands foremost in terms of its contribution to a fuller understanding of the linguistic, cultural and historic origins of our nomenclature. Professor Seary compiled an inventory of all historical maps and charts, the main source of our historical toponymy, produced a checklist of all toponyms used on the National Topographic Maps of the Great Northern Peninsula and published a classic work in *Place Names of Avalon Peninsula* (1971), a book that is a standard reference on the origin and derivation of all names in the most populous region of the Province.

From the time of explorations by Cabot, Corte Real, Cartier and others the features of the coast were the first named. Because our economic pursuits have always centred on the sea, coastal regions have a higher of names than inland regions. Current maps of interior are characterized by numerous unnamed features, partly because the local oral names have not been recorded and also because many features have indeed remained unnamed. Nonetheless many features the interior of the Island and of Labrador have a nomenclature imposed by native peoples as well as hunters, trappers, loggers, sportsmen, anglers, mining prospectors, travellers and guides. Bush pilots and other aviators are said to have their own informal nomenclature for identifying features of wilderness areas which are unnamed on published maps. Micmac names also constitute an important nomenclature in the interior of Newfoundland. Maps of Labrador likewise contain Inuit and Innu toponyms, but clearly only percentage of those in oral usage.

For over a century following its rediscovery by English and Portuguese explorers about 1500 the shores of Newfoundland were frequented only during the summer months by fishermen from Europe. Meanwhile the major features of the coast (bays, harbours and capes) were given names on maps and charts. Once established, this nomenclature was reproduced by European cartographers. The main influence during the 1500s was the Portuguese, who produced the first maps and charts and provided the earliest names. Some of our oldest extant names come from those implanted by the Portuguese between 1502 and 1508. These include Bonaventure, derived from *Cabo de boa ventura*, Cape Race, initially *Capo raso*, and Baccalieu from *Rivo de los Bacalaos*. The first French names in Newfoundland do not appear until the publication of Descelier's map of 1542, though Jacques Cartier mentions a few names in accounts of his voyages of 1534 and 1536. Among the oldest and still surviving French toponyms are *Cap de Bonne Viste*, which we know better in its Spanish or Portuguese form as Bonavista, and Catalina, a name probably derived from the translation of Cartier's *Sainte Katherine*. Quirpon, Brehat and Degrat are old French toponyms as well. French toponymy expanded with their migratory fishery. By 1790 French names could be found all around the Island and along sections of the Labrador coast side by side with English names. Regionally, the French element in toponymy was strongest in Placentia Bay and on the Burin Peninsula (areas settled by the French in the period 1662-1713), and along the \*French Shore *qv*, which included the Great Northern Peninsula, where they fished until 1904.

Labrador appears to have been derived from a Portuguese word meaning "small land-owner". Newfoundland comes from English, but was first written as "the newe founde isle". Meanwhile the Portuguese called the Island *Bacalaos* ("land of the cod"). English nomenclature was not very prominent until the publication in 1626 of a map by Captain John Mason *qv*. Mason, governor of the Cuper's Cove (Cupids) colony from 1615 to 1621, surveyed part of the coast between Bonavista Bay and Placentia Bay and his map records the first good crop of English names. Many of Mason's names were transformations of toponyms earlier given by the Portuguese, Spanish and French. Among these were Harbour Grace, Carbonear, St. John's, Petty Harbour, Ferryland and Trepassey. The earliest purely English compositions included Torbay, Bristol's Hope, Cuper's Cove, Heart's Content and Avalon. Avalon, derived from Avalonia, is a name associated with the legend of King Arthur, and was borrowed by Sir George Calvert *qv* for his Newfoundland colony, or plantation. In 1621 Calvert established a settlement on this land at Ferryland.

Selma Barkham has shown that in the late sixteenth century the Basques named a considerable number of features while fishing and whaling in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Some examples include Cape St. George (*Cabo de San Jorge*), Cape Ray (*C. de Rey*), Ferrole Point (*Ferrolago Amuixco Punta*), Port aux Choix (*Portuchoa*) and Codroy (*Cadarrai*). In subsequent usage these names became anglicized. Thus Codroy is the anglicized version of the Basque *Cadarrai*, while Ferryland was derived from a Portuguese name first recorded as *Faniham* on a map by Verrazano in 1529 and St. John's from *R. de Sam Joham* on a Portuguese map of 1519 (Reinel).

By the 1670s the English had settled the area between Cape Bonavista and Cape Race, then known as the English Shore, but settlements bore names imposed by fishermen of other nations. Of 32 English settlements occupied in 1675, for example, only about a third - English Harbour, Trinity, Ireland's Eye, Old Perlican, Heart's Content, Silly Cove, Salmon Cove, Clown's Cove, Bryant's Cove, Torbay and Tors Cove - have a fairly obvious English origin. Most of these were imposed by English migratory fishermen rather than by the earliest settlers. From the late seventeenth century, however, English toponyms increased in the settled areas, as did French nomenclature on the treaty shore. Meanwhile the anglicization of existing non-English names, or their replacement, also accounted for some of the changes. French names such as *Toulinquet*, *Audierne* and *Baliene* were transformed to Twillingate, Oderin and Bauline respectively. The Bay of Flowers was changed to Bonavista Bay and *Baya de Santa Cyria* (originally named after a Portuguese saint) became Trinity Bay.

In addition to Mason other key figures who added to the early stock of English names were Henry Southwood (who visited in 1676), Captain James Cook (1762-67) and Lieutenant Michael Lane *qqv* (1762-90). In the summer of 1676 Southwood consulted local fishermen and settlers on names while compiling navigational information which was later published in *The English Pilot* (1689). Cook's survey not only advanced cartography and resulted in the first accurate coastal maps of Newfoundland, but also increased English recorded names. Cook imposed his own preferences at will. These ranged from the names of his survey ships (*Lark*, *Pearl* and *Tweed*), to English rivers (Humber and Thames), to a Newfoundland governor (Graves) and to his admiral friends (Hawke, Saunders and Keppel). Cook also named Portland Creek for its likeness to Portland in the English Channel, and on one occasion coined a Nameless Cove. Most names first recorded by Cook, however, were clearly those which came from local oral usage and were most likely authored by fishermen and settlers. Cook's practice of consulting local residents on nomenclature was followed by many later surveyors and explorers working on behalf of various government agencies. When Cook was posted on the *Endeavour* for work in the Pacific the Newfoundland survey was continued by his former assistant. Michael Lane added more toponyms to the standing record, but his contribution to Newfoundland nomenclature has not yet been fully analyzed.

While most of the additions to coastal toponymy in the nineteenth century came from hydrographic surveys, pioneer geologists such as J.B. Jukes, W.E. Cormack and James Howley *qqv* began in this period to establish a nomenclature of inland features. In 1795 the British Admiralty established a Hydrographic Department, and from the early nineteenth century sponsored a series of detailed coastal surveys in Newfoundland and Labrador. From these surveys came some 90 charts, many of which have been revised. Various editions of the *Newfoundland and Labrador Pilot* have included name lists for most significant features mapped on these charts. Indeed this source provided a large proportion of the names which after 1949 were used on the 1:50,000 National Topographic Series of Maps and which were published in the two editions of the Newfoundland gazetteer (1968, 1983). As is the case with Lane's work, however, very little research has been completed on the naming process or the special contributions of the various hydrographic surveyors of the nineteenth century, including G. Holbrook (1821-23), T. Smith (1821-26), F. Bullock (1821-26), J. Orlebar (1857-64), W. Chimmio (1865-72), J.H. Kerr (1872-91), and W.E. Maxwell (1891-1900).

What names were imposed by these hydrographers and what names did they gather in conducting their surveys? Answers to these queries can be gleaned only from their journals, log books and their original charts. The recent publication by W.J. Kirwin of some of Chimmoo's journals related to his surveys on the northeast coast of Labrador in 1867 illustrates quite clearly the value of this source in determining origins and some of the inspiration for names in the areas of his survey. Not surprisingly, some, if not all, of these hydrographers seized an opportune moment to achieve a measure of personal glory and immortality. Thus we have Holbrook Head (NTS 2C/12), Bullock Island (2 E/9), Bullock Point (2 C14) and Chimmoo Rock (13 1/17). It is likely too that at least one or more of the 15 features with the specific Smith has a similar origin. The explorers of the interior also dispensed names commemorating persons they admired and their personal friends. As Cormack relates in the journal of his travel across the Island in 1822, "I have used the customary privilege of giving names to the lakes and mountains. . . in this hitherto unexplored route, and these are in compliment to distinguished individuals and private friends." Names inherited from Cormack include Jameson Hills, "in honour of an excellent friend and distinguished promoter of science and enterprise - Professor Jameson, of Edinburgh", King George IV Lake and Mount Sylvester (honouring his Micmac guide, Sylvester Joe *qv*). Some of Cormack's names, such as Gowers Lake, Emmas Lake and Richardsons Lake, are no longer in use. The name Cormack was fittingly bestowed on a post-World War II settlement designed for war veterans.

Clearly the naming and renaming of geographical features has gone on spontaneously from the time of the first occupation of the areas of the Island and Labrador. Consequently most areas have a complex nomenclature made up of names left by different cultures and by different generations of the same culture. These different name layers (or palimpsests, as Professor Story calls them) are usually mixed and blended within an area, but the more distinctive sets are easily identified. Micmac toponymy, for example, is evident in many landmarks and natural features in the southern and western regions of Newfoundland. Names such as Annieopsquotch ("rocky mountain"), Mael Paeg ("Crooked") Lake and Kaegudek ("on the top") Lake are good examples. However, names given by the Micmac to features along the coasts have, according to Professor Frank Speck, been lost and replaced by English toponymy. Seary maintains that the only toponym known to have come from the Beothuk language was *shannoc*. Shannoc Brook was recorded by Jukes in 1842, and is believed to be the Beothuk word for Micmac. Later this brook was renamed Noel Pauls, after a Micmac guide. (In 1914 Jack of Clubs Cove on the Port au Port Peninsula was renamed Aguathuna, in the belief that this was a Beothuk term for "white stone" -see PORT AU PORT-WEST-AGUATHUNAFELIX COVE). Toponyms containing the elements Indian and Wigwam indicate sites of settlement or cultural contact with Europeans. Mary March Brook commemorates a Beothuk woman captured in 1819 near Red Indian Lake. Recently the name Mount Caubvick was approved for the highest peak, previously unnamed, in the Torngat Mountains (Caubvick was an Inuit woman who survived a smallpox outbreak among a group taken to England by George Cartwright in the 1770s).

How do geographical features get their names and who does the naming? According to Jean Poirier, places get named by deliberate imposition, by persons who had or assumed authority, and by a process of spontaneous creation, or collective usage. Imposed names tend to be restricted to settlements and to prominent natural features. Spontaneous names are, however, usually more numerous and include also all names in oral usage, nicknames, vulgar names and the like. The earliest authorities to impose names were the early explorers and cartographers. Later this role was assumed by governors, hydrographers, geologists, clergymen, post office officials and politicians. Currently the only authority that can impose name changes or approve new names is the Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board. The modern names board, which was formed in 1979, consists of six members from around the Province and is the successor of the Nomenclature Board established in 1904. The earliest spontaneous names in Newfoundland evidently came from the migratory fishermen. The vast majority of names that we possess today were invented and bestowed by the ordinary settlers, who are mainly responsible for much of the variety in our toponymy as well for much of the repetition and more mundane aspects of our nomenclature. Personal names and family names are frequently found in the names of communities and in numerous natural features - coves, ponds, points etc. For instance the community of Princeton in Bonavista Bay commemorates Prince, a pioneer family. Nearby Charleston is named after Charles Prince, a descendant of the same family who established a new settlement. Meanwhile Charlottetown, Bonavista Bay evidently honours Charlotte Spracklin (née Hussey), a pioneer mother of the community.

In considering imposed names created by authority, Seary noted that both governors and members of the clergy were generous in giving their own names. After a visit to the northeast coast in 1866 Governor Musgrave had his

name attached to the communities of Musgrave Harbour (formerly Muddy Hole) and Musgravetown, a newly settled site in Goose Bay, Bonavista Bay. Governors' names are the main element in Cochrane Street, Cochrane Pond and Glovertown, while prime ministers gave the community names Whiteway and Winterland. Names of religious significance, especially those of saints (St. John's, St. Mary's), were among the first imposed in Newfoundland. Other names include those chosen to replace older names deemed unsuitable. Thus St. Michael's replaced Caplin Cove, St. Phillip's replaced Broad Cove, and Black Duck Gullies became St. Joseph's. The Nomenclature Board frequently commemorated local clergy in changing names or in creating new names. Searston in the Codroy Valley was named for a popular Roman Catholic priest in the area. Earlier this century one of the several Cuckhold Coves was renamed Dunfield after a Church of England clergyman, and Bird Island Cove was changed to Elliston after the Reverend William Ellis, the first Methodist minister in the area.

Geographical names normally contain two parts, a specific part (e.g. "Kelligrews" in Kelligrews Point) and a generic part (e.g. "Tickle" in Black Tickle). Generics identify the class, family or general type to which an individual feature belongs (e.g. cove, island, lake, etc.). An analysis of "specifics" and "generics" reveals much of the history and culture of any area. A recently published glossary of generic terms, *Generic Terms In Canada's Geographical Names*, shows that Newfoundland toponymy contains numerous generic terms which are very rare or unknown in other parts of Canada - an indication of the rich cultural variety in our nomenclature. Newfoundlanders were inclined to name inland bodies of water "ponds", whereas elsewhere in Canada they were classed as "lakes". An explanation of this difference is that most of the early settlers in Newfoundland came from the southwest of England and were unfamiliar with the term "lake" since no lakes occur in the homeland. Similarly "brooks" are in many other parts of North America called "creeks". Regional linguistic difference in the use of generics also occur within Newfoundland. Water-logged soils, for which one of the standard generics is "marsh", are in some parts of Newfoundland referred to as "mish" and in others as "mash".

Specifics are much more numerous than generics. Nearly every community in the Province has a "Gull Pond", while many have several, distinguished as "Big Gull Pond", "Inside Gull Pond" or "Outside Gull Pond". "Little" and "Big" are very commonly used qualifiers. Other features include specifics such as "Back", "Great", "Green" and "Southwest". The current gazetteer contains scores of Wild Coves, Sandy Coves, Long Ponds, Southwest Ponds, Northwest Ponds, Flat Islands, Burnt Heads, Burnt Islands and Burnt Points.

Repetition of names can be a problem, especially in the case of settlements. Towards the end of the last century the Postmaster General had authority to change the name of any settlement which duplicated another. The first Nomenclature Board assumed this authority in 1904. In 1992 the Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board can authorize name changes for any unincorporated community if most residents petition for a change. Incorporated communities (cities, towns etc.) are empowered to alter their own names. The Geographical Names Board is, however, responsible for naming all natural features. Among the current settlements (about 800) some 160 have had a formal name change within the last century. Most of these changes were approved by the Nomenclature Board, usually after receiving petitions from local people, politicians, clergymen, magistrates or merchants. Most changes were prompted by the need for a community to have a unique identity. There were simply too many Fox Coves, Northwest Arms, Holyroods and New Harbours. Other changes were motivated by a desire to avoid awkward associations - North Side of Norris Arm (Alderburn), Botwoodville, Ship Cove (Botwood), Upper Rocky Brook and Middle Rocky Brook (Monroe) . . . etc. - or by the perceived need to improve either the euphemistic or the euphonious appeal of a name, or simply to avoid a "negative" label. Thus Silly Cove became Winterton; Devils Cove, Job's Cove; Bay Bulls Arm, Sunnyside; Bloody Bay, Glovertown; and Famish Gut, Fairhaven. More recently Gayside has become Baytona. Repeated efforts to change the name of Dildo have failed.

Authoritative intervention has not always proven effective. Indeed names officially rescinded often survive in oral usage or at least are retained as nicknames. One still hears casual reference to Silly Cove instead of Winterton, Squid Tickle for Burnside, Damnable for St. Chad's and Ward's Harbour for Beaumont North. Likewise, officially proclaimed names have often been thoroughly resisted by local residents and alternative names have had to be considered, sometimes including a reversion to an old name. Shoal Bay, Bonavista was altered to Wellington, but then became Dover; and Salvage Bay was proclaimed Brighton and then Eastport. Flat Islands, Bonavista Bay became Samsons Islands but later reverted to the original. By a 1916 proclamation Wood's Island became Innishmara, but the name never caught on. Overall, however, most official place name changes have gained public acceptance. It appears that the main agent enforcing change, following a proclamation by the official board, has been the post office. More recently the practice of sign-posting by the highways department and by municipal

governments has contributed to the stabilization of official place names. Nomenclature Board records for the period 1904-1958 disclose a preoccupation with settlement name changes. Although the Board was active up to the 1950s its activities were spasmodic. Indeed much of the work involving geographical names in the 1950s and 1960s was done by civil servants. Particularly noteworthy was the work of two land surveyors, J.H. Burrige and W.J. Walsh, who were responsible for compiling the 18,000 names which appeared in the first published Newfoundland and Labrador Gazetteer (1968). This gazetteer marked a significant advance upon the list of 3200 names compiled in 1941, which stood until 1968 as the most comprehensive inventory of toponymy. The 1968 gazetteer for the first time listed scores of toponyms for natural features, gathered from printed sources and from numerous land surveys and cadastral (land-ownership) maps.

In 1981 the department of geography at Memorial University began a field program to record local toponymy and to check the accuracy of the names on current maps against local usage. Undergraduate geography students began visiting communities to interview elderly and knowledgeable residents and to record names on maps of the National Topographic Series 1:50,000. The results of the field survey are submitted to the Geographic Names Board. Names approved by the Board are submitted to the Canada Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for entry into the toponymic data base for the Province. These new names will appear on maps and in subsequent publication of gazetteers. Up to 1991 detailed field surveys have covered the Avalon Peninsula, the Burin Peninsula, the Bonavista Peninsula, Bonavista North, the Straight Shore as far as Musgrave Harbour, Terra Nova National Park, Gros Morne National Park and the Sandwich Bay area of Labrador. Some 15,000 "new" names have come from these surveys. Additional field work has been conducted in recent years by the department of English of Memorial University in the Placentia Bay area aimed at recording and preserving the linguistic aspects of the culture as represented in geographical names. Other work has involved the field collecting of names among the native peoples of Labrador. All these projects will result in improved toponymic coverage of the Province and in the preservation of an important component of our cultural heritage. W. Gordon Handcock (1987), R. Hollett (1991), M. E Howley (1901), K. L. Keenleyside, Jean Poirier (1985), E.R. Seary (1958; 1962; 1970), G.M. Story (1987), W.J. Kirwin (1985), Canada Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (1968; 1983), Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board.

**W. GORDON HANDCOCK**