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Group of Experts on  
Geographical Names

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Item 6  
of the Provisional Agenda

REPORTS OF THE LIAISON OFFICERS, REGIONAL MEETINGS AND  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

PAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY (PAIGH)  
REPORT OF THE EIGHTH GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES COURSE

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Submitted by Roger L. Payne (USA).

PAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY  
REPORT OF THE EIGHTH GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES COURSE  
Asunción, Paraguay  
13 - 24 May, 1996

Roger L. Payne (USA)

The eighth geographical names course offered under the auspices of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) was held in Asunción, Paraguay. The Servicio Geográfico Militar served as host and provided excellent training facilities and administrative support as did the Defense Mapping Agency (DMA) liaison and his staff. The two-week course (syllabus attached) is designed to provide an introduction and basis for national standardization of geographical names and a program of applied toponymy. The first week is predominantly lecture and addresses various aspects of applied toponymy and concentrates heavily upon all requirements involved in establishing a program of national standardization. A comprehensive field exercise offered students the opportunity of actual data gathering, processing and analyzing in accordance with established toponymic field procedures. The second week of the course is devoted to a workshop in automated data processing where the student designs databases and files, as well as acquires the ability to retrieve and analyze toponymic data in a microprocessing environment. Finally, there is an exercise where a names staff interacts with a national names committee in applying principles and policies of standardization.

The eighth course was comprised of 26 students primarily from Paraguay, but also including Bolivia, Colombia, and Uruguay. The students generally represented various military and civilian institutes and agencies with participation also from the academic community. The natural accumulation of materials and further development of techniques from the previous courses have resulted in a complete, structured set of materials including viewgraphs and handouts. The materials have been prepared for presentations to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, and will be presented in August, 1996 on behalf of PAIGH as a comprehensive set of geographic names training materials.

The course is now taught by three instructors well-versed in traditional and team teaching methods and each has demonstrated expertise and experience in applied toponymy. While students (as usual) indicated more time is needed, it should be emphasized that this course is basic and introductory. There is the possibility of developing an advanced course or possibly a mobile team for specific problem-solving in individual countries. Practically, it is hoped that the course will be the impetus for establishing a program of national names standardization and a body to direct such a program. There is evidence that the goals of the course are being achieved to varying degrees throughout the Latin American community.

A Syllabus for the PAIGH Geographical Names Course  
on Applied Toponymy

Duration - Two weeks

Instructors: Roger L. Payne (USGS-USA)  
Randall Flynn (DMA-USA)  
Ramón Rivera (National University-Honduras)  
Richard R. Randall (Emeritus-USA)

Instructional materials are provided and include manuals and articles as well as a special topographic map for the field exercise.

I. Introduction

- A. Terminology
- B. History of Applied Toponymy
- C. Survey of National Programs Throughout the World
- D. Local guest lectures (also throughout the course as appropriate)

II. National Standardization

- A. A National Board or Committee
  - 1. Authority
  - 2. Membership
  - 3. Staff
- B. Basis for Establishing Principles of Standardization
  - 1. International Agreements
  - 2. National, Regional and Local Specific Requirements
- C. Policies
  - 1. Rules for Uniform Decisions
  - 2. Standardization Implementation
- D. Procedures, Methodology and Guidelines
  - 1. Requirements
  - 2. Implementation
  - 3. Training
- E. Exercise (performed at the end of the course)
  - 1. Mock Meeting of a National Board
  - 2. Staff Presentation to the Board
  - 3. Reversal of Roles (Board and Staff)
  - 4. Draft Resolution for Establishing National Names Authority

III. Field Exercise

- A. Techniques of Toponymic Field Work

- B. Preliminary Examination of Area
  - 1. Physiography
  - 2. Urban or Rural
  - 3. Other Cultural Aspects
  - 4. Examination of Special Topographic Map of the Area Without Names
  - 5. Preparation of Interview Questions
- C. Trip to the Field
  - 1. Interviews
  - 2. Field Notes
  - 3. Map Annotation
- D. Office Analysis and Processing

#### IV. Automated Processing

- A. Introduction
  - 1. Terminology
  - 2. Overview of Hardware
  - 3. Overview of Software
  - 4. Database Management Systems
- B. Office Processing
  - 1. Data Verification
  - 2. Loading the Data
- C. Data Retrieval Requirements and Techniques
  - 1. Three Principle Operations
  - 2. Standard or Routine Retrieval
  - 3. Specialized retrieval
  - 4. Formatting Reports
  - 5. Products
- D. Maintenance Procedures
  - 1. Field Techniques
  - 2. Other Written Sources
  - 3. Office Processing (backups)
  - 4. Updating the Database
  - 5. User Tracking
  - 6. Security
- E. Workshop
  - 1. Pre-programmed Environment
  - 2. Database Design
  - 3. Retrieval Techniques
  - 4. Formatting Reports
  - 5. Questions and Problems

#### V. Summary

- A. Questions
- B. Examination of Draft Resolution
- C. Course Analysis and Evaluation
- D. Closing Ceremonies