

WHAT'S IN A NAME? – QUOTABLE QUOTES

The importance of place names

“Man the tool-maker and Man the thinker is also Man the namer.”

George Stewart, *Names on the Globe* (1975)

“Whenever people of any sort, from ancient to modern times, come into a land that is new to them, they begin at once to name their surroundings. This is something that cannot wait.”

Constance Mary Matthews, *How Placenames Began and How they Develop* (1974)

“Toponymy, whether we realize it or not, is part of the primary needs of every person on our planet.”

Alain Vallières, ‘The Administrative Framework of a Central Toponymic Agency’ in *Canadian Documents for the United Nations Toponymy Course* (1992)



Photo: Helen Kerfoot

“Place names are a reflection of culture and history, a reflection of us. They are a reflection of the who, what, when, where, and why at the time they were given, and like the culture they are dynamic and subject to change no matter how established or traditional they are.”

John R. K. Clark in the preface to *Hawai'i Place Names* (2002)

“In travelling we visit *names* as well as places.”

William Hazlitt, *Notes of a Journey through France and Italy* (1826)

“While we may have plans, diagrams and visual images, our maps will remain ‘inhuman’, bearing no relation to man, until they are enriched with geographical names.”

Art Ó Maolfabhail, ‘The background and present role of the Placenames Branch of the Ordnance Survey’ in *The Placenames of Ireland in the Third Millennium* (1992)

“... it is keeping abreast of the latest name changes that occupies the map and atlas editor – to say nothing of the world’s foreign offices ...”

Naftali Kadmon, *Toponymy, The Lore, Law and Language of Geographical Names* (1997)

“In the former Soviet Union place-name changes since the 1917 Revolution have been legion. It has been estimated that of the total number of about 700,000 populated places in the old USSR probably as many as half had their names changed in some way in the first 60 years following the revolution.”

Adrian Room, *Place-Name Changes 1900-1991* (1993)



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The need for geographical names standardization

“Next to a good dictionary, the most generally useful book is a good gazetteer.”

W. G. Blackie in the preface to *The Imperial Gazetteer* (1855)

“As it is desirable that uniform usage in regard to geographic nomenclature and orthography obtain throughout the Executive Department of the Government, and particularly upon maps and charts issued by the various Departments and Bureaus, I hereby constitute a Board on Geographic Names...”

Benjamin Harrison, US President, executive order issued on 4th September 1890

“A national standardization programme produces savings in time and money by increasing governmental efficiency. It can prevent internal conflicts and eliminate the duplication of work by more than one bureau or organization attempting, with varying results, to determine accurate name use.”

Donald J Orth, ‘Organization and functions of a National Geographical Names Standardization programme: A Manual’ in *World Cartography* Volume XXI (1990)

“With the continuous expansion of technical capabilities and communication media, authoritative geographical names are sought for accurate reporting, geo-referencing and inclusion in geographical information systems.”

Helen Kerfoot, Chair, United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names *Technical reference manual for the standardization of geographical names* (2007)

“Reliable, updated and comprehensive geo-information is an important economic factor worldwide. Today we know that some 80 percent of all decisions in public and private life are spatially related and that the majority of decisions are taken on the basis of specific geo-information, irrespective of the development status of a country, for instance in regional planning, the construction industry or environmental protection, disaster management and national defence, traffic routing and the aerospace industry.”

Otto Schily, German Federal Minister of the Interior
Welcome Address at the opening of the 8th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in Berlin (2002)

“Hundreds of millions of users around the world use Google Earth. Many of them have strong – and sometimes conflicting – opinions about how places should be named and where borders should be drawn.”

Andrew McLaughlin, *Google’s views on government, policy and politics* (2008)



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