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Report on the Standardization of Geographical  
Names in the Federal Republic of Germany

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Introduction

In 1967, the United Nations held the First Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names in Geneva. On this subject the Conference adopted several resolutions of which resolution No. 4 deals with the "National Standardization" (see: "United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, Geneva, 4-22 September 1967", Volume 1, Report of the Conference, United Nations, New York 1968, E/CONF.53/3). The paper as presented here is based on this resolution.

A. National Groups for Names

In 1959, the "Ständiger Ausschuss für Geographische Namen" (Permanent Committee for Geographical Names) was established. This is an independent scientific group of experts, the tasks of which concern among others:

"to assist in the realization of the recommendations passed by the conferences of the United Nations on the standardization of geographical names in the domain of national standardization, in particular

the regulated field collection of geographical names in topographic and cadastral surveyings to be performed according to scientific viewpoints;

the treatment of the collected names for their reproduction on maps and lists;

the elaboration and publication of gazetteers".

B. and C. Field Collection and Principles for Office Treatment of  
Geographical Names

As far as the Federal Republic of Germany is concerned the situation is as follows: the topographic land survey at scales 1:25,000 and smaller is completed. The collected names were shown for the Northern part of the Federal Republic of Germany on the topographic map at 1:25,000 - the former plane table sheets -, for the southern part of the Federal Republic of Germany on the property maps and survey sheets of the topographic ground surveys at 1:5,000 and 1:2,500. At last, the alphabetical nomenclature adopted is as follows: under heading A all place names, under heading D hydrographic names, heading E names of bogs, heading F names of meadows, heading G names of heathes or forests, heading H road names, and heading I geographical or provincial names of landscapes. The different headings show, for which categories names are collected. The topographic survey of the Southern part of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Basic Map 1:5,000 comprise, in addition, also names of fields, as a rule being taken from cadastral surveys. In

the northern part of the Federal Republic of Germany such names are also shown on the German Basic Map 1:5,000.

In connection with the names the present tasks are as follows:

1. To register changes which apply in particular to names of settlements due to the reforms of administrative areas (see: I. Frank: "Namengebung im Zuge der Gebietsreformen, Tagung des Arbeitskreises für Namenforschung in Berlin am 22. und 23.9.1977" - Nomenclature in the course of reforms of administrative areas, Meeting of the Working Group for Onomatology held in Berlin-West on 22 and 23 September 1977). In this case, attention has to be paid that the procedure for the grant, change, and elimination of names of towns, communes, and parts of communes is prescribed by legal and administrative regulations of the Federal Laender. A list of all names of settlements, usually with the appertaining numbers of inhabitants and arranged according to the customary hierarchy of places, is kept by the Statistics of the Laender or partly by the Survey Offices of the Laender as official list of inhabited places.

2. To preserve names of historical importance in the Federal Republic of Germany.

3. To cultivate the correct spelling of names. With regard to the Low German linguistic area, many topographic names in Low German were translated into High German. This task was performed by officers, detached to the topographic land survey, who sometimes did not dispose of sufficient linguistic knowledge. For the preparation of the German Basic Map 1:5,000 several times still today translation into High German is made, if field names in Low German lettering are taken from old "Verkopplungs-" (coupling) and cadastral maps. In general, problems of the use and spelling of topographic names (except place names) gain importance when preparing and revising official topographic map series. While a series of scientific publications on names exists for local areas, so far a general guideline is missing how these works can be co-ordinated and evaluated for the revision in to topographic land surveying. The Working Group Topography of the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Vermessungsverwaltungen der Länder der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AdV)" (Working Committee of the Survey Administrations of the Laender of the Federal Republic of Germany) has recently made an inventory on the collection of names on the ground at the survey administrations of its members which resulted in the following statements:

The survey proper on the ground including the appertaining collection of names was mostly performed in the second half of the 19th century according to predominantly uniform principles. In such a form the names were shown on the official topographic map series. Nowadays, checking of names in the field is in general only required when revising map series. Special investigations may become necessary at land consolidations when a decision must be made which ones of the old field names shall be preserved after the re-distribution of the fields, but also at the new preparation of maps, or at the first preparation of the German Basic Map 1:5,000 and due to inquiries by map users. For this purpose, in all Laender the survey offices, sometimes also the forest administrations, are involved. In addition, co-operation is demanded of:

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|-----------------------|---|
| in Baden-Württemberg: | Expert for spelling at the "Landesvermessungsamt" (Survey Office of the Land)                                     |
| in Bavaria:           | "Verband für Flurnamenforschung" (Assoc. for Research of Field Names) in Bavaria                                  |
| in Hesse:             | "Hessisches Landesamt für geschichtliche Landeskunde" (Office for Historical Applied Geography of the Land Hesse) |
| in Lower Saxony:      | "Niedersächsisches Landesverwaltungsamt" (Administration Office of the Land Lower Saxony)                         |

Abteilung Statistik, Institut für Denkmalspflege, Dezernat "Naturschutz, Landschaftspflege, Vogelschutz" (Division Statistics, Institute for Preservation of Monuments, Department "Nature Protection, Safeguarding of Countryside, Protection of Birds"), "Institut für Historische Landesforschung" (Institute for Historical Land Research) of the University of Göttingen

in North-Rhine-Westphalia:

"Landesamt für Statistik" (Statistics Office)

in Rhineland-Palatinate:

"Institut für geschichtliche Landeskunde" (Institute for Historical Applied Geography), University of Mainz  
"Landesarchivverwaltung" (Administration of the Archives of the Land)

in the Saarland:

"Institut für Landeskunde" (Institute for Applied Geography) of the Saarland

in Schleswig-Holstein:

"Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Landesgeschichte und Volkstumsforschung" (Working Committee for Land History and Folklore Research), Schloß Gettorf  
"Deutsches Hydrographisches Institut" (German Hydrographic Institute)

in Hamburg:

"Baubehörde - Wasserwirtschaft, Behörde für Wirtschaft, Verkehr und Landwirtschaft, Strom- und Hafenbau" (Building Authority - Water Engineering, Authority for Economy, Transport and Agriculture, Stream and Harbour Construction).

A standardization of hydrographic names is at work in several Federal Laender (e.g. at the Institute for Applied Geography of the Saarland). In general, however, the standardization causes still difficulties. At present, the responsible Land authorities prepare hydrographic regional index numbers which will be considered when preparing the Gazetteer Federal Republic of Germany. Natives, teachers, scientists in local research a.o. will be consulted in most countries when inquiring in the field.

As to the problem of reproducing dialect names on land maps, it is generally stated that the degree of their adaptation to the high language differs regionally although the tendency to high linguistic spellings mostly dominates.

The names collected in the field are shown on the topographic maps. In several Laender they are additionally recorded in another form.

#### D. Multilingual Regions

The northern boundary zone of Schleswig-Holstein is the only multilingual region where Danish has the status of a minority language. But here too, official geographical names are in German only.

Although Frisian presents a West Germanic language of its own, it has practically in the land survey only the character of a dialect to which German is assigned as high language.

#### E. National Gazetteers

At present, the Gazetteer Federal Republic of Germany is prepared at the "Institut für Angewandte Geodäsie" (Institute for Applied Geodesy - a federal agency under the authority of the Federal Minister of the Interior - which is cooperating with the respective Federal Laender and the Permanent Committee for Geographical Names. The volume "Niedersachsen" (Lower Saxony) was the first part presented to the United Nations Third Conference for the Standardization of Geographical Names held in Athen in 1977. The complete volume "Bundesrepublik Deutschland" (Federal Republic of Germany), to be finished by about 1980 and sent to the United Nations, is conceived according to the Resolution No. 4 mentioned above.

Literature:

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