

DR. BURRILL'S ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

United Kingdom and Canada

Dr. Burrill collaborated with numerous national and international organizations concerned with names issues. An early significant partner was the United Kingdom's Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use (PCGN). Founded in 1907, the PCGN developed useful procedures regarding the conversion of non-Roman-alphabet writing systems to the Roman script. During World War II, the USBGN used many of these writing systems for names appearing on US maps and charts. After World War II, the two nations began meeting regularly to discuss toponymic issues and develop solutions. These conferences still take place, and standards and procedures jointly developed during Dr. Burrill's time remain important to this day. The USBGN maintained contacts as well with its Canadian counterpart, the Geographical Names Board of Canada (founded in 1897), to deal with questions concerning names of features along and near their common border.

Pan American Institute of Geography and History

Dr. Burrill worked with the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH). He served as the Secretary General at its Third Consultation on Geography in 1952 and also participated in consultations in 1949, 1961, 1965, and 1969. In addition, he chaired a Working Group on Geographic Terms, from 1958 to 1973. The purpose of this body was to assure that terms associated with names had consistent definitions, not only within a country but also among countries. Dr. Burrill also worked on other PAIGH agenda items, including efforts to promote the concept that standardizing names was an important national and international function. (Dr. Burrill's legacy remains. In 1987, his successor as Executive Secretary of the USBGN initiated an annual two-week teaching program to instruct PAIGH member nations how to standardize names. The 20th program took place in Brazil in 2007.)

Professional Organizations

Prior to any official US participation in UN activities, Dr. Burrill was active in several academic and national organizations concerning geographic names. He held official positions, in a several of these, such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping, the American Dialect Society, the American Geophysical Union, the American Names Society, the American Polar Society, the American Society of Professional Geographers, the Antarctic Society, the Association of American Geographers, the International Geographic Union, and the UK Royal Geographical Society. In the 1960's he attended, as an observer, UN Regional Cartographic Conferences in Australia, Kenya, and Tunisia. With respect to the International Geographical Union, he was a member of the US National Committee from 1952 to 1965, and participated in several sessions from 1949 to 1976. He also worked with its Commission on Geographical Terminology.

Hidden Bay

Discovery Bay

Search Lake

Research Creek

Buried Hills

Obscure Arch

Examiner Mine

Render Creek

Veiled Peak

Unknown Pass

Learn Pond

Hard Heights

Polar Woods