



**UNITED STATES BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES**  
**Foreign Geographic Names:**  
**Standardization Policy:**  
**Historical Features<sup>1</sup>**

The Board's Foreign Geographic Names Standardization Principles apply to foreign geographic names in general and form the basis for the Board's foreign names decisions. Additional normative regulations must be developed to address specific geographic and linguistic phenomena peculiar to countries or regional areas. Special classes of place-names, such as high seas features, may also require special analysis and treatment. For this reason, the Board develops supplementary standardization policy and procedure on a country basis, and to address specific standardization issues.

**Policy: Historical Features:**

In the NGA/BGN Geographic Names Database, a historical feature is a feature determined to no longer exist.

**Procedure:**

1. Historical features are those which have been disestablished (e.g., a former first-order administrative division).
2. Historical features are those that are destroyed by human or natural means and are no longer locatable (e.g., a town permanently flooded by a river impoundment), or whose existence has been otherwise disestablished or disproved. Lack of recent cartographic evidence will **not** constitute sufficient proof that the feature no longer exists.
3. Historical features may be physical features which have been named and have been determined in subsequent years to not actually exist. This is the case for several features in the Undersea Features file.
4. Ancient sites, ruins, battlefields, etc., the existence of which can still be discerned on the landscape, are not covered under this policy.
5. A date will be entered into the 'Terminate Date' field in the Geographic Names Database to identify historical features. This date may be an effective date of a legislated change, if available, or the date the database action was taken.
6. The use of any other previously used schema to flag historical features (i.e., double parentheses, historical feature name types, and historical feature designations) shall cease. All records utilizing former schema will be corrected using the above procedures. If those schemas were utilized to indicate something other than the above definition of a historical feature, alternate methods shall be sought.

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<sup>1</sup> This policy supersedes the version approved at FNC 365 (2010)