

The known and less familiar history of the naming of “Mt Kosciuszko”

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The highest peak on the continental Australia bears the name “Mt Kosciuszko” and we know this from our time in primary school. We as well remember that it was discovered and named by the Polish traveller and explorer, Paul Edmund de Strzelecki.

Polish people consider it a magnificent monument to Tadeusz Kosciuszko. However, the history of its naming along with many related controversies are less familiar and lead to dissemination of incorrect information both in Poland and in Australia. Hence, to fill the gap, it is necessary to gather the facts in one publication equipped with references to the relevant historical resources.

Key terms: Mt Kosciuszko, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, Kosciuszko's Will, Paul Edmund Strzelecki, Strzelecki, Australia, Aborigines, equality under the law, freedom, democracy.

Macarthur and Strzelecki's Expedition

Paul Edmund Strzelecki (1797-1873) arrived in Australia in April 1839, as one of four passengers on the merchant ship *Justine* carrying potatoes and barley [P1, p. 57]. Half a century had already passed since the British flotilla under the command of Governor Arthur Phillip had landed in Australia on the shores of the Bay, which he named Sydney Harbour, and nearly 70 years since James Cook assimilated Australia into the British Empire. Strzelecki was a passionate of geology, a new discipline at the time, dealing with minerals and the wealth of the earth, and he was an expert in this field. His set goal for visiting Australia was to study Australia's geology, or at least that of its eastern part, which no one had yet done systematically.

The first three months of his stay in Sydney, Strzelecki spent meeting with local people and gathering information about the country, which later proved very important in achieving his goals. Before the end of April he got to know Governor Gipps, to whom he introduced his aims and who advised him to explore the still mysterious interior of Australia. He also met Lady Franklin, who later, together with her husband John, the Governor of Tasmania, hosted Strzelecki and enabled him to explore and conduct pioneering geological research of this island. It is worth remembering that, at that time, Tasmania was still known as Van Diemen's Land.

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In June 1839, Strzelecki began his geological exploration of New South Wales with a trip to the mountainous territory called the Blue Mountains and located west of Sydney. Strzelecki reached northern parts of these mountains, getting as far as present day Katoomba, Mount Banks and Mount Tomah. Then he moved northwest, in the direction of present day Lithgow. In the vicinity of the Clwydd Valley, he named his first peak Mount Adina.

Adina (Aleksandryna) Turno, was his youthful love, with whom he continued to correspond by letter his whole life. Later, he sent Adina alpine daisies from the highest peak in Australia, Mount Kosciuszko [A3]. As we will see, this fact proved important in the subsequent history of the mountain naming. Strzelecki was the first to reach, name, and describe in a scientific manner the highest peak of the continental Australia.

In his first Australian geological expedition into the Blue Mountains and further, to the west of them, Strzelecki got as far as present day Bathurst and Orange. He returned to Sydney from this expedition at the end of November, assessing the mineral resources he encountered as modest [P1, pp. 72-73]. Because of Governor Gipps' concern about initiating gold fever, he did not publish his discovery of gold in the vicinity of Bathurst [P1, pp. 83], [S5]. Enriched by his own Australian experiences, he participated in many local meetings. Importantly, one of these meetings was with James Macarthur, the son of a wealthy farmer from the district of Parramatta [P1 p. 73]. During his sea voyage from Hobart, he noticed that, to the north of Melbourne, the mountain slopes fell towards the interior of the landmass. He suspected that there could be some excellent pastures over there. Included in Strzelecki's plans was exploration of the southern parts of New South Wales, including the Snowy Mountains, the State of Victoria, as well as Tasmania. Both Strzelecki and Macarthur decided to leave together on a pioneering overland expedition from Sydney to Melbourne.

Strzelecki left Sydney between the 21st and 24th of December 1839 [S3, p. 137] – if the tidings from the local press can be believed – in a two-horse carriage and accompanied by a servant [P1 p. 97]. After reaching virgin terrain, he continued without the carriage. Macarthur only left the Vineyard homestead in Parramatta on the 17th of January 1840, accompanied by a young assistant, James Riley, as well as a servant, Charles Tarra, an Aborigine from the region of Goulburn. Strzelecki and Macarthur did not meet up until February, in the vicinity of Goulburn. The exact date of the meeting is either the 5th or the 21st of February [P1, p. 102]. This rules out the date of the 15th February, given later by Strzelecki, as the date for conquering the summit of the highest peak in Australia. At the end of his expedition, Strzelecki lost all of his original notes. Consequently, his description of Mount Kosciuszko, as well as the dates of exploration, as given in his official reports [S2, p. 13], in the Polish translation [S4, p. 31], and in the monograph [S1, p. 62], turned out to be inaccurate. For a long time this caused various controversies. It was even postulated that Strzelecki was on the mountain now known as Mount Townsend, or even on Mount Abbott, and doubted if he really climbed Mount Kosciuszko. Analyses were carried out to determine if Strzelecki gave the name *Kosciusko* to the highest range forming the Snowy Mountains or just the highest peak. Contributing to the disputes, lasting to these days, were old inaccuracies in cartographic maps from the state of Victoria, which for a period of time mistakenly placed the name *Mt Kosciusko* in an area where the mountain now known as Mount Townsend is located [D2]. Let us also recollect the official name change, in 1997, from Mt Kosciusko to Mt Kosciuszko [M2]. In this article we endeavour to systematically present these quandaries.

Naming Mt Kosciuszko and Macarthur's notes

Paul Edmund Strzelecki wrote about naming Mt Kosciuszko in his official report to Governor Gipps [S2, S4], as well as in his monograph [S1] for which he received the Royal Geographical Society Gold Medal in 1846 [P1, p. 219]. In these reports, many inaccuracies were later noted in the dates and descriptions of places associated with the climb of the mountain and naming the highest point of the Australian continent².

In his report [S2, S4 p. 31], Strzelecki wrote:

... On the 15th February, about noon, I found myself at 6,510 feet (1,984m) above the level of the sea, seated on perpetual snow; a lucid sky above me, and below, an uninterrupted view over more than 7,000 square miles. This pinnacle, rocky, and naked, predominant over several others, elevations of the same mountain, was and always will be, chosen for an important point of trigonometrical survey; clear and standing by itself, it affords a most advantageous position for overlooking the intricacies of the mountain country around. The particular configuration of this eminence struck me so forcibly, by the similarity it bears to the tumulus elevated in Krakow over the tomb of the patriot Kosciuszko, that, although in a foreign country, on foreign ground, but amongst a free people, who appreciate freedom and its votaries, I could not refrain from giving it the name of Mount Kosciuszko.

In his book [S1, p. 62] (cf. translation into Polish by Słabczyński [S3 p. 146]), written sometime later and finally published 6 years after the naming of the mountain, Strzelecki wrote about it: *Beneath the feet, looking from the very verge of the cone downwards almost perpendicularly, the eye plunges into a fearful gorge 3,000 feet deep, in the bed of which the sources of the Murray gather their contents, and roll their united waters to the west.*

The imprecision of the heights has been questioned falling far beyond the precision of Strzelecki's instruments. Doubts have also been cast on perceptions of similarity to the Kosciuszko Mound and the chasm over the river Murray. That last description does not match the view from Mount Kosciuszko but is a better fit to the view from Mount Townsend. The similarity to the Kosciuszko Mound depends upon the vantage point from which Mount Kosciuszko is viewed, but there is piquancy in the actuality that the Australian commentators did not really know either Krakow or the Mound. Their comments in [T1] on Strzelecki mistaking the Mound for the Royal Castle Wawel Hill (yes, such theories were also promulgated) cannot be taken seriously by the writer, who is a Cracow born and it is known that Strzelecki also spent some time in Cracow [P1, p. 13].

No more accurate account of the naming of Mount Kosciuszko was available publicly until nearly one hundred years after the naming of the mountain by Strzelecki. Leslie Macarthur (1856-1930) [M1], the son of James Macarthur (1798-1867), the only witness to the naming of the mountain, found his father's notes and, in the 1920s, passed them on to Charles Daley. Daley published James Macarthur's notes in 1941, on the centenary of the Strzelecki & Macarthur expedition. These notes are now considered to be one of the most important sources about the naming of the mountain [D1].

² We recall that the highest point in the Commonwealth of Australia is actually [Dome Argus](#) in the Australian Antarctic Territory, which stands 4,093m above sea level.

Lieutenant Clews in about 1948 took part in the production of aerial military maps of the environs of Mt Kosciuszko and in the years 1950-1958 worked as a surveyor for the Snowy Mountains Authority. He also lived in the area encompassing the route of ascent by Strzelecki of Mount Kosciuszko. In [C1] he undertook a professional analysis of all available information relating to the ascent and naming of the mountain by Strzelecki. He deemed Macarthur's notes as primary documentary evidence. Below we include this famous fragment of James Macarthur's field diary.

March 9 – 1840. I started from Messrs Hay and Chalmers station on the Hume accompanied by Count Strzelecki and two native guides determined to reach the highest point of the Australian Alps. Ascending the beautiful and highly picturesque valley of the Hume on the Southern bank of the river passing Guise's Station we found our first camp at a ford known by the natives under the name of "Nowang". On the 10th we crossed the river to the northern bank and following the valley upwards we reached a small circular plain, 'Gobollin'. It was more regular than picturesque; the margin of the forest was so formal and unbroken. From this point we ascended the higher ranges and in about four miles reached a small but rapid creek. There we determined to leave our horses under the charge of a friend, who had accompanied us so far, but did not feel the same ardour of discovery that incited the Count and myself to ascend the highest known peak in Australia.

March 11th.-Count Strzelecki, myself, and two natives started at 7 a.m. in high spirits to accomplish our object. The weather intensely hot, we marched on with our blankets and provisions au militaire. The Count carried in addition a heavy case of instruments for scientific observations. Ascending at once through a narrow gully, in about three miles we reached a gap overhanging the course of the river. Before us was the deep valley of a tributary flowing from the Dargan mountains at the head of the Tumut. We found the descent to the river so steep that we only accomplished it safely by clinging to the shrubs and small saplings. This locality is peculiarly the habitat of the Black Opossum, an animal common in Van Diemen's Land. On the opposite side of this fine stream we ascended an equally steep range; and descending again, found ourselves on the main stream of the Hume. We crossed to the right bank, and passing the junction of another branch or tributary, re-crossed to the left bank, reaching the spot at which our actual ascent of the mountains was to commence. The thermometer ranging upwards of 90 degrees during the day, we determined after refreshing ourselves to accomplish as much of the ascent as we could during the cooler hours of night, and only camp when the bright moonlight failed us. A fine lyre-bird furnished an ample supper and consoled us for the want of water.

The early dawn of the 12th found us again on our way, and after five hours of tedious ascent we reached a small open spot. A fine spring afforded us the means of making a hearty breakfast. The only water we had had during these many hours of toil was a single quart, afforded by our guide, Jacky, descending over some perpendicular rocks to a roaring torrent, which we could hear far below us but could not see. The spot we had now reached was the favourite camping-ground of the natives during their annual visit to feast on the Boogan Moth. Traces of their camps were visible in all directions. Our sable friends arrive thin and half-starved; and in a few weeks' revelling on this extraordinary food, clothe their skinny frames in aldermanic contrast. Dr. Bennett published in 1834 some very interesting details on this subject, observed by him on the adjacent ranges of the Boogan Mountains. Being on the margin of the timber we determined to leave our blankets, etc., calculating that we could descend to the spot after accomplishing our object. Passing firstly through a belt of thick timber, and secondly a belt of dead timber, we reached the open summit, clothed with a peculiar gigantic grass, called by the natives 'Monnong.' It is from 2 to 3 feet high, bright green and succulent. It was very difficult to travel through flying mist, occasionally enveloped and accompanied by a keen, freezing air. After two hours of toilsome

ascent, as we found ourselves still far from the topmost point, after consultation we determined to send back our guides for the blankets and provisions, and directed them to form a camp on the spot where we then stood. Strzelecki and I then proceeded towards the extreme summit which we reached after a very laborious climb. The air was bitterly cold. We found the actual summit divided into six or more points. The Count by the aid of his instruments quickly detected one of them as being in fact considerably higher than where we stood. A deep ravine, separating us from this, did not deter my adventurous friend; he determined to reach it. As the day was far advanced, I thought it more prudent to return toward the point where I had ordered the natives to await our return. Before leaving the Count he told me of his intention of recording his visit to the highest point in Australia by associating the name of Kosciusko with our successful ascent. I could not but respect and feel deep sympathy with my friend, when with his hat off, he named the patriot of his country. Parting on the summit, I commenced my descent, leisurely enjoying the ample supply of fine water-cress that abounded in every crevice of the rocks. The beautiful flowers, then in full bloom, afforded me great pleasure. There were the flowers of early spring below, principally Euphorbiaceae. Immense masses of mica slate form groups here and there on the mountain's side. Towards evening I reached the spot where I had ordered our camp to be formed, but could see no trace of our sable friends. I shouted, fired my gun, but could get no answering signal. The approaching night made me feel deeply anxious respecting my own position, and that of my friend. My first care was to collect fuel and light a fire to direct Strzelecki's descent by its light. The night was passing on; just as I was placing myself in the best position that I could find to feel the warmth of my small fire, I thought that I heard a faint shout or cooey. I climbed up a high rock overhanging a deep precipice about 100 feet below me. I saw the reflection of the natives' fire. I scrambled back; and, making a rather perilous descent through a dark glen, reached the terrace, upon which my friends were comfortably established. I could hear nothing of Strzelecki, but immediately despatched Jacky to look for him, and very soon after had the satisfaction of shaking my friend by the hand. He had experienced many falls by the way but was unhurt. He produced from his bag the extreme summit of the height he had gained. I imagine he has still in his collection this interesting trophy. The Count had experienced more difficulty than he expected. The rather deep hollow that he crossed, after we parted, offered serious obstacles to his progress, from the endless confusion of rocks and the tall growth of the Munnong grass. He remarked the escape of carbonic acid gas from the fissures in the rocks. I had noted the regular hissing noise, but did not know its cause. The air after nightfall was alive with the Boogan moths causing a deep sounding humming noise in character like that of a gigantic bee-hive. On the most shaded side of the mountain there was still an extensive patch of snow, judged to be by my friend perpetual, as it was more or less stained by the decay of vegetation. This season was remarkable as being one in which the mountain was more free from snow than it had been before observed.

On the 13th we made a rapid descent to the camp where we had left our horses. On the 14th the Count was engaged completing and verifying his observations. He found the height he had reached as 7,800 feet³.

Macarthur's notes are definitely more detailed and cohesive than the laconic articulation of Strzelecki. Clews meticulously analysed the information contained in the above notes as well as in other available additional documents and reconstructed the probable route stages taken by Strzelecki and Macarthur. In view of his competency and experience in the region of the mountain, his conclusions are considered as the most plausible. We include below a schedule given by Clews [C1, p. 28], for the 12th of March 1840, showing that the demanding route

³ 7,800 ft equals 2377m, while it should be 2228m, ie. 7310 ft

described by Macarthur was achievable for a proficient traveller such as Strzelecki undoubtedly was.

| | | |
|--|-----|----------|
| Left camp on Lower Hannells Spur at "early dawn" | say | 5:30 am |
| Byatts Camp "5 hours tedious ascent" | " | 10:30 am |
| Byatts Camp "fine spring - hearty breakfast" | " | 11:00 am |
| Sent back for blankets "after 2 hours toilsome ascent" | " | 1:00 pm |
| Top of Townsend "reached after very laborious climb" | " | 2:30 pm |
| Strzelecki and Macarthur parted ("the day was far advanced") | " | 3:00 pm |
| Strzelecki on top of Kosciusko | " | 3:45 pm |
| Strzelecki left Kosciusko | " | 7:30 pm |
| Macarthur at proposed camp (leisurely descent) | " | 5:00 pm |
| Macarthur at natives' camp | " | 8:00 pm |
| Strzelecki and Macarthur reunited | " | 9:00 pm |

So, the mountain was identified by Strzelecki as the highest peak on the continental Australia and named (Mt Kosciusko), but how were these facts ultimately recognised and by whom?

Townsend, Mueller and von Lendenfeld

In 1940, on the centenary of the naming of the mountain, the *Royal Australian Historical Society* published an important report concerning Mt Kosciuszko. This was a historical paper by Harvard [H1] accompanied with Addendum by Dowd [D2]. Harvard authored a sound biography of Strzelecki and his explorations, particularly his travels in Australia, while Dowd documented the formal fortunes of the Mt Kosciusko name over the century since the mountain was first identified by Strzelecki as the highest peak in the Australian Alps. In what follows, we rely on the research and conclusions of B.T. Dowd, a historical research officer with the Department of Lands of the NSW Lands Department. ⁴

⁴ Halliday E.J., Chairman of the NSW Land Board, published in Sydney Morning Herald on Wed 20 Jan 1892, p. 4, i.e. 50 years prior to B.T. Dowd's publication, a statement rectifying confusion in naming of the highest peaks of the Snowy Mountains caused by van Lendenfeld's mistake. Halliday's and Dowd's findings are consistent. Halliday also wrote: *shortly after my visit in February last a trigonometrical station mark " M " was placed on its summit in connection with the NSW survey, this mark, as usual, is a cairn of stones, surmounted by a black circle or ball, formed of*

Following Strzelecki's report [S2] in 1840 on his and Macarthur's expedition from Sydney to Melbourne, including his ascent and naming of the highest peak in Australia, the colonial authorities started related bureaucratic procedures. The Colonial Secretary, in his letter of the 23 February 1841, ordered the Surveyor-General to have a copy taken of Strzelecki's original route plan of his visit to Western Port to be kept for record purposes by the Surveyor-General. The inclusion of the documentation was acknowledged. However, the large scale used by Strzelecki on his maps made identification of the exact position of Mt Kosciusko uncertain. His report, however, clearly stated: he named the highest mountain within the range of Australian Alps.

In the years 1846-47 the Surveyor Thomas Townsend was conducting an official survey of the Australian Alps. His maps show that, during this survey, he was present on Mt Kosciusko, but at that time he had not yet placed this name on his maps. He named the main range of Snowy Mountains, on these maps, the Bald Mountains, and recorded only two summits: Bull's Peaks and The Ram's Head.

In 1851 Townsend, created the first official map of the Selwyn County in Victoria. This was the same surveyor who, five years earlier, was on Mt Kosciusko and was probably the first person on the mountain since Strzelecki conquered and named it. On his plan of the Selwyn region, Townsend placed the name *Mt Kosciusko* correctly next to the peak that carries the name until this day. Hence, from 1851 on, the name "Mt Kosciusko" was accepted as being valid by the colony's authorities.

In 1851, pastor W.B. Clarke, who was a well-known scholar, visited the Snowy Mountains. Clarke published a book, "*Southern Gold Deposits in New South Wales*", together with a map on which he placed the label *Mt Kosciusko*. However, the scale of the map was also too large to accurately identify the location of the mountain.

The first official map of the county of Wallace in New South Wales was published in 1860. On this map, the designation *Mt Kosciuszko* is placed precisely in the same location where we have *Mt Kosciuszko* today. Both Selwyn's and Wallace's maps, from that time onwards, have always shown and still show the precise location of the mountain and there are no traces of any swap of name of the summit of Mt Kosciuszko with any other peak, as incorrectly claimed by many popular sources even to this day.

An important event took place in 1870, in relation to the triangulation conducted by the administration of Victoria near the border of Victoria with New South Wales. The Survey Department of Victoria created a map at that time, in which the name of Mt Kosciusko was placed in a different location than had been the case on the maps of Selwyn and Wallace. An Austrian explorer, von Lendenfeld, who used these incorrect maps in 1885 while exploring Australian Alps, claimed that this peak was locally called Mueller's Peak, after Baron von Mueller, who visited the Snowy Mountains about 1853, then again several years later. On the map submitted by von Lendenfeld to the Department of Land of New South Wales, he used the name *Mt Kosciusko (Ramshead)*. Nonetheless, the summit of *Mt Kosciusko*, according to the

iron sheets. The hill, therefore, can now be readily identified. Link: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/13859020>

Selwyn's and Wallace's maps, is located 2 ¼ miles to the southeast from the summit assigned this name by von Lendenfeld. From 1892 on, the summit thus labelled on von Lendenfeld's map has been officially called Mt Townsend, although Townsend, himself, most probably never stepped foot on it. There was never any swap of names of Mt Kosciusko and Mt Townsend as incorrectly claimed to this day by numerous internet sources. The incorrect story about swapping names of the two highest peaks of Australian Alps have spread even to Poland.

Von Lendenfeld gained his place in the annals of the Australian Alps history as the person who created a large stir by calling himself the discoverer of the highest peak on the Australian continent. Von Lendenfeld explored the Snowy Mountains guided by a hired local pastoralist, James S Spencer. Actually, they repeated the route that Strzelecki and Macarthur had traversed 45 years prior to them. Via Hannells Spur they ascended the summit that is currently called Mt Townsend. Then von Lendenfeld, as Strzelecki did previously, discovered that the neighbouring summit was slightly higher. Alas, von Lendenfeld was misled by his inaccurate map, created by the Victorian authorities, about which we have written earlier. On this erroneous map, the peak, on which von Lendenfeld stood with Spencer, bore the name *Mt Kosciuszko*. Moreover, according to von Lendenfeld, the peak was by the locals supposedly called Mueller's Peak. And so, based on his erroneous map, von Lendenfeld claimed that it was not Mt Kosciuszko that was the highest peak, because he believed that he was just standing on *Mt Kosciuszko*, and that the highest was a neighbouring peak, 2 ¼ miles to the southeast and separated from them by a valley.

Satisfied by his discovery, von Lendenfeld, immediately prepared an official report [L1] on his findings, which he addressed to the Hon *J.P. Abbott, M.P. Minister of Mines*, with the date 21 January 1885. He also notified the press about having discovered the highest peak in Australia and naming it Mt Townsend. Unexpectedly, this initiated a sharp riposte from his guide Spencer. Spencer wrote a letter [S6] to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, published on the 25th February 1885, in which he caustically protested against von Lendenfeld's pretensions to primacy in the discovery of Australia's highest peak. Spencer wrote as von Lendenfeld's guide, that he led him up to all of the summits and unambiguously told him that these summits had been visited many times not only by himself, but also by his sons and others. Spencer had pastured thousands of his sheep on these mountains for a three-month stint, however, the season was too short to suit his requirements. He had also traversed these mountains guiding Mr Adams, the Surveyor General, with his daughter, and with Mr A.C. Betts, the District Surveyor of Cooma. He was infuriated that von Lendenfeld, 45 years after Strzelecki, had attributed to himself the rights of primacy. In his letter, Spencer, similarly to von Lendenfeld, used the names on the erroneous Victorian map, which was used by von Lendenfeld.

A closer analysis of the submitted report proved that Lendenfeld was mistaken. The mayhem resulted in the name Mt Townsend proposed by von Lendenfeld for the highest peak in Australia, being assigned to the still officially unnamed at that time summit from which both Strzelecki and Lendenfeld, 45 years later, identified the highest peak known, from 1840, as Mt Kosciusko. Von Lendenfeld did not want to reconcile himself with this verdict and kept writing spacious articles to the press, which Dowd [D2, annotation on p. 104] commented on, averring that von Lendenfeld constantly shifted the soil under the tallest peaks. Von Lendenfeld's supporters interpreted this as changing the names of the peaks, and this myth is still being propagated now. In reality there was never any swap of names.

Speculation, regarding the conferring of the name of Mt Kosciuszko on Australia's highest peak and Strzelecki's ascent on this mountain, did not cease even with the end of the von Lendenfeld affair, nor did it end with the discovery and publication of Macarthur's notes.

In 1969, the authors of the work [J1] came to the conclusion that the first to conquer the highest peak of the continent was Dr John Lhotsky, a Czech from Galicia [K1]. Lhotsky was a fairly controversial personage, in contention with his whole milieu. In Australia he conducted geological and ecological surveys from 1832 to 1838. In 1834, he journeyed from Sydney to the Australian Alps. The crowning glory of this was the conquest and naming of *Mt King William IV*, the tallest peak theretofore ascended by a European explorer. Andrews [A5], after a meticulous analysis of Lhotsky's route, came to the conclusion that *Mt King William IV* equates with present day Mt Terrible and that Lhotsky himself never even came close to Mt Kosciuszko.

Several later publications: [S7, p. 50], [B1, p. 53], as well as [T1, p. 88] undermine the determinations of Daley and Clews, analysing the imprecision of Strzelecki's descriptions and searching for arguments to justify the naming by Lendenfeld. Bergman [B1] and the Teichmanns [T1] even suggest that Strzelecki confused the Kosciuszko Mound with the Royal Castle Wawel Hill in Cracow, however such an absurd idea can only be held by people for whom Polish history and culture is a stack of blocks without interconnection or meaning. Let us recall that Strzelecki spent some period of time in Cracow [P1, pp. 13, 19], being already curious about the world intelligent teenager. Thus such confusion should be decidedly ruled out.⁵

In reply to the Teichmanns' article, Andrews [A4] expounded a suggestion that Strzelecki and Macarthur were not on Mt Townsend, but on the neighbouring summit, closer to Mt Kosciuszko and 50 metres shorter, nowadays known as the Abbott Peak. From the Abbott Peak the views of Mt Kosciuszko better align with the descriptions by Macarthur and Strzelecki. However Rygielski [R1] and Teichmanns [T1, p. 56] argue that from the Abbott Peak, not knowing the exact distances to Mt Kosciuszko and Mt Townsend, it is not possible to determine which is higher.⁶

The writer of these words, believes that, on the basis of the presently available information, Strzelecki and Macarthur were on Mount Townsend, but that, to get there, they had to pass, or

⁵ We recall that Strzelecki in his report wrote *the tumulus elevated in Krakow over the tomb of the patriot Kosciuszko*. The Kosciuszko Mound was founded as a symbolic tomb of Kosciuszko. The Senate of the Republic of Cracow in its resolution of 19/07/1820 decided to raise a **symbolic tomb** as a monument to Kościuszko from home soil and native rocks, in tune with other mounds in this city, Krak and Wanda's.. <http://kopieckosciuszki.pl/en/historia-kopca-kosciuszki> No tumulus ever was elevated over the Wawel Castle, where the coffin of Tadeusz Kosciuszko was placed in June 1818.

⁶ Let us note that from the Abbott Peak one can visually estimate that Mt Kosciuszko is about 2.5-3 times more distant than Mt Townsend. Using this rough estimate and knowing the angles from the Abbott to both these peaks, 1.6 and 2.9 degrees, respectively, one can easily come to the conclusion (as $2.5 \cdot 1.6 = 4.0 > 2.9$) that Mt Kosciuszko is higher than Mt Townsend. Hence, Teichmans and Rygielski's arguments cannot be considered as revealing a gap in the Andrews' theory.

at least get close to the Abbott Peak. The impressive views from Abbott remained in the memories of both Strzelecki and Macarthur, however, during the later recounting and writing about the conquest and naming of the mountain they were not as precise as historians would expect. Their memories may have deceived them, because they wrote both their notes and reports quite some time later. Von Ledendenfeld's writings and reporting are as well inaccurate to the extent that his reports were described as *shifting soil beneath mountains*.

From Mt Kosciusko to Mt Kosciuszko

Australia's administration, despite the controversies, remained in the position that the clearly formulated will of Strzelecki should be respected; in particular that the highest peak of the continent bear the name Kosciuszko. In Australia, knowledge about Tadeusz Kosciuszko is far from extensive. When the so called *Solidarity wave* of well educated immigrants began arriving in the 1980's, more and more voices began to note that the correct Polish spelling is Mt Kosciuszko and not Mt Kosciusko.

We need to recall here briefly the history of the campaign to correct the spelling of the name of the mountain through the addition of the letter "z". There were many initiators of such a change. There were individual petitions; as for example the petition of Mr Karol Murawski from Cooma, called Mr "Z", presented as far back as 1993. For over twenty years, Edward Gough Whitlam blamed the Australian bureaucrats for the mistake embarrassing Australia, through the omission of the "z" in the mountain's name. In 1997, while assessing the issue of a change in the name, the New South Wales Geographical Names Board considered over two hundred petitions. However, it seems that the deciding factor here was a great press campaign, strongly supported by the then Polish Ambassador, Ms Agnieszka Morawińska. A letter supporting the change was also sent by the then President of Poland, Aleksander Kwaśniewski. With support from the Kosciuszko Committee, formed on the Gold Coast by Marian Szuszkiewicz-Landis and such influential people as the former Prime Minister of Australia, Edward Gough Whitlam and the renowned Australian diplomat, Richard Broinowski, then serving as the Australian Ambassador to Mexico, the addition of the "z" to the original spelling of "Mt Kosciusko" was finally achieved [M3]. This happened on the 200th anniversary of the birthday of Sir Paul Edmund Strzelecki. The deciding argument was the acknowledgement that Strzelecki, himself, in his letter to Adina describing the discovery and naming of the mountain used the term "Mt Kosciuszko". However, the Polish spelling of the name, which some of the petitioners also suggested by replacing the first "s" to a soft "ś" was not approved [M4]. The Polish Diaspora, or at least those who had postulated such a change in the name were ecstatic at their "victory". However was this campaign really reasonable? We, Poles, do polonise foreign terms and names as well, should we not then tolerate such practices by others?

Ngarigo, the traditional custodians of Mt Kosciuszko

Eventually we have to write about the indigenous peoples of Australia, the Aborigines. Did the local tribes have some sort of name for this highest peak of the continent? Did this mountain have a special meaning for them?

There were two native participants in Strzelecki and Macarthur's expedition, Charlie Tara and Jacky. However, they were not indigenous to the locality of Mt Kosciuszko. The Australian Alps are situated in the land called Monaro, the Snowy Mountains themselves were called Muniang,

although the term Muniang could also refer to an individual mountain “white” with snow. The tribe inhabiting the vicinity of Mt Kosciuszko for thousands of years was Ngarigo.

Things have changed during the colonial times. The Australian authorities tended to resettle local people as the resettlement has proved such an effective method of establishing the new “power”. Congruent with this are the waves of settlers taking over these new, for them, territories. Conflicts and animosities arise naturally between the “newcomers” and the indigenous. The administrators, employing their “natural” authority, can then intervene to settle disputes and strengthening their unassailable prestige. To put it short, most of the Ngarigo no longer live on their traditional lands.

Luckily for them, the colonial days have passed and given way to more conducive trends, which actively include indigenous peoples in modern society. Both Kosciuszko and Strzelecki would have been thrilled by such changes, considering that both were greatly opposed to slavery and social inequity.

The first aboriginal voice demanding a name change for the mountain to “something more aboriginal” emerged in 2000, when the Mayor of Tumberumba, a town at the foot of Mt Kosciuszko, proclaimed this demand on the summit of Mt Kosciuszko in the presence of politicians and the then president of the Polish Community Council of Australia, Janusz Rygielski. Protests arose, the Polish organisation in Western Australia, Mt Kosciuszko, organised a press plebiscite in which over 90% of respondents voted to retain the current name.

However, a delicate situation emerged: it is certain that both Kosciuszko and Strzelecki would have supported the aboriginal position; the Aborigines had barely survived the colonial invasion and so much had been stolen from them. Yet, on the wave of voices pushing towards restoring native rights, these native people requested changing the name of the mountain knowing nothing about who Tadeusz Kosciuszko was, or of his stance on slavery, of his famous Last Will, or about his strong support for equality. As we have seen, there are many adversaries to the name of Mt Kosciuszko. It is quite easy searching the internet to find incorrect information: that the names of Mt Townsend and Mt Kosciuszko have been swapped or that the aboriginal name of the mountain is Targangil⁷. What could be simpler than to antagonise relations between the Aborigines and the Polish Diaspora? Previous attempts to change the name proved unsuccessful, so the new idea was to let the indigenous population do it themselves. This act could be considered as a step showing departure from the colonial practices and simultaneously would deprive them of links with Kosciuszko as a proponent of native people or even their patron.

Thus Kosciuszko Heritage Inc. undertook the challenge to approach and befriend the indigenous people, the traditional custodians of Mt Kosciuszko. In 2007, thanks to the invaluable support from David Darlington, the then Manager of the Kosciuszko National Park, a process of building mutual confidence was inaugurated.

⁷ A.E.J. Andrews, the author of the monograph [A1] on the history of Mt Kosciuszko asserts in [6] that there was no indigenous name of Mt Kosciuszko. The name Targangil first appeared in the Spencer’s letter [S6] and definitely refers to Mt Townsend, cf. [D2].

However the 200th anniversary of the death of Tadeusz Kosciuszko under the auspices of UNESCO, was a real breakthrough. Invitation from the Kosciuszko Mound Committee turned out to be a milestone in building the friendship between the Polish Diaspora, Poland and Ngarigo. It was a great privilege that we were able to show our Australian Friends just who Tadeusz Kosciuszko was, what sort of international reputation he enjoys, and that was a step forward that they can truly consider him as their own Champion and Friend. It was invaluable that, after crossing the barriers of suspicion, there appeared a chance of mutual dialogue, of mutual trust, and an idea how together we can care for the mountain and how to promote Kosciuszko's values on a broader scale. This new friendship not only brings closer the two earthly Kosciuszko monuments, but it also stands for yet another symbolic monument of Kosciuszko.

Will there be a change in the name of the mountain, as Polish journalists have enquired? We will see, it is too early to tell. The most important point is that both sides respect each other, that they both continue to learn about each other, and that both acknowledge that Tadeusz Kosciuszko is the Friend of All Humanity, as General Lafayette stated in his funeral speech.

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