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It would appear that the origins of our State names would be well-established facts; however, when an attempt is made to trace these origins, they are found to be quite elusive and controversial. In most instances, loose translations are offered as an explanation for the meaning of the original word; this is especially true for State names of Indian origin. Some of the following information is quoted, and some is a composite of ideas and opinions expressed by several authorities. Among the authorities from which parts of the material were gathered are State historical societies, the Bureau of American Ethnology, college and university departments of history, and individual researchers.

A State that many have never heard of -the State of Franklin was named for Benjamin Franklin. In 1784, Franklin was a part of North Carolina's western territory, a part of the grant of Charles II. It broke away from the original territory and elected a legislature' and a governor. For about three years, the two factions were nearly at war. Congress was petitioned by the newly formed State and asked for recognition, but this was not granted. Franklin was ceded to the Federal government in 1790, became the State of Tennessee in 1796, and was admitted to the Union.

Following are the 50 States' names, listed alphabetically, with brief explanations of their origins:

**ALABAMA**: From an Indian tribe of the Creek Confederacy originally called the Alabamas or Alibamons, who in turn gave the name to a river from which the State name was derived.

**ALASKA**: From Eskimo word "alakshak", meaning peninsula; also said to mean "great lands."

**ARIZONA**: Many authorities attribute the meaning to a word meaning arid zone or desert. Others claim the name is Aztec, from "arizuma" meaning "silver bearing." Still another version: attributes the origin to the Papagos tribe of the Southwest, wruc named it from the locality in which they lived called Arizonac, meaning "site of the small springs" (lack of water). This place was near the present town of Nogales, and in the early 1700's, silver ..was discovered near here, which gives some credence to the Aztec word "arizuma."

**ARKANSAS**.: Origin uncertain. As usual with words of Indian origin, there are various spellings for this State name, among them Alkansia, Alkansas, and Akamsea. The word, according to some, is of Algonquin origin, and the meaning is unknown. Others say that Arkansas is a French version of "Kansas, a Sioux Indian name for "south wind people."

**CALIFORNIA**: Generally agreed that Cortez first applied the name, the origin is traced to the name of an imaginary island in an old Spanish romance written by Montalvo in 1510. The island is described as an earthly paradise, abundant with gold and precious gems.

**COLORADO**: Presumably named from the river bearing the name, although only tributaries flow through the State. Other theories are that it might have come from the Spanish word meaning "rad" or "ruddy," describing the color of the stream in various places or the red earth found in some areas.

**CONNECTICUT**: Appears to be a derivation of the Indian word "Quonoktacut" (also Quonecktacut) , interpreted by some to mean "river whose water is driven in waves by tides O:c:" winds." Other interpretations include "long river," "the long ({without end) river," and "long river place."

**DELAWARE**: Named for Lord De La Warr, first governor and captain-general of Virginia, who in 1630 explored the bay and river area where his name was first applied.

**FLORIDA**: In 1513, Ponce de Leon landed here on Easter Sunday, the Spanish Pascua de Flores, meaning "Feast of Flowers," for which the State is named.

**GEORGIA**.: Named by and for King George II of England. The colony bore this name in the charter granted by the king to General James Oglethorpe, colonial administrator, in 1732.

**HAWAII**: English spelling of Owhyhee, possibly from a native word meaning "homeland."

**IDAHO**: Origin uncertain. Some claim it to sterol from an Indian word of unknown meaning, while others claim the mean1img "gem of the mountains," which properly describes the State especially because Indian translations quite often referred to natural features of surrounding country. Another claim is the Shoshone translation of "Edah hoe," or "light on the mountains."

**ILLINOIS**: From the Illini Indian word meaning "men" or "warriors," supplemented by the French adjective ending "ois.."

**INDIANA**: Presumably named from the fact that the land lying along the Ohio River was purchased from the Indians. Others claim it was named for the Indian tribes who settled in western Pennsylvania.

**IOWA**: From an Indian tribe, "Ah-hee-oo-ba," meaning "sleepy ones" or "drowsy ones." They lived in the valley of the State's principal river, which they named for their tribe; and, in turn, the name was applied to the State.

**KANSAS**: Named for the Kansas or Kanza tribe of the Sioux family that lived along a river in the area and gave it the tribal name. The name translates as "south wind people," or "wind people."

**KENTUCKY**: Origin and meaning controversial. Pioneer George Rogers Clark claimed the name was derived from the Indian word "Kentake," meaning "meadow land." The claim is also made that it stems from the Shawnee word meaning "at the head of a river" inasmuch as they used the Kentucky River in traveling throughout the area. It is also claimed to stem from the Wyandot word "Ken-tah-ten," meaning "land of tomorrow."

**LOUISIANA**: Named in honor of Louis XIV of France. First used in 1683 by the French explorer, Rene Robert Cavelier de La Salle, and was applied to the territory- encompassing the drainage basin of the Mississippi and its tributaries.

**MAINE**: Two versions: One is that it was so called by early explorers after the private estate of Henrietta Maria in Maine, a French province; the other attributes it to fishermen of the islands along the coast who referred to it as the main or mainland, often spelled "Maynland" in some early documents. In a grant to Sir Fernando Gorges by Charles I in 1639, it is referred to as "the province or county of Mayne."

**MARYLAND**: Named for Queen Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I of England.

**MASSACHUSETTS**: First of the States to have an Indian name. From the Algonquin word "Massadchu-es-et," meaning "great-hill-small-place," possibly for the hills around Boston as seen from the bay."

**MICHIGAN**.: From Algonquin word "Mishigamaw," meaning "big lake" or "great water," deriving its name from the lake of the same name. Also said to be from "Michi" meaning "great" and "Gama" meaning "water."

**MINNESOTA**: From Sioux word meaning "cloudy water" or "sky-tinted water," deriving its name from the river of the same name.

**MISSISSIPPI**: Meaning "great river" or "gathering-in of all the waters," sometimes referred to as the "father of waters," indicating that the Indians were aware of the immensity of the river. First written by Tonti as "Michi Sepe."

**MISSOURI**: An Indian tribal name denoting "muddy water" and named for the large river.

**MONTANA**: Controversial from the standpoint of whether the name is Spanish or Latin, but quite descriptive; it means "mountainous."

**NEBRASKA**: From Sioux word describing the river from which the State gets its name, meaning "shallow water" or "broad water." Also said to be an Otos Indian word meaning "flat river," referring to the Platte River.

**NEVADA**: From the Spanish word meaning "snow-clad," "snowy land," or "snowy" - descriptive of the snow-clad mountains of the area.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**: Named in 1629 by John Mason for the English county of Hampshire.

**NEW JERSEY**: Named for the Isle of Jersey off the coast of England by George Carteret, who settled in this area after receiving it in a grant from the Duke of York.

**NEW MEXICO**: Called "New Mexico" when the Mexicans referred to the territory north and west of the Rio Grande in the 16th century. May have been derived from the name of the Aztec war god, "Mexitli" still another interpretation is that it means "habitation of the god of war."

**NEW YORK**: Originally called New Netherlands, but changed in 1664 when taken over by the English and named in honor of the Duke of York.

**NORTH CAROLINA**: In the early 1600's, the area was referred to in some English papers as Carolina and was thought to be named for Charles I of England. Later, about 1663, the name Carolina was definitely applied by those who had received a grant to the land from Charles II, and so it was named in his honor.

**NORTH DAKOTA**: From Indian name meaning "allies. "' Indian form is - Lakota, Nakota, Lahkota, or Dakota, depending on dialect. "Allies" was used to signify the common name of the confederated Sioux tribes.

**OHIO**: Iroquois Indian word meaning the river of the same name. "beautiful river," taken from the river

of the same name.

**OKLAHOMA**: Choctaw Indian word meaning “red people."

**OREGON**: One theory is that the name is derived from "origanum," a species of wild sage which grows abundantly on the coast of Oregon; another, that it stems from the Spanish "Oregones," which referred to the Indian tribes inhabiting the region and meant "big-eared men." Joaquin Miller, poet of the Sierras" gave another version - that the name came from the Spanish "alura agua" meaning "gently falling waters."

**PENNSYLVANIA**: This is the only State in the Union named for its founder, William Penn, who wanted to call it "Sylvania" because of the extensive forest areas.

**RHODE ISLAND**: Originally called "Roode Eylandt'" by the Dutch Navigator Adrian Block (for whom Block Island was named), presumably from the redness of the clay in the area along the shore. Name was later anglicized to Rhode Island. Also said to have been named from the Island of Rhodes in the Mediterranean, but several historians give this little or no support.

**SOUTH CAROLINA**: Named for Charles II of England, the same as its sister State, North Carolina. (See North Carolina.)

**SOUTH DAKOTA**: From Sioux Indian name meaning “allies.” (See North Dakota.)

**TENNESSEE**: Name is of Cherokee origin from a tribe located at a village site called Tanasse (also spelled Tennese). The State is named for its principal river, which has been interpreted as meaning "bend in the river." However, this has not been substantiated, and the meaning is considered to be lost.

**TEXAS**.: The generally accepted version is that the name is an Indian word "tejas," meaning "friends" or "allies."

**UTAH**: Name taken from the Ute Indians who inhabited that region, but origin of the word is unknown.

**VERMONT**: Named by Samuel de Champlain (the famous lake's namesake) for the Green Mountains (Vert Mont), a range which is one of the outstanding features in the State.

**VIRGINIA**: Named by Sir Walter Raleigh for Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen of England.

**WASHINGTON**: May be said to have a truly American name - named for George Washington, "The Father of our Country." When the bill creating the Territory of Columbia was introduced in the 32nd Congress, the name was changed to Washington because of the existence of the District of Columbia.

**WEST VIRGINIA**: Originally a part of Virginia. When the western counties left Virginia (rejecting secession), they retained a portion of the original name. It was suggested that it be named "Kanawha," an Indian name and the name of one of its principal rivers, but this was not adopted.

**WISCONSIN**: From an Indian name whose meaning is uncertain. Named after its principal river and said to mean "wild rushing channel;" also refers to "holes in the banks of a stream in which birds nest." Spelled Ouisconsin and Misconsing by early chroniclers.

**WYOMING**.: Name has more than one meaning as interpreted by different authorities. One meaning is

"extensive plains" (from the Delaware or Leni-Lenape word "maugh-wau-wama"). Another interpretation suggests that the name means "mountains with valleys alternating."

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