



A Socio-Linguistic Investigation into the Etymology of American State Names

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to determine the semantic and etymological roots of the fifty names of the American states. It examines the etymology of these names and seeks to explain the sociolinguistic aspects that contributed to their development. Moreover, it unearths the origins of the original inhabitants of these states, respectively, taking into account the fundamental roles that language and culture played in the naming process. This research article is therefore qualitative and descriptive in essence and depends greatly on consultation with etymological authorities. For example, it referred to official information available on the websites of the respective states in order to access important details related to the development of the naming process. Collected data were analyzed and collected primarily within the framework of past and present mainstream theories of etymology. In addition, this study was undertaken with a view towards providing the most logical and reasonable explanations for states' names. It concluded that all fifty states have acquired their names from a diverse assortment of languages. For example, twenty-four of the states come from languages indigenous to the Americas and one comes from Hawaiian. Eight states' names are derived from Algonquian languages; seven states' names are derived from Siouan languages; three states' names are derived from Iroquoian languages; one state derives its name from a Uto-Aztecan language and five states derive their names from other languages indigenous to the Americas. Twenty-two of the other states derive their names from languages of Europe; seven states derive their names from Latin; five states derive their names from English; five states derive their names from Spanish and four states derive their names from French. The origins of the names of six states are contested: Rhode Island, Oregon, Maine, Idaho, Hawaii and Arizona. Eleven states are named after individuals. For example, seven states are named after queens and kings. These include North and South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia, Georgia, Louisiana and Maryland. Interestingly, only one state was named after a president - Washington.

Keywords: American state names, etymology, sociolinguistics, historio-linguistics, name coinage

1. Introduction

1.1 Definition of Etymology

The term *etymology* refers to word history, origins and the historical formation of word meanings. A word's etymology, therefore, refers to a specific word origin. Moreover, etymology involves accounting for the chronological development of words or aspects of words while tracing their shared usage between diverse languages over time. In other words, etymology involves the study of historio-linguistic development as made manifest in particular words. The term *etymology* itself originates in the Greek term *etimos*, which stands for true or real. *Ology* refers to the science or study of a particular subject; for example, as found in the subjects zoology or astrology. This brief description describes, therefore, the etymology of the term *etymology*, pointing to its broad definition as signifying the study of the roots of words in light of their historio-linguistic evolution. Another example is provided in the following: in Ancient Greek, the term *hippos* refers to 'horse' and *potamus* refers to 'river'; the term hippopotamus, therefore, signifies a 'river horse'. Other elements of words originating from Ancient Greek include *tele*, *micro*, *phone* and *scope*; *tele* means 'long distance'; *micro* means 'small'; *phone* means 'speak' and *scope* means 'look'. Here we see the origins of the terms telescope, microscope, microphone and telephone (Liddell & Scott, 1940). The fact that not all English terms derive from Ancient Greek, however, is what makes the study of the origins of English words intriguing. Those who study the origins of words rely on examinations of languages' historical writings as well as original texts. More specifically, they attempt to decipher and approximate the exact times in which certain words were made available and put to use. When etymologists lack readily available information on language history, they employ the method of comparative-linguistics to fill in whatever gaps there might be with regard to the respective language construction. Then, by examining similar languages through this method, etymologists can discover similarities between the language at hand and its vocabulary.

This method is that by which word origins are traced to their original sources - for example, the Indo-European source. Regardless of the fact that philology gave rise to the etymological tradition, much of the research that is done today is related to language-families such as Austronesian and Uralic that fail to bring with them earlier documentation .

1.2 Word Origin Types

Theories of etymology assert that the origins of words come from only a few outlets - those being 'compounding' and 'derivation', borrowing 'loanwords' from others, 'symbolism' and 'onomatopoeia'. Time plays an important role in this process given that although word origins are often readily known at first, over time they become less known due to changes in their semantics (Bauer, 1983). For example, as a result of semantic changes over time, the word 'sit' in English has its root in the word 'set' in English, 'set' here serving as the causative formation of 'sit'. A less clear example is the fact that the English word 'bless' is a causative formation of the English word 'blood'. In fact, 'bless' originally meant to mark or cover with blood.

1.3 History

While modern conceptions of the evolution of languages and the relationships thereof began quite recently - in the eighteenth century to be exact - the search for the origins of words dates back much further. Throughout time, original etymological understandings had in fact adapted to modern demands.

There is no doubt that any study of the etymology of words and origins of names should take in consideration different phenomena including contact between languages and borrowing from one language into another. These issues are also very interrelated and interconnected with social and cultural factors relevant to people who belong to certain speech communities. All of these issues together are extremely important for the study of etymology in terms of American state names. Therefore, this particular study cannot ignore the salient historical and socio-linguistic role played by language contact in relation to culture and society. The social and linguistic history of the United States of America becomes so important in order for us to understand how the American states got their names. Different historians and socio-linguistic scholars dealt with this particular issue during the past several centuries of American history. Such scholars include (Mithun, 1999 & Campbell, 1997), for example. These two scholars were among the most popular and authoritative to conduct thorough investigations into the etymological history of languages in North America. Their research in this particular area was considered as a primary source of information for purposes of this study.

2. Purpose

This research article aims at examining the development and etymology of the names of the American states. Moreover, it emphasizes their sociolinguistic development at the backdrop of the etymological and semantic features of the names and in light of how the names came into being.

3. Methodology

This research article is qualitative and descriptive in that it relies heavily on a theoretical examination of the American states' names origins. The authors of this article seek to rely heavily on prominent etymological theories. In addition, the information made available on each state's official website will be looked at in order to provide informative specifics in relation to each respective state. Data collected will then be analyzed, classified and compiled in accordance with such methods. More specifically, all states names will be listed alphabetically and the most accurate data will be made available under each name. Emphasis will be given to the linguistic origins of each name in order to delineate potential commonalities.

4. Limitations

This research article is limited to examining the semantic and etymological roots of the names of the American states. It examines these factors solely within the framework of the sociolinguistic process that defined the respective states names. In addition, it clarifies who the original settlers of each of the fifty states are in order to delineate their cultural and linguistic role in relation to each of the states' names.

5. Discussion

The following is a discussion of the etymology of the names of the American states based on all of the best available sociolinguistic data. Such data was collected from etymological theorists and official sources and documents such as dictionaries of etymologies (Douglas, 2014), historio-linguistic sources (Pulju, 1991 & Campbell, 2004), encyclopedias (Frawley, 2004 & Crystal, 1997) and the official websites of the respective states. As Robert Louis Stevenson rightfully asserts, "There is no part of the world, where nomenclature is so rich, poetical, humorous and picturesque as in the United States of America" (Mencken, 1921).

5.1 Alabama

Alabama's state name origin has been much contested among etymologists. Its original inhabitants were a southern Native American tribe who had lived in what is now the central part of Alabama. A river in the state had first been named 'Alabama' then the state itself was named after the river. Early British, French and Spanish observers spelled the state's name differently from the onset; for example, it had been spelled in all of the following manners at one point: Allibamou, Alabamu, Alibamon, Alibamou, Alibama, Alebamon, Albama and Alabama. The state name originally occurred in three chronicles of de Soto's 1540 expedition; de la Vega had written the state name as 'Alibamo', the Knight of Elvas had written the state name as Alibamu and Ranjel had written the state name as Limamau in accordance with common practice of Native American languages at the time. As chronicled by these observers, however, the state name originally referred to a Chickasaw subdivision rather than the state of Alabama as it is today.

Although it is widely believed that 'Alabama' originated in the works of Meek, the fact of the matter is that its use can be traced back to an 1842 issue of the Republican. Wright traced the name Alabama to origins referring to forest clearers, with *alba* indicating vegetative mass that was large and *amo* indicating a gathering or collecting of such vegetative mass.

5.2 Alaska

The name 'Alaska' originates from the word *alaxsxaq*, which is Yupik and refers to the land mass that sits in front of the sea. Russia, having been the first people from Europe to travel to Alaska, originally spelled the state's name 'Alysaka'. Obviously, when the Russians sold Alaska to the United States of America, the name underwent only a small change (Ransom, 1940).

5.3 Arizona

Arizona was originally called so by the Spanish who rooted the word in the Basque term *arizonac*, which stood for 'oak'. It is interesting that the Spanish used a Basque word to refer to the state because at the time it was part of Mexico at the time. Nonetheless, the name is probably of Native American origins - perhaps of Pima origin more specifically - referring to a land with little water.

5.4 Arkansas

French travelers of the seventeenth century came into contact with indigenous folks of the Mississippi delta that referred to each other as the *Ugakhpa* or people from downstream. The French, on the other hand, decided to spell this name as Quapaw, which would eventually become the official spelling of the name of Dhegihan Siouan origin. Interestingly, those that accompanied the French travellers called the Quapaw *Akansa* which mean people of the wind. Pike, in 1811, would later change the name to Arkansaw. Some, however, later chose to adopt the French spelling with the addition of an 's' at the end. This gave the name a similarity to that of 'Kansas'. It was not until the state's GA later decided to pronounce the name arkensaw with a silent 's' while spelling the state name 'Arkansas'.

5.5 California

The state name 'California' originated in de Montalvo's usage in 1510 referring to an island west of the Indies populated by dark women. More specifically, it gets its origins from the roots *forn* and *cali* meaning 'hot oven'. Missionaries from Spain also referred to the area as such.

5.6 Colorado

Colorado, having been decided upon by Congress in 1861, means 'colorful' or 'colored' in Spanish.

5.7 Connecticut

The Native American tribe the 'Mohicans' named the main river in Connecticut; the state itself was then named after the river. In the Mohicans' native language, the word refers to the area next to the river.

5.8 Delaware

The Delaware Bay and the Delaware River played a key role in naming the state. They were both named after West. Even the Native American tribes in the state were named by English colonizers. The tribe was originally the 'Lenape' tribe.

5.9 Florida

The state name 'Florida' originates in a Spanish reference to the season of Easter, which means 'flower feast'.

5.10 Georgia

The state name 'Georgia' was named after George II of England. Its original settlers were from prison in London who had owed great amounts of debts. As a result of approval for their settlement, the settlers named the colony after the king after travelling up the Savannah River.

5.11 Hawaii

Though there is a lack of evidence with regard to the origins of the state name 'Hawaii', some researchers claim that it was named after its original discoverer. Other researchers claim that it refers to the biggest island. Cook even called Hawaii the Sandwich Islands at one point. Nonetheless, the state name of 'Hawaii' is much contested.

5.12 Idaho

The state name Idaho originated from the Kiowa-Apache term *idaahe* which meant 'enemy'. This was the name that the Kiowa tribe gave the Comanche tribe after they met with them in Colorado and their resulted a territory dispute which shortly turned into a battle thereafter. It was first used to refer to Idaho as a state (as opposed to its previous usage referring to Idaho Springs) in 1863.

5.13 Illinois

French travellers originally named the state river Illinois. The state itself was subsequently named Illinois after the river. The river was named originally after the Illiniwek tribal peoples.

5.14 Indiana

Originally formed out of the Northwest Territory in 1800, this state name means the area of the Indians. It was named by Congress and in 1816 officially became part of the Union.

5.15 Iowa

Originally a Dakota Sioux term referring to the Iowa tribe (the indigenous inhabitants of the land) and meaning those who are sleepy, the state name was given to the territory that is now Iowa in 1879. Interestingly, the tribe Iowa reverts to a traditional story of a time in which strong winds covered their faces with ash, lending them the name gray-head.

5.16 Kansas

Like some previously-mentioned states, this state itself was named after a river that was named Kansas before it. In fact, the river was called Kaw after the indigenous peoples of the land. This same tribe had been previously referred to as the Kanza - hence, the name Kansas.

5.17 Kentucky

Similarly, the state name Kentucky itself was named after the state's main river, the Kentucky River. Though the river's name origin is debated, some trace it to Iroquoian roots referring to a meadow, an Algonquian term referring to the bottom of a river and a Shawnee term meaning the head of a river. It is most widely believed, however, to be rooted in the Iroquoian word *kentahteh* which means the next day.

5.18 Louisiana

Louisiana was named after King Louis XIV. Though it took its name in 1682, its original settlement was founded by a Canadian named d'Iberville in Fort Maurepas. Fort Maurepas is near modern-day Biloxi.

5.19 Maine

Maine is perhaps the most disputed state name. Its origins are practically unknown. All that is known about it is that after much debate, King Charles demanded that the state be called 'Mayne' and nothing else.

20. Maryland

After passing away in 1632, George Calvert's wish for a new charter for Maryland was granted to his son Caecilius. The state name 'Maryland' was named after Maria, Charles I's Queen Consort.

5.21 Massachusetts

Referring to the Great Blue Hills near Milton, Massachusetts, this state name referred to the indigenous Massachusett tribe. Some argue, however, that the Great Blue Hills was originally called Arrowhead Hill.

5.22 Michigan

Meaning big or great lake, this state was named after its main lake, similar to other states.

5.23 Minnesota

Minne is derived from 'mni' meaning water and sota meaning murky. The Dakota tribe, when sharing this name with the colonists, explained the name by dropping sand into water in order to show murky water. The colonists, in turn, dropped, then at the beginning of mni and added 'i' so as to make it easier to pronounce in English. Other state locations have mni origins at the beginning of them as well. For example, Minnetrista, Minneapolis and Minnehaha.

5.24 Mississippi

Like many other states, Mississippi is named after its main state river. Its river is its westernmost border. The Ojibwa term Messipi is the main root origin of what would later become the state name.

5.25 Missouri

Similarly, the state name Missouri was taken after the state river itself. The river was named after a Sioux tribe who went by the name of the Missouris. They had inhabited the lands closest to the river. The term Missouri also means big canoe (McCafferty, 2004).

5.26 Montana

This state name originally was derived from the term for 'mountain' in Spanish, although its original application and use has been heavily debated. Nonetheless, it took on its official name in 1864. It is the forty-first state.

5.27 Nebraska

The state name 'Nebraska' originally came into being through an explorer's contact with the Missouri-Oto tribe who lived along the Platte River. The explorer, Fremont, understood from the tribe that the river meant 'flat river'. Fremont argued that the name of the state should be Nebraska. This decision was approved in 1844.

5.28 Nevada

This state name was originally derived from the Spanish term meaning 'snow-filled'. It became formalized in 1861 when President Buchanan formed the territory. In 1864, it became the thirty-sixth state under President Lincoln.

5.29 New Hampshire

Named after John Mason in 1629, this area refers to Hampshire, an English area where Mason had grown up as a young boy.

5.30 New Jersey

This state was named after Jersey, an English Channel island. Carteret, the territory's founder, was born in Jersey was its governor for many years.

5.31 New Mexico

Established in 1850 after the US beat Mexico in the 1846-1848 War, the state was originally owned by New Spain, which was what Mexico was called before it became independent from Spain.

5.32 New York

New York was established out of a land grant from Charles II, his brother. The Duke of York sent for its capture in 1664 after receiving the land grant.

5.33 North Carolina

The term 'Carolina' is derived from the name Charles. Indeed, Charles I, before being executed in 1649, established, among other places, North Carolina's colony.

34. North Dakota

Before 1880, South and North Dakota were one land mass. Regardless, however, the area was named after the Dakota tribe.

5.35 Ohio

The state name 'Ohio' is widely debated, with some claiming that it refers to a river that is beautiful. It is widely held, however, that the state name originated from Iroquoian and means the large one.

5.36 Oklahoma

Wright, Choctaw Nation chief until 1870, gave the state of Oklahoma its name. Oklahoma is derived from 'huma', which means red, and 'person', which means ukla. Oklahoma therefore refers to 'red persons'.

5.37 Oregon

This state name's first usage can be traced back to 1778, when Carver borrowed it from Rogers' petition to Great Britain in 1775. It is unknown how Carver acquired knowledge of Rogers' use of the word. However, he could have possibly heard it from his many encounters with the Mohegan tribe.

5.38 Pennsylvania

Like New York and New Jersey, Pennsylvania originated out of a land grant given to William Penn by Charles II for a large debt that had been owed to Penn's father. This occurred in 1681 (Donehoo, 1998).

5.39 Rhode Island

This state name's first usage dates back to 1524, when da Verrazzano, an Italian traveler, compared the Narragansett Bay to the Mediterranean Island of Rhodes. Knowledge of the state name was printed and given to settlers before they arrived in Rhode Island.

5.40 South Carolina

South Carolina shares the exact same history as North Carolina with regard to its name. The term 'Carolina' is derived from the name Charles. Indeed, Charles I, before being executed in 1649, established, among other places, North Carolina's colony.

5.41 South Dakota

Before 1880, South and North Dakota were one land mass. Regardless, however, the area was named after the Dakota tribe.

5.42 Tennessee

Travelling from South Carolina, Pardo, a Spanish traveler came across the indigenous village of Tanasqui. Tennessee was named after this village. Unlike most other state names, the word 'Tennessee' has no specific meaning but is simply the name of a tribe.

5.43 Texas

The state name Texas has its root in teysha, which means 'friend, hello' in the language of Caddoan Indians. Teysha, moreover, was used for greetings among tribes in Oklahoma, Louisiana and Texas (William, 1961).

5.44 Utah

The state name 'Utah' comes from Navajo origins and refers to those people that live on the mountains. Interestingly, when tribes who lived on the mountains came into contact with Europeans, they were referred to as 'Utes'.

5.45 Vermont

The state name 'Vermont' was officially adopted in 1777. The name was originally proposed by Young, a statesman of Pennsylvania who argued that the constitution of Pennsylvania would be the best model for Vermont.

5.46 Virginia

Queen Elizabeth I named the whole Raleigh expedition along the North American coast 'Virginia'. It later applied to the area from Maine to South Carolina.

5.47 Washington

Named after Washington (and being the only state to be named after a US president), the State of Washington was named as a territory in 1853. It officially became a state, however, in 1889.

5.48 West Virginia

Queen Elizabeth I named the whole Raleigh expedition along the North American coast 'Virginia'. It later applied to the area from Maine to South Carolina. Instead of joining the Confederacy, what is presently referred to as West Virginia resulted for secession from the State of Virginia.

5.49 Wisconsin

Originally from Algonquian, the word 'Wisconsin' comes from Miskous and Mescousing, which mean red rock. Knowledge of this word was originally acquired from the Kickapoo tribe. A different but related Algonquian tribe, the Mesquakie referred to themselves as the people of the red earth. This fact could also have played a key role in the etymology of the name (McCafferty, 2003).

5.50 Wyoming

This state name's first usage was derived from the land of the Lenapes and was first used to name the Wyoming Valley. The state itself later took on its name. Its first official use was in 1865. Though its name was in line with other names to be chosen for the state, Wyoming had already gained popularity, so it was chosen as the state's name.

The following table (table 1) below provides a brief summary of the etymological information outlined above:

Table 1. Origin of American state names.

Word of origin	Language of origin	Year of first original language	Date of first original language	State name
albah amo	Choctaw	1742	April 19	Alabama
alaxsxaq via Аляска	Aleut via Russian	1897	December 2	Alaska
aritz ona	Basque			
ali şona-g via Arizonac	O'odham via Spanish	1883	February 1	Arizona
zonas áridas	Spanish			
akaansa	Kansa, via Illinois and French	1796	July 20	Arkansas
Unknown	Spanish	1850	May 22	California
colorado	Spanish	1743		Colorado
quinnitukqut	Eastern Algonquian	1675	April 15	Connecticut
de la Warr	French via English	1680	January 31	Delaware
(pascua) florida	Spanish	1819	December 28	Florida
Georgos	Latin via English (ultimately from Greek)	1674	October 3	Georgia
Hawaii	Hawaiian	1879	December 29	Hawaii
I-dah-hoe Ídaahé	English Plains Apache	1864	June 6	Idaho
ilenweewa	Algonquian via French	1793	March 24	Illinois
	Latin (ultimately from Proto-Indo-Iranian)	1794	December 2	Indiana
ayúxba/ayuxwe via Aiouez	Dakota via French	1818	August 31	Iowa
kką:ze via Cansez	Kansa via French	1832	May 12	Kansas
	Iroquoian	1728	April 28	Kentucky
Louisiane	French (ultimately from Frankish)	1787	July 18	Louisiana
main	English	1729	October 13	Maine
Miryam	French English English (ultimately from Hebrew)	1691	January 18	Maryland
	Algonquian	1665	June 4	Massachusetts
mishigami	Ojibwe via French	1811	October 28	Michigan
mnisota	Dakota	1821	April 21	Minnesota
misi-ziibi	Ojibwe via French	1800	March 9	Mississippi
mihsoori	Illinois	1805	September 7	Missouri
montaña	Spanish	1860	November 1	Montana
ñjbraske	Chiwere	1847	June 22	Nebraska
	Spanish	1845	February 9	Nevada

	English	1692	August 27	New Hampshire
	French (ultimately from Old Norse)	1669	April 2	New Jersey
Mēxihco via Nuevo México	Nahuatl via Spanish	1859	November 1	New Mexico
	English	1680	October 15	New York
Carolus via Carolana	Latin via English (ultimately from Frankish)	1686	June 30	North Carolina
dakhóta	Sioux	1867	November 2	North Dakota
ohi:yo'	Seneca via French	1785	April 19	Ohio
okla + homa	Choctaw	1842	September 5	Oklahoma
wauregan	Connecticut Pidgin Algonquian	1860	July 20	Oregon
Penn + silvania	Welsh and Latin	1650	March 8	Pennsylvania
roodt eylandt	Dutch	1680	February 3	Rhode Island
Carolus via Carolana	Latin via English (ultimately from Frankish)	1687	November 12	South Carolina
dakhóta	Sioux	1867	November 2	South Dakota
tanasi	Cherokee	1747	May 24	Tennessee
táysha via Tejas	Caddo via Spanish	1827	June 30	Texas
yúdah via yuta	Western Apache via Spanish	1877	December 20	Utah
vert + mont	French	1721	September 27	Vermont
	Latin	1652	March 21	Virginia
	English	1872	February 22	Washington
	Latin	1831	September 1	West Virginia
Wishkonsing	Miami via French	1822	February 5	Wisconsin
xwé:wamənk	Munsee Delaware	1877	August 14	Wyoming

6. Conclusions

As a reminder, it is definitely worth mentioning here that the purpose of this paper is to investigate the etymological origin of American state names. In addition to the reasons behind the names given to the states and how each state received its name, the present study sheds light on the various ethnic groups to which the original settlers of these states belong taking in consideration their different linguistic background. Furthermore, it explains the process through which each state reviewed its name and how such names came to being over time. In sum, the study takes in consideration a number of socio-linguistic and cultural factors that collectively had a great impact on the naming process eventually giving each American state its name as we know it today.

Based on the discussion above, and after consulting various authoritative references dealing with the historical development of the etymology of American state names, the following conclusions were reached:

1. All fifty states have acquired their names from a diverse assortment of languages (Bright, 2004). This is an inevitable fact due to the phenomenon of language contact and the fact that different settlers brought with them different native languages and particular social and regional dialects (Crowley, 1992). For example, the names of twenty-four of the states come from languages indigenous to the Americas and one name comes from Hawaiian.
2. Eight states' names are derived from Algonquian languages (Mahr, 1959).
3. Seven states' names are derived from Siouan languages.
4. Three states' names are derived from Iroquoian languages.
5. One state derives its name from a Uto-Aztecan language.

6. Five states derive their names from other languages indigenous to the Americas.
7. Twenty-two of the other states derive their names from languages of Europe. Seven states derive their names from Latin; five states derive their names from English; five states derive their names from Spanish and five states derive their names from French (Hodge, 1911).
8. The origins of the names of six states are contested: Rhode Island, Oregon, Maine, Idaho, Hawaii and Arizona.
9. Eleven states are named after individuals. For example, seven states are named after queens and kings. These include North and South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia, Georgia, Louisiana and Maryland.
10. Interestingly, only one state was named after a president – Washington (Guyton, 2009).

In conclusion, it is fair to say that the etymological origin of American state names is as varied linguistically as it is socially and culturally. Most of the states' names went through a long process of coinage and no state received its name and kept it without going through a process of change and development. The original languages of the settlers of American states had the most impact on the naming process coupled with other cultural and social factors including the occasional desire of some settlers to commemorate their original place from which they migrated to America. In addition, there is a clear desire of certain settlers to commemorate some kings and queens of their original places from which they migrated to America. This was mostly true in the case of European immigrants. This also became evident if we take a careful look at place names within such states. It becomes clear that a large number of places is named after original English and European towns that existed and still do exist in their original countries.

Finally, it would be safe to claim that regardless of any controversy surrounding the etymological history of American state names, the names of all fifty states have long become household names familiar to not only people who live in the United States of America, but also to the vast majority of people who live throughout the world even without ever paying much attention to or thinking about the etymological history of such states or the true reasons that exist behind the names.

6.1 Suggestions for Further Research

As a clear outcome of this study into the etymology of American state names, it would be of great interest and linguistic research value to conduct similar etymological studies investigating the historical and socio-linguistic origin of American place names including town and county names. It would also be interesting to find out the reasons for such names and their linguistic origins comparing and contrasting the findings of such studies to the findings of this study. This would no doubt shed light on the history of the United States of America and relate the socio-linguistic findings to the political history of the country and how that history developed and changed over time.

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