

# How States Got Their Names

## Alabama

Before Europeans landed on American shores, the upper stretches of the Alabama River in present-day Alabama used to be the home lands of a Native American tribe called – drum roll, please – the Alabama (*Albaamaha* in their own tribal language). The river and the state both take their names from the tribe, that's clear enough, but the meaning of the name was another matter. Despite a wealth of recorded encounters with the tribe – Hernando de Soto was the first to make contact with them, followed by other Spanish, French and British explorers and settlers (who referred to the tribe, variously, as the Albama, Alebamon, Alibama, Alibamou, Alibamon, Alabamu, Allibamou, Alibamo and Alibamu) – there are no explanations of the name's meaning in the accounts of early explorers, so if the Europeans asked, they don't appear to have gotten an answer. An un-bylined article in the July 27, 1842 edition of the *Jacksonville Republican* put forth the idea that the word meant “here we rest.” Alexander Beaufort Meek, who served as the Attorney General of Alabama, Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Treasury and the President of the First American Chess Congress, popularized this theory in his writings throughout the next decade.

The rub, of course, is that experts in the Alabama language have never been able to find any evidence to support that translation. What they did find are two words in the Choctaw language (both tribes' languages are in the Muskogean language family), *alba* (“plants” or “weeds”) and *amo* (“to cut” or “to gather”), that together make *Albaamo*, or “plant gatherers.” We also know that the Alabama referred to a member of their tribe as an *Albaamo*, cleared land and practiced agriculture largely without tools and by hand and had contact with the neighboring Choctaws. Today, the prevailing theory is that the phrase was used by the Choctaws to describe their neighbors and the Alabama eventually adopted it as their own.

## Alaska

Like Alabama (and, as we'll see, plenty of other state names), the name Alaska comes from the language of the area's indigenous people. The Aleuts (a name given to them by Russian fur traders in the mid 18th century; they used to, and sometimes still do, call themselves the Unangan), natives of the Aleutian Islands, referred to the Alaskan Peninsula and the mainland as *alaxsxaq* (ah-lock-shock), literally, “the object toward which the action of the sea is directed.”

## Arizona

There are two sides in the argument over the origin of Arizona's name. One side says that the name comes from the Basque *aritz onak* (“good oak”) and was applied to the territory because the oak trees reminded the Basque settlers in the area of their homeland. The other side says that the name comes from the Spanish *Arizonac*, which was derived from the O'odham (the language of the native Pima people) word *ali ?ona-g* (“having a little spring”), which might refer to actual springs or a site near rich veins of silver discovered in 1736. For what it's worth, official Arizona state historian Marshall Trimble had supported the latter explanation but for now favors the former.

## Arkansas

The first Europeans to arrive in the area of present-day Arkansas were French explorers accompanied by Illinois Indian guides. The Illinois referred to the Ugakhpa people native to the region as the *Akans* (“wind people” or “people of the south wind”), which the French adopted and pronounced with an *r*. They added an *s*

to the end for pluralization, and for some reason it stuck when the word was adopted as the state's name. The pronunciation of Arkansas was a matter of debate (**Ar**-ken-saw vs. Ar-**kan**-zes) until it was officially decided by an act of the state legislature in 1881.

## California

*California* existed in European literature way before Europeans settled the Western U.S. It wasn't a state filled with vineyards and movie stars, but an island in the West Indies filled with gold and women. The fictional paradise, first mentioned in the early 1500s by Spanish author Garci Ordóñez de Montalvo in his novel *Las Sergas de Esplandián*, is ruled by Queen Califia and “inhabited by black women, without a single man among them, [living in] the manner of Amazons.” The island is said to be “one of the wildest in the world on account of the bold and craggy rocks... everywhere abounds with gold and precious stones” and is home to griffins and other mythical beasts.

While there is some consensus that the area was named for the fictional island, scholars have also suggested that the name comes from the Catalan words *calor* (“hot”) and *forn* (“oven”) or from a Native America phrase, *kali forno* (“high hill”).

## Colorado

*Colorado* is a Spanish adjective that means “red.” The early Spanish explorers in the Rocky Mountain region named a river they found the *Rio Colorado* for the reddish silt that the water carried down from the mountains. When Colorado became a territory in 1861, the Spanish word was used as a name because it was commonly thought that the *Rio Colorado* originated in the territory. This was not the case, however. Prior to 1921, the Colorado River began where the Green River of Utah and the Grand River of Colorado converged outside of Moab, Utah, and the United States Geological Survey identified Green River of Wyoming as the Colorado's actual headwaters. The *Rio Colorado* did not actually flow through Colorado until 1921, when House Joint Resolution 460 of the 66th United States Congress changed the name of the Grand River.

## Connecticut

The state is named after the Connecticut River, which was named *quinnitukqut* by the Mohegans who lived in the eastern upper Thames valley. In their Algonquian language, the word means “long river place” or “beside the long tidal river.”

## Delaware

Delaware is named for the Delaware River and Delaware Bay. These, in turn, were named for Sir Thomas West, 3rd Baron De La Warr, the first colonial governor of Virginia, who traveled the river in 1610. The title is likely ultimately derived from the Old French *de la werre* (“of the war” or a warrior).

## Florida

Six days after Easter in 1513, the Spanish conquistador Juan Ponce de León landed near what is now the city of Saint Augustine. In honor of the holiday and the area's plant life, he named the land Florida for the Spanish phrase for the Easter season, *pascua florida* (“feast of flowers”). The name is the oldest surviving European place-name in the U.S.

## Georgia

In the early 18th century, the British Parliament assigned a committee to investigate the conditions of the country's debtor prisons and didn't like what they found. A group of philanthropists concerned with the plight of debtors proposed the creation of a colony in North America where the "worthy poor" could get back on their feet and be productive citizens again. Their plan ultimately didn't pan out as the colony wasn't settled by debtors, but the trustees of the colony still wanted to thank King George II for granting their charter, so they named the place after him.

(Bonus: The nation of Georgia is supposedly called so because its inhabitants revere St. George and feature his cross on their flag, though Georgians refer to themselves as *Kartvelebi* and their country as *Sakartvelo*.)

## Hawaii

No one is certain, so take your pick. The name may come from the Proto-Polynesian *Sawaiki* or "homeland" (some early explorers' accounts have the natives calling the place *Hawaiki*, a compound of *hawa*, "homeland," and *ii*, "small, active") or from Hawaii Loa, the Polynesian who tradition says discovered the islands.

## Idaho

The origin of Idaho's name, like a few other names we've already talked about, is a mystery. When it was proposed as the name of a new U.S. territory, it was explained as a derivation of the Shoshone Indian term *ee-da-how*, meaning "gem of the mountains" or "the sun comes from the mountains." It's possible that the word, and its Indian origin, were made up by the man who proposed the name, George M. Willing, an eccentric industrialist and mining lobbyist (not all historians and linguists agree on this, though, and the most common alternate explanation is that the name comes from the Apache word *idaahe* ("enemy"), which the Kiowas Indians applied to the Comanches they came in contact with when they migrated to southern Colorado). When Congress was considering establishing a mining territory in the Rocky Mountains in 1860, Willing and B. D. Williams, a delegate from the region, championed "Idaho." The request for the name came up in the Senate in January 1861 and Senator Joseph Lane of Oregon objected to "Idaho," saying, "I do not believe it is an Indian word. It is a corruption. No Indian tribe in this nation has that word, in my opinion... It is a corruption certainly, a counterfeit, and ought not to be adopted." Lane was roundly ignored, probably because he had the bad luck of having been the vice presidential candidate for the pro-slavery southern wing of the Democratic Party in the previous year's election.

After the Senate approved the name, Williams, for some reason, gave into curiosity and looked into Lane's claim. He heard from several sources that Willing or someone in his group of territorial supporters had invented the name "Idaho" and that the word didn't actually mean anything. Williams went back to the Senate and requested that the name be changed. The Senate agreed and used a name that had been on the table before Willing and Williams showed up: "Colorado."

A year later, Congress set out to establish another mining territory in the northwest part of the continent. "Idaho" was again a contender as a name. Without Williams there to call shenanigans and with the senators who should have remembered the last naming incident just a little bit preoccupied with the Civil War, "Idaho" went unchallenged and became the name of the territory and the state.

## Illinois

"Illinois" is the modern spelling of the early French explorers' name for the people they found living in the area, which they spelled in endless variations in their records. The Europeans' first meeting with the Illinois was in 1674. Father Jacques Marquette, a Jesuit missionary and explorer, followed a path to a village and asked the people there who they were. According to Marquette's writings, "They replied that they were Illinois...when one speaks the word...it is as if one said, in their language, 'the men'." The explorers thought the tribal name to signify a grown man in his prime, separate from, and superior to, the men of other tribes.

## Indiana

The state's name means "Indian Land" or "Land of the Indians," named so for the Indian tribes that lived there when white settlers arrived. While its meaning might be simple enough, the way it got the name is a little more interesting. At the end of the French and Indian War, the French were forced out of the Ohio Valley, so a Philadelphia trading company moved in to monopolize trade with the Indians in the area. At the time, the tribes of the Iroquois had already formed a confederacy and conquered territory beyond their home lands, subjugating other tribes and treating them as tributaries. In the fall of 1763, members of the Shawnee and other tribes who were tributary to the Iroquois Confederacy conducted raids on traders from the Philadelphia company and stole their goods. The company complained to the chiefs of the Iroquois Confederacy and demanded restitution. The chiefs accepted responsibility for the behavior of their tributaries, but did not have the money to pay off the debt. Instead, when making a boundary treaty with the English five years later, the chiefs gave a 5,000-square-mile tract of land to the Philadelphia company, which accepted the land as payment.

The land's new owners, in the search for a name, noted a trend in the way states and countries in both the Old World and New World were named. Bulgaria was the land of the Bulgars, Pennsylvania was the woodland of Penn, etc. They decided to honor the people to whom the land originally belonged and from whom it had been obtained and named it Indiana, land of the Indians. The year the colonies declared their independence from Britain, the Indiana land was transferred to a new company, who wanted to sell it. Some of the land, though, was within the boundaries of Virginia, which claimed that it had jurisdiction over the land's settlers and forbade the company from selling it. In 1779, the company asked Congress to settle the matter. It made an attempt, but, still operating under Articles of Confederation, had no power to compel Virginia to do anything. The argument eventually went to the United States Supreme Court, but Virginia's government officials, strong believers in states' rights, refused to become involved with a federal court and ignored the summons to appear. In the meantime, Virginia's politicians worked to secure the Eleventh Amendment, which protected the states' sovereign immunity from being sued in federal court by someone of another state or country (and was proposed in response to a Supreme Court case dealing with Georgia's refusal to appear to hear a suit against itself, in which the Supreme Court decided against Georgia).

After the amendment was passed and ratified, the company's suit was dismissed and it lost its claim to the land, which was absorbed by Virginia. The name would come back in 1800, when Congress carved the state of Ohio out of the Northwest Territory and gave the name "Indiana" to the remaining territorial land and, 16 years later, a new state.

## Iowa

Iowa's name comes from the Native American tribe that once lived there, the Ioway. What the word means depends on who you ask.

One pioneer in the area wrote in 1868 that "some Indians in search of a new home encamped on a high bluff of the Iowa River near its mouth...and being much pleased with the location and the country around it, in their native dialect exclaimed, 'Iowa, Iowa, Iowa' (beautiful, beautiful, beautiful), hence the name Iowa to the river

and to those Indians." A report from the 1879 General Assembly of Iowa translated the word a little differently and claimed it meant "the beautiful land." However, members of the Ioway Nation, who today inhabit Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma, will tell you that *Ioway* is the French spelling of *Ayuhwa*, a name meaning "sleepy ones" given to the tribe in jest by the Dakota Sioux. (The Ioway refer to themselves as Baxoje (bah-ko-jay) or "the gray/ashy heads," a name that stems from an incident where tribe members were camping in the Iowa River valley and a gust of wind blew sand and campfire ashes onto their heads.)

## **Kansas**

Kansas was named after the Kansas River, which was named after the Kansa tribe who lived along its banks. Kansa, a Siouan word, is thought to be pretty old. How old? Its full and original meaning was lost to the tribe before they even met their first white settler. Today, we only know that the word has some reference to the wind, possibly "people of the wind" or "people of the south wind."

## **Kentucky**

There is no consensus on where Kentucky's name comes from. Among the possibilities, though, are various Indians words, all from the Iroquoian language group, meaning "meadow," "prairie," "at the prairie," "at the field," "land of tomorrow," "river bottom," and "the river of blood."

## **Louisiana**

Louisiana comes from the French *La Louisiane*, or "Land of Louis." It was named for Louis XIV, the King of France from 1643 to 1715. Exciting, no?

## **Maine**

Maine is another case where no one is quite sure how the name came about. Ferdinando Gorges and John Mason, who received a charter for land in Maine, were both English Royal Navy veterans, and the name may have originated with the sailors differentiating "the mainland" from the many islands off the state's coast. Maine's state legislature, meanwhile, passed a resolution in 2001 that established Franco-American Day and claimed that the state was named after the French province of Maine.

## **Maryland**

The English colony of Maryland was named for Queen Henrietta Maria, the wife of King Charles I, who granted Maryland's charter. Mariana was also proposed as a name, but Maryland's founder, Sir Lord Baltimore, believed in the divine right of kings and turned the name down because it reminded him of the Spanish Jesuit and historian Juan de Mariana, who taught that the will of the people was higher than the law of tyrants.

## **Massachusetts**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Bay Colony that preceded it were named after the area's indigenous people, the Massachusett. The tribe's name translates to "near the great hill," referring to the

Blue Hills southwest of Boston. An alternate form of the tribe's name, the Moswetuset ("hill shaped like an arrowhead" ), refers to the Moswetuset Hummock, an arrow-shaped mound in Quincy, MA.

## Michigan

The state takes its name from Lake Michigan. Michigan is a French derivative of the Ojibwa word *misshikama* (mish-ih-GAH-muh), which translates to "big lake," "large lake" or "large water."

## Minnesota

*Minnesota* is derived from the Dakota tribe's name for the Minnesota River, *mnisota* (*mni* "water" + *sota* "cloudy, muddy;" sometimes translated to the more poetic "sky-tinted water" ). The English language doesn't really dig words beginning with *mn* (*you'll find only one, mnemonic*), so early settlers in the region added some *i*'s and produced a *mini* sound that they wrote as "mine." The city of Minneapolis combines *mni* with the Greek *polis*, or "city."

## Mississippi

The state is named for the Mississippi River. You may have heard that *mississippi* means "the Father of Waters" and you may have heard that from no less a source than novelist James Fenimore Cooper or President Abraham Lincoln (who wrote in a letter after the Civil War after Union victories during the Civil War, "the Father of Waters again goes unvexed to the sea" ). I hate to pee on Honest Abe's parade, but the word, a French derivation of the Ojibwa *messipi* (alternately *misi-sipi* or *misi-zibi*) actually means "big river." It may not sound as dramatic as Lincoln's preferred translation, but whatever the meaning, the name caught on. As French explorers took the name down the river with them to the delta, it was adopted by local Indian tribes and replaced their own names, and the earlier Spanish explorers' names, for the river.

## Missouri

The state and the Missouri River are both named after the Missouri people, a southern Siouan tribe that lived along the river. *Missouri* comes from an Illinois language reference to the tribe, *ouemessourita*, which has been translated as "those who have dugout canoes," "wooden canoe people" or "he of the big canoe."

## Montana

*Montana* is a variation of the Spanish *montaña*, or "mountain," a name applied because of its numerous mountain ranges (3,510 mountain peaks, total). Who first used the name, and when, is unknown.

## Nebraska

*Nebraska* comes from the archaic Otoe Indian words *Ñí Brásge* (in contemporary Otoe, it would be *Ñí Bráhge*), meaning "flat water." The words refer to the Platte River, which flows across the Cornhusker State.

## Nevada

The state's name is the Spanish word for "snowfall" and refers to the Sierra Nevada ("snow-covered mountains") mountain range. The non-Nevadan pronunciation of the name "neh-vah-dah" (long A sounds like the a in *father*) differs from the local pronunciation "nuh-vae-duh" (short A sounds like the a in alligator) and is said to annoy Nevadans endlessly.

## New Hampshire

John Mason named the area he received in a land grant after the English county of Hampshire, where he had lived for several years as a child. Mason invested heavily in the clearing of land and building of houses in New Hampshire, but died, in England, before ever venturing to the new world to see his property.

## New Jersey

New Jersey was named for Jersey, the largest of the British Channel Islands, by its founders Sir John Berkeley and Sir George Carteret. Carteret was born on Jersey and served as its Lieutenant Governor for several years.

## New Mexico

New Mexico and the country it used to be part of, Mexico, both take their name from Nahuatl *Mexihco*. The meaning of the word is unclear, but there are several hypotheses. It might reference *Mextli* or *M?xihtli*, an alternate name for Huitzilopochtli, the god of war and patron of the Aztecs, and mean "place where *M?xihtli* lives". It's also been suggested that the word is a combination of *m?tztli* ("moon"), *xictli* ("center") and the suffix *-co* ("place") and means "place at the center of the moon" (in reference to Lake Texcoco).

## New York

Both the state and New York City were named for James Stuart, Duke of York and future King James II of England. The old York, a city in England, has been around since before the Romans made their way to the British Isles and the word *York* comes from the Romans' Latin name for city, written variously as *Eboracum*, *Eburacum* and *Eburaci*. Tracing the name further back is difficult, as the language of the area's pre-Roman indigenous people was never recorded. They are thought to have spoken a Celtic language, though, and *Eboracum* may have been derived from the Brythonic *Eborakon*, which means "place of the yew trees."

## North Carolina

King Charles II of England, who granted a charter to start a colony in modern-day North Carolina, named the land in honor of his father, Charles I. *Carolina* comes from *Carolus*, the Latin form of Charles.

## North Dakota

North and South Dakota both take their names from the Dakota, a tribe of Siouan people who lived in the region. No detailed etymology of *Dakota* is widely accepted, but the most common explanation is that it means "friend" or "ally" in the language of the Sioux.

## Ohio

A common translation, “beautiful river,” originates in a French traveler’s 1750 account of visiting the region. He referred to the Ohio River as “une belle riviere” and gave its local Indian name as *Ohio*. People took his description of the river as a translation of the Indian name, though there is no evidence that that was his intention or that that is even a correct translation. In fact, no definitive meaning for the word is available, though *ohio* is more likely a Wyandot word meaning “large/great” or “the great one,” than “beautiful river.” It could also be derived from the Seneca *ohi:yo*’ (“large creek”).

## Oklahoma

*Oklahoma* is a combination of the Choctaw words *ukla* (“person”) and *humá* (“red”). The word was used by the Choctaw to describe Native Americans, “red persons.” Allen Wright, chief of the Choctaw Nation from 1866 to 1870, suggested the name in 1866 during treaty negotiations with the federal government over the use of the Indian Territory. When the Indian Territory was whittled down to what is now Oklahoma, the new territory took its name from the Choctaw word.

## Oregon

The origin of *Oregon* may be the most hotly debated of the state names. Here’s a few of the competing explanations (and I may have even missed a few):

- Derived from the French *ouragan* (“hurricane”) and the state named so because French explorers called the Columbia River *le fleuve aux ouragans* (“Hurricane River”) due to the strong winds in the Columbia Gorge.
- Derived from *oolighan*, a Chinook name for the eulachon (*Thaleichthys pacificus*), a smelt found along the Pacific coast and prized as a source of food for Native Americans in the area.
- Derived from the Spanish *orejón* (“big ears”), which early Spanish explorers reportedly used to refer to local natives.
- Derived from *Ouragon*, a word used by Major Robert Rogers in a 1765 petition asking the British government to finance and supply an overland search for the Northwest Passage. As to where Rogers got the word, it could have come from an error on a French-made map from the early 1700s, where the *Ouisiconsink* (“Wisconsin River”) is misspelled “Ouaricon-sint,” and broken so “Ouaricon” sits on a line by itself or it might have been derived from the Algonquian *wauregan* or *olighin*, which both mean “good and beautiful” (and were both used in reference to the Ohio River at the time).
- Derived from the Shoshone words *Ogwa* (river) and *Pe-On* (west) and picked up from the Sioux, who referred to the Columbia as the “River of the West,” by American explorer Jonathan Carver.

## Pennsylvania

Named in honor of Admiral William Penn. The land was granted to Penn’s son, William Penn, to pay off a debt owed by the crown to the senior Penn. The name is made up of Penn + *sylva* (“woods”) + *nia* (a noun suffix) to get “Penn’s Woodland.” The younger Penn was embarrassed by the name and feared that people would think he had named the colony after himself, but King Charles would not rename the land.

## Rhode Island

First used in a letter by Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano, in which he compares an island near the mouth of Narragansett Bay (a bay on the north side of Rhode Island Sound) to the island of Rhodes in the Mediterranean. The explanation preferred by the state government is that Dutch explorer Adrian Block named the area *Roodt Eylandt* (“red island”) in reference to the red clay that lined the shore and the name was later anglicized under British rule.

## South Carolina

See *North Carolina* above.

## South Dakota

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## Tennessee

While traveling inland from South Carolina in 1567, Spanish explorer Juan Pardo passed through a Native American village in modern-day Tennessee named *Tanasqui*. Almost two centuries later, British traders came upon a Cherokee village called *Tanasi* (in present-day Monroe County, Tennessee). No one knows whether Tanasi and Tanasqui were actually the same village, though it is known that Tanasi was located on the Little Tennessee River and recent research suggests that Tanasqui was close to the confluence of the Pigeon River and the French Broad River (near modern-day Newport). *Tennessee* could have come from either one of these village names, but the meanings of both words have since been lost.

## Texas

*Texas* comes from *teysha* (sometimes spelled *tejas*, *tayshas*, *texias*, *thecas*, *techan*, *teysas*, or *techas*), a word widely used by the natives of the eastern Texas region before the arrival of the Spanish. The tribes had various spellings and interpretations of the word, but the usual meaning was “friends” or “allies.” Some tribes, like the Hasinai and the Caddo, used it as a greeting, “hello, friend.” This is the usage that Spanish explorers picked up and used to greet friendly tribes throughout Texas and Oklahoma. The explorers also applied the word as a name for the Caddo people and the area around their East Texas settlement.

## Utah

Derived from the name of the native tribe known as the *Nuutsiu* or *Utes* (which itself may come from the Apache *yudah*, *yiuta* or *yuttahih*, meaning “they who are higher up”), whom the Spanish first encountered in modern-day Utah in the late 1500s. In the tribe’s language, *ute* means “Land of the Sun.” (The tribe referred to themselves as the “Nuciu” or “Noochew,” which simply means “The People.”)

## Vermont

Derived from the French words *vert* (“green”) and *mont* (“mountain”). Samuel Peters claimed that he christened the land with that name in 1763 while standing on top of a mountain, saying, “The new name is *Vert-Mont*, in token that her mountains and hills shall be ever green and shall never die.” Most historians would disagree, as would Thomas Young, the Pennsylvania statesman who suggested that his state’s constitution be used as the basis for Vermont’s and is generally credited with suggesting the name to maintain the memory of the Green Mountain Boys, the militia organization formed to resist New York’s attempted take-over of the area.

## Virginia

Named for Queen Elizabeth I of England (known as the Virgin Queen), who granted Walter Raleigh the charter to form a colony north of Spanish Florida.

## Washington

Named in honor of the first president of the United States, George Washington. In the eastern US, the state is referred to as Washington State or the state of Washington to distinguish it from the District of Columbia, which they usually just call “Washington”, “D.C.” or, if they're very local, “the District.” Washingtonians and other Pacific Northwesterners simply call the state “Washington” and refer to the national capital as “Washington, D.C.” or just “D.C.”

## West Virginia

West Virginia, formed from 39 Virginia counties whose residents voted to form a new state rather than join the Confederacy, was named after the same queen as the state it split from, though the new state was originally to be called *Kanawha*.

## Wisconsin

Derived from *Meskousing*, the name applied to the Wisconsin River by the Algonquian-speaking tribes in the region. The French explorer Jacques Marquette recorded the name in 1673, and the word was eventually corrupted into *Ouisconsin*, anglicized to its modern form during the early 19th century, and its current spelling made official by the territorial legislature in 1845. Modern linguists had been unable to find any word in an Algonquian language similar to the one Marquette recorded, and now believe that the tribes borrowed the name from the Miami *meskonsing*, or “it lies red,” a reference to the reddish sandstone of the Wisconsin Dells.

## Wyoming

Derived from the Delaware (Lenape) Indian word *mecheweami-ing* (“at/on the big plains”), which the tribe used to refer their home region in Pennsylvania (which was eventually named the Wyoming Valley [Wilkes-Barre represent!]). Other names considered for the new territory were Cheyenne, Shoshoni, Arapaho, Sioux, Platte, Big Horn, Yellowstone and Sweetwater, but *Wyoming* was chosen because it was already in common use by the territory’s settlers.