

HISTORICAL GLEANINGS

BY
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"HOW EACH STATE CAME BY ITS NAME"

"FLORIDA : It was on Easter Sunday in 1512 that Ponce de Leon while in search for the 'Fountain of Youth', landed on its eastern coast. The Profusion of flowers that greeted his eyes reminded him that with his people the day was Pascua Florida or 'Feast of Flowers', and suggested the graceful name the country bears. The shape of Florida warrants the title of 'The Peninsular State' 'Fly up the Creeks' is said to have been characteristic of the inhabitants, and they are still so called.

"GEORGIA : So named in honor of George II, under whose patronage it was colonized. It is 'the Empire State of the South' and abounds with 'buzzards' and 'goober grabbers'.

"ILLINNIS : From the Algonquin word Illiniwek meaning 'we are men', in the sense of belonging to a superior race, and the change to Illinois is due to the French explorers that it might conform more nearly to their own language, it has two sobriquets: 'The Prairie State' which explains itself, and the 'Sucker State' but in name only. Says the Providence Journal of an old date.

"The western prairies are in many places full of holes made by the crawfish which ^sdepends to the water beneath. In early times when travelers wended their way over the immense plains, they very prudently provided themselves with a long hollow reed, and when thirsty thrust it into these natural artesian wells and thus supplied their longings. The crawfish well generally contains pure water, and the manner in which the traveler drew forth the refreshing element gave him the name of the 'sucker.'

"INDIANA : This name was first applied to a tract of land lying on the Ohio River above the Kanawha, granted by the Fort Stanwix treaty of 1768, to Captain William Trent, and other traders for goods destroyed by the Indians, and when the Northwest territory was divided in 1800, it was given to that portion of the territory not covered by the limits of Ohio.

'The Hoosier State' and 'Hoosiers' are the fancy names and are said to have originated from the general rough response given in early days to a knock at the door: 'Who's yere ?' But Webster says that the word is a 'corruption' of 'husher' (formerly a common term for a bully throughout the West.

"IOWA: The Iowa River, after which the State is called is a sluggish stream, which accounts for the name it received from the Indians, the proper meaning of the word being 'Sleepy' or 'Drowsy' 'The Hawkeye State' and 'Hawkeyes' are terms used in recognition of an Indian Chief, who in early times held sway among the Iowas.

"KANSAS: As has already been explained this is an Indian word 'Smoking Waters'. The sobriquet 'The Garden State' is itself explanatory'. How the inhabitants became to be called "Jayhawkers" is thus interestingly accounted for by the Chicago Tribune in 1861, it first became general in the fall of 1857, when the troubles of Southeastern Kansas having commenced the Free State people established a squatter court, before which they tried the men who were accused of fomenting disturbances. Their method of punishment gave rise to the name of 'Jayhawking'. Men were fined for the offenses of which Judge Lynch found them guilty. On refusal to meet the fine, they were visited by armed parties, who perhaps frightened them by firing or took what they considered necessary to pay the claim. If offenses were again committed the pro-slavery - ites were ordered to leave, that failing, the order was enforced. It was emphatically a system of 'worrying', the Missourians say there is a variety of hawk which does not at once sweep on its prey but like a cat, torments it awhile. This is known as the 'jayhawk' The similarity of proceedings caused the name to be applied to the guerrillas of "Southern Kansas" and it soon became general in its application.

"KENTUCKY: This word does not mean as is commonly supposed the 'dark and bloody ground' though it was so termed by the Indians in their own tongue, in consequence, of the many sanguinary conflicts occurring among them on Kentucky soil.

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It is in all probability a derivation from 'Kan Hukee' which signifies 'bone earth' and is in consonance with the fact that great quantities of animal bones of extinct species are found in various localities of the commonwealth. the 'cant' names are 'the corn cracker state' and 'corn crackers' ".

(Quotes from an old scrâp book owned by Mrs. Charlotte D. Hurst)