"Names are Magic": Walt Whitman's Laws of Geographic Nomenclature

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THE LINES OF *LEAVES of Grass* are filled with names—names of races, occupations, individuals, trees, rivers, but especially places. Walt Whitman was passionately interested in American place-names, and he had some strong views on what kinds of names were appropriate for the America of which he sang. One could arrive at this conclusion inductively by analyzing the many poems of *Leaves of Grass*, and there have been some partial attempts to do this.[1] On the other hand, it is possible to take a step behind the poems, "into the poet's mind," so to speak, to get a better idea of his theories on the use and value of names.

This information on Whitman's principles of onomastics is abundantly available because the subject so thoroughly fascinated him. He has left many notebook entries and clippings attesting to his interest in language in general and names in particular.[2] The subject of place-names was frequently brought up in the conversations of his latter years, as recorded by his Boswell, Horace Traubel, in his volumes of *With Walt Whitman in Camden*.[3] There is also evidence of Whitman's interest in names in his early journalism and in such later published essays as the posthumous *An American Primer*[4] and "Slang in America" which appeared first in the *North American Review* in November, 1885.

Despite its title, "Slang in America" is almost wholly taken up with a discussion of names. In fact, early notes which he assembled apparently

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1 See C. Carroll Hollis, "Names in *Leaves of Grass*," *Names*, 5:3 (September, 1957), 129-56 and Robert Gene Coffeen, "Naming Techniques in Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*," Diss., University of North Carolina, 1969.

2 Most of this material is now found in the Feinberg and Harned Collections at the Library of Congress.

3 Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, I (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1906), II (New York: Appleton, 1908), III (New York: Mitchell Kennerly, 1914), IV, ed. Sculley Bradley (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953), V, ed. Gertrude Traubel (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964).

4 Walt Whitman, *An American Primer*, ed. Horace Traubel (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1904).

in preparation for this piece show that its title was originally "Names and Slang in America." It is no accident, however, that he combined the study of names with an examination of slang. He shows in his essay that the relatively lawless new creations and extensions of language which characterize slang are precisely the very elements which make good names for places. Among his principal examples are the American Indian names for people and places which he said were "of an appropriateness and originality unsurpassable."[5]

Whitman's interest in place-names and his preference for fresh, original names are traceable all through his manuscript notes on language and his published remarks on the subject. In *An American Primer* there is a principle enunciated which we might reasonably call "Walt Whitman's First Law of Geographic Nomenclature": "All aboriginal names sound good" (p. 18). In accordance with this "Law," he appended the comment "bad—bad" after a note in which he recorded the following: "Jan 20 '78—(telegraphic)—H M Stanley, the African explorer at a great banquet to him in Paris, proposes that the great river Congo should be called Livingstone."[6] Likewise, based on his belief in the essential rightness of indigenous names, he objected to many of the place-names in California, which he said was "sown thick with the names of all the little and big saints"; and he believed that such names for cities as "Baltimore" should be "revolutionized."[7] Similarly, "The name of Niagara should be substituted for St. Lawrence. Among the places that stand in need of fresh appropriate names are the great cities of St. Louis, New Orleans, St. Paul's."[8]

On a slip of blue paper inserted into his *Words* notebook (now in the Feinberg Collection), he elaborated further on his "First Law."

> *Names of cities, islands, rivers, new settlements &c.*
> These should ["must" written above the line] assimilate in sentiment and sound, to something organic in the place, or identical with it.—It is far better to call a new inhabited island by the native word, than by its first discoverer, or to call it New anything.—Aboriginal names always tell finely; sometimes it is necessary to slightly Anglicise them.—All classic names are

5 Walt Whitman, *Prose Works 1892*, II, *Collect and Other Prose*, ed. Floyd Stovall (New York: New York University Press, 1964), p. 576.

6 Harned Collection.

7 *An American Primer*, pp. 29-30.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 32.

> objectionable. How much better Ohio, Oregon, Missouri, Milwaukee &c doing [sic] than New York, Ithaca, Naples, &c.

Whitman's purpose in much of his talk about "aboriginal names" is often clearly to remove from the American scene what he saw as vestiges of "feudal" Europe. This can be seen in a note titled "New Names for Counties" in the *Words* notebook. Referring mainly to New York State he wrote, "New Names for Counties—Many of the Counties in the State—and in other States [—] must be re-named—What is the name of Kings' [sic] county or of Queens county to us?—or of St. Lawrence county?—Get rid as soon as convenient of all the bad names—not only of counties, rivers, towns—but of persons, men and women—."

As we have seen, Whitman felt that "all classic names are objectionable." His "Rules for Composition," which appear in *Notes and Fragments*, contain a similar, more personal warning away from a dependence on classical or non-American sources in his poetry: "Take no illustrations whatever from the ancients or classics, nor from mythology, nor Egypt, Greece or Rome—nor from the royal and aristocratic institutions of Europe."[9] Once in a conversation between him and Horace Traubel the subject of the use of classical names in America came up. Traubel recorded the conversation this way: "He tried to name me one of the Western rivers—a Greek name—but it 'failed' him. He laughed—'It was a terrible one.' I put in—'Named by the drunken pedagogue who gave names to the New York towns?' He laughed—'Probably a relative: you mean the Ithaca, Utica, Troy man? I think so far as such names go, however, that the South beats us all hollow—look at Memphis—a fearful name—with no smack of the soil whatever—yet hundreds, thousands, like it!' The great Indian names 'lost, like so many opportunities!' "[10] This conversation, with its reference by Whitman to "lost opportunities" in the passing over of Indian names, took place in the summer of 1889 and testifies to his continued and almost

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[9] *Notes and Fragments*, IX, *The Complete Works of Walt Whitman*, ed. Richard Maurice Bucke, Thomas B. Harned, and Horace L. Traubel (New York: Putnam's, 1902), p. 35.

[10] *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, V, p. 358. The "pedagogue" to whom Traubel referred was Simon DeWitt, Surveyor General of the State of New York from 1784 until his death in 1834. Although DeWitt later denied personal responsibility for the many classical town names in central New York—placing the blame on other state officials—he is generally credited for the names of Ithaca, Utica, and Troy, but also others, such as Syracuse, Lysander, Scipio. Sempronius, Ulysses, Ilion, Camillus, Manlius, and Rome. See George Philip Krapp, *The English Language in America* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1960 [1925]), I, pp. 93-94. Also, in regard to Whitman's ideas about supplanting the name of Syracuse with "Salina," see Hollis, "Names in *Leaves of Grass*," p. 143 and n. 48.

instinctual predilection for words derived from native American languages. He had praised those languages in print as early as 1846 when he had celebrated their "sonorous beauty" in the Brooklyn *Eagle* and claimed that Indian words and names provided the proper material for truly American poetry and romance.[11] And one can see his delight with the mere sounds alone of the many Northwestern Indian placenames recounted by the "traveller from Oregon," whom he quoted in "Slang in America."

Among the "lost opportunities" that Whitman recorded in his manuscript notes was the saddling of several of the more prominent mountains of the West with the European surnames of early explorers and others who, for one reason or other, had been honored by having a mountain named after them. In one note in the Harned Collection, he merely recorded the fact of these names, citing as his source a certain "Letter from Colorado": "Colorado / 'Long's, Gray's & Pike's peak for three of the most beautiful & majestic mountains in the world.' " But in another Harned note, he commented on what he saw as the tragedy of these misnomers: "The great western mountain peaks (Colorado)—three or four of them, (as Pikes peak) among the grandest in the world are seriously injured by vulgar names." One of the clippings that Whitman saved, which is now in the Harned Collection, contains a similar instance of this kind of inappropriate naming of mountains—this time in the Pacific Northwest. Next to the passage from the article quoted here, Whitman wrote the word "Names":

> It is a pity that Hood, Rainier, St. Helen's, and Baker, three [i.e., excluding "St. Helen's"] of the most magnificent peaks in the world, should only perpetuate the names of four "old duffers" who happened to be Admiralty Lords when the far wandering Vancouver bestowed their names here with so much prodigality. The people of the region are doing what they can to change Ranier to Tacoma, but ancient tradition is likely to prove too strong for them. It is late in the day to change the names of these majestic monarchs of the great continental range, and one may as well be thankful that nothing worse than the tolerably euphonious patronymics of dead-and-gone nobodies cling to these peaks of snow.[12]

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11 Walt Whitman, *The Gathering of the Forces*, ed. Cleveland Rogers and John Black (New York: Putnam's, 1920), II, p. 137.

12 "The Oregon Metropolis," *New York Times*, October 15, 1883, p. 2.

Two other names which would fit into Whitman's category of "lost opportunities" are the names of two places very close to his heart—Long Island and New York City. For the former, as is well known, he much preferred the original name for the Island, "Paumanok." Whitman had used "Paumanok" as a psuedonym in a series of articles about life on Long Island which appeared in the New York *Sunday Dispatch* in 1848-1850[13] and the New York *Evening Post* in 1851;[14] and Number 13 of his "Brooklyniana" series, which appeared in the Brooklyn *Standard* in 1861 and 1862, is devoted to a plea that the aboriginal name "Paumanok" (which he interpreted to mean "the island with its breast long drawn out, and laid against the sea") be restored.[15]

For the City of New York, he preferred the Indian name of the island to which the city was originally confined, "Manhattan"—which he recorded under several spellings besides the usual ("Manhatta," "Mannahatta," "Monhatta"). Among his notes for proposed lectures which Furness has grouped together in *Walt Whitman's Workshop*, there is one set of notes headed "Mannahatta Lectures 'A great city proposed'."[16] The notes contain a stinging denunciation of King James II of England, the Duke of York in whose honor the city was named by his brother Charles II. The lecture is addressed to the people of "Mannahatta" and fairly well scolds them for preserving the inappropriate name of "New York" for their city:

> Do you know whom you celebrate in the name of this haughty and populous city?—You celebrate the meanest and feeblest tyrant that ever press'd the English throne—the Duke of York, duly James the Second—the burner of women and torturer of men, for the least freedom in thought or words. Every time the hitherto name of this city is written with the pen or spoken with the mouth it celebrates that man.—If it remains fastened to the city, when after times ask what the name perpetuates, they will have to be answered that it perpetuates the memory of that wretch whom his people chased away, but whose memory is preserved here in the grandest freest and most beautiful city of

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13 See Joseph Jay Rubin, *The Historical Whitman* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1973), pp. 311ff.

14 See *The Uncollected Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman*, ed. Emory Holloway (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1921), I, p. 247ff.

15 *Ibid.*, II, p. 274.

16 Clifton Joseph Furness, ed., *Walt Whitman's Workshop* (New York: Russell, 1964 [1928]), p. 61.

> the world!—It celebrates one who attempted the basest violations of his word, of the colonial charter of this very city, and of all human rights! A pretty name, this, to fasten on the proudest and most democratic city in the world![17]

In the *Words* notebook we find him recording the name he preferred in place of "New York" and supplying an etymology for it with pronunciation hints: "*Manhatta* (or *Monhatta*)—(A peninsular island, enclosed by active, changing, or playful waters.—Mä nä hatta." Amid some notes on "The States and Their Resources," he gives himself over to a small rhapsody on the name and the etymology: "The Mannahatta (that's it—*the* Mannahatta—the mast-hemmed—the egg in the next of the beautiful bays—my city—ma femme—O never forgotten by me."[18] Whitman repeated substantially the same etymology for "Mannahatta" a number of times—in a newspaper piece for the New York *Tribune* in 1879,[19] in a recorded conversation in 1889,[20] and in a letter that same year.[21] He claimed to have the "best authority" for his notion of the meaning of "Mannahatta" from two experts in Indian languages whom he identified as "Judge Furman, in Brooklyn—and Jeremiah Mason."[22]

That experts in place-names[23] even to this day are unable to offer as definite an interpretation of *Manhattan* as did Whitman—or his sources—is immaterial to our considerations here. What does come forth from

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17 *Ibid.*

18 Feinberg Collection. For a discussion of this group of manuscripts, see Hollis, "Names in *Leaves of Grass*," pp. 148-55.

19 *Prose Works 1892*, II, p. 683.

20 *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, V, p. 470.

21 Walt Whitman, letter to William Sloane Kennedy, October 10, 1889, *The Correspondence*, IV: 1886-1889, ed. Edwin Haviland Miller (New York: New York University Press, 1964), p. 381.

22 *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, V, p. 470. Gabriel Furman (1800-1854), a lawyer and antiquarian who served a term as a justice of the Brooklyn municipal court, was the author of *Notes Geographical and Historical Relating to the Town of Brooklyn on Long Island* (1824) and editor of a new edition of Daniel Denton's 1670 pamphlet, *A Brief Description of New York* (New York: William Gowans, 1845). In his introduction to the latter book, Furman discusses the etymology of "Manhattan" and says that the term means "violent running water" or "whirlpool"—a reference to Hell Gate, the narrow channel in the East River. Like Whitman, Furman lamented the loss of "Manhattan" as the name for the City and State of New York (see p. 46). Neither Furman nor Whitman lived to see the Indian name adopted for the borough in 1898. Jeremiah Mason (1768-1848), Whitman's other reference for Indian words, was a noted trial lawyer and United States Senator from New Hampshire with a great reputation for learning and homespun eloquence.

23 See Henry Gannett, *American Names* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1947); and George R. Stewart, *American Place Names* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

all Whitman's concern about American Indian names such as "Mannahatta" is that he was preoccupied with the idea of "appropriateness" in onomastics. As can be seen from the clippings he saved, he followed the controversy that followed the rechristening in 1869 of a number of United States Navy ironclads, which had originally been given Indian names, but which Admiral David Dixon Porter ordered would thenceforth be called by what the Admiral felt were less outlandish and more warlike and dignified names, drawn from, among other places, the Classics.[24] Whitman doubtless disapproved.

He likewise followed the namings of the new western territories with interest. In "Slang in America" he said that he considered the proposed name of "Oklahoma" for one of the new territories "perfect."[25] Among the loose notes in the Harned Collection, there is one on which he jotted, "Idaho means the Gem of the Mountains (the original name suggested was Montana)." Noting again the same etymology for Idaho on another Harned slip, he lamented that "Gem of the Mountains" had not been reserved for Colorado. On this same slip he offered a comment on the name of another of the territories: " 'Wyoming' is an inappropriate name [,] doesn't belong out there at all." and he was, of course, correct. *Wyoming* is an Algonquian name, originally applied to a valley in Pennsylvania; and Whitman was not alone in his protest against this transplanting of an indigenous Eastern word to the West.[26]

Besides being concerned, Whitman apparently even contemplated action—as his "Mannahatta" lecture had—which would have led to the correction of the many "inappropriate" names he saw in America. In his manuscript notes he wrote, "Some one should authoritatively re-name the mountains (? by act of Congress) [.] The great rivers and many of the smaller are [illegible word] to us by—majestic & musical names—Monogahela Alabama [.] 'Dakota' is right ('the proud & vengeful Dakota warriors.')"[27] And, naturally, he seriously objected to the displacement of native names already established by Europeanized names. Speaking to Traubel and commenting on two local railroad stops, "Wingohocking" and "Tulpehocken," Whitman said, "They are beautiful names . . . : they should be kept: they have some reason for being. . . . Why should we give up the native for borrowed names? Down in this country—right here, near us—there was a place called

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24 For example, see "Naval Names," *Galaxy* (September, 1869), pp. 423-25, Harned Collection.

25 *Prose Works 1892*, II, p. 576.

26 See Stewart, *American Place Names.*

27 Harned Collection.

Longacoming: the name was fine, fine—the mere sound of it: yet they got it into their fat heads that the name was not satisfactory: they met, put the old name aside for a new name: changed Longacoming to Berlin: oh God!"[28]

In his quest for authenticity in the use of Indian names, Whitman did not overlook the fact that the very word "Indian" as applied to native Americans was a misnomer. In the Harned Collection there is a note in which he remarked on this: "Names or terms get helplessly misapplied & wrench'd from their meanings—sometimes a great mistake is perpetuated in a word, (as when the term called the American aborigines *Indians* [sic])—the mistake is rectified but the word remains."

In applying his policy that "all aboriginal names are good," Whitman was not, however, without a sense of proportion and political reality. But he did not give up his basic tenet, as can be seen in the following conversation among Whitman, Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke, and Horace Traubel (who is the first-person speaker):

> I spoke of the new State, Washington. I said: "I'd rather they had given it an Indian name." W. said: "And I: but it would not do to publish that: our people cannot bear to hear Washington in any way indifferently mentioned." The pending proposition to call West Virginia "Kanawtha" [Kanawha?] appealed to him. Bucke said he never liked "Virginia" anyhow. But W. said: "I would be in favor of changing West Virginia: yes, I am sure I would: but Virginia I would let stand: it seems to have its own long reasons for being what it is." Dakota he liked very much, "and Tacoma! how fine that would have been for one of the new States!"[29]

Concerning these Indian names, Whitman said that he believed that they were, like his own poetry, "originals": ". . . they stand specifically alone—are not to be imitated—not to be manufactured. . . . There is nothing in all languages, ancient or modern, so significant—so individual —so of a class—as these names."[30]

Whitman's concern with the aptness of place-names was not confined, however, only to the use of American Indian names. He also believed that American places—especially towns—could be properly

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28 *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, III, p. 123.
29 *Ibid.*, IV, p. 324.
30 *Ibid.*, V, p. 488.

named in English if the word or words that made up the names tellingly portrayed some aspect of the terrain, environs, or history of the respective places and if the names embodied what he considered the correct variety of "slang." He explicitated this belief, which we might call his "Second Law of Geographic Nomenclature," in a passage in *An American Primer* in which he praised the practice whereby places are "named from some natural peculiarity of water or earth, or some event that happened there—often named, from death, from some animal, from some of those subtle analogies that the common people are so quick to perceive."[31]

He applauded names such as those for the towns of the northern plains which he encountered during his trip to Denver in 1879: "Eagle-Tail, Coyoté, Cheyenne, Agate, Monotony, Kit Carson."[32] These and other Western towns, with their untamed, raucous names pleased him. He assembled an even wilder bunch (probably lifted from some newspaper article) in "Slang in America": "Shirttail Bend, Whiskey Flat, Puppytown, Wild Yankee Ranch, Squaw Flat, Rawhide Ranch, Loafer's Ravine, Squitch Gulch, Toenail Lake, are a few of the names of places in Butte county, Cal."[33]

Besides approving of some names, Whitman, in several of his newspaper pieces about Long Island, registered his disapproval of the tendency to replace the original ruder or more explicit names of towns with more euphonious or—as he called them—"more romantic appellations." See, for example, the instances he gave of the way the "reformers" had substituted "Orient" for "Oysterponds," "Marion" for "Rocky Point,"[34] "Brooklyn Heights" for "Clover Hill,"[35] and "Hempstead" for the nickname by which the town was also generally known, "Clamtown."[36] In one of his notes, we see him similarly regretting the replacement of "Whitehorse," New Jersey, by the "new fangled name Kirkwood."[37]

Whitman was not without humor, however, in his discussion of the odd names some places enjoy. In regard to "Hardscrabble," Long Island, he noted with a chuckle that the town's officials, "with the rage for improvement," had decided that "*any* other name would be more

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31 P. 17.

32 *Prose Works 1892*, I, *Specimen Days*, ed. Floyd Stovall (New York: New York University Press, 1963), p. 219.

33 *Prose Works 1892*, II, p. 576.

34 *The Uncollected Poetry and Prose*, I, p. 250.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 255.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 176.

37 Harned Collection.

inviting than "Hardscrabble," so they had renamed the town "Farmingdale."[38] Though he seems to have sympathized with them somewhat, Whitman, citing by misconstruing Juliet's speech (What's in a name? that which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet . . ."),[39] decided that it actually did make a difference by what name the town was called. As for the old name "Hardscrabble," he said, "I think it was right."[40]

Whitman never, as far as this writer has found, voiced the need to reform the name of "Brooklyn"; but he did try his best to find the right amount of "appropriateness" in it. Although he mentioned at several points the older spelling of the city's name, "Breuklyn," he did not connect this name with the Dutch village of "Breukelen," after which his hometown was apparently named.[41] Instead, he offered such etymologies as "brook-land" (for all the local streams) and "broke(n)-land" (indicating the rolling hills of Long Island) in what seems to have been an attempt to demonstrate "Brooklyn's" conforming to his "Second Law," which in this case called for appropriateness via direct relationship of name to place.

Applying the principles of his "Second Law" to more than just places, Whitman also used them to assay the appropriateness of other American names. For instance, he liked the names of some of the "far-west newspapers," such as "*The Fairplay* (Colorado) *Flume, The Solid Muldoon*, of Ouray, *The Tombstone Epitaph*, of Nevada [Arizona?], *The Jimplecute*, of Texas, and *The Bazoo*, of Missouri."[42] Bucke recorded in *Notes and Fragments* a suggestion Whitman had for an apt name for a publication: "'The Scout.' A good name for a poem, a magazine, a newspaper."[43]

On the other hand, Whitman disapproved of certain names of American papers which he considered inappropriate. In the *Primer* he questioned some of these names: "Names of Newspapers. What has such a name as The Aegis, The Mercury, The Herald, to do in America?"[44] As we saw earlier, in regard to his embracing of aboriginal names, Whitman's rationale in demanding American names is linked to a rejection

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38 *The Uncollected Poetry and Prose*, I, p. 177.

39 *Romeo and Juliet*, Act II, Scene 2.

40 *The Uncollected Poetry and Prose*, I, p. 177. For further views of Whitman on how it does make a difference by what name something is called, see *An American Primer*, p. 34.

41 *The Dictionary of American History*, ed. James Truslow Adams and R. V. Coleman (New York: Scribner's, 1940).

42 *Prose Works 1892*, II, p. 576.

43 Vol. X, 34.

44 *An American Primer*, p. 35.

of "feudal" European associations. In one of the Harned manuscripts which also refers to newspapers, we can see this rejection very clearly: "Right in the midst of 1874-75 in the midst of the whirling & current scenes of New York life a leading daily journal to give a desperate cut at some scheme proposed in Congress consigns it 'to the tombs of the Capulets.' In fact the names of the papers the Tribune, the Herald, the Mercury, etc."

Another variety of names in which Whitman showed an interest—and of which he generally approved—is the kind of nicknames that are assigned to citizens of the various states or to the states themselves. In "Slang in America" he recorded 28 such nicknames by which natives of the individual states were reportedly called during the Civil War, e.g., "Maryland, Claw Thumpers; Virginia, Beagles; North Carolina, Tar Boilers; South Carolina, Weasels" and so on.[45] Among the Feinberg Collection manuscripts, there is another such list with a short heading which may indicate either that he collected this list on his way back from New Orleans in 1848 or merely that he copied from some source:

Western Nicknames

The nicknames given in the West to people of different communities, are not a little amusing and sometimes characteristic.—We subjoin a list gathered by the writer, while on a steamboat journey from Chicago to Buffalo.

New-Yorkers are called *Eels.*
Pennsylvanians—*Pennymites*
Missourians—*Pukes*
Iowans—*Gophers*
Ohioans—*Buckeyes*
Michiganians—*Wolverines*
Wisconsin people—*Badgers*
Illinoisians—*Suckers*
Indianians—*Hoosiers*
Kentuckians—*Corncrackers*
Virginians—*Tuckahoes*
Canadians—*Kanucks*
Oregonese—*Webfoots*[46]

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45 *Prose Works 1892*, II, p. 575.

46 This list is included in a set of clippings and notes dated and identified, in the Library of Congress card catalogue for the Feinberg Collection as "1847-1869 *Materials and Notes on Words.*" This list of 13 contains seven which overlap the nicknames given in "Slang in Amer-

In regard to the last citation in this list, there is another Feinberg manuscript which shows recording that "The Oregonese are called '*Web*foots,' a fact which he notes he received from a letter / Salem, Oregon / Oct. 1870." Attached to the note is a short newspaper clipping which explains that the Oregon nickname derives from the frequent rains in that state.

Whitman seems also to have been attracted by nicknames given to states, such as "The Empire State" for New York or "The Keystone State" for Pennsylvania. We can see this in his series of notes on "The States and Their Resources" where he recorded, apparently from Samuel G. Goodrich's *Geography and History,*[47] state nicknames especially for those states which he must have felt were not properly named.

As noted at the beginning of this essay, Whitman's poems are full of names. His catalogues are studded with them. This is apparent to all. From the preceding survey of his thoughts on the subject of naming, we can see that his use of names was not the result of capricious, haphazard, or uncritical standards. Rather, it was an essential manifestation of the poetic role he had chosen for himself. His poems were to be authentic renderings of the American experience, and the names used in them reflected his rage for appropriateness. The right name had power in it. As Whitman said, "*Names* are magic.—One word can pour such a flood through the soul."[48]

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ica," *Prose Works 1892*, II, p. 575. One name in this list which is probably a mistake is Whitman's notation of "Gophers" for "Iowans." In "Slang in America," he correctly associates "Iowa" with "Hawkeyes"; but he does not reassign "Gophers" to Minnesotans, whom he leaves out of the article list altogether.

47 Samuel G. Goodrich, *The World As It Is, and As It Has Been; or a Comprehensive Geography and History, Ancient and Modern* (New York: Colton, 1855).

48 *An American Primer*, p. 18.