Before plunging into new territory, we pause to take note of a series of addenda to subjects probed in previous articles of this series.

That is the "curse" of research. He who keeps searching, keeps finding, oftentimes objects other than those sought. The process is an endless one. As we advance toward our goals, those goals recede into infinity. Nothing remains static. Every stopping point is tentative and temporary. Never can we achieve the satisfaction of reaching the ultimate limit, of having scaled the highest summit. However far we have traveled, there is more just a little further up the road.

In the realm of long one-word place names, a new 22-letter hyphenated champion has been crowned: CHARLESTON-ON-THE-KANAWHA, West Virginia (Kanawha-2), an old name of the state capital. Another two 16-letter solid names have also appeared on the scene: MICHILIMACKINAC, Michigan (Emmet-3), and CHRISTIANSBURGH'S Depot, Virginia (Montgomery-4), the first very long name that is the initial word of a compound name. Does the apostrophe destroy the "solidity"?

In discussing very short names, we observed that two-letter names were too common to be interesting, per se. On the other hand, we must concede that names beginning with three consecutive two-letter words are a rarity. Two examples: PA PA ME, Michigan (Oceana-4), and CEJA DE GALISTEO, New Mexico (San Miguel-4).

Tautonymic names are becoming more popular. Further examples: LOU LOU, Montana (Missoula-4), not to be confused with LO LO, Montana (Missoula-4), through the post office of which LOU LOU happens to receive its mail, even though the map in this atlas equates the two names, and LAHLAHI, Hawaii (Honolulu-5). In the way of near misses, we commend to your care the 14-letter specimen AUBBEEN-AUBBE, IN. (Fulton-1). If only the "I" could be made an "E"!

Palindromes, too, are on the march, with KAYAYAK, Alaska (Bristol Bay-6), less inspiringly also known as KAGUYAK and so shown on the map in this atlas, leading the way. Naturally, it does not compare with the future metropolis of NO. TRENNASSERTON (12 letters!), apparently named after someone bearing the surname of Trenner. (For confirmation that this is, indeed, a surname, see Sources 7 and 8.)
Note of a conclusion of this series.

Hyphenation, as this series has shown, keeps prose tentative and informal in the making of letter transpositions, and the ultimate is far we have come.

Two-letter hyphenates: KANAWHA, Tewa, al. Another example: MICHLINGHI'S Design is the inverse of the "soldier's". Another two-letter example: CO, (Oceana-4)

In the field of all-vowel names, we suddenly have two brand-new co-champions: AUYAOYAO, The Philippines (Camarines Sur Province-9) and AYAOIYAO, The Philippines (Batangas Province-9). Both are names of barrios (villages or rural community units) on the island of Luzon, and we note appreciatively that the two names are substitute-letter transpositions of each other. The Philippines were under American control from 1898 to 1946; the name decisions included in Source 9 cover the period from 1890 to 1932. Draw your own conclusions.

Transposals will not be left behind. An authentic 11-letter transposition, well-shuffled and producing a non-name, is SAN ANTONITO, New Mexico (Bernalillo-1), rearrangeable into ANNOTATIONS. More significantly, the 12-letter name DAINGERFIELD, Texas (Morris-1) may be converted both into LIFE-DREADING and into FINGER-DIALED. Granted, both of these are coined words, but what of it? The dictionaries give us LIFE-ABHORRING; in what way is LIFE-DREADING less real? If you dialed a phone number with your finger (how else?), isn't it a FINGER-DIALED number?

So much for an updating of the first three articles in this series. We are ready now to take up a new subject.

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If all place names in the United States were arranged in one continuous alphabetical order, which name would be first, which would fall at the precise midpoint, and which would be the very last one?

Using ordinary standards, the very first name is AABYE, Minnesota (Norman-4), located in the southwestern part of its county: a fine Scandinavian name. Few logologists, of course, are ordinary people, so ordinary standards do not satisfy. If we adopt the alphabetization principles followed by atlases such as those published by C. S. Hammond and Company, then a name such as EL TORO precedes ELBA instead of following it. This opens up new vistas, and we soon discover AA JUNCTION, Arkansas (Johnson-10). Even this name, however, is surpassed by A B C, Tennessee (Sumner-5). The three letters comprising the name are written separately in Source 5, with no periods between them, making alphabetization on the basis of the first word being "A" mandatory. (However, purists may object to the fact that the same reference also lists this town as A. B. C. -- see the previous article in this series.)

Starting with ordinary standards once more, the very last name is ZYRZA, Georgia (Putnam-5), a community receiving its mail through the county seat of Eatonton. If we broaden our perception of a community ever so slightly, however, we light upon ZZYX SPRINGS, California (San Bernardino-11). ZZYX SPRINGS is both a hydrologic feature and a privately owned spa catering to the senior citizen, about 8 1/2 miles south of Baker, on the western edge of Soda Dry Lake, of the abandoned right-of-way of the old Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad.

Where is the midpoint of our alphabet? Between M and N. Con-
sequently, it may be approached from either direction, but never reached. Starting from the front of the alphabet, the name closest to the midpoint is MYTON, Utah (Duchesne-1). Starting from the back of the alphabet, the name closest to the midpoint is NAAHTEE, Arizona (Navajo-12). Or is it? A little digging yields NAAGETL, a Yurok Indian village on the lower Klamath river, just below AYOTL and above the mouth of Blue creek, in northwestern California (Source 13).

Up to this point, we have been considering names from a psychological standpoint: individually. Let us now consider them sociologically: in groups. Taken in groups, American place names exhibit some remarkable characteristics. Suppose, for example, someone were to ask you in what one state you might find LEWISTON, KOKOMO, and RENTON. Would you guess at Idaho, or Indiana, or Washington? If you did, you'd have to guess again, because the correct answer is Hawaii (Source 1). Or, you might be asked to identify the one state in which you could find CINCINNATI, CLEVELAND, and COLUMBUS. Yes, all three are in Ohio, but all three are also in Arkansas (Source 1) and in Indiana (Source 1).

Do you recognize ATHENS, BELFAST, BELGRADE, LISBON, MADRID, MOSCOW, PARIS, ROME, STOCKHOLM, and VIENNA as European capitals? Are the names BREMEN, CALAIS, DRESDEN, FRANKFORT, HANOVER, NAPLES, PALERMO, SORRENTO and VERONA familiar to you as well-known cities in Germany, Italy, and France? Have you been under the illusion that DENMARK, NORWAY, POLAND, SCOTLAND, SWEDEN, and WALES are countries in Europe? Have you been ready to swear on a stack of Bibles that BRISTOL, CAMBRIDGE, DOVER, LEEDS, MANCHESTER, MONMOUTH, NEWCASTLE, OXFORD, and PLYMOUTH are cities in England? Disabuse yourself of these fanciful notions. Taken as a group, all 34 names are those of towns in the state of Maine (Source 1).

You look at a map of one of our states, published today. On that map, you see town names such as SIKUL HIMATK, PIA OIK, KOXI-KUX, SIVILI CHUCHG, VAAYA VO, WAWK HUNDUNK, SCHUCHK, GU VO, MISHONGNOVI, TAT MOMOLI, TEEC NES POS, VAINOM KUG, and CHUI CHUISCHU. Where are you? In Arizona, of course (Source 1) -- those are present-day Indian villages, mostly Papago and Navajo.

One purpose of "An Onomastic Study" has been to lead up to the most fundamental of all onomastic principles, paralleling the ultimate logical principle that all words, without any exception, are logically remarkable and interesting. The onomastic corollary is that all names, without exception, are of intrinsic logical interest.

I spent more than 36 years living in or around CHICAGO, Illinois. That name is significant as the base of a charade that totally changes its pronunciation: CHIC + AGO. In 1972, I moved to DAYTON, Washington, of interest as a transpos of ADYTON, the innermost sanctu-
ary of an ancient Greek temple. The nearest sizable city is WALLA WALLA, Washington, one of the longest American tautonyms. And so it goes...

Shortly upon my arrival here, my attention was drawn to a small town 15 or 17 miles northwest of Dayton -- STARBUCK, Washington (Columbia-1). I have yet to visit STARBUCK, but I have been thinking about the name for many months. After a time, it came to me that STARBUCK was a transposal of SUBTRACK. This is not what it appears to be, a subordinate track of some sort, but a 16th-century spelling of "subtract" recorded in The Oxford English Dictionary. Timely and significant as this discovery obviously was, I felt intuitively that it did not exhaust the potential inherent in STARBUCK. The name radiated logological vibrations from a higher level, and I continued my reflections. Eventually, the real portent of STARBUCK came to me: it is the base for a word-building game in which you are asked to use the letters in the name to spell as many modes of transportation as you can. Self-evident examples include CAR, CART, BUS, SUB, TRUCK, CAB, and ARK. A little less obvious are BARK (a small sailing ship), TUB (a slow-moving boat), and (half-) TRACK (a lightly-armored motor vehicle). Locally, residents of the Chicago, Illinois area are keenly aware of the CTA (Chicago Transit Authority). How many more modes of transportation can you add to these humble beginnings?

For the moment, we have completed our survey of the onomastic scene, using names drawn at random from some 25 different reference works. We could have referred to many more, but whatever for? We have not begun to exhaust the potential of the ones used! What we have done is to set up guideposts, bringing you abreast of the current state of research into American place names. It is for you -- yes, YOU -- to grasp the torch and carry it forward, attaining ever higher levels of logological ingenuity.

Nor need you limit yourself to the particular problems surveyed in this series. A particularly important and urgent one not touched on here is that of devising a long state name chain. Such a chain, connecting 27 of the 50 state names, was displayed by Darryl H. Francis in the February 1971 issue of Word Ways. Although that chain has never been bettered, it can be lengthened substantially -- by someone willing to invest 100 hours of research in the project. Are you going to be that determined individual?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

2. West Virginia Place Names, by Hamill Kenny, The Place Name Press, Piedmont, West Virginia, 1945
VARIANT SPELLINGS IN MODERN AMERICAN DICTIONARIES

This is the title of a new 130-page soft-bound book written by Donald W. Emery, Professor of English at the University of Washington, who has examined word spellings in the five desk dictionaries most widely used in schools and offices. The book provides the quickest and easiest way of determining the preferred spellings of about 2,400 common or near-common words about the spelling of which there is some disagreement. It is somewhat startling to learn that there are exactly 11,197,440 different ways of writing the following sentence:

In a cozy house cater-cornered from the palace a finicky caliph, who maintained that a genie had revealed to him the secret of the cabala, spent much of his time smoking panatelas -- sometimes kef -- and training his pet parakeet.

Although the book is unlikely to be available in your local bookstore, it can be obtained (for $3.30) from the National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.