NEW WORD PALINDROMES

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The November 1973 issue of Word Ways comments on the relative paucity of new word palindromes in the literature of recreational linguistics. Lest this be interpreted as besmirching the reputation of present-day palindromists as compared with their illustrious predecessors, I have dipped into my secret files, and hasten to present a variety of word palindromes rarely if ever previously seen in print.

Let us begin with English-language examples. These are arranged in order of ascending letter length, and alphabetically under each letter length.

XE BEX the name of a corporation in Manhattan, N. Y., listed in the telephone directory as a manufacturer of electronic equipment
XOLOX the name of a locality in central Mexico, listed in the August 1965 edition of the Official Guide of the Railways; also, a trademark for a substance used in preparations for the treatment of skin infections, filed with the U.S. Patent Office in 1933
XOTOX the trade name for calcium carbonate used by a company in Denver, Colorado, listed in the Thomas Register

KILLIK a name listed in A Dictionary of English and Welsh Surnames (Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, Maryland, 1967) by Charles W. Bardsley
OLOOLO the name of a barrio on the island of Luzon, in the Philippines, listed in the 6th report of the United States Geographic Board (1890 to 1932), published in 1933 by the U.S. Government Printing Office

AKASAKA a district in Tokyo including the headquarters of top-class geishas, mentioned in "Mujina", one of the stories in Kwaidan, by Lafcadio Hearn.

GNIDING "crumbling, crushing": a 14th-century word in Webster's First Edition
HALALAH a monetary unit of Saudi Arabia, analogous to the American cent; the word is given in the 1971 Addenda Section of Webster's Third Edition
NAURUAN a native or inhabitant of Nauru Island, in the western Pacific; the word is found in Webster's Third Edition

NENONEN the surname of Vilho Nenonen who died in February 1960 and is listed in the New York Times Obituaries Index
NEUQUEN the name of a river, and of a town on that river, in
west-central Argentina; the name is given in Webster’ s New Geographical Dictionary

NIGAGIN a substance used as a preservative, found in the Seventh Edition of Chemical Symbols and Trade Names, by William Gardner and Edward I. Cooke

RENTNER the surname of Maurice Rentner who died in July 1958 and is listed in the New York Times Obituaries Index

VERY REV. an abbreviation of Very Reverend, the title given to the Dean of a Cathedral in the Episcopal Church

SNODONS plural of Snodon, a name listed in A Dictionary of English and Welsh Surnames (Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, Maryland, 1967) by Charles W. Bardsley


GNIPPING "nipping, champing": a 16th-century word in Webster’s First Edition, used in Scotland

IRASSARI an old spelling of Irissarry, a French village in the lower Pyrenees, southwest of St. Palais, found in A Geographical Dictionary or Universal Gazetteer (Henry Whipple, Salem, Mass., 1817 and 1823), by J. E. Worcester

PEEP-PEEP the cry of the hedge sparrow, as given in an 1880 quotation under peep in the Oxford English Dictionary

SNIFFINS’ that form of the gerundial plural sniffings which corresponds to the word fixin’s, a word found in sources such as The American Thesaurus of Slang by Berry and Van den Bark

SNIFFIN’ S that form of the verbal noun snippings which corresponds to the word fixin’s, a word found in sources such as p. 506 of H. L. Mencken’s The American Language, Supplement I.

TOOT-TOOT the blast of a horn: a light-face entry in the Oxford English Dictionary

ABBA-DABBA a slang word for jargon or nonsense, found in the Dictionary of American Slang, by Wentworth and Flexner

DR. AAGAARD the proper title of George Nelson Aagaard, professor of medicine at the University of Washington, the first person listed in the 1958-59 edition of Who’s Who in America

ELLEMLELL a small community in Belgium, southwest of Liege, given in the Mid-Century Edition of the Times Atlas of the World

KINIKINIK the name of a village in northern Alberta, Canada, southeast of Athabasca, found in Hammond’s Ambassador World Atlas

REP. PEPPER Irvin St. Clair Pepper of Iowa, 1876 - 1913, a member of the House of Representatives in the 62nd and 63rd Congresses

SANANANAS pale yellow crabs, given in the Dictionary of Jamaican English

SOMOSOMOS straits such as a certain strait in the Fiji Islands
named Somosomo; listed in The Times Index-Gazetteer of the World.

DETANNATED separated from, or free of, tannic acid; found as part of the description of a drug, detannated tincture of cinchona, in the 8th decennial revision of the Pharmacopeia of the United States.


ADAVEN, NEVADA the name of a community in Nye County, Nevada, shown on the maps of the Rand McNally Road Atlas.

SINRAM-MARNIS the name of an oil company in the Bronx, N.Y., listed in the local telephone directory.

GILES ASA SELIG the pseudonym of Joseph S. Thompson, author of The Miracle and Other Verses (Wallace Kibbie and Son, San Francisco, 1945).

YRELLA GALLERY the name of an art gallery at 322 West Miner Street, in Yreka, California, listed in the local telephone book.

English is not the only language catering to palindromes. Following are some examples drawn from various foreign languages. For the sake of simplicity, they are listed in straight alphabetical order.

ALLILLA an Icelandic word meaning "very badly".

ANONANONA the Hawaiian word for the lowly ant.

GWALLAWG a masculine first name in the Welsh language.

MALAJALAM the Dutch name for the language in India to which we refer by the equally palindromic Malayalam.

MARKTKRAM a German word designating stuff sold in a market.

MASSINISSAM in Latin, the accusative singular form of Massinissa, the name of a Numidian king of the 2nd century B.C., allied with Rome.

OOCOOCOO the Cherokee Indian word for the wild turkey.

OTTO-OTTO an Italian word designating eight-eight time in music.

RECONOCER a Spanish infinitive meaning "to consider, to contemplate".

REGALLAGER a German word describing a storage place for bookcases.

REGNINGER the Danish word for bills; the kind you have to pay.

RESSASSER a French infinitive meaning "to sift again; to harp on; to scrutinize".

SIMILLIMIS in Latin, the dative plural of similimus, the superlative of the adjective similis, translated as "very similar" or "most similar".

Islands