

## ASTRONOMY

# Harvard Astronomers Detect Cosmic Dust Cloud Near Pole

CONFIRMING earlier scientific "suspicions," Dr. Harlow Shapley, director of Harvard College Observatory, has just announced the discovery of a vast, sprawling cosmic dust cloud near the north pole of the sky, obscuring and reddening the light from the stars in this area.

While such dust clouds in the sky have been found in the Milky Way it is unusual to find one far removed. The new discovery will probably mean that the established values for magnitudes and the colors of stars in the polar region will need correction, said Dr. Shapley.

The polar dust cloud in space was found by studies of stellar photographs

in a survey directed by Dr. Shapley and Miss Rebecca Jones.

The cloud region is about two astronomical degrees in diameter and removed some three degrees from the north pole of the sky.

Besides being irregular in outline, the cloud is also probably irregular in its blocking effect on the light from more distant stars, the investigators believe. The presence of the cloud, "leads one to suspect a lack of transparency throughout this region, where starlight is not only cut down in intensity but is affected differently for different wavelengths, with the result that star colors will be abnormal," Dr. Shapley said.

*Science News Letter, July 31, 1937*

## LANGUAGE

# Experts on Indian Language Translate State Names

INDIAN language experts of the Smithsonian Institution have just given their latest translations of the names of those states having origins in Indian dialects. Kentuckians may be pleased to learn that the translation of Kentucky as "dark and bloody ground"—found in most texts—is false. Alabama, in contrast, will have to give up its poetic translation of "here we rest."

Here, state by state, are the new translations:

Alabama: Thicket cutters or, possibly, medicine gatherers. "Here we rest" is definitely not justified.

Arkansas: A name formerly applied

by the Illinois Indians to the Quapaw who lived about the mouth of the Arkansas River.

Arizona: From the Papago dialect meaning "place of few springs."

Kentucky: Probably from the Iroquois dialect with the root word meaning level, and hence "level land."

Tennessee: Meaning unknown. The name came from the Cherokee settlement named Tanasi but there is no root word in this dialect for such a word.

Ohio: From the Iroquois term generally translated "beautiful river" but probably meaning beautiful for fishing and not in the esthetic sense.

Illinois: From the Algonquin "Ilini" or man, plus the plural termination of "ek." French explorers probably shifted the ek to ois.

Texas: From the Hasinai word meaning friends or allies. The word was first a form of greeting like saying hello friend, or merely hello.

Dakota: The eastern Sioux term for friendly, or allied with the general use and meaning of Texas by the Hasinai Indians in the south.

Missouri: Probably from the Algonquin phrase meaning "he of the big

canoe." There is no possible justification for the usual translation "muddy water" sometimes mentioned.

Wisconsin: A complete linguistic blank. Some original Indian phrase may have been distorted by early Indians and then redistorted by early white explorers.

Minnesota: The famed "land-of-the-sky-blue-waters" is only an approximation. Minne is Sioux for "water," but sota means "clear but not perfectly clear." Hence a better approximation might be milky blue; with the blue referring to the river and not to the clear blue lakes of the north country.

Oklahoma: An easy one from the Choctaw and Chickasaw dialects meaning "red people."

Nebraska: From the Sioux meaning "flat water" or "water spread out."

Kansas: Same root word as Arkansas but applied here by another Siouan tribe.

Wyoming: Indian in origin, all right, but from the eastern tribe of the Delawares. In Delaware dialect, Wyoming means "on the plain" and applied to the region around what is now Wilkesbarre, Pa., scene of the Wyoming massacre. Pennsylvanians who migrated to the Rocky Mountain area carried the name from their homeland to their new state.

Massachusetts: From the Algonquin, meaning "Big hill."

Connecticut: Also from the Algonquin, meaning "on the big tidal river." This is the Connecticut River.

Iowa: From the Dakota dialect and a term of ridicule meaning "sleepy ones" which the northern neighbors applied to their more southerly colleagues across then non-existent state lines.

Mississippi: School children and grown ups, too, can take heart, for the well-known translation "big water" still prevails.

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