IT is announced in the *Bulletin* of the Mayo Foundation that for several years Dr. W. J. Mayo has had under consideration the conversion of his residence for educational purposes. The residence and the east half of the block on which it stands will be deeded, for the Mayo Foundation, to a board of trustees, the members of which are, tentatively, Dr. D. C. Balfour (chairman), Dr. Waltman Walters and H. J. Harwick. Dr. and Mrs. Mayo will build a new and smaller house, of simple construction and proportions, on the southwest section of the block. The present residence was built and occupied by Dr. and Mrs. Mayo in 1916. It is of reinforced concrete faced with stone and is fireproof. The two lower stories and the tower contain general living rooms; the third story is occupied by an assembly room. Surrounding the residence are spacious grounds, naturally wooded. Many visiting physicians from the United States and foreign countries have been entertained there. It is not planned to make radical changes either in the house or the grounds. Dr. Mayo intends to endow the property sufficiently to prevent taxes and general maintenance becoming a burden on the Mayo Foundation. Details of the use to which the property will be put will be formulated by the trustees. Broadly, Dr. Mayo intends that his gift shall aid in the educational aims of the Mayo Foundation and of the University of Minnesota.

The Experiment Station Record reports that an experimental aviary has been built on the top of Fernow Hall, which houses the department of ornithology at Cornell University. This aviary, a metal encased structure, will have large wire cages, containing smaller shelters to protect the birds, and a hall the length of the aviary where various experiments will be carried on. A study of bird migration is planned. Birds will be confined in the aviary during periods of the year when they normally migrate to discover how long this impulse persists and how it is related to physical changes in the birds.

THE Secretary of State for Scotland announces that the conjoined offices of Astronomer Royal for Scotland and of professor of astronomy in the University of Edinburgh will become vacant on October 1, owing to the resignation of Professor R. A. Sampson. Applications for appointment, accompanied by two copies of recent testimonials, should be in the hands of the Private Secretary, Scottish Office, Whitehall, London, S.W.1, not later than September 13. Particulars of the appointment may be obtained from him.

DISCUSSION

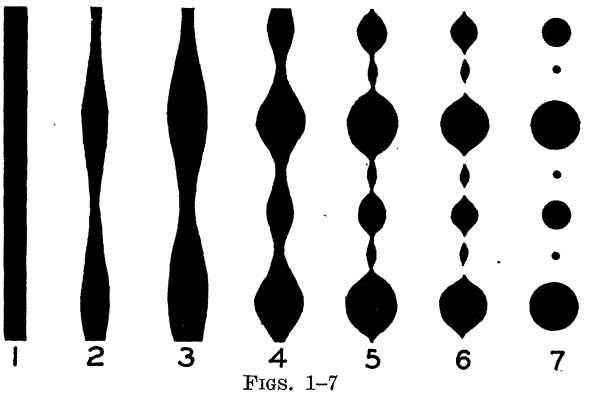
ANOTHER ANALOGUE OF PLATEAU'S SPHERULE

A RECENT note in SCIENCE[1] brings to mind another way in which liquid spherules may be formed. By the method described below, the rate of formation is easily controllable and may be made so slow that all details of the process can be watched without auxiliary apparatus.

If a filament of oil is formed in syrup, the filament will break up into a beautifully regular chain of drops at a rate depending on the viscosity of the liquids. The drops will form usually in two orders of size, and occasionally into three, the smaller drops being formed from the "tails" of the larger ones. The process for three orders is somewhat as indicated by the accompanying figures, where the successive stages are indicated by Figs. 1 to 7, respectively.

To any one wishing to observe the phenomenon, the following very simple procedure is suggested:

Fill a small (ca. 250 cc) beaker nearly full of white "crystal clear" Karo corn syrup and boil until it boils at a temperature of about 110° C. While still hot, cover with a thin layer (2 or 3 mm) of very heavy asphaltic oil (putting the oil immediately on the hot syrup prevents formation of a thick scum; if allowed to cool, the scum should be removed before covering with the oil). Let stand until cool. The filament of oil in the syrup may be formed by dropping an ordinary B-B shot (or a small steel ball bearing) on the oil. The shot will sink, carrying a long filament of adhering oil down into the syrup. This filament is unstable, apparently because of surface tension, and breaks up into drops.



FIGS. 1–7

The rate at which the filament breaks up is dependent on the viscosity of the syrup, which is controlled by the temperature to which it is boiled, and also by the temperature at the time the filament is formed. For experiments at room temperature the syrup should

[1] Charles H. Greene, SCIENCE, May 21, 1937.

have a boiling point of 107 to 110° C. and the drops will form in one or two minutes. If boiled to about 115° or 116° C., the drops will form very slowly, *i.e.*, requiring several hours, and will persist for hours or even days, for very small drops, before floating out to the surface of the syrup. Intermediate rates of formation of the drops may be obtained from syrup having boiling points at intermediate temperatures.

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BOTANY IN STATE NAMES

ANYTHING written by Dr. C. Stuart Gager, the versatile and distinguished director of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, is worth reading, and the lead article in SCIENCE for April 23, "Botanic Gardens in Science and Education," is no exception. Erudite, thought-provoking, yet withal witty, entertaining and charming, it holds one's attention, from the opening tribute to Swarthmore to the concluding reference to 1st Corinthians. The inaccurate second sentence can only be explained as another illustration of the old adage, "et Jupiter nuat." Pennsylvania is definitely *not* "the only state of our union that has any reference to plant life in its name." How about Florida?, or Vermont? or Quonecktacut, river of pines? Moreover, some authorities say that Alabama is a corruption of Choctaw "alba aya mule," meaning, "I clear the thicket," and one of the etymologies of Oregon is from *Origanum,* referring to a native plant with a marjoram-like scent.

W. A. DAYTON
FOREST SERVICE

THE MEANING OF STATE NAMES

I BELIEVE it was Will Rogers who said, "All I know is what I read in the papers." My knowledge of the origins of the names of the states in our union is of similar derivation. It seems to me the question hinges partly on the obviousness of the meaning and partly on the reliability and certainty of the authority consulted. The statement quoted from my Swarthmore address was that Pennsylvania "is the only state of our union that has any reference to plant life in its name." As supporting authorities I consulted: Gannett, Henry, "The Origin of Certain Place Names in the U. S.," *U. S. Geol. Survey Bull.* No. 197, 1902; Century Dictionary; Encyclopaedia Britannica. Mr. Dayton cites what he considers to be five exceptions to that statement:

Florida: Gannett says: "Named by Ponce de Leon 'the florid or flower land.' He chose this name for two reasons: First because the country presented a pleasant aspect [no definite reference to plants]; and, second, because he landed on the festival which the Spaniards call Pascua de flores, or Pascua Florida, 'feast of flowers,' which corresponds to Palm Sunday. The second reason is generally considered to have more weight." That is, the reference in the state's name is to a feast of the Catholic Church—only indirectly, if at all, to plant life. In view of the important part played by institutional religion in the lives of the Spanish explorers this second reason seems to me also more logical.

Vermont: I had always supposed the reference in this name was to mountains, not to plant life. It is the greenness of mountains that is referred to. What makes them green is not referred to in the state's name. Perhaps your correspondent would consider Red Sea to be also a reference to plant life, since the redness is due to the presence of one of the blue-green algae in the plankton. Does the name Blue Ridge also refer to plant life? If so, why not Red River?

Connecticut: Gannett says: "River and state. An Indian name, derived from Quonoktacut (Century Dictionary gives it Quonoktacat), meaning, according to some authorities, 'a river whose water is driven in waves by tides or winds.' Haines says, 'land on the long tidal river.' Other interpretations are, 'on long river,' 'long river,' and 'the long or without end river.'" So also the Century Dictionary. The World Almanac gives "river of pines," but cites no authority.

Alabama: Gannett says: "Named from an Indian tribe. There are several explanations of the meaning of the word. Gatchet gives 'burnt clearing' [reference to the absence of plants!]. Others say it means 'here we rest.' Haines, in his "American Indian," gives 'thicket clearers'" [reference to men who remove plants!]. Century Dictionary says, under Alibamu, "In the form Alibama . . . the name is first mentioned as that of a chief met by De Soto." Question: Was the chief already named when De Soto met him, or did the Spaniards give him his name?

Oregon: Century Dictionary says: "Jonathan Carver, in his 'Travels' (1763) named the River 'Oregon.' Possibly from Spanish *Orejon.* See *Orejones.*" Under *Orejones* we read that the early Spanish explorers applied that name to an Indian tribe who artificially distended the lobes of their ears. In the Spanish Dictionary the English meaning of *Oreja* is given as *auricle of the ear.* As to the state being named, as Dayton notes, "from *Origanum,* referring to a native plant with a marjoram-like scent," one would wish to know what that plant was. It must still be growing there if it was there during the years of Spanish exploration in sufficient quantity to suggest a name for the vast region that constituted the territory of Oregon (much greater than the area of the present state of that name). The genus *Origanum* is European, and is found in America only as an introduced plant. Question: Were the early explorers likely to have been