

Words and Their Stories: State Nicknames, Part 3

Now, the VOA Special English program WORDS AND THEIR STORIES.

Today, we tell about more interesting nicknames of American states.

The mid-Atlantic state of Maryland is called **the Free State**. A Baltimore newspaper first called it that during the nineteen twenties when the manufacture and sale of alcohol were banned for a time. Maryland said it wanted to be free from this prohibition.

Mississippi is **the Magnolia State**. It is named for a tree with big, beautiful white flowers that grows in that hot, southern state.

The midwestern state of Missouri is called **the Show Me State**. The people of that frontier state were once famous for not believing everything people told them.

If you visit the western mountain and plain state of Montana you will know why it is known as **Big Sky Country**.

Nebraska is the only state to have a nickname that honors sports teams! The state university's athletic teams are nicknamed Cornhuskers in recognition of one of the area's chief crops. The state borrowed the **Cornhusker** nickname from the university.

The western desert state of Nevada is called **the Silver State**. It was once home to many silver mines and towns that grew up around them. Today, most of them are empty “ghost towns.”

New Hampshire, in the northeast area called New England, is **the Granite State** because of that colorful rock.

New Jersey is between the big cities of New York, New York and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It got its nickname, **the Garden State**, because New Jersey truck farms once provided vegetables to those big cities.

New York, which always thinks big, was called **the Empire State** because of its natural wealth. The most famous Manhattan skyscraper got its name from the state. It is, of course, the Empire State Building.

If you get a chance to see a red sunset over the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of New Mexico, you will know why that southwestern state is called **the Land of Enchantment**.

North and South Carolina were one colony until seventeen twenty-nine. South Carolina's nickname is the easier of the two: It is **the Palmetto State** because of a fan-leafed palm tree that grows there. North Carolina is **the Tar Heel State**. That is because many of the men who worked to gather substances from trees wore no shoes. They would make turpentine from tar and get the black, sticky tar on the heels of their feet.

Next week, we will finish telling about the colorful nicknames of American states.