

Words and Their Stories: State Nicknames, Part 4

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

Today, we finish telling about the interesting nicknames that have been given to the fifty American states.

The state of Ohio is in the midwest. It is named the **Buckeye State** after a tree that produces nuts similar to chestnuts.

The Great Plains state of Oklahoma is called the **Sooner State**. That is because of a sale of land in eighteen eighty-nine. Some people arrived in the territory to claim their land earlier than they were supposed to. They cheated and got there "sooner."

Pennsylvania's nickname is the **Keystone State**. Just as a keystone holds together a stone arch, Pennsylvania was seen as holding together the young American republic.

Pennsylvania is also sometimes called the **Quaker State**. Its founder, William Penn, and most of his followers, were members of the Protestant Quaker religion.

Rhode Island's nickname is **Little Rhody** because of its size. The state is smaller than the area around Los Angeles, California.

Tennessee got its nickname -- the **Volunteer State** -- because of the bravery of its citizens. They volunteered to join Tennessean Andrew Jackson to defend the city of New Orleans, Louisiana, against the British army in the War of Eighteen Twelve.

Texas is called the **Lone Star State**. It gets its nickname from the single star on its flag. This represents the short time Texas was an independent nation battling Mexico for self-rule.

The **Beehive State** of Utah has no more beehives than any other state. The nickname is from the Mormon Church's symbol for hard work.

The eastern state of Vermont is proud of its beautiful Green Mountains so it calls itself the **Green Mountain State**. The southern state of Virginia is called the **Old Dominion**.

Long ago, King Charles the Second of England added the colony's coat of arms to his shield. It joined his other dominions of England, Ireland, and Scotland.

West Virginia broke away from Virginia in the eighteen sixties. It is called simply the **Mountain State** for the ancient Appalachian mountains.

And we have saved perhaps the most American nickname for last. The western state of Wyoming was once an area where cattle were transported east. And where there are cattle, there are men -- and now women -- to move them. So Wyoming is the **Cowboy State**.