

Now, the VOA Special English program, Words and Their Stories.

Almost all American cities have nicknames. They help establish a city's identity. They can also spread unity and pride among its citizens.

Two east coast cities -- Philadelphia and Boston -- were both important in the early history of the United States. Philadelphia is best known as "The City of Brotherly Love."

In 1681, King Charles the Second, of England, gave William Penn a large amount of land to establish a colony. The king named the colony Pennsylvania in honor of Penn's father. William Penn was a Quaker. He brought his beliefs about equality, religious freedom and brotherly love to this new land. Penn was also an expert in Latin and Greek. He established a city and named it Philadelphia, which is Greek for "brotherly love." An ancient city called Philadelphia was also noted in Christianity's holy book, the Bible.

Philadelphia became the social, political and geographical center of the American colonies. In the late 1700s, many events that took place in Philadelphia gave birth to the American Revolution and independence. For example, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were signed in the city. Philadelphia was the temporary capital of the new nation from 1790 to 1800.

Some of Philadelphia's other nicknames are "The Quaker City," "The Cradle of Liberty" and "The Birthplace of America." Philadelphia is a long name. So many people just call it "Philly."

Boston is another important city. It is one of the oldest cities in the United States. In 1630, Puritan settlers from England established Boston in what would become the state of Massachusetts.

Several major events took place in Boston before and during the American Revolution. You may have heard of the Boston Massacre, the Boston Tea Party and the Battle of Bunker Hill.

So, like Philadelphia, Boston is called "The Cradle of Liberty." Another nickname is "The Cradle of Modern America."

However, Boston's most famous nickname is "Beantown." But it was not because the city grew a lot of beans. In the 1700s, Boston was a major trading center. It received a lot of sugarcane from the West Indies. Beans baked in molasses -- a sugar product -- became a favorite food in the city. Today, no companies there make Boston baked beans. Restaurants in Boston rarely serve it. But many Americans eat this tasty dish at home.

This program was written by Shelley Gollust. I'm Barbara Klein. You can find more Words and Their Stories at our website, voaspecialenglish.com.



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