

## TOWN-AND-STATE NAME TRANSPOSALS

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Transposals of the US statenames have received considerable attention in previous editions of Word Ways. Familiar transposals include NOMINATES (MINNESOTA), NOWANIGHTS (WASHINGTON) and TAXES (TEXAS).

Transposals of the names of the state capitals have also figured in previous editions of Word Ways. Familiar examples include DOMAINS (MADISON, Wisconsin), HORNCastle (CHARLESTON, West Virginia) and TUINAS (AUSTIN, Texas).

In the May 2004 edition of Word Ways, we presented transdeletions formed from the names of the states and the corresponding state capitals. For example, a single letter can be deleted from SALEM OREGON to give ALEMONGERS. But we were unable to offer any transposals at all of the name of a state and its state capital.

This set me wondering as to the feasibility of finding any placename in the US which could be combined with the appropriate statename. After some considerable searching, we have managed to amass a collection of 30 reasonably lengthy transposal combinations. Presented in descending order of length, here they are.

### 16 letters

#### **Lismore, Minnesota**

This pair transposes to REMAIN MOTIONLESS. While not a word or term listed as a main entry in any dictionary, this does appear at least six times in the Oxford English Dictionary Online (OED Online), twice in definitions and four times in illustrative quotations. Here are the two definitions, both at STAND, where the phrase occurs in the body of the definition:

**4. a.** To **remain motionless** on one's feet; to cease walking or moving on. More explicitly **to stand fast, still**, etc.

**27. a.** Of liquids: To cease flowing; *esp.* of water, to collect and **remain motionless**, be stagnant.

### 15 letters

#### **Presto, Minnesota**

This pair transposes to MONTE SAN PIETRO'S, the possessive form of MONTE SAN PIETRO, the name of a municipality in the province of Bologna in Italy, with a 2004 population of around 11,000 (Wikipedia website). It's even possible to find a website with an occurrence of the apostrophized form. The following brief restaurant review was found on a website dedicated to Italian cooking and eating:

Monte San Pietro's Bonzara (tel. 0516768324). The vineyard offers a restaurant, farmhouse and museum for the best in wine-tasting experiences.

We felt that inclusion of this particular term was warranted, despite its apostrophe and three-word name, because of the obvious rarity of such 15-letter transposals.

#### 14 letters

##### **Albert, Michigan**

This pair transposes to AMERICAN BLIGHT, a synonym for 'woolly apple aphid', an aphid that attacks apple and other trees. Listed in Webster's Third (W3).

##### **Ripon, Minnesota**

This pair transposes to PRENOMINATIONS, the plural of PRENOMINATION, an obsolete noun, a previous mentioning (W3)

##### **Silas, Minnesota**

This pair transposes to SENSATIONALISM, sensational subject matter (W3).

#### 13 letters

##### **Circle, Montana**

This transposes to NECROMANTICAL, an obsolete variant of 'necromantic', relating to necromancy, the art or practice of magically revealing the future through communication with the dead (W3).

##### **Darien, Georgia**

This transposes to GREGARINOIDEA, a synonym for 'Gregarinida', a large order of parasites occurring in insects (W3).

##### **Iron, Minnesota**

This transposes to RENOMINATIONS, acts of nominating again (W3). Note that this is a single-letter transdeletion of RIPON, MINNESOTA / PRENOMINATIONS, above.

##### **Rosemont, Maine**

This transposes to the three-word term A SENIOR MOMENT. While this three-word term doesn't appear in dictionaries, the two-word SENIOR MOMENT is listed in the OED Online, and the three-word term appears in two of the associated illustrative quotations. Here's part of the entry at SENIOR from the OED Online:

**senior moment** *n. colloq. humorous* an instance or short period of forgetfulness or confusion, such as might be experienced by an elderly person.

1996 *Re: probably Most Stupid Question to ask in this Group in rec.food.cooking* (Usenet newsgroup) 3 May, Please ignore this person. He is obviously suffering from a \***senior moment**. 2003 *Yours* Oct. 5/1 Have you had one recently? A **senior moment** that is? Where you've heard yourself saying or doing something silly, absent-minded or unaccountable.

#### 12 letters

##### **Belfast, Maine**

This transposes to MANIFESTABLE, capable of being manifested, a simple entry from W3.

##### **Canon, Georgia**

This transposes to GORGONIACEAN. You have to turn to Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition (W2) to find this listed, beneath the line. It is an adjective, undefined, but obviously pertaining to Gorgoniacea, a synonym for Gorgonacea, an order of Alcyonaria, including such specimens as sea fans and sea shrubs. Any the wiser? Looking up Alcyonaria only makes the definition even more confusing. Suffice it say, GORGONIACEAN probably means 'pertaining to certain sea anemones and corals'.

**Lattners, Iowa**

This transposes to LAW-STATIONER. While W3 has this as a two-word term (defined as 'one that deals in paper, forms, and other stationer's supplies used by lawyers and that in Great Britain and Ireland also makes fair or engrossed copies of legal instruments'), the OED Online has the hyphenated spelling.

**Talent, Oregon**

This transposes to LOT-ET-GARONNE, a department in the southwest of France named after the Lot and Garonne rivers. Its 1999 population was 305,000. The name is listed in the Times Index Gazetteer (TIG), and the additional supporting details can be found at a variety of websites.

**11 letters**

**Bath, New York**

This transposes to the everyday phrase KNOW BY HEART. While this doesn't appear as a main entry in the major dictionaries, it does appear in the OED Online at the entry "know" as follows:

To have learnt by committing to memory; more fully, *to know by heart*: see HEART *n.* 32.

**Carmel, Maine**

This transposes to AMERICAN ELM, a large and well-known ornamental tree common in eastern North America with gradually spreading branches, listed in W3.

**Carson, Maine**

This transposes to CAMERONIANS, the plural of CAMERONIAN, a person that holds the ecclesiastical and political doctrines of Richard Cameron and his followers who refused to recognize any civil government that did not explicitly admit that it derived its power from Jesus Christ (W3).

**Esto, Florida**

This transposes to DEFOLIATORS, the plural of a word with an obvious enough meaning: one that defoliates (W3). W3 also defines it as an insect that strips plants of their leaves, and a defoliant (or chemical spray).

**Salmon, Idaho**

This transposes to ANIMALHOODS, the plural of ANIMALHOOD, one of those many undefined words appearing 'beneath the line' in Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition (W2). The word is listed in the OED Online, where it is defined simply as: 'the state or condition of the inferior animals.'

**Strong, Maine**

This transposes to ENTORGANISM, an internal parasite (W2).

**10 letters**

**Acton, Maine**

This transposes to ACTINONEMA, a technical biological term (W3). W3's definition is the highly informative: 'a form genus of imperfect fungi (order Melanconiales) having hyaline 2-celled spores'.

**Aledo, Texas**

This transposes to DESOXALATE, a salt of desoxalic acid. DESOXALATE appears in both the OED Online and Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition (W2).

**Alton, Maine**

This transposes to TELAMONIAN, an adjective derived from TELAMON, a figure of a man used as a supporting column in architecture. In Greek mythology, TELAMON was the father of Ajax. While TELAMON is listed in W3 and OED Online, the adjectival TELAMONIAN only appears in a number of illustrative quotations in the OED Online. Here's one appearing at the entry OVERPITCH from the OED Online:

a1800 W. COWPER tr. Homer *Iliad* XXIII, in *Wks.* (1835-7) 310 Epeüs seized the clod. He swung, he cast it... Leonteus..quoited it next. Huge **Telamonian** Ajax with strong arm Dismiss'd it third, and overpitch'd them both.

**Goshen, Utah**

This transposes to STONEHAUGH, a place in Northumberland, England. According to the Wikipedia website "Stonehaugh is a small settlement in Northumberland about 7 km west of Wark and 4 Roman miles (6 km) north of Hadrian's Wall. It was purpose-built for housing forestry workers in the 1950s. It has a spectacular scenic views and a local artist's totem poles grace the local and lovely picnic area."

**Manila, Utah**

This transposes to MIAHUATLÁN, which, according to the TIG, is a place and river in Mexico. Additional information and pictures of MIAHUATLÁN can be found on a variety of websites.

**Paris, Idaho**

This transposes to APHRODISIA, a W3 term defined as sexual desire especially when violent.

**Pratts, Ohio**

This transposes to HOSPITATOR, a person who receives or entertains hospitably (OED Online).

**Solon, Maine**

This transposes to MONOSILANE, a colorless gas SiH<sub>4</sub> that is spontaneously flammable in air (W3).

**Stone, Idaho**

This transposes to THEODOSIAN, of or relating to one of two Roman emperors called Theodosius (W3).

**9 letters****Manti, Utah**

This transposes to THAUMATIN, either or both of two related sweet-tasting proteins isolated from the fruit of the African plant *Thaumatococcus daniellii* (OED Online).

### **Paris, Ohio**

This transposes to ISOPHORIA, the quality or state of having the visual axes of the two eyes in the same horizontal plane (W3).

### **Encore**

These 30 town-and-state name transposals are taken from just thirteen states: Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, Utah. It would be good to extend this small transposal collection to encompass some of the other states. Can anyone add further states to this list?

There is one further way to extend the list above, and that's to find examples of "town X is in state Y, and town Y is in state X". Revisiting the material used for the article A Statename Chain (Word Ways, November 1970), it's worth recording that there is a town called Virginia in Washington state (in Kitsap county), and a town called Washington in Virginia state (in Rappahannock county). So, we can legitimately offer the following 18-letter specimen, deserving of a place at the top of the list in this article!

**Virginia, Washington – Washington, Virginia**

## **A POEM**

MARTIN GARDNER  
Norman, Oklahoma

This is an excerpt from Gardner's 1969 book *Never Make Fun Of A Turtle, My Son* (Simon and Schuster, illustrated by John Alcorn).

## **Share Toys**

Be kind and share your toys, dear Rose,  
With friends who come to call.  
Don't be a selfish little girl  
And start a noisy brawl.

If Pattie, Les and Tina  
Play with something that is yours,  
You mustn't yell and stamp your feet  
And order them outdoors.

A girl who never shares her toys  
With friends who come to play,  
Will soon discover that her friends  
Prefer to stay away.