

US STATE NICKNAMES, SLOGANS & LICENSE PLATE LEGENDS

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Over the years, Word Ways has offered transposals of the names of US state names and state capitals, well as transdeletions and transadditions. But in this article, I look at transposals of state nicknames (both current and no longer in use), state slogans (used for promoting tourism, past and present), as well some of the legends that appear on vehicle license plates from different states.

There are many websites offering US state nicknames and slogans, but Wikipedia seems to have more than other websites (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_nicknames and en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_slogans). But there are nicknames, slogans and the like on other websites which are missing from Wikipedia. Perhaps a future Word Ways article might amass all the different nicknames, slogans and similar material from a wide variety of websites.

Anyway, I have found transposals for nicknames and slogans of 28 different states, or 29 if you treat Puerto Rico as a potential future US state. Let's take a look at them.

Alaska – Great Land

Great Land is a legend which previously appeared on Alaskan vehicle license plates. There is a simple transposal here – **tear-gland** – spelled as two words in Webster's Third, but hyphenated in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED).

Arizona – Baby State

Arizona is called the **Baby State** as it's the newest continental state in the US, having been admitted to statehood in 1912. The transposal here is **Tyabb East**, which is a small town south-east of Melbourne, in the Australian state of Victoria. The name can be found on the website en.factolex.com/Tyabb_East.

Arizona – Sunset State

Sunset State transposes to **sustentates**, an archaic word for 'sustains'. Webster's Second describes the word as 'archaic', whereas the OED describes it as 'archaic and rare after the 17th century'.

Arkansas – Bear State

Bear State has three transposals. There's **Battersea**, a district in London. The OED also notes that **Battersea** is used to designate articles ornamented with a decorative enamel produced at York House, Battersea, in the 18th century. The remaining transposals are **Atrebates** (Webster's Second) and **breast tea** (Webster's Third).

Arkansas – Wonder State

An additional nickname for Arkansas, **Wonder State** can be transposed to **western toad**, a large toad of western North America, according to the OED. It seems rather surprising that this term doesn't appear in either Webster's Second or Webster's Third.

California – Bear State

Sharing this nickname with Arkansas, the same transposals are available: **Battersea**, **Atrebates** and **breast tea**.

Colorado – Silver State

No longer used as a nickname for Colorado, **Silver State** can be transposed to **Valse Triste** (Sad Waltz), which is a short orchestral work in waltz form by the Finnish composer Jean Sibelius, dating from 1904.

Florida – Flower State

Flower State has the trivial transposal **state flower** (W3)

Florida – Orange State

Another nickname for Florida is **Orange State**, which transposes to **Great Easton**, the name of two English villages in Essex and Leicestershire listed in *The Ordnance Gazetteer of Great Britain* (3rd edition, 1992).

Florida – Peninsular State

Peninsular State is yet another nickname for Florida, which can also be spelled as Peninsula State. The spelling-with-the-R transposes to **Instant Pleasure**, a song written by pop songwriter Seth Swirsky which was featured in Adam Sandler's film, *Big Daddy* (1999). Check out the film on the www.imdb.com website.

Idaho – Gem State

The straightforward dictionary transposal of **Gem State** is **test game** (Webster's Second). But a Google search for the term **megatest** turns up over two million occurrences, with several different definitions and meanings, including an IQ test, a specific piece of software, a test to stress software, and a user name on several social networking websites.

Illinois – Corn State

There are four different transposals of the nickname **Corn State**. The OED has **Cantor set**, which it defines as 'the set of points left by removing from a line of unit length all points whose distance from one end is greater than $\frac{1}{3}$ and less than $\frac{2}{3}$, then removing similarly the middle third of the two segments so formed, and so on indefinitely'. The Ordnance Survey Gazetteer of Great Britain has **Casterton**, a small village and civil parish in the county of Cumbria, England. The third transposal is the surname **Catterson**. Tom Catterson (1884–1920) was a professional baseball player who played outfield from 1908 to 1909 for the Brooklyn Superbas. The fourth transposal is **contrast**, a 17th century variant spelling of 'contrast' (OED).

Louisiana – Creole State

Creole State has a straightforward transposal, **electorates** (Webster's Third).

Maine – Lumber State

Maine's **Lumber State** nickname transposes to **Stream Bluet**. This is a species of American bluet damselflies, with the technical name *Enallagma exsulans*, in the family Coenagrionidae. Wikipedia has the details.

Maryland – Crab State

The state's **Crab State** nickname has a couple of transposals. Webster's Third has **cabrettas**, and the OED has **cabarets**, the plural of 'cabarett', a 16th century variant spelling of 'cabaret'.

Massachusetts – Make it Yours

Make it Yours is a tourist advertising slogan. The transposal here is **Your Mistake**, a 2002 single release by Sister Hazel, an alternative rock band from Gainesville, Florida, whose style also blends elements of folk rock, pop, classic rock 'n' roll and southern rock. The **Your Mistake** track also appeared on the group's *Chasing Daylight* album. Details on Wikipedia.

Michigan – Great Times

First off, the complete tourist advertising slogan is “Great Lakes, Great Times; More To See”. But I felt that the interposed comma and semicolon gave each of the three parts some legitimacy of their own. The transposal of **Great Times** is **tiger teams**. According to *Oxford Dictionary of English* (3rd edition, 2010), a tiger team is a team of specialists in a particular field brought together to work on specific tasks. But *Chambers Dictionary* (12th edition, 2011) has two more specific definitions: (1) a group of counter-intelligence agents who test the security of military bases, and (2) a group of computer hackers who are employed to test the secureness of a computer system.

Michigan – More to See

As with the previous item, I felt that But I felt that **More to See** had some legitimacy of its own. If you disagree, skip this transposal, which is **osteomere** (Webster's Second & OED).

Mississippi –Magnolia State

Magnolia State can be transposed to **Galmae Station**, a railway station on the Gyeongchun Line, a railway line connecting Seoul to Chuncheon in South Korea. Details are on Wikipedia.

Missouri – Lead State

Delta EATS is an in-flight snacks and meals option available on domestic US, Canada, Latin American and Caribbean flights of Delta Airlines. Further details are at www.inflightfeed.com/delta-airlines/

Nevada – Silver State

Nevada currently uses **Silver State** on its vehicle license plates. It can be transposed to **Valse Triste** – further details above for Colorado.

New Mexico – Red or Green

The meaning of this tourist advertising slogan isn't clear (to me, anyway). But there is a not-too-well-shuffled transposal of **GreenOrder**, a US management consulting group specialising in environmental sustainability. For details, see Wikipedia and greenorder.com

New York – Empire State

Probably the most widely known of the nicknames presented in this article, **Empire State** transposes to **pre-estimate** (Webster's Second & OED). The OED also has the unhyphenated yet accented spelling **preëstimate**.

New York – I love New York

And this is probably the most widely known tourist advertising slogan in this article, often also displayed on tee-shirts and other items as the logo I♥NY. The state song also happens to be **I Love New York**. The transposal of this slogan is **Olive, New York**, Olive being a town in Ulster County, New York, with a population of 4,419 at the 2010 census. Wikipedia has more information.

North Carolina – Tar Heel State

Altes Theater was a theatre in Leipzig, Germany, which was operational between 1923 and 1936. It's not clear from the limited number of internet references whether this is still open or has long since closed down. One website which mentions **Altes Theater** is www.usq.edu.au/artsworx/schoolresources/mothercourage/Timeline

North Dakota – Legendary

The **Legendary** slogan, used to promote tourism, transposes to **enragedly** (Webster's Third).

Oklahoma – Sooner State

Roseta Stone is an occasional misspelling of Rosetta Stone, an ancient Egyptian granodiorite stele inscribed with a decree issued at Memphis (Egypt, not Tennessee!) in 196 BC on behalf of King Ptolemy V. Google provides almost 50,000 hits for the misspelling, while Wikipedia has more details on the Rosetta Stone.

Oregon – Beaver State

Esteve Rabat (born May 1989 in Barcelona, Spain) is a Spanish motorcycle racer who currently competes in the Moto2 class in the Motorcycle World championship. Wikipedia has details, as do many other websites dedicated to motorcycle racing.

Oregon – Union State

There's a couple of transposals here, both names of railway stations in Japan. **Neu Station** is a train station in Hino, Tottori Prefecture. And **Une Station** is a railway station in Akō, Hyōgo Prefecture. Wikipedia and other websites can provide more information.

Oregon – Sunset State

Oregon uses this nickname as well as Arizona. As described above, **Sunset State** transposes to **sustentates**, an archaic word for 'sustains'.

Puerto Rico - Isla del encanto

I know it's not a US state, but I'm aware that in November 2012, 61% of Puerto Ricans chose statehood as the alternative to the current commonwealth status. **Isla del encanto**, which translates as "Island of Enchantment", transposes to **Castile and Leon**, an autonomous community in north-western Spain. It was constituted in 1983 and it comprises the historical regions of León and Old Castile; it is the largest autonomous community in Spain, covering an area of nearly 95,000 square kilometres with an official 2011 population of around 2.5 million. Wikipedia has the details.

Rhode Island – Hope

Hope appears on Rhode Island's state flag, and has also been used in the past to promote tourism in the state. **Hope** transposes to **peho** (Webster's Second) and **Hepo**. The latter is an alternative name for the town of Jiexi, which is in Guangdong province, China. Quite why a Chinese town with the Chinese-looking name of Jiexi should have an alternative un-Chinese-looking name of **Hepo** isn't clear! Nevertheless, both **Hepo** and Jiexi are listed in *The Times Concise Atlas of the World* (2010 edition).

South Dakota – Artesian State

Santa Teresita is a municipality in the province of Batangas, Philippines. According to the latest census, it has a population of 16,891 people in 2,762 households. Details are at Wikipedia.

Texas – Chili State

One of several nicknames for Texas, **Chili State** transposes to **theistical** (Webster's Third & OED).

Vermont – I LoVermont

The former tourist advertising slogan here simply runs together Love and Vermont, to create the rather odd-looking **I LoVermont**. When this slogan was created, I'll bet its creators never realised it was a transposal of **Levi Morton**. As students of US politics and history will be aware, **Levi Morton** (1824-1920) was a Representative from New York and the 22nd Vice President of the United States (1889-1893). He also later served as the 31st Governor of New York.

Washington – Say WA!

Another tourist advertising slogan, which could equally well have been rendered as Say followed by any of the other 49 state abbreviations. Not so catchy! Anyway, the transposals here are **asway** (Webster's Third) and **aways** (OED).

Wyoming – Park State

This state nickname has five transposals. The OED has **state park** and **TetraPaks**. A careful search of the OED also reveals **partakest**, an obsolete form of the verb 'partake', appearing in an illustrative quotation at the entry for 'of': paragraph 29b has this quote from the 1611 version of the Authorized Version of the Bible "And thou..with them partakest of the roote and fatnesse of the Oliue tree." **Kaspar Ett** was a German composer and organist (1788-1847) – see Wikipedia. And finally, **Patrasket** is a travelling theatre, which tours all over Denmark and a great deal abroad – see www.patrascket.dk

The Wikipedia sources used are:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_nicknames

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_slogans

