

## **Nicknaming in American Culture / Language**

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### **1 Introduction**

Nicknaming or the use of an informal name in place of, or together with a formal name is a universal phenomenon. Nicknames are most common for persons and places.

In American culture/ language nicknaming is almost a natural hobby. Indeed all states have one or more nicknames, and so do famous people, rivers, food, drinks, and even trains, planes, dollar notes (or bills), etc.

This paper examines first the form or processes of nicknaming, and second gives an exhaustive list of all American states, and a few examples of nicknames of people, towns and cities rivers, etc.

### **2 Forms of Nicknaming**

A common form of nickname is a modification of the formal name by clipping alone (Ed for Edward), clipping and diminutive suffix (Eddy, Teddy), sometimes with many variations (Eliza, Liza, Lisa, Liz, Lizzie; Betty, Beth, and Betsy for Elizabeth).

Sometimes, the modification can lead to an entirely different form such as Polly from Mary and Peggy from Margaret. Another form of nickname is the descriptive epithet either on its own (Shorty for someone short, or ironically for someone tall), or following the given name (Ivan the terrible, Richard Lionheart). Nicknames may be neutral (Bill, Johnny),



admiring ((the) king), or stigmatised (Stinky), and show a more intimate and often emotive relationship between addresser and addressee.

Nicknames are informally given, as opposed to the ritual naming ceremonies typical of formal names, as in Christening ceremonies or launching ships. They have, however, sometimes been adopted as regular names, as with such surnames as Black, White, Brown, Draft, etc.

### 3 Nicknames of states

Alabama	Lizard State
Alaska	1)Uncle Sam's Attic 2)U.S.' Icebone
Arizona	1)Sunset State 2)Grand Canyon State 3)Apache State 4)Badger State 5)Baby State
Arkansas	1)Land of Opportunity 2)Wonder State 3)Bowie <sup>1</sup> State
California	1)Grape State 2)El Dorado State 3)Grizzly State 4)Sunset State 5)Golden Poppy State 6) Golden State
Colorado	1)Buffalo Plains State 2)Centennial State
Connecticut	1)Constitution State 2)Land of Steady Habits 3)Nutmeg State 4)Blue Law State

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<sup>1</sup>Bowie=Knife



Delaware	1)Blue Hen's Chickens State 2)Diamond State 3)Blue Hen State 4)Uncle Sam Pocket Hand Kerchief
Florida	1)Everglade State 2)Flower State 3)Alligator State 4)Gulf State
Georgia	1)Peach State 2)Goober <sup>2</sup> State 3)Cherokee Rose State 4)Cracker <sup>3</sup> State 5)Empire State of the South
Hawaii	Paradise of the Pacific
Idaho	1)Gem of the Mountains 2)Gem State
Illinois	1)Corn State 2)Sucker State
Indiana	1)Hoosier State 2)Crossroads of America
Iowa	1)America's Heartland 2)Hawkeye State
Kansas	1)Grasshopper State 2)Squatter State 3)Sunflower State 4)Wheat State 5)Central State 6)Jay Hawker State <sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Goober =Pea-nuts

<sup>3</sup>Cracker =poor white

<sup>4</sup>Bandit, outlaw



Kentucky	1)Corn Cracker State 2)Bluegrass State 3)Tobacco State 4)Land of the Bluegrass Belle 5)Rock- Ribbed State
Louisiana	1)Pelican State 2)Creole State 3)Sugar State
Maine	1)Lumber State 2)Fox State 3)Pine Tree State 4)Switzerland of America
Maryland	1)Black-eyed Susan State 2)Free State 3)Cockade State
Massachusetts	1)Puritan State 2)Blacked Bean State 3) Bay State
Michigan	1)Lake State 2)Wolverine <sup>5</sup> State
Minnesota	1)Little Sweden 2)New Sweden 3)North Star State 4)Bread and Butter State 5)Land of 10 000 Lakes 6)Gopher State
Mississippi	1)Mudwaddler State 2)Bayou State 3)Border Eagle State 4)Eagle State 5)Magnolia State

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<sup>5</sup> Bear



Missouri	1) Bullion State 2) Show- me State
Montana	1) Bitter Root State 2) Bonanza State 3) Treasure State
Nebraska	1) Cornhusker State 2) Black Water State
Nevada	1) Sagebrush State 2) Battle born State 3) Silver State
New Hampshire	Granite State
New Jersey	1) Clam State 2) Garden State
New Mexico	1) Land of Enchantment 2) Sunshine State
New York	1) Exclusion State 2) Empire State
North California	1) Tar and Turpentine <sup>6</sup> State 2) Tarheel State 3) Flickertail State
North Dakota	1) Sioux State 2) Great Central State
Ohio	Buckeye State
Oklahoma	Sooner State
Oregon	Beaver State
Pennsylvania	1) Keystone State 2) Coal State 3) Buttermilk State 4) Keystone State
Rhode Island	1) Gun Flint State 2) Little Rhody 3) Plantation State

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<sup>6</sup> Cheap whisky



South Carolina	1)Iodine State 2)Sandlapper State 3)Palmetto State
South Dakota	1)Sunshine State 2)Coyote State 3)Blizzard State 4)Swing Cat State
Tennessee	1)Hog and Hominy State 2)Volunteer State 3)Big Bend State
Texas	1)Jumbo State 2)Beef State 3)Lone Star State 4)Long horn State
Utah	1)Desert State 2)Beehive State
Vermont	Green Mountain State
Virginia	1)Cavalier State 2)(The) Mother of Presidents <sup>7</sup>
Washington	1)Chinook <sup>8</sup> State 2)Evergreen State
West Virginia	1)Mountain State 2)Panhandle <sup>9</sup> State
Wisconsin	1)Badger State 2)America's Dairyland
Wyoming	1)Cowboy State 2)Equality State

<sup>7</sup> Eight presidents were born in Virginia: George Washington , Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, William Harrison, John Taylor, Zachary Taylor and Woodrow Wilson

<sup>8</sup> Panhandle =to beg

<sup>9</sup> Hot wind



#### 4 Nicknames of places

New York	1)Gotham 2)Big Burgh 3)Big City 4)America's Megalopolis 5)Big Apple 6)Empire City
Hollywood	1)Film City 2)Film Town 3)Flicker City 4)Follywood 5)Girlyville 6)Glamour Town
San Francisco	1)Frisco 2)Golden Gate City 3)Boston of the Pacific 4)Queen of the Pacific
Chicago	1)Big Windy 2)Windy City 3)Beefopolis 4)Hogopolis
Pittsburgh	Big Smoke
Minneapolis	Sawdust City
Milwaukee	1)Beer City 2)Beer Capital of America
Dallas	Big D
Sacramento	Camellia City
Seattle	America's Boating Capital
Portland	City of Roses
Philadelphia	1)City of Brotherly Love 2)City of Homes
Rochester (N.Y)	Kodak City
Los Angeles	L.A.
Salem (Mass)	Witch City



Pittsburgh	Smoky City
Phoenix (Ala)	Sin City
Akron(Ohio)	Rubber City
Ellis Island	God's 27 ½ Acres
Denver	Mile. High City
Salt Lake City	1)Mormon City
	2)City of Saints
Chicago	1)Crime Capital
	2)Queen City of the Prairie
Sacramento	City of Trees
Albany(N.Y)	Edinburgh of America
Forth Worth	Cow Town
Boston	1)Classic City
	2)Puritan City
New Orleans	Crescent City
Philadelphia	Quaker City
Detroit	Automobile City
Atlantic Ocean	1)Big Ditch
	2)Big Pond
Mississippi River	Big Drink
Missouri River	Big Muddy
Truman Library	The House That Harry Built
(At Independence, MO	Missouri)
American Senate	The House That Never Dies
Madison Square	The House That Tex <sup>10</sup> Built
Garden	

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<sup>10</sup> George Tex Richard





## 5 Nicknames of people

Abraham Lincoln (16 <sup>th</sup> president of the U.S.)	1)The Great Commoner 2)The Great Emancipation 3)Honest Abe 4)Uncle Abe 5)Father Abraham
George Washington (1 <sup>st</sup> president of the U.S.)	1)Sword of America 2) Father of this Country
Thomas Jefferson (3 <sup>rd</sup> president of the U.S.)	1) Great Signer 2)Sage of Monticello 3) Pen of the Revolution 4)Father of the declaration of Independence
Samuel Adams (1722-1803)	Father of the Revolution
John Adams (2 <sup>nd</sup> President of the U.S.)	1)Colossus of Debate 2)Father of American Independence
James Madison (4 <sup>th</sup> President of the U.S.)	Father of the Constitution
Andrew Jackson (7 <sup>th</sup> President of the U.S.)	King Andrew the First
Thomas Paine (1737-1809)	Philosopher of the American Revolution
General Lee	Light Horse Harry
Senator Robert Marion La Falette (1855-1925)	Fighting Bob
Millard Fillmore (13 <sup>th</sup> President of the U.S.)	The American Louis- Phillipe
General Georges Patton	Iron Pants
Benjamin Harrison (23 <sup>rd</sup> President of the U.S.)	Little Ben



Grover Cleveland (22 <sup>nd</sup> President of the U.S.)	1)The Hangman of Buffalo 2)Old Veto
Theodore Roosevelt (26 <sup>th</sup> President of the U.S.)	1)Teddy 2)Teddy Four-Eyes 3)Teddy the Meddler 4)Cowboy President
James Buchanan (15 <sup>th</sup> President of the U.S.)	1)Ten Cent Jimmy 2)Bachelor President
Andrew Johnson (17 <sup>th</sup> President of the U.S.)	1) The Veto President 2)Sir Veto
Harry Truman (33 <sup>rd</sup> President of the U.S.)	Harry
John Fitzgerald Kennedy (35 <sup>th</sup> President of the U.S.)	JFK
Calvin Coolidge (30 <sup>th</sup> President of the U.S.)	Silence Cal
Zachary Taylor (12 <sup>th</sup> President of the U.S.)	Old Rough-and-ready
John D. Rockefeller	Standard Oil King
Elvis Prestley	1)The King 2)The Pelvis
Al Capone	Scarface Al
Frank Sinatra	The Voice
Louis Armstrong	1)The King of Jazz 2)Ambassador of Jazz
Yul Brynner	Golden Egg Head
Jack Dempsey (Heavy-weight Champion 1919-1926)	Jack the Giant Killer
Martha Jane Canary	Calamity Jane



## 6 Conclusion

There is a great deal more to say about nicknaming in American English / culture.

Nicknaming pertains-or should pertain-to the study of "forms of Address" – which is itself one of the fields of study of 'Sociolinguistics'.

I hope that the few examples that I have given in this short paper will motivate students to investigate further this virtually inexhaustible and barely touched field.

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