

The Story Behind
by Rob Swanson

States of Confusion

Maybe you're starting to think about vacation as the cold weather begins to pass and summer looms ahead. Perhaps you'll strike out on a road trip across this great country and visit a few of the fifty states. Or will it be fifty-two? Scuttlebutt continues to surf around the other Sunshine State as California considers yet again whether to split into three states. It's not going to happen, but the talk never dies down.

And what about the great Dakota controversy? South Dakota wants to drop the "South" and become just "Dakota." Works okay for Virginia and West Virginia, but the Northerners aren't interested in becoming an appendage to the State of Dakota, pointing out that there is no civil war to split them – unless SD does just go D, and then there might be one...

Name changes aren't all that uncommon. Just ask the citizens of the great State of Whatchamacallit. No, that wasn't the real name, but no one could pronounce the real thing derived from an Indian name without any vowels. So they changed it to the State of Columbia. Fearing confusion with the country's capital, Columbia took a more patriotic name – Washington State. Nice idea; poor execution.

Or maybe you could throw onto your itinerary the States of Franklin and Jefferson, with their wonderful views of the Great Lakes. Nestled high in the Mid-West, these two states were quickly swallowed by Michigan soon after their coronation.

Then there's Ohio, the pretend State. Or so it was called when a sixty year old clerical error came to light, revealing that Ohio never filed their petition of Statehood correctly, thus they weren't a state when everyone thought they were (don't worry, they are now).

Pride prevented New England states from merging into the state of New England, but it was voted down by fewer delegates than you might think.

And how long do you think New Mexico and New York should retain their names? They're hardly new anymore...

With the volatility of state names, be glad you're not a mapmaker, and maybe just vacation here in the great state of De Leon... uh, that is, Florida (but just barely).