

## **What's in a name?**

Some of our loveliest place names began life as Native American words:

***Susquehanna, Shenandoah, Rappahannock.***

Such names are the stuff of poetry:

*William Penn did not know "a language spoken in Europe that hath words of more sweetness and greatness."*

*To Walt Whitman, Monongahela "rolls with venison richness upon the palate".*

Four of America's five Great Lakes have names based on Native American words:

**Lake Huron:** named by the French for the Huron tribe.

**Lake Michigan:** Ojibwa: "mishigami" "Great Water"

**Lake Erie:** named for the Erie people.

**Lake Ontario:** Huron name: "ontari:io" "great lake"

**Lake Superior:** Ojibwa name – Gichigami "Big Water". The English name derives from the French - "le lac superieur" or "Upper Lake" (above Lake Huron).

Native American languages have also had a great impact on other parts of the American English language.

Here are some common English words that were adapted from American Indian words:

### **Animals**

caribou (Micmac)  
chipmunk (Ojibwa)  
moose (Algonquian)  
muskrat (Abenaki)  
opossum (Algonquian)  
porgy (Algonquian)  
raccoon (Algonquian)  
skunk (Algonquian)  
woodchuck (Narraganset)

### **Food**

hominy (Algonquian)  
pecan (Algonquian)  
pemmican (Cree)  
pone (Algonquian)  
squash (Natick)  
succotash (Narraganset)

### **People**

mugwump (Natick)  
papoose (Narraganset)  
sachem (Narraganset)

### **Things**

hickory (Algonquian)  
hogan (Navajo)  
kayak (Inuit)  
moccasin (Chippewa)  
potlatch (Chinook)  
tipi (Lakota)  
toboggan (Algonquian)  
tomahawk (Algonquian)  
totem (Ojibwa)  
wampum (Massachuset)  
wigwam (Abenaki)

### **Terrain**

bayou (Choctaw)

### **Gatherings**

caucus (Algonquian)  
pow wow (Narraganset)