

Classroom Activity—American Indians of Wisconsin

Indian Place Names in Waukesha County

Objective: Students will learn the prevalence of American Indian place names in Waukesha County and the meanings they carry. Students will use mapping skills in their identification of these places.

Materials:

- **American Indian Place Names in Waukesha County** sheet
- **Map of Waukesha County ONLINE** [UW-Libraries](#)
- Writing utensil

Backstory: Many American Indian place names can be found in Waukesha County. Many of the communities and places within Waukesha County were established along or over the ancient trails and former villages of American Indian tribes. These place names throughout the county reflect this American Indian past.

Activity

- Pass out the **American Indian Place Names in Waukesha County & Map of Waukesha County** sheets and review the materials together. Have them guess if their town is derived from an American Indian name.
- Have the students work on the **Map of Waukesha County** worksheet individually or in groups.
- Discuss the answers together

American Indian Place Names – Waukesha County

Native Name	Place Name & Location	Meaning
Wauk-tsha		Potawatomi word meaning "fox." <i>Wauk-tsha</i> was the name of the leader of the village, called <i>Tchee-gas-cou-tak</i> meaning "burnt" or "fire land."
Menomonee		Derived from the Ojibwe word meaning "Wild Rice People".
Mawkwa or Makwanagoing		Origins in the Potawatomi word <i>maw-kwa</i> and the Ojibwe word <i>makwanagoing</i> . Both words mean "bear" or "place of bears."
Muskeeguaac		Derived from the Potawatomi word for the area, <i>mus-kee-guaac</i> , meaning "sunfish."
Okonimawag or Coonomowauk		Ojibwe or Potawatomi word <i>okonimawag</i> which means "beaver dam," or from the word <i>coo-no-mo-wauk</i> which means "waterfall."
Nibiwaki or Peewaunaukee		Ojibwe word <i>nibiwaki</i> meaning "swampy or water land," or Menominee word <i>pee-wau-nau-kee</i> meaning "flinty place"
Neshoto		This town and lake name come from the Ojibwe word <i>neshoto</i> meaning "twin."
A'shpun or A'sepan		The Lake and River are named from the Potawatomi word <i>a'shpun</i> , or from the Menominee <i>a'sepan</i> , both meaning "raccoon."
Negawicka		Derived from the Ojibwe word <i>negawicka</i> meaning "sandy" or "there is sand."
Okauchee		Potawatomi and Ojibwe words meaning "it is small."
Nemahbin		Potawatomi or Ojibwe word for a type of fish.

American Indian Place Names – Waukesha County TEACHER GUIDE

Native Name	Place Name & Location	Meaning
Wauk-tsha	<i>Waukesha County & City.</i>	Potawatomi word meaning "fox." <i>Wauk-tsha</i> was the name of the leader of the village, called <i>Tchee-gas-cou-tak</i> meaning "burnt" or "fire land."
Menomonee	<i>Menomonee Falls</i>	Derived from the Ojibwe word meaning "Wild Rice People".
Mawkwa or Makwanagoing	<i>Mukwonago</i>	Origins in the Potawatomi word <i>maw-kwa</i> and the Ojibwe word <i>makwanagoing</i> . Both words mean "bear" or "place of bears."
Muskeeguaac	<i>Muskego</i>	Derived from the Potawatomi word for the area, <i>mus-kee-guaac</i> , meaning "sunfish."
Okonimawag or Coonomowauk	<i>Oconomowoc</i>	Ojibwe or Potawatomi word <i>okonimawag</i> which means "beaver dam," or from the word <i>coo-no-mo-wauk</i> which means "waterfall."
Nibiwaki or Peewaunaukee	<i>Pewaukee</i>	Ojibwe word <i>nibiwaki</i> meaning "swampy or water land," or Menominee word <i>pee-wau-nau-kee</i> meaning "flinty place"
Neshoto	<i>Nashotah</i>	This town and lake name come from the Ojibwe word <i>neshoto</i> meaning "twin."
A'shpun or A'sepan	<i>Ashippun</i>	The Lake and River are named from the Potawatomi word <i>a'shpun</i> , or from the Menominee <i>a'sepan</i> , both meaning "raccoon."
Negawicka	<i>Nagawicka</i>	Derived from the Ojibwe word <i>negawicka</i> meaning "sandy" or "there is sand."
Okauchee	<i>Okauchee</i>	Potawatomi and Ojibwe words meaning "it is small."
Nemahbin	<i>Nemahbin</i>	Potawatomi or Ojibwe word for a type of fish.