

New England Indian tribes depended on crops such as corn, squash, beans and pumpkins. They understood soil conservation practices such as fertilization and also that well drained soils, loamy soil textures and alluvial soils were important characteristics of productive farmlands.

Vermont Soils with Names of

American Indian Origin



The names are familiar throughout New England; names such as Agawam, Monadnock, and Winooski. Usually associated with towns, these names are also of soil series named after the places where the soils were first identified. These soil names are derived from early English, Dutch and French translations of American Indian languages. The vocabulary of various tribes indicates that they understood soils, soil conservation and agriculture.

Agawam

The Agawam lived in the Connecticut River Valley near Springfield, MA. Agawam was the name of a Penacook village in northeast Massachusetts.

Allagash

Allagash may have been derived from the Abenaki word *walagaskik* which means 'bark' or 'rough bark'.

Canandaigua

Canandaigua was a Seneca village destroyed during the campaign by the American Army under General Sullivan in 1779. Canandaigua may have been derived from *Kanandarque* which means "the chosen spot".

Kendaia

Kendaia was a Seneca village destroyed by the American army under General Sullivan in 1770, during the American Revolution.

Missisquoi

Missisquoi is derived from *Masipskiik*, which means "where there is flint". The name originated from an Abenaki chert quarry located near Missisquoi Bay. The Mazipskoik band of Abenaki still live in northern Vermont.

Monadnock

The Abenaki name for Mount Monandnock in southeast New Hampshire was *memonadenak*, which means "smooth mountain".

Ninigret

The name Ninigret comes from a number of sources. Ninigret was a chief of the Narragansett in the late 1600's during the time of King Phillip's War. Ninigret was the leader of a group of Niantic who participated with the English and Narragansett in the destruction of the Pequot stronghold of Mystic in 1637, during the Pequot War.

Occum

Sampson Occum was a Mohegan Christian missionary during the latter part of the 1700's. He led the western migration of part of the Mohegan who eventually settled in Wisconsin.

Ondawa

Ondawa may have been derived from a Mohican word for the Battenkill River which flows from southwest Vermont into New York.

Podunk

The Podunk lived in the Connecticut River Valley in northern Connecticut. Podunk may have been derived from the word *petunk*, which means "to put anything in a bag" or "clean place."

Scantic

Scantic is from *Scanticook* which was a Podunk village in northern Connecticut. Scantic may have been derived from the Nipmuc word *Scatacook*, meaning "fork in the river".

Unadilla

Unadilla was the name of a Mohawk village in eastern New York.

Sunapee

Sunapee or sunnipee may have been derived from a Penacook (Abenaki) word which means "stony pond". A different origin may be from the Algonquin words *suna* and *apee* which together could be translated as "goose lake".

Taconic

This may have been derived from a Mohegan or Natick word which means "wild forest". A similar translation may be from the Delaware word *tachan* which means "woodland".

Winooski

Winooski was derived from an Abenaki word that means "onion land river". *Winooskik* was the name of an Abenaki band and village located near the mouth of the Winooski River.

Want more soils information?

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