

26 States That Were Named By Native Americans

By James B. Barnes, October 15th 2014
with additional "Did You Know?" content by Trip Reynolds



<https://thoughtcatalog.com/james-b-barnes/2014/10/26-states-that-were-named-by-native-americans-was-your-state/>

I'd wager that most people (including me, until now) aren't aware that over half the states that make up the union we call the United States are actually Native American words for the land or the people that White settlers simply adopted as they spread across the West. Here are all 26 states as well as the meaning of their names according to the [Nevada Dept. of Tourism and Cultural Affairs](#) and various state websites.

1. Alabama

Named after the Alibamu tribe of Indians who were members of the Creek Confederacy. Literally, it means "clears the thicket."

Did you know?

Year	Date	Name	What Happened?
1540	October 18	Mabila Massacre	The Choctaw retaliated against Hernando de Soto's expedition, ^[9] killing 200 soldiers, as well as many of their horses and pigs, for their having burned down Mabila (Alabama) compound and killed c. 2,500 warriors who had hidden in houses of a fake village.

2. Alaska

From the word "Alakshak" which means peninsula.

3. Arizona

This one's uncertain but may derive from a word meaning "small springs."

4. Connecticut

From the expression "quinnitukg-ut" which means "at the long tidal river."

5. Hawaii

From the words "Havaiki" or "Hawaiki," which was the legendary name of the original Polynesian homeland.

6. Idaho

Derived from one of three sources and meaning one of three things:

- Comanche "Idahi"
- Shoshone "ee-dah-how" which means something like "Good Morning"
- Salmon River Tribe of Indians "Ida" means salmon and "ho" means tribe so we might be saying "Salmon eaters".

7. Illinois

From "ilhiniwek" or "illiniwek". "Illini" meant "man" and "iwek" makes the word plural, so, literally, "men."

8. Iowa

Named after the loway Indians.

9. Kansas

Named after the Kansa Indians.

10. Kentucky

Means one of three things: meadow lands, cane and turkey lands, or dark and bloody ground.

11. Massachusetts

An Indian word meaning "about the big hill."

Did you know?

Year	Date	Name	What Happened?
1623		Wessagusset affair	Several Massachusett chiefs were lured

			to Wessagusset under peaceful pretenses and put to death. Other Indians present in the village were also killed.
1637	May 26	Mystic Massacre	In the Pequot War , English colonists commanded by John Mason , with Mohegan and Narragansett allies, launched a night attack on a large Pequot village on the Mystic River in present-day Connecticut, where they burned the inhabitants in their homes and killed all survivors, for total fatalities of about 600–700.
1676	May 10	Turner Falls Massacre	Captain William Turner and 150 militia volunteers attacked a fishing Indian camp at present-day Turners Falls, Massachusetts . At least 100 women and children were murdered in the attack.
1692	January 24	Candlemas Massacre	During King William's War , 200–300 Abenaki and Canadiens killed 75, took 100 prisoner and burned the encroaching town of York, Maine district of the Province of Massachusetts Bay
1704	February 29	Deerfield Massacre	During Queen Anne's War , a force composed of Abenaki , Kaniенkehaka , Wyandot and Pocumtuck , accompanied by a small contingent of French-Canadian militia, sacked the town of Deerfield, Massachusetts , killing 56 civilians and taking more than 100 as captives.

12. Michigan

From the Chippewa Indian word “Michigama” meaning “large lake.”

Did you know?

Year	Date	Name	What Happened?
1712	May	Fox Indian Massacre	French troops with some Indian allies killed around 1,000 Fox Indians men, women and children in a five-day massacre near the head of the Detroit River .

13. Minnesota

From the Dakota Indian word “Minisota” meaning “white water.”

14. Mississippi

From the Choctaw word meaning “Great water” or “Father of Waters.”

Did you know?

Year	Date	Name	What Happened?
1729	November 29	Natchez Massacre	Natchez Indians attacked French incursions near present-day Natchez, Mississippi , killing more than 200 French colonists.

15. Missouri

“Town of the large canoes.”

Did you know?

Year	Date	Name	What Happened?
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1854	May 15	Asbill Massacre	Six white settlers from Missouri attacked previously uncontacted Indians in the Round Valley , massacring approximately 40 of them.
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16. Nebraska

From the Oto Indian word meaning “flat water.”

Did you know?

Year	Date	Name	What Happened?
1855	September 2	Harney Massacre	US troops under Brigadier General William S. Harney killed 86 Sioux , men, women and children at Blue Water Creek, in present-day Nebraska. 27 US soldiers also died in the skirmish. About 70 women and children were taken prisoner. Women and children accounted for about half of the Sioux deaths.
1879	January 9–21	Fort Robinson Massacre	Northern Cheyenne under Dull Knife attempted to escape from confinement in Fort Robinson , Nebraska; U.S. Army forces hunted them down, killing between 32 and 77 of them including at least 14 women and children. The remains of those killed were repatriated in 1994. 12 U.S. soldiers were also killed.

17. New Mexico

Named after Mexico, of course. Means “place of the Mexica.” One source says that it’s derived from the name “Mertili” who was an Aztec god.

Did you know?

Year	Date	Name	What Happened?
1599	January 22–24	Acoma Massacre	Juan de Oñate led a punitive expedition against the natives in a three-day battle at the Acoma Pueblo , killing approximately 500 warriors and 300 civilians. King Philip III later punished Oñate for his excesses.
1601		Sandia Mountains	Spanish troops destroyed 3 Indian villages in the Sandia Mountains , New Mexico . According to Spanish sources, 900 Tompito Indians were killed.
1680	August 10	Pueblo Revolt	Pueblo warriors killed 380 Spanish invaders, and drove other Spaniards from New Mexico.
1689		Zia Pueblo	Governor Jironza de Cruzate destroyed the pueblo of Zia , New Mexico. 600 Indians were murdered and 70 survivors enslaved.
1747	October	Chama River	Spanish troops ambushed a group of Utes on the Chama River , murdering 111 Indians and taking 206 as captives.

18. Ohio

From the Iroquois word meaning “beautiful.”

Did you know?

Year	Date	Name	What Happened?
1755	Jul 8	Draper's Meadow	5 settlers killed by Shawnee Indians at Draper's

	massacre	Meadow, Virginia
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19. Oklahoma

From the Chocrow word meaning “red people.”

20 and 21. South and North Dakota

This used to all simply be called the Dakota Territory. The Indian word “Dahkota” means “friends” or “allies”.

Did you know the Republic of Lakotah is demanding its land back?



158 Year Struggle for Legal Justice

<http://www.republicoflakotah.com/steps-to-sovereignty/158-year-struggle-for-justice/>

As a result of the long running litigation between the Lakotah and the United States, the U.S. has made some telling statements:

“A more ripe and rank case of dishonorable dealings will never, in all probability, be found in our history,...” U.S. Court of Claims, 1975

“ It is clear that, based on the representations of the United States negotiators, the Indians cannot have regarded the 1868 Treaty as a treaty of cession. Nowhere in

the history leading up to the treaty negotiations themselves is there any indication that the United States was seeking a land cession or that the Sioux were unwilling to consent to one. On the contrary, the evidence is overwhelming that the Sioux would never have signed the treaty had they thought they were ceding any land to the United States.” Sioux Tribe v. United States, 42 Indian Claims Commission, 1978

“Here, there is no doubt that the Black Hills were “taken” from the Sioux in a way that wholly deprived them of their property rights to that land. The question presented is whether Congress was acting under circumstances in which that “taking” implied an obligation to pay just compensation, or whether it was acting pursuant to its unique powers to manage and control tribal property as the guardian of Indian welfare, in which event the Just Compensation Clause would not apply.” U.S. Supreme Court, UNITED STATES v. SIOUX NATION OF INDIANS, 1980

The court also remarked upon President Grant’s duplicity in breaching the Government’s treaty obligation to keep trespassers out of the Black Hills, and the pattern of duress practiced by the Government on the starving Sioux to get them to agree to the sale of the Black Hills.

“That there was tragedy, deception, barbarity, and virtually every other vice known to man in the 300-year history of the expansion of the original 13 Colonies into a Nation which now embraces more than three million square miles and 50 States cannot be denied. But in a court opinion, as a historical and not a legal matter, both settler and Indian are entitled to the benefit of the Biblical adjuration: ‘Judge not, that ye be not judged.’” Hearing before the committee on Indian affairs, united states senate session on Tribal Sovereign Immunity 9-24, 1996

2007 – The Republic of Lakotah demand unilateral withdrawal of the Lakotah from the Treaties of 1851 and 1868 as permitted under the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, of which, the United States is a signatory.

“We are working towards complete freedom in a lawful, non-violent, non-aggressive way.”

- Russell Means

Did you know?

Year	Date	Name	What Happened?
1730	September 9	Massacre at Fox Fort	A French army of 1,400 soldiers and some Indian allies massacred about 500 Fox Indians (including 300 women and children) as they tried to flee their besieged camp.
1832	August 1	Battle of Bad Axe	Soldiers under General Henry Atkinson , armed volunteers and Dakota Sioux killed around 150 Indian men, women and children near present-day Victory, Wisconsin . The US suffered 5 dead.

22. Tennessee

From the Cherokee “Tanasi” which was a village. The word means one of three things: “meeting place”, “winding river”, or “river of the great bend”.

Did you know?

Year	Date	Name	What Happened?
1813	November 3	Battle of Tallushatchee	900 Tennessee troops under General John Coffee , and including Davy Crockett , attacked an unsuspecting Creek town. About 186-200 Creek Warriors were killed, and an unknown number of women and children were killed, some burned in their houses.

23. Texas

A Caddo Indian word meaning “allies.”

Did you know?

Year	Date	Name	What Happened?
1758	March 16	San Saba Mission Massacre	A large party of Comanche, Tonkawa and Hasinai Indians attacked the encroachment known as the mission of San Saba, Texas , killing 8 and burning down the mission.
1826		Dressing Point Massacre	A posse of Anglo-Texan settlers massacred a large community of Karankawa Indians near the mouth of the Colorado River in Matagorda County, Texas . Between 40 and 50 Karankawas were killed.

24. Utah

Derived from the Ute Indian word “Yuta” meaning “people who live high in the mountains.”

25. Wisconsin

From the word “Wishkonsing” meaning “place of the beaver.”

26. Wyoming

“On the Great Plain.”

**SO YOU'RE AGAINST
IMMIGRATION?**



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DO YOU LEAVE?**

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