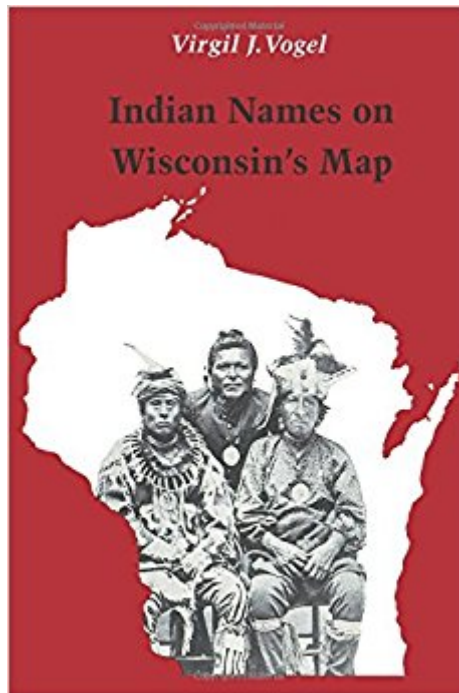




The book was found

Indian Names On Wisconsin's Map



"Of all the states of the American union, none has a name that has been spelled in more ways, or interpreted more variously, than Wisconsin. Among the spellings listed are Mesconsin, Meskousing, Mishkonsing, Ouisconsens, Ouisconsin, Ouisconsing, Ouiscousing, Ouisconsin, Owisconsing, Quisconsing, Weeskonsan, Wisconsin, Wisconsin, Wishkonsing, and Wiskonsin. The name has been attributed to the French, Menominee, Ojibwa, Potawatami, Sauk-Fox, and Winnebago languages." Place names are cultural artifacts that tell us as much about how people lived as do relics dug from the ground, writes Virgil Vogel, one of America's foremost authorities on place names. They are historical records from which the location and migration of people, plants, and animals can be charted. Onalaska and Aztalan, not surprisingly, are place names transplanted to Wisconsin from the far north and south. Some names tell of topographic features that have long since disappeared or are little noticed today. Beaver Dam once had an Indian name meaning just that; Sheboygan, "big pipe" in Ojibwa, described the shape of a river bend. Other names are vestiges of ancient languages nowhere else recorded. Some commemorate historic events: Winneconne is believed by many to mean "place of the skulls." The Indian names of Wisconsin's towns, rivers, and lakes reveal the minds of the Indian peoples, their cosmic views, their values, their relation to their environment, and their ways of life and convey as well something of the history of their white invaders. Virgil Vogel's thirty years of research into Native American influence on geographical names has resulted in an absorbing account that illuminates the history and culture of Wisconsin Indians. Vogel tells his story thematically—names from the spirit world, names of trails and portages, French-Indian personal names, tribal names, and so on—to show that place names are part of a larger cultural and natural world. In recovering the history and meaning of these names, he has restored an important and colorful part of America's heritage.

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Customer Reviews

Place names are cultural artifacts which tell us much about how people lived, as do the relics dug from the ground. They are historical records which can chart the location and migration of people, both native and European. Names also tells us something about those people we have called Indians, including their cosmic views, their values, their understanding of their place in nature, and their ways of life.

Virgil J. Vogel, professor emeritus of history and social science at Harry S. Truman College, City Colleges of Chicago, is the author of Indian place name books for Iowa, Illinois, and Michigan in addition to *This Country Was Ours: A Documentary History of the American Indian and American Indian Medicine*.

If you live or aspire to be in Wisconsin it is a must own and read.

The condition of the book was great! Shipping was fast, and it was economical. We were very happy to get this book. We are always wondering what the different Indian names mean here in Wisconsin. The author was very thorough in his research.

Exactly what I wanted.

It's impossible that it be complete, even when limited to Indian names, but this book contains enough Wisconsin place-names to make an impression on the reader at least as powerful as a drive through the state or any amount of recent television coverage of its unfortunate current politics. Chapters on: 1) Wisconsin's name 2) Tribal names 3) Personal names 4) Women's names 5) French-Indian names 6) Literary and legendary names 7) The Spirit world 8) Material culture 9) Ethnicity, gender, rank, occupation, and age 10) Trails and portages 11) Descriptive names 12) Names from fauna 13) Names from flora 14) Water names 15) Topography 16) Commemorative names 17) French-Indian place names 18) State names 19) Transfer names [meaning names brought

from other parts of the country, mostly by non-Indians]²⁰) Names from south of the border [the author means, "from Spanish-speaking America", not Illinois]²¹) Potpourri²²) Artificial names

The author is an historian, and a good one (in my opinion), not, however, a linguist, which is a bit of a drawback here, as an enormous amount of linguistic detective work can be exercised on names that may have existed in numerous variants and were subsequently transmogrified into gibberish by non-native speakers, sometimes in multilingual succession. However, the book is rich in anecdote relating to origins (sometimes very uncertain) of names and their transmission, down through varying tongues and cultures

There are good notes and an excellent bibliography; the sources include books, articles, newspapers and magazines, correspondence, maps, various unpublished texts and personal interviews. The few illustrations, mostly portraits of Indians and early maps, are well-selected and evocative.

"We were once a powerful but now a small nation. When the white people first crossed the big water and landed on this island, they were then small as we are now. I remember when Wisconsin was ours and now it has our name. We sold it to you." [Attributed to] Chief Wapello of the Mesquakie [believe it or not, another corruption of the tribal name wound up being written down as "Wisconsin"] Oct 16th, 1841.

How can you not spend at least some time with a book that begins with a quotation like that?

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