

WAHCONAH STREET

1. Many of the names connected to the presence of Native Americans in Pittsfield refer to bodies of water. Wahconah is an exception; the road, the baseball park, the brook, the falls and the high school in Dalton were all named after a Mohican princess, Wahconah. The legend is that her elders had arranged her marriage to a Mohawk warrior to secure peace, but she refused and married Nessacus, who had saved her from a bear attack.



HONASADA TERRACE

3. This short street bears an Oneida name, but it refers to one of the earliest English settlers and hero of the French and Indian War in 1750s. Colonel William Williams claimed the Oneida bestowed the name on him, meaning “one who is good to be here.” The original Honasada Street ran to his own house, now the current Williams Street. He may be the only person to have two streets named after him.

UNKAMET PARK DRIVE

4. A brook, a crossing and a farm owned by Col. Oliver Partridge all bore the name “Unkamet” in the early years of Pittsfield, a name that the Mohican allies referred to as the “place over there.” The early settlers built Fort Anson at Unkamet Crossing, where the brook met up with the East Branch of the Housatonic River.



PONTOOSUC AVENUE



5. Pontoosuc is a Mohican name for “falls on the brook.” When the first English settlers arrived, they used the Mohican name for their village, before incorporating it as Pittsfield in 1761. The original name for Pontoosuc Lake is Shoon-keek Moon-keek or, in the Mohican language, “the abode of the straight fish,” a reference perhaps to the Northern Pike that still inhabit the lake.

HONWEE ROAD

2. Overlooking Honwee Road near Pontoosuc Lake, one mountain rises above all others. It bears the same name as the street. The Iroquois used the term Ongwee Honwee to refer to themselves. It translates roughly as “men surpassing all others,” fitting for Honwee Mountain that does surpass all the other nearby hills.

OSCEOLA STREET

6. First a woolen mill, then a street, and much later a park and playground, all named after Osceola. He had no direct connection to Pittsfield, but was a nationally known Seminole chief from Florida. After his arrest and death in prison for leading a resistance against a forced removal, Osceola was commemorated across the U.S., with his name given to towns from New York to Arizona, a mountain in New Hampshire and a national forest in Florida.

