

# TOPONOMY BASED ON WINTER, COLD, AND SNOW FOR MUNICIPALITIES IN WESTERN AND NORTHERN CANADA

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## ABSTRACT

Toponymy is the science/art of naming places. This article examines how winter, cold and snow can influence the name of municipalities and other entities in Western and Northern Canada. Since this country is one of the coldest in the world during wintertime, one would expect several places named after these terms. A list has been set up for British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba covering Western Canada and Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut for Northern Canada. (KEYWORDS: Winter in Canada, toponomy, places, names, weather)

## INTRODUCTION

While etymology (true science in ancient Greek) is the science of the origin of words and how these words evolve with time. Toponymy (place and name) refers more specifically to the study of place names and geographical entities. Vastly used by Aborigines, Vikings and later with the first European settlers in North America, toponyms such as *Canada, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Helluland, Vinland, Alberta, British Columbia, Pouce Coupé* and *la Broquerie* are all examples of toponomy.

An impressive list (close to 100 different places) was gathered for cities and towns (including boroughs, hamlets as well as First Nations reserves) for Western and Northern Canada introduced by provinces (from British Columbia to Manitoba) and the three Territories. All these geographical entities are related to a degree to: cold, snow or winter which clearly shows how important these elements are in naming places in Canada.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA PLACE NAMES

Big White	Jumbo Glacier	North Delta	North Poplar	Whytecliff
Canyon Alpine	Norgate	North Galiano	Northfield	Winter Harbour
Cariboo Meadows	North Bend	North Kamloops	North Star	
Coldspring House	North Bonaparte	North Lonsdale	North Vancouver	
Edelweiss	North Bulkley	North Nechako	Northern Rockies	
Glacier Nat'l Park	North Campbell R.	North Pine	Snow White Mountain	

First Nations reserves: Coldwater 1, North Tacla Lake and North Thompson

## ALBERTA PLACE NAMES

Chinook	County of Northern Lights	Merryweather Lake	Whitecourt	Wintering Hills
Chinook Valley	Janvier South	Whitelaw	Northern Sunrise County	
Cold Lake	La Glace	Viking	Winterburn	

First Nations Reserves: Cold Lake 149 A, 149 B, 149 C, 149 D and Janvier 194

## SASKATCHEWAN PLACE NAMES

North Battleford	North Qu'Appelle	White Valley no. 49	Winter Lake
North Cypress	Norton	Wind Lake	
North Norfolk	Snowden	Windy Lake (two of them...)	

First Nations Reserves: White Bear and White Cap

### MANITOBA PLACE NAMES

Coldwell            Norway House      Snow Lake            Whitemouth            Windy Lake  
Crystal City        Snow Creek            Winnipeg (also known as Winterpeg!)      Wintering Lake  
Dufrost            Snowflake            Whitehead            Whitewater  
First Nations reserves: Norway House 17 A, 17 B, 17 C, 17 D. North Prominent Ridge and  
Northwest Angle 34 C and 37 C

### YUKON PLACE NAMES

Whitehorse (The Capital)  
First Nations reserve: Whitehorse 8

### NORTHWEST TERRITORIES PLACE NAMES

North Slave Region  
First Nations Reserves: Arctic Red River and Snowdrift (now Lutselke)

### NUNAVUT PLACE NAMES

As a reminder, Nunavut was created in 1999. The names of many communities were changed afterwards. This is a list of examples linked to winter, cold and snow:

Arctic Bay  
Arviat (“place of the bowhead whale”), formerly Eskimo Point  
Umingmaktok (“he or she caught a muskox”), formerly Bay Chimo  
Grise Fiord (known as Ajuittuq, “place that never thaws,” in Inuktitut)  
Igloolik (“There is a house here”)  
Pangnirtung (“Place of the bull caribou”).  
Resolute (known as Qausuittuq, “place with no dawn,” in Inuktitut)  
Taloyoak or Talurjuaq (“large caribou blind”), formerly known as Spence Bay

### CONCLUSION

Canada (a native word possibly meaning: house or a village) has a long history of naming places dating as far back as the first arrival of Native People more than 10,000 years ago: *Chinook*, *Ajuittuq*, *Qausuittuq* to name a few. In Western Canada, from British Columbia to Manitoba and from Yukon to the Nunavut, we were able to trace down about 100 geographical entities bearing the name of winter, snow or cold which shows how important this topic is for Canadian identity, politics and geography.

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