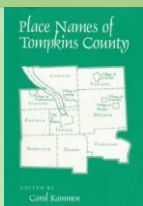


How to Research a Place Name



Find it on a map.

Look on a map to find the place you're researching.
Tompkins County GIS Division: www.tompkinscountyny.gov/gis/maps
Google Maps: www.google.com/maps
Geonames: www.geonames.org



Check local history books.

Check *Place Names of Tompkins County* (2004):
www.tompkinscountyny.gov/historian/place-names.
Go to the Tompkins County Public Library (tcpl.org) and The History Center in Tompkins County (thehistorycenter.net) to consult books on Tompkins County.



Examine old maps and photos.

You can find surprising details about a place in the most ordinary of sources, including old maps, photos, phone books, diaries, and obituaries. Trek to your local library or historical society (or to their websites) to look for them.



Phone
Books

Old
Newspapers

Family
Histories



Ask questions.

Talk to family members, friends, and neighbors. People who have lived in a place—especially those whose families have been here for a long time—are very good sources of stories about how places came to be named. They can also describe how a place has changed over time.



County
Permit
Maps

Assessment
Records
and Deeds

Town and
County
Records



Record and share.

Type or write down the place name story. Take photographs or draw pictures of the place to illustrate your story. Keep track of your sources. Email your place name history to the Names on the Land—Tompkins County project: tcplacenames@gmail.com.

Names on the Land—Tompkins County (tcnames.wordpress.com) is a Legacy Project of the Tompkins County Bicentennial Commission. An online research guide is available at: <https://tcnames.wordpress.com/an-easy-guide-to-place-name-research/>.