

## First Americanisms

H. L. Mencken's *The American Language* (1919) reports several projects exploring words originating in North America. The following are among the earliest (dates as given in his book), all borrowings from indigenous Indian languages:

caribou (1610)  
chipmunk (1645)  
hickory (1618)  
moccasin (1612)  
moose (1613)  
opossum (1610)  
papoose (1634)  
persimmon (1612)  
powwow (1624)  
raccoon (1608)  
skunk (1588)  
squaw (1634)  
tomahawk (1612)  
totem (1609)  
wampum (1638)  
wigwam (1628)  
woodchuck (1674)

## Nineteenth-century American slang

*Dates are the first recorded usage, from the OED. Several words have since entered general English, or have become familiar through cowboy comics and films.*

absquatulate (1830): abscond, send away  
almighty (1824): very great, huge  
bummer (1855): idler, lounge  
bunkum (1828): nonsense, rubbish  
dude (1877): dandy, fop  
high-falutin (1839): pretentious, highbrow  
hornswoggle (1829): to cheat, swindle  
mosey (1829): saunter, stroll  
one-horse (1853): on a small scale, inferior  
pardner (1795): partner  
phony (1893): fake, sham  
plug-ugly (1856): thug, rowdy  
rambunctious (1830): unruly, boisterous  
rip-roaring (1834): first-rate, exciting  
schoolmarm (1830): schoolmistress  
skedaddle (1861): retreat hastily, flee  
tuckered out (1840): worn out, exhausted  
vamoose (1834): leave quickly, make off