

Who are the Abenaki?

Dr. Bruchac shares with us: "Abenaki literally means those who are in the east. 'Ki' means land or place; 'wa-ban' or 'a-bun' means light or dawn. So people of the dawn land are the Abenaki. We did not call ourselves that 500 years ago; that's a relatively recent term, since the coming of Europeans, because people were asked to live to the west of us. The term Wabanaki is a term generally used to refer to all the western Abenaki, and are made up of a number of different tribal groups who found themselves in conflict with English settlers. A number of them were forced to seek refuge in Canada, while others remained (often keeping a low profile) in what became, western New England. As a result, at present there are two Abenaki reserves in Quebec—Odanak and Wolinak—and four state-recognized Abenaki Nations in Vermont: the Elnu Abenaki Tribe, the Koasek Traditional Band of the Koas Abenaki Nation, the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi and my own Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk Abenaki Nation."