

THE HAMPTONS' HIDDEN STREET NAME HISTORIES.

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In New York's extraordinary Hamptons, some street names have a charming history. Or one that was obliterated.

Montauk, currently the most rapidly expanding Hamptons' area, has a slew of noteworthy street signs:

Parallel to the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) station is "Rough Riders Road". Soldiers of the Spanish American War, including the Rough Riders with Officer Theodore Roosevelt, were held here in isolation to prevent the spread of Yellow Fever. Today, disgruntled LIRR riders find the name "Rough Riders" strikingly accurate.

In the 1690's, the notorious pirate Captain Kidd had a plunder-filled home at 119 Pearl Street in lower Manhattan. But as "Captain Kidd's Path" in Montauk attests, he was an early Hampton visionary.

"Beach Vehicle Check Road", though not historical yet, has a nice, potentially historical ring to it. Worth checking out.

It's true. Montauk has a "False Point" near Money Pond (rumored hideaway for two chests belonging to Captain Kidd).

Several Hampton street names have already lost or are in danger of losing their place in local history. Neighborhood residents, offended by certain name connotations have influenced local politicians to re-write history:

Morton Pennypacker had no idea his last name would become a source of embarrassment to the newer folks in Easthampton. "Pennypacker Avenue" was re-named "Town Line Road". Sounds divisive!

"Whip-Poor-Will Street" in Amagansett was changed to "Atlantic Avenue". Sadly, poor Will was whipped by a "Monopoly" game name. Are "Marvin Gardens" and "Ventnor Avenue" right around the corner?

The original Indian name for a Southampton brook was "Achabachawesuck". It's been replaced by "Wesuck". A distinct improvement.

"Deep Six Drive" in Easthampton Springs yet retains its name. Really? No resident objections yet?? Sounds suspicious. Call CSI, they know criminal minds in depth and if anyone can find the deep-sixed bodies, they will.

On a related note, the Springs and Northwest areas of Easthampton have many quaint street signs that read vertically, not horizontally. Charming perhaps by day, aggravating by night. Each white (pole) sign is about 6 feet high, a mere 4 inches wide with 3 inch high black letters. Try reading...

"B
O
N
A
C

W
O
O
D
S

L
A
N
E"

as you whiz by at 25 mph on pitch-dark, lampless roads, your head bobbing up and down. With luck, you'll see the

"B

O..."

OK, slowing to 15 mph you may possibly recognize...

"B

O

N..."

But by then you will have incurred the wrath of 16 drivers behind you, blowing their horns and having coronaries.

Alternatively, you could completely stop your vehicle (assuming your brakes passed inspection at the fore-mentioned "Beach Vehicle Check Road"), and angle it into the opposing lane so your headlights illuminate the signs. Oncoming drivers, it should be pointed out, may take issue with this technique.

The Hamptons are far too focused on heady names:

Head of Cove Road

Head of Lots Road (sounds particularly intriguing)

Head of Pond Road (a personal favorite)

Head Rock Road

Heady Creek Lane (no comment)

Ahhh, a variation: Masthead Lane.

"Aborigine Way" in Easthampton possibly commemorates an early Aussie settlement in East Hampton (though unconfirmed). It's just outback of Three Mile Harbor.

"Alewife Brook Road" in Easthampton was named after the large Alewife fish belly, remarkably similar to bellies of the women who then ran ale houses.

There's an expression, "You can never get enough of a good thing". Try telling that to drivers seeking the correct "Bishop" destination from the likes of "Bishop Avenue", "Bishop Place", "Bishops Court", "Bishops Lane", and "Bishops Lane, N". Pray you don't choose the wrong Bishop! Embark early and ask for forgiveness.

However, that is child's play compared to searching through the forests of Hampton "Cedars": "Cedar Avenue" (at least 4), "Cedar Court" (about 3), "Cedar Drive" (3), "Cedar Lane" (7), "Cedar Point Lane" (only 1?), "Cedar Point Road" (2), "Cedar Road", "Cedar Ridge Drive", "Cedar Street" (9 of these). It's rumored one poor soul rang the doorbell at what he believed was the correct Cedar Street address (his GPS corroborated this) and was never seen again. One must also consider "Cedar Terrace", "Cedarberry Lane", "Cedarcrest Road", "Cedarfield Lane", and "Cedarfields Drive".

Occasionally, Easthampton street name-makers get carried away and create the likes of "Oyster Pond Shell Fish Cove". They shall remain nameless.

"Wireless Road" acknowledges the former presence of a radio station tower. Today it suggests a WiFi hub. Wireless Road home owners, it is said, are displeased with crowds gathering daily for free internet connections. Homes are already on the market. Another name-change in the works?? The "Oyster Pond Shell Fish Cove" name-makers are standing by.

The "Upper Sag Harbor Cove" area is home to "Dartmouth"; "Princeton"; "Cornell"; "Amherst"; "Yale"; and "Notre Dame" streets, a Higher Education theme park off Long Beach Road. Summer admission applications are now being accepted.

A level 5 advisory has been issued for "Thistle Patch Lane" in North Haven: people have been stuck here for years.

"Redcoats Lane" – British Loyalist families yet holding on in North Haven are hereby on notice that any attempts to regain this heathen land for "King and Queen" will not be tolerated.

Amagansett's "Pussy Pond", now a creek, was named for a woman searching for her... well what can one say? Hopefully she found it.

A sailor who died at sea's last wish was to be buried in Sag Harbor. His body was transported in a Rum barrel to "Rum Hill", near Madison and Elizabeth Streets in Sag Harbor, his wish granted. Hopefully, the barrel was never re-used. Or perhaps his remains are being carefully aged.

Aye, let's drink to the lad, and all the historic names remaining and rewritten to be found on Hampton street signs.

Thanks to the Easthampton Library research room for ferreting out appropriate volumes and documents. Particularly "South Fork Place Names" by William P. Mulvihill. His findings are used in Alewife; Pennypacker; Pussy Pond; Rum Hill; and Whip-Poor-Will locations. "Wesuck" info comes from "Indian Place Names on Long Island" by William Wallace Tooker. The wise-cracks are mine.