

WHY A DUCK?
Improper Place Names on the Eastern Shore.
by
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You can't drive around this county very much without suspecting that developers must have some unwritten code that their new roads and subdivisions must be named after some sort of duck. According to recent statistics, which I just made up, there are 9,357 Teal Drives in Talbot County alone. Well, I am kidding about that, but you know what I mean. I think this alarming trend should be stopped. While I have nothing at all against ducks, there are other things to name property after. It wasn't always this way around here.

Two hundred years ago, place names were descriptive and clever. As proof, I offer the following, all guaranteed to be genuine Eastern Shore names and most about two hundred years old. They demonstrate an amazing range of human emotions from the happy expectation of a "Mt. Hope" to the depths of a "Mt. Misery" and all have their own stories to tell.

Anyone looking to buy land here might find these names instructive. The important thing is to keep looking for that perfect piece of property and don't settle for "Smith's First Choice" because you are desperately afraid it might be your "Last Choice" because you have given up "Hope". By acting too quickly your "James Choice" may turn out to be "James Mistake" instead. Don't lose your sense of "Adventure". Never forget "Harris's Rambles" when driving around the county looking for that perfect for sale sign. Don't merely expect "Good Hope" when "Great Hope" can be yours in the search for your "Discovery".

Don't be "Haphazard" because "Powell's Venture" could be a "Keene's Mistake". Expect "Plain Dealing" and "Fraternity" and don't settle for less. Not everyone has a "Crooked Intention". Ask around because contacts and word of mouth are important, a "Tilghman's Friendship" can give you a "Pleasant Spring" resulting in a "Cook's Hope" should you get discouraged. Although not everyone can expect a "Parson's Privilege", sometimes things left to fate and a "Squire's Chance" work out for the best.

Don't get carried away. Unrealistic expectations can be the result of "Tom's Fancy Enlarged". When searching for your new home, don't be a "Simpleton" because any country bumpkin will be a "Hick's Hazard" to himself and others. Do your homework and you will get a "Top Mark" and won't have to leave things to "Chance". The result of your "Jenkin's Mistake" would be an embarrassing "Folly". Don't fall into that "Trap".

This "Adventure" could turn into a lifelong "Co-Partnership". A "Bachelor's Hope" or a "Widow's Chance" could make all the difference. "William's Conquest" then would be "Mary's Delight". Property may have come on the market because of a "Vicker's Necessity", a financial "Scott's Hardship" or possibly because of some "Guardian's Neglect". Other places come on the market because of divorce or some other "Love's Folly", but what else is new?

Not everyone can gain property because of "My Lord's Gracious Gift" or "Held's Inheritance". Shop around and just "Hope" that you don't have to sell "Littleton's Last Shift" to purchase it. What kind of a "Wretch's Fame" would you have them? Waterfront property has proven to be a good investment, but don't expect that a "Bacon's Quarter"

or even a "Golden Quarter" will buy you much of it. You'll probably end up paying a "Troth's Fortune" for it instead. Find out what comparable properties are selling for. You don't want to buy something that's been overpriced because of some unscrupulous land "Skinner's Expectation".

Be careful and do a title search to "Safeguard" yourself- don't let a "Friendship" become "Friendship Resurveyed" or "Grove's Beginning Corrected" as a result of some "Brothers Contention" over "Lockerman's Purchase" with incorrect property lines because of a "Roe's Claim" that leads to a "Scott's Outrage" and result's in "Moffit's Defiance" and an expensive lawsuit.

Don't be bitter because you "Might Have Had More". What a "Seegar's Hazard" that would be, but that's just "Darden's Luck", isn't it? Like the old saying, "Neighbor Beware". Sometimes common sense and "Brotherhood" can result in the "Ending of Controversie". Stay away from the "Court Road" and litigation. That could be "The Mistake" of a lifetime and your very own "Hel's Half Acre".

A perk test for your property is important too, lest you end up living in a "Squirrel Swamp". If there is an existing structure on the property, have it inspected, otherwise you might end up with a "House With The False Front" which would result in expensive repairs. Any "Grosse Coat" of paint will have to be stripped off. Have the old electrical work checked carefully because plugging an appliance into a "Sparks Once Outlet" could be a fire hazard. Expensive remodeling will turn any "Sorry House" into a "Resurrection Manor" but it may look like a "York's Destruction" in the process. You can do the work yourself but expect soiled hands and a "Dirty Neck" from all the hard work, just make sure you don't "Labour In Vain".

What a "Relief" you will feel when you finally made the right "Choice" and have made your "Purchase". Your "Mt. Pleasant" can a be a "Mt. Independence" that gives you an "Outten's Security", an "Anchorage" and a "Haven" in this busy world. Then you will have earned a well deserved "Angel's Rest".

To sum up, I hope this grouping of antique names is instructive to both buyers and sellers of property alike. And I hope it also serves as an inspiration for developers, too because in the literally thousands of the old names I looked through, not one place was named for a duck.

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The *Tidewater Times* is practically a local institution and has published many great articles on Delmarva in it's 54 year history. Thanks, *TT* for letting me use this one.