

Title:

Historic Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey

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521

Summary:

If you aren't from New Jersey, or you have spent little time in the Garden State, you may not be too familiar with some of the peculiarly named towns located around the state. Indeed, with 566 incorporated communities, New Jersey has no lack of uncommon named locales including, Hoboken, Hackensack, Teaneck, Wanaque, Ho-Ho-Kus, and others. Located in Bergen County, in northeast New Jersey, Ho-Ho-Kus is one such town with an unusual name. Let's take a look at the history of this little community.

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Article Body:

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With 70 communities, Bergen County is New Jersey's most populated county with just under one million residents. The county is located just west of New York City and the towns which comprise the county are what many call "bedroom communities" for the city workers who make the daily commute to Manhattan. Indeed, located just 17 miles west of New York is the town of Ho-Ho-Kus, where a large portion of the people who have settled in the town make the daily trek to the city via train, bus, or passenger car. With just over 4000 people living within its approximately one square mile radius, Ho-Ho-Kus has a history that can be traced back to 1698 when European settlers deeded land in what is now Ho-Ho-Kus.

The name Ho-Ho-Kus is a fairly big mystery as well. Town residents take pride in the unusual name and are adamant that commonly used ways of writing the name of

the town <u>not</u> be used, including HoHoKus or Hohokus. The Lenni Lenape were the original inhabitants of the area and some believe that a particular native term, Hochaos, is one of the closest words associated with the current spelling. The meaning of Hochaos is not certain as some think that it could be a native term for "running water" or to a Dutch term for high oaks, or it may simply be referring to another native term "hoccus" meaning gray fox. Indeed, there are at least six different explanations for the origins of "Ho-Ho-Kus", but none are definitive.

Much of the current town saw its growth in the 20th century via the establishment of a railroad station. A walking tour of the business district reveals to visitors charming shops, restaurants, the train station, and a beautiful library. There are no lodging establishments within the town, but several can be found in neighboring Paramus.

The town has just one public school covering grades K-8, with high school students sent to Northern Highlands Regional in Allendale for their schooling. Three churches are located within the town and Ho-Ho-Kus is free of all industry.

A national historic landmark, The Hermitage, is located within the borough and it is well noted for having been visited by General George Washington during the Revolutionary War. The manse is a wonderful example of domestic Gothic Revival architecture.

Most of the residential area is located to the north, west, and south of the business district and the homes are recognized for their architectural beauty as well as being pristinely maintained. Indeed, per capita income for town residents reflects the overall wealth of Bergen County and the residences keenly reflect this fact.