Title:
NJ Towns: What's In A Name?

Word Count:
296

Summary:
New Jersey is replete with interesting town names. Ho-Ho-Kus, Hackensack,
Hoboken, to name just a few. Where did the name Paramus come from? Or Clifton?
Or Bloomfield? Let's take a look at the origins of these three well known
communities located in three different New Jersey counties.

Keywords:
Paramus, Clifton, Bloomfield, New Jersey, Essex County, Bergen County, Passaic
County

Article Body:
When you think of "Paramus" do you automatically think, "shopping malls?" If you
do, you are not alone. On a recent trip to the west coast, I was asked, "where
in New Jersey do you live?" When I mentioned near Paramus, the person nodded her
head in recognition. She knew that the town was a shopping mecca on the east
coast.

Paramus' origins and even recent history, belie the shopping mecca label. As
recently as the 1960s, the borough was dotted with farmland; indeed Paramus is
derived from the Lenni Lenape name Perampsus, meaning: "where there is
worthwhile or fertile land." Where there was fertile land, maize or corn was
grown and wild turkeys were also found in abundance. Thus, the meaning of
Paramus . . . "A fertile land where corn was grown attracting wild turkeys".
For kicks, go to the Paramus Park Mall and observe the Indian riding the turkey
[Route 17 entrance near Macy's]. It looks odd to the visitor, but with your new
knowledge of Paramus' name origin, it explains much.

Clifton could easily be called Cliftside or Underclift due to its proximity to
Weasel Mountain, now called Garrett Mountain. Acquackanonk Township was an
earlier name for Clifton, which at one time also included the cities presently
called Passaic and Paterson. Acquackanonk was part of Essex County until its
residents, unhappy, with the preferential treatment Newark was receiving, asked
to leave the county and be joined to Passaic County.

In Essex County, the name Bloomfield suggests bucolic farmland. While the

farmland part may have at one time been true, Bloomfield was named for a New Jersey governor who served from 1803-1812; Gov. Joseph Bloomfield also served as a U.S. Senator. The present day township of Bloomfield was originally part of Newark, which was settled in 1666.