

In Howard County

Unusual Street Names Sought For Columbia

By Adam Spiegel

The largest residential developer in the State and perhaps the country has actively enlisted in the campaign to eliminate duplicate street and road names in the Baltimore metropolitan area.

James R. Rouse, head of Community Research and Development Corporation, has assigned three members of his staff to the task of coming up with new and distinctive names for the 1,000 streets and roads and lanes that are planned for the new city of Columbia.

That new city is to rise in Howard county and is expected to be the home of more than 100,000 people.

Files Examined

At the same time the research staff examined the files of the Maryland Historical Society, the Howard County Historical Society and other groups, scanning original sources and county records for information.

They were richly rewarded. A covey of pure American names—such as Jacob's Dream, Polecat Hill, Chillum Castle—came immediately to light. Others, like The Mistake, Big Trouble or Poverty Discovered, were discreetly shelved at the suggestion of Mr. Rouse.

As the search continued, a guiding view for the naming of all Columbia's roads, hills, golf courses, lakes, villages, parks, neighborhoods and swimming pools began to take shape.

The names would reflect, they agreed, the whole spectrum of American accomplishment in the



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arts, medicine, exploration, science, business and other areas.

A typical example is Faulkner Ridge, one of the several villages in Columbia. The town takes its name from William Faulkner, the late, acclaimed American novelist.

The research team, directed by W. Scott Ditch 3d, information officer of Community Research, set out by interviewing a number of old-timers whose memories go far back into Howard county history. Somewhere in those 14,000 acres of Columbia countryside, Mr. Ditch figured, were a few streams, farms or hillocks with usable names, ones the countians would remember.

Book, Poem Titles

Faulkner's book titles — The Hamelet, The Delta, Spotted Horse lane—are given to the clusters of houses and smaller streets within the neighborhood.

Another neighborhood, named

The Birches after a poem by Robert Frost, has streets dubbed Mending Wall lane, Vantage Point road and The Maple Tree—all poem titles.

Interspersed in this collage of Americana are place and farm names that originated with the early Howard county settlers.

A multiacre farm, for example, has for generations been known as Jericho. Columbia will do away with the farm, but the enterprise taking its place will be called the Jericho Golf course.

Some Present Problems

Some names, though attractive, presented a problem. A farm that has been converted to a shooting preserve bore the monicker White Wine and Claret Farm.

The research team and Mr. Rouse liked the name, wanted to keep it, but opposed the notion of associating wine with gunning.

The result: The intriguing name will be grafted to another Columbia location.

Although he cannot be considered an American folk hero, Frazar Wilde pioneered in the purchase of Columbia. As chairman of the Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, Mr. Wilde wrangled the financing that enabled assemblage of the 14,000 rolling acres.

In his honor Mr. Rouse created Wilde Lake.

Not all the names have been selected and some, like Andrew Wyeth Park (after the modern artist) are subject to change. Columbia's developers feel that the surest way to finer, more enjoyable, names lies in the rich culture of American life.

The notion may be disputed, they say, but at least there will be no Elm avenues in Columbia.