

CANINE CORNER

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What's in a name...?

I can't help but notice the street names which remind me of dogs as I travel around the Canterbury region in my mobile practice.

For this column, I decided to investigate some of the places that have been named after dogs.

In New Zealand, we have Dog Island which is located in the Foveaux Strait and can be seen from Bluff on a clear day. Uninhabited, but with a lighthouse, it was named because the island is in the shape of a dog. A reef on the northwest side of the island is referred to as the Dog's Tongue.

Houndsditch in London was named because it was widely used as a rubbish dump where feral dogs scavenged for food. The bodies of dead dogs were also disposed of there.

In Mono County, California, there is Dogtown which was one of the first mining locations in the state's gold rush that began in the 1850s. There are two reported reasons why the area was named as Dogtown. A) Miners lived in basic huts with few luxuries and so they named anywhere with such spartan living conditions as Dogtown and B) Miners often lived with companion dogs which were the result of unchecked breeding in the area. Now a ghost town, Dogtown is a registered California Historic Site.

There is also a Dogtown in the Cape Ann region of Massachusetts. First settled in 1693, according to legend the area was named because many women kept dogs to protect them while their husbands were fighting in the Revolutionary War. By 1845, Dogtown was no more since the population had moved for various reasons including to nearby Gloucester to work in the thriving fishing industry.

Dog Ridge in Texas was apparently named because settlers arriving there in 1836 found wild dogs running in the area. 🐾

