RESEARCH OF

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COLLECTED SHORT ARTICLES FROM BUCKS COUNTY

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[The following articles are rather short, but they all pertain to our Indian History in Bucks County, so I am presenting several of Uncle Don's articles of research in this one document. I will list all of them below and they will fall in order, one after the other. - Wipunkwteme]

2. SKETCH OF DR. JONATHAN INGHAM

2a Aquetong Spring 2b Aquetong Creek 2c Aquetong

2a. AQUETONG SPRING

Solebury Township: Ingham's Spring; Auquetong

George MacReynolds, "Place Names in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, Alphabetical Arranged in an Historical Narrative," second edition (published by the Bucks County Historical Society, Doylestown, Pa., 1942, 1955, 1976,) pages 12-15.

Classed as one of the natural "wonders" of southeastern Pennsylvania, this spring is near the center of Solebury Township on a byway branching from York Road (Route 202) two and a half miles from New Hope. It is quite close to York Road and also near the middle of what was long known as the Loganian Lands, a tract of nearly 600 acres granted by William Penn to James Logan, his secretary, on November 1, 1701.

When white settlers came to Solebury the Indian had a name for the spring which the whites corrupted into Aquetong. Some difficulty had been experienced in determining the exact form of the Indian word, but it probably was *Achewetong* or *Achewe-tank* (according to Dr. Amandus Johnson in Geographia Americae, 1925, p. 300), *achewe* meaning bush or bushy and *tonk*, *-tank*, at: hence, "at the place in the bushes," or, more freely, "at the spring among the bushes."

It was known as Aquetong Spring in 1747, when Jonathan Ingham, son of Jonas Ingham, who had come with his son from New England to Solebury some years before that date, bought the spring tract from James Logan.

Jonathan's youngest son, Dr. Jonathan Ingham, became a famous physician and during the prevalence of yellow fever in 1793 did heroic service to the infected districts of Philadelphia, was taken ill himself with the disease, and died in Clinton, New Jersey, while on his way to Schooleys Mountain Springs, in the curative properties of whose waters he had abiding faith.

During the ownership of Dr. Ingham the spring became known as Ingham Spring. Dr. Ingham's distinguished son, Samuel D. Ingham, Secretary of the Treasury in President Andrew Jackson's cabinet, inherited the spring tract when he became of age. (1)

It remained in possession of the family for 113 years. In some Bucks County deeds and other old documents the spring is referred to as "the Great Spring," and thus it has shared three names (Aquetong, Ingham, and Great) down through the years to the present, again known by its first name. Samuel D. Ingham, when at home addressed his letters from "Great Spring." Dr. John Watson, writing I 1804, says: (2)

"A very large spring rises in Solebury, called by the natives Aquetong, and by the white people Inghams, or the Great Spring. The water flows out in a cove or hollow, the stones on the southeast being a solid red shale, while those on the northwest are limestone. It is remarkably clear and cold in summer, and freezes in winter. The quantity is supposed sufficient with 18 or 20 feet fall, to turn two grist mills uniformly throughout the year; and there are five good sites for mill-works on the stream to where it falls in to the Delaware at New Hope, or Coryells Ferry, a distance of about 3 miles. It is employed at the present time for one paper mill, one fulling mill, two merchant mills, four saw mills, and an oil mill."

Aside from the natural beauty of its environment, the spring has distinction for the great volume of its flow. Amasa Ely, an engineer of the Water Department of Philadelphia, after making careful tests some years ago, estimated the daily discharge at 3,000,000 gallons. The crystal clear water boils up from the bottom of a partly shaded pool, from which it has exit over a spillway into a gully that carries it a short distance into a lake several acres in extent. This lake was formed many years ago by an artificial dyke constructed to impound the spring water for mill power purposes.

A theory has been advanced that the spring is an outlet for a vast subterranean cavern or perhaps a series of connected caverns. Dr. Walter M. Brenner (3) describes it as "a fissure spring flowing from a definite fault in the surrounding Shenandoah limestone and the Brunswick shale near by." It has often been said that in some way it is connected with the curious natural formation popularly known as Konkey Hole, three miles away in Buckingham Township near Holicong.

The Indians, who were very fond of the country around the spring, had fantastic legends, relating to it. One was that a party of young hunters, pursuing a deer, drove it into Konkey Hole, and the animal in the course of half an hour emerged at Aquetong Spring, alive and even uninjured - a pretty good tale for young hunters to carry back to the old chief as an excuse for poor marksmanship.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) Samuel D. Ingham had the chronic failing of many great men. His handwriting was desperately bad. Rev. Joseph Mathias, in a letter from Hilltown under date of February 7, 1814, to William H. Rowland, a member of the Legislature sitting at Harrisburg, says: "This writing is extremely bad, but I think not worse than a letter I received yesterday from S. D. Ingham. I have attempted to read it and failed resumed, and failed resumed, and have at length succeeded at most of it a few words. I shall lay it by till I learn Greek, Chinese, or something else."
 - (2) Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1826, Vol. I, Part 2, pages 282, 283.
 - (3) The Flora of Bucks County, by Walter M. Benner, 1938, page 11.

2b. AQUETONG CREEK

Solebury Township: Ingham's Spring; Auquetong

George MacReynolds, "Place Names in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, Alphabetically Arranged in an Historical Narrative," (published by the Bucks County Historical Society, Doylestown, Pa., 1942, 1955, 1976), pages 10-12.

Rises in Aquetong Spring, Solebury Township, and flows eastwardly about two and half miles, emptying into the Delaware River at New Hope. The creek naturally takes its name from the famous spring.

On November 2, 1710, Richard Heat, "of Northern Liberties, Philadelphia, gentleman," received from William Penn a grant of 1,000 acres of land in two contiguous tracts of 500 acres each, fronting a mile on Delaware River and extending back in the woods to the border of "the Great Spring tract," embracing the entire site of the present borough of New Hope.

The "Mill Tract" of this grant covered the lower Aquetong Creek valley. On this creek Robert Heath, the father, and Richard Heath, the son, probably jointly, built a grist mill in 1707. The clatter of the Heath mill was the first industrial sound that broke the wilderness silence of mid-Bucks County. Plumstead pioneers, who had gone horseback twenty-five miles to Pennypack mills, now came by the same means down the bridle trail, afterwards known as Sugan Road, to the nearer Heath mill. It will be noticed that the mill was built three years before the grant of 1710, indicating the Heaths may have moved there and were operating at the earlier date on a lease concession.

After the building of the Heath mill the little valley soon became the scene of much mill activity. A fulling mill was built as early as 1712 by Philip Williams. In the old-time process of making woolen cloth, a fulling mill was the establishment where the fabric was shrunk by means of heat and moisture.

The first saw mill on the stream was built in 1740. Benjamin Canby, operator of the ferry, built a forge along the creek in 1744. Jonathan Ingham, who bought the spring tract from James Logan in 1747, erected a fulling mill some distance below the spring and carried on the business of fuller and farmer. This mill passed to his son, Dr. Jonathan Ingham, and in turn to his son, Samuel D. Ingham, who gained possession upon attaining his majority in 1800.

It is probable that Samuel D. Ingham abandoned the fulling mill. The same year he built a paper mill, which he operated until his death in 1860. He had learned the paper making trade in a mill on Pennypack Creek and also had experience in operating a mill in Bloomfield, New Jersey. In the Library of The Bucks County Historical Society are preserved fine specimens of laid writing papers made in 1805-1810 at the Ingham Springs Paper Mill, bearing the mill's plain watermark, I. S.

Benjamin Parry in 1789 purchased the Dr. John Todd mill in New Hope, believed to have been erected in 1768, and established a flaxseed oil and flour mill in connection with his lumber business. This old building, long abandoned as a mill, has recently been remodeled and converted into a modern playhouse.

In 1870 two Philadelphians, James B. Thompson and H. C. Tagg, leased from A. Jackson Beaumont, then owner of the spring farm, a small piece of ground near the spring spillway for a fish hatchery.

Beaumont, of Huguenot descent, who had a good deal of sportsman's blood in his composition, was sympathetic towards the project, as he himself had a fish pond somewhere back of his dwelling house, where he was quietly experimenting in a gentlemanly way with raising black bass from stock he had obtained from the Hudson River. This was about the time great activity was developing throughout the county in fish culture. It soon became the major hobby of the day.

By 1871 the Thompson and Tagg plant was fully equipped with ponds and spawning beads. Crowds came to see the place. Although heralded as an enterprise more for the projectors' pleasure than profit, everybody paid 25 cents to go through the plant. It was reliably reported that 100,000 shad, 60,000 to 70,000 brook trout, 9,000 salmon and 100 terrapin were raised the first year and distributed for stocking purposes.

Soon the fish culture fad died out, and also the hatchery. Some of the brook trout escaped into the lake and furnished good sport for anglers until they grew so big and lazy they would no longer rise to a fly.

About fifteen years ago an effort, sponsored by the Bucks County Fish, Game and Forestry Association, was made, to have the State established a fish hatchery below the breast of the dam that impounds the present lake. Dr. Richard V. Mattison, who owned the spring at that time, favored the project. The Commissioners of Fisheries, some of whom personally inspected the proposed site, considered it one of the finest for the purpose to the State, but something intervened to divert the hatchery to a less desirable site in a western county.

2c. AQUETONG

Solebury Township: Ingham's Spring; Auquetong

George MacReynolds, "Place Names in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, Alphabetically Arranged in an Historical Narrative." second edition (published by the Bucks County Historical Society, Doylestown, Pa., 1942, 1955, 1976), page 10.

Village near central western Solebury Township on the York Road (Route 202) nearly midway between Lahaska and Aquetong Spring. It formerly had a post office, probably established March 31, 1884, with William H. Robinson as postmaster. The date of its discontinuance is not definitely known, but it must have been after 1914. Mail is now received by New Hope rural delivery.

The village's first name, as far back as Revolutionary times, was Paxson's Corner, so called from the Paxson family. The change to Aquetong no doubt took place when it became a post office. Mrs. William R. Nichols states the old stone wall of the village bridge contained a white marble slab marked "Paxxons Bridge."

"Rolling Green," the fine Colonial mansion on the western side of York Road, has continued in possession of the Paxson family from the time it was built in 1748 until the present day. Benjamin Paxson, a courtly Quaker, staunchly affiliated with the patriots' cause, was its owner during the Revolution. He was host to officers and soldiers of the Continental army upon several occasions.

When General Washington with his main army was encamped at Doylestown, June 20, 1778, on the march from Valley Forge to Monmouth, General Charles Lee's advance division, comprising six brigades, bivouacked the same night in a field across the road from "Rolling Green." A soldier, who was taken ill and died there after the army had moved on, was buried on the Paxson property.

The village in 1872, says Hershey's Directory of Bucks County, had a store, several shops and about sixteen dwellings..