

## **RESEARCH OF**

*Donald R. Repsher, of Bath, Pennsylvania  
Friend and Brother of the Lenape*



## **INDIAN PLACE NAMES IN BUCKS COUNTY**

*[Note: these may also be found in “William Penn and the Lenape Indians” by Willis M. Rivinus, New Hope, Pennsylvania, 1995, pages 78-88. Mr. Rivinus in the above mentioned book states that they were extracted from “Place Names in Bucks County” by George MacReynolds, published by the Bucks County Historical Society of Doylestown in 1955.]*

*[Personal note: Place names were originally in alphabetical order; I have re-arranged them by townships, with the townships listed in alphabetical order. In several instances the exact location of a site is uncertain and I have had to guess in which township the site is located, using a contemporary county map as my guide; therefore, corrections may need to be made when more precise locations are available. - Donald R. Repsher]*

### ***BENSALEM TOWNSHIP***

#### ***Poquessing***

This name applies to a creek which forms the boundary between Bensalem Township of Bucks County and Philadelphia County. The creek ultimately flows into the Delaware River near Torresdale. It appeared on various maps in 1654, 1677, 1680, and 1702. It is probable that an Indian village was located here although no specific site has ever been located. The name is thought to mean “place of the mice.”

### ***BRISTOL TOWNSHIP***

#### ***Tschichohocki***

This “ancient or oldest planted land” was the name for Burling Island off Bristol. The remains of camp sites have been found here.

#### ***Wickus Sippus Creek***

This small stream flows through Bristol Township, entering the Delaware River at Tullytown. The Indian name means “pike” or “pickerel” creek.

### ***BUCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP***

#### ***Hollekonk***

The modern village of Holicong in central Buckingham Township between Buckingham and Lahaska takes its name from the natural spring around which the Lenape camped, somewhat east of U. S. Route 202. This community was called Grintown prior to 1800. Later, it became

known as Greenville until 1881 when the name was changed to Holicong.

Hollekonk was an Indian town in Buckingham Valley along Lahaska Creek. Watson, the famous Philadelphia historian and annalist, reports that along this stream the Lenape held their last encampment before heading west. Here in 1775, Isaac Still, the leader of the tribe, is said to have gathered some forty of his people to go westward to the Wabash, far “from war and rum.”

Although the Lenape village has not been definitely placed, it doubtless was in the vicinity of Hollekonk Well on Bycot Road. This spring, now closed in, was formerly an attraction which visitors from nearby towns came to see.

### ***Lahaska***

The familiar modern name of Lahaska is derived from Lahaskeke which was applied both to a village and a stream near it. In the Lenape language, the term means “the place of much writing,” doubtless referring to some parley or treaty which took place here. Like so many of the Lenape villages, the exact location is not precisely known.

### ***Lekau-miska***

Lahaska Hill, probably a corruption of Lekau-miska, is part of a ridge in Buckingham Township extending from the village of Lehaska to Spring Valley to the west. The Indian name refers to “sandy or gravel soil.”

### ***Pepacating***

This was the Lenape name for Buckingham Mountain in the same township. Its origins and associations are not known. Only the fact that the Indians thought the hill important enough to name, remains. Perhaps the natural caves and peculiar rock formations, known as Wolf Rocks, served as temporary shelter on hunting trips.

## ***DELAWARE RIVER***

### ***Makereisk-kikon***

This was the term, recorded in a variate of spellings, for the Delaware River in William Penn’s first land deed with the Lenapes in 1682. The derivation has been as varied as the spelling, but the suffix appears to refer to water ebbing and flowing, hence the tidal portion of the river. Makerisk is thought by some to be a corruption of Mohawk.

Heckewelder, the German missionary who sought to convert the Lenapes to Christianity and in the process wrote extensively on their history and customs, claims the name of the “river of the Lenape” was Lenapewihittuck.

### ***Menahakonk***

Now known as Biles Island and owned by the USX Corporation, Menahakonk was conveyed to William Bile about 1680 by four local Lenapes: Orecton, Nannacus, Nenemlahocking, and Patelana, for a total of ten pounds. As on most islands inhabited by Indians, all artifacts are located near the upstream end of the island.

## ***DURHAM TOWNSHIP***

### ***Durham Cave***

The Durham Cave, just off the River Road near the village of Durham, has long been connected in tradition with Indian occupancy. In the days before the cave, or rather the complex of caves with three large chambers, was blasted out for limestone to use in the iron furnaces in the nineteenth century, it is likely that the Lenape did use the place.

At the base of the inner cave was a clear spring. Thus, the caves would have given ideal protection from the elements without effort in maintenance. Popular fancy among the many visitors who came here until the Civil War assigned the name "Queen Esther's Drawing Room" to the largest of the chambers. There is probably more fantasy than fact in the naming of this site after the woman who is said to have led the Indians against the white settlements of the Wyoming Valley in Western Pennsylvania.

No Indian name seems to have survived. In some of the early maps of Bucks County, such as Thomas G. Kennedy's in 1817, the area is known as Devil's Hold

Durham was early known as a place for arranging treaties with the Indians. The Penns resorted here to meet in the meadows, near the center of the township and close by the earlier furnace.

### ***Pechoqueolin***

Pechoqueolin was a sizeable village located on a peninsula north of where Gallows Run empties into the Delaware River, not far from Kintnersville. The location is in full view from Top Rock along the Narrows of the river.

The Shawnees under their chief Kakowwatchy moved here in 1698. The town was mostly in Durham Township but spread into adjoining Nockamixon. It was opposite Pechoqueolin that the Lenape and Shawnees fought the great battle of the Grasshopper War. Early white settlers are said to have used the skulls and bones of the Indian dead instead of cornerstones to mark their land purchases.

It was here that Chief Nutimus, leader of the Delawares and noted Indian doctor, lived until 1742 when the tribe was forced to move west.

Discovery of the site of Pechoqueolin is credited to John A. Ruth of Durham who read the following in a paper before the Bucks County Historical Society, July 27, 1886: "*It extends along the river several hundred yards and from fifty to one hundred yards back. Its extent can*

*be traced by the numerous broken cobblestones and chips of quartz and jasper which are thickly strewn over the surface and imbedded in the soil. Many of the cobblestones bear marks of fire. The chips of quartz and jasper are marks left by the ancient arrow-maker. They are an unerring guide to the archaeologist. Where they are abundant, he is almost sure to find arrow-heads and other implements. Many fine relics have been found among the refuse of this aboriginal village. They exhibit all degrees of workmanship, from the rude 'turtleback' to the finest chipped spear-points and arrowheads. The most abundant relic is the arrow-head, of which several hundred specimens have been collected. Many of them show by their excellent workmanship that they were made by a people who had reached a high degree of skill in the stone art. Stone-hammers, sinkers, plummets, scrapers, and spear points are plentiful. The last named are generally broken. Among the rarer implements are polishing-stones, grooved-axes, celts, knives, pestles, hoes, drills or perforators, ceremonial hatchets, and amulets. Fragments of pottery are plentiful. It is made of a mixture of clay, pounded quartz, and shells, and is of rude manufacture. Some fragments are well preserved, while others are crumbling and have the appearance of great age. Some pieces are rudely ornamental and sometimes perforated in order to suspend the vessel by means of a string."*

### ***EAST ROCKHILL TOWNSHIP***

#### ***Pocasie***

Pocasie, the name of a creek, and Perkasio, the town in northwestern Bucks County, are corruptions of the Lenape word Poekskossing, meaning "where the hickory nuts were cracked." There was doubtless a village on the site of the present town before William Penn's Perkasio Manor was settled in the 1720's.

### ***FALLS TOWNSHIP***

#### ***Chickenumiche***

There is a low clay hill in southeastern Falls Township, at the southeastern end of the county, which wild turkeys formerly are supposed to have used for roosting and breeding. The place was known to the English as Turkey Hill. The Indian name has been corrupted when applied to Shickshinny Creek.

#### ***Hackaczockan***

Common Creek, flowing from near Emilie in Falls Township northeast of Tullytown, formerly had this name. The change in name is said to have been effected by none other than William Penn himself, through whose land it flowed.

#### ***Kantkateck***

Moon's Island in the Delaware River just south of Morrisville once bore this name. It has been interpreted "the place of the dance," no doubt because the Indians gathered here for that purpose.

### ***Pessenewinning***

Now known as Mint Island, off Scotts Creek in Falls Township, Pessenewinning was identified first in Lindestrom's Geographia Americae (1654-1655).

### ***Sanckhickan***

Sanckhickan was the Lenape name for the Falls of the Delaware at Trenton. Freely translated it means "flint rock at the end of the tide." The name for this locale was first recorded by the Swedish surveyor and engineer, Campenius, in 1642. The clan, which also occupied sites on the opposite side of the Delaware, was known as Sannhickan throughout this portion of New Jersey. Prominent out-croppings of gravel and quartzite produced virtually made-to-order tools for the local residents. The Indians apparently crossed the river regularly before the white man instituted ferry service connecting New York City and Philadelphia.

### ***Sipaessing***

Pennsbury and the area around William Penn's country seat on the Delaware was known by the Lenape by this name. Translated, the name means "the land of the plum trees." On Lindestrom's map of 1654 the place is marked Sipaessinglandt.

One school of thought (Dr. Donehoo, "Indian Villages and Place Names in Pennsylvania") believes that this name is a corruption of Chiepieasing, which means "the water flows rapidly," referring to the Delaware near the Falls at Trenton.

Penn says in a letter that he bought his land of 8,431 acres from an old "Indian King." Sipaessing applied equally to the village and to the stream which Penn re-christened Welcome Creek, now known as Scott's Creek.

## ***HILLTOWN TOWNSHIP***

### ***Perkiomen***

This name is applied to a stream which has its headwaters in the western townships north of Doylestown. The stream flows through Montgomery County on its way to the Schuylkill River. The name is a corruption of the Indian Pakihmomink, "where there are cranberries."

## ***LOWER MAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP***

### ***Towissink Creek***

Now known as Jericho Creek, this stream flows from near Wrightstown across Lower Makefield Township on the southeastern side of Jericho Mountain to the Delaware River, just south of Brownsburg. At various points in time past, it has been known as Baker's Creek and Knowles' Creek.

The stream is of importance as having been the northern boundary of William Penn's first land purchase from the Lenape in the area of Bucks County in 1682. The line extended from the outlet of the creek southwesterly to a point on the Neshaminy Creek to which William Penn, along with some friends and a series of Indian chiefs, walked in a day and a half's time. A spruce tree, some 140 perches above the creek, was marked with a "P" for Penn. This creek subsequently formed part of the starting line for the Waking Purchase of 1737.

### ***LOWER SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP***

#### ***Playwicky***

A parchment in the Pennsylvania Historical Society in Philadelphia shows the line which marked the outer boundary of William Penn's initial purchase from the Lenapes in 1682. This deed refers to a mountain, a place called Mackkeerikitton, a stream called Towissink, a corner spruce marked with the letter "P", a white oak with another "P", by a spring and a path close by leading to an Indian town called Playwicky.

A manuscript note by John Watson, surveyor of Bucks County in 1756, says the town was near Philip Drake's, below Heaton's mill on Mill Creek in Southampton or Northampton townships. Dr. Henry C. Mercer located the town site in southeastern Lower Southampton township just south of the road from Langhorne to Feasterville, two and a half miles west of Langhorne.

Playwicky is a corruption of the Lenape term Pleu-ecke or Pleu-ick-ing, which means "the place which is full of turkeys." The supposed location of the town has recently been acquired by Bucks County for use as a park.

### ***NEW BRITAIN TOWNSHIP***

#### ***Machk-achsin***

Prospect Hill, a crescent-shaped shoulder of a plateau, is the modern name of this area in southeastern New Britain Township. The hill commanding view over the Neshaminy Creek. The Lenape name means "at the red stone" for the red shale so prominent here. A number of springs formerly flowed out of the hillside along which an Indian fishing trail used to run.

A series of graves, thought to be Indian, were found on top of the hill nearly a century ago. Dr. Henry Mercer found some evidence to support the belief that one of these contained the body of the great chief Tamenend, and as a result, a monument was erected at the side of the road.

#### ***Neshaminy***

Nisha-men-ing "at the double drinking place" or "at the place where we drink twice" and probably referred to the Lenape village situated near two springs at the head of Neshaminy Creek near Chalfont, west of Doylestown.

The location is known as Prospect Hill where the two branches of the Neshaminy Creek converge. The creek curves around from west to east for nearly two miles. About midway in this curve were formerly two famous springs, which have now dried up. One was known as the "Great Spring," about 300 feet from the other, along with what was supposed to have been an Indian trail. The great chief Tamanend was thought to be buried near here.

### ***NOCKAMIXON***

#### ***Nockamixon***

The name Nockamixon is said to be a corruption of the Indian word Nocha-nichs-ink, meaning "at the place of the three huts." Another theory states that the name is derived from Nocha-miks-ing, meaning "at the place of the soft soil. Either could have been appropriate as this stretch of cliffs along the river marks some of the most spectacular scenery in the Delaware Valley. Along this stretch there are only narrow strips of very fertile bottom-land created by the river.

Nockamixon was the home of King Nutimus of the Lenapes, a sachem renowned both as a leader of his people and as a medicine man of considerable ability. He is thought to have been buried here.

### ***PLUMSTEAD TOWNSHIP***

#### ***Hartyaken***

The village on the North Branch of Neshaminy Creek, west of Fountainville, became of particular interest when some small quantities of pure lead were dug up in the 1890's. It was thought for a time that the Indians had learned to refine the ore galena. However, it seems more probable that these were caches of lead which had been received in trade from earlier white men.

The finding of ore in New Galena, three miles to the southwest, and its subsequent mining about 1865 only helped to preserve the importance of the myth and the community. The Lenape name Arr-ti-hick-anna is translated "the bullet mould creek."

### ***RICHLAND TOWNSHIP***

#### ***Mahonhanne***

Licking Creek is the modern name for this small stream that rises in Richland Township and flows into Tohickon Creek just east of Quakertown Borough. The Indian name meant "salt lick creek."

### ***SOLEBURY TOWNSHIP***

#### ***Aquetong***

This Lenape community was located, quite probably, at Acquetong Spring, or Ingham Spring as it is now known. Dr. Jonathan Ingham, a famous physician from Philadelphia, lived here. His son Samuel D. Ingham, ran a paper mill here until his death in 1860. The Indians had a large settlement here in 1690.

Aquetong Spring is located on US route 202 about two miles west of New Hope. This largest of the natural springs in this part of the state runs cold and clear all year long. In Lenape the name describes the “place of the pine trees.” The modern village was formerly known as Paxsons Corner.

### *Cattalossa*

The valley of the Cattalossa Creek, six miles upriver from New Hope, has been made famous in the nineteenth century for its association with General Zebulon M. Pike, discoverer of Pike’s Peak, who grew up here, and the poet John Greenleaf Whittier, who spend at least one winter here. It is one of the loveliest locations in the county, with hemlocks and rhododendron contrasting with the white-barked sycamores.

A small Lenape community existed here, based upon reference to “Indian Town” in land transfers registered in 1701 and 1705. It was probably located along the upper portion of the stream where it is abridged by Sugan Road. Near here two springs form the origin of the creek. In the Indian language Quitolawissing means “the place of the middle fountain” or “the place where there are three springs.”

Among the last of the Lenapes anywhere in this part of the country was Peg, the daughter of Tuckamony. They lived by making fine baskets which they traded at the local store for goods. They were allowed free range of the adjacent woods where they cut splints for dyeing and weaving. Peg seems to have been a favorite of the community and was looked after when the rest of her people had gone west.

### *Paunacussing*

Paunacussing, a name now applied only to the creek which flows across Solebury Township to Lumberville, was once an Indian community in this locale. The name meant “where the powder was given to us.” The village was probably not far from the present Carversville.

### *Tooqueminsey*

The Lenape term “Tuckwi-mens-ing has been translated “at the place of the black walnut trees.” It refers to a community in a hollow where the trees grew in the vicinity of the present village of Solebury.

The existence of such a village was discovered by the local historian and landholder Henry D. Paxson in the course of tracing the deeds to his own family property. The earliest reference is 1702 when the village appeared on the early survey. In spite of considerable research in the area the exact location of the community has not been found. Logic would

indicate that it was near a spring, perhaps at the head of Phillips Creek, also known as Rabbit Run.

### ***Winnahawchunik***

This village and field, also called Win-na-haw-caw-chunk, was located along the banks of the Delaware River just above Bowman's Tower. It was referred to in local deeds of 1690 and 1701. The river bottom soil is quite fertile along this stretch. The actual site of the town is now part of the area used for Boy Scout encampments on the river side of the Delaware Canal, not far from the Thompson-Neely House. The translation of the word is "at the hill near the water," an appropriate enough term as Bowman's Hill was also known to the Indians by the same name.

The Indian village to the west of Bowman's Hill was known to early white settlers by the piles of tortoise shells found here. *(Because this is located so close to the boundary with Upper Makefield Township, this same information is also listed under that township.)*

## ***SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP***

### ***Buckwampum Mountain***

Buckwampum Mountain is located in eastern Springfield Township, not far from either the Durham or Bethlehem Roads, between which it lies. It is identified on some maps as Pocacuintink.

This unique hill is known for the fact that it has a swamp on the top. The name means "a round bog." Tradition says that the Lenape lived and hunted near here right down to the Revolution. This 820-foot hill is still a great attraction for the naturalists who find rare orchids and other little-known plants here. These same plants probably served the Lenape as medicine.

## ***TINICUM TOWNSHIP***

### ***Tinicum***

This name applies to a township and an island in the Delaware on northeastern Bucks County. Lindstrom spells it Tennakonk on his map of 1654. William Penn referred to it as "an Indian township" in his correspondence with James Logan.

Tinicum Creek flows through the center of the township. No known Indian villages have been spotted here.

### ***Tohickon***

The Tohickon Creek flows through northeastern Bucks County to empty into the Delaware River at Point Pleasant. Students of the Lenape language differ as to whether the name means "the stream over which we pass by means of a bridge of drift-wood" or simply "deer-bone

creek.” A number of caves along the creek probably served as temporary shelters to the Indians. The site of the Indian town by this name has not been fixed precisely.

### ***UPPER MAKEFIELD TOWNSHIP***

#### ***Winnahawchunik***

This village and field, also called Win-na-haw-caw-chunk, was located along the banks of the Delaware river just above Bowman’s Tower. It was referred to in local deeds of 1690 and 1701. The actual site of the town is now part of the area used for Boy Scout encampments on the river side of the Delaware Canal, not far from the Thompson-Neely House. The translation of the word is “at the hill near the water,” an appropriate enough term as Bowman’s Hill was also known to the Indians by the same name.

The Indian village to the west of Bowman’s Hill was known to early white settlers by the piles of tortoise shells found here. (*Because this is located so close to the boundary with Solebury Township, this same information is also listed under that township.*)

### ***UPPER SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP***

#### ***Chinquapin***

Chinquapin is a small crossroads village on the Upper and Lower Southampton Township line near the Northampton Township line, at the intersecting of the old Holland and Bristol Roads. No direct evidence of a Lenape village has been found here, but it seems doubtful that the white man would have adopted this name if there had not been some precedent.

The name is taken from a small nut-bearing tree or shrub, resembling the American Chestnut. It is commonly found in the dry soil of York, Lancaster, Chester, and adjoining counties. A stand of these trees may once have been found here.

### ***UNKNOWN ??***

#### ***Name unknown***

Along the “Palisades of the Neshaminy” was another Lenape village whose name is lost to us. It stretched along the plateau above the spectacular almost perpendicular cliffs. This village was a landmark on William Penn’s survey of 1682 when a trail led from here eastward to a spring at the head of Towissink Creek. This spring is mentioned in the Penn deed as being near a large white oak on which the boundary was marked with a “P”.

- e n d -