

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, July 10, 2006

The Water Supply for Auburn Heights: In 1897, the original water supply was undoubtedly a dug well on the property, probably under where the small stone "pump house" is now located. It is thought that this well was drilled deeper and the stone building erected over it about 1915. My father always told me this well was 150 feet deep. It had a wonderful reciprocating pump on the floor of the pump house, and I think this was our water supply for the first few years of my life at Auburn Heights.

My grandfather, Israel, had always been interested in spring water, partly because he had a diseased kidney and partly because there were two excellent springs on Marshall property near the state line. The most prominent of these springs discharged on the upper side of Creek Road (Route 82) just inside the Delaware line, and a pipe had been extended from the bank to a stone basin at the very edge of the road. In passing, many people would stop and partake of this excellent water and would often collect it to take home. In 1905, my grandfather had it tested, and for softness and chemical quality it equaled the well-known Poland water from Poland Spring, Maine. About 1920, when the road was first paved, the discharge pipe from this spring was extended under the road and through a new concrete abutment below the road. It was possible to park here, just above the dam on the creek, and fill containers to take home. Most of the time this spring ran strong, but in dry years, it would sometimes stop, usually to come back within a few months.

High in the woods about 800 feet into Pennsylvania, three springs of almost equal water quality bubbled water through the ground in close proximity. In 1928, my father, having inherited his interest in spring water from his father, determined to harness these springs and pipe the water to Auburn Heights. The property there was then owned by my father's cousin, J. Albert Marshall, and his wife, Abbie, of Marshall's Bridge. Cousin Albert had no problem in giving my father permission to use the springs and to service the cistern and the pipe line as he had no interest in piping it the other way to his Guernsey dairy. Using an old, steep and windy cart road from Route 82 through the woods to the site, a cubical concrete cistern approximately 125 cubic feet in size was built to collect the water. There was a two-inch overflow pipe near the top of the cistern, a manhole cover on its top, and a two-inch delivery pipe about 18 inches below the overflow, through which water was piped toward Auburn Heights. One-half mile of two-inch galvanized pipe was laid about three feet under the ground, up and down hill, finally crossing under Route 82 on the north side of the driveway and onto the Auburn Heights property. The trench was dug by several men with picks and shovels. So high in the woods was the cistern that the water there leveled with the top of the chimneys on the house. The pipe discharged into a 750-gallon tank (now removed) in the present garage or carriage house, some 50 feet lower than the springs, so gravity did the work unless the siphon effect was broken. When wells feeding the houses near the Marshall Brothers mill went dry in the late 1940s, a temporary connection from our spring was made, and the faithful spring fed these houses as well as Auburn Heights.

Like many parts on the Stanleys, this system did not last very well, as it started to give some trouble in the past 10 years, mostly because the old galvanized pipe was choking up. The old well on the property, having caved in badly in recent years, was not an alternative, and a new well was drilled near the pond in 1994, but it never produced more than four to six gallons per minute, despite its depth of 360 feet. When it went dry (after very little use) in 2003, a new 200-foot-deep well was drilled closer to the house, and this was a good strong one with reasonably good water. While we have used this new well for our domestic water supply for the past three years, water is still flowing at a good rate through the old pipeline from the spring and feeds our pond with nice, soft spring water! The spring has been harnessed, and the pipe used for only 78 years so far. Israel and Clarence would both like that.