

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P O BOX 481
BRIGHTON MI 48116-0481

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #303
BRIGHTON, MI

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

AREA FARMS C. 1900

Research of local farms and farmers listed in the Brighton Argus, their background and location continues. Mary Christa's HURON VIEW STOCK FARM is this issue's subject. This farm concludes this series. Contact the Editor if you know of more named area farms which weren't on the list, or wish to recommend another subject.

William S. Russell was among the early settlers in Green Oak Township, purchasing the entire NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 3. After locating his site, May 6, 1833, a land patent was recorded October 15, 1835. William, born in Massachusetts, 1803, and wife Jane, born in 1817 in Vermont, must have built a house soon after arrival; all five children were born in Michigan, the eldest in 1834. The house may well have been a frame structure, instead of log, since Woodruff's saw mill was within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile on Pleasant Valley Road.

The Indian Grand River Trail, already deviating from the township line road planned by the U.S. government, traversing through the north portion of his property. During William's time here the Detroit & Howell Plank Road Company constructed the Grand River Road, c. 1850, with planks. A toll gate was installed near the house. William's older brother, Elihu, born 1795 in Massachusetts, lived with William and had the job of 'tending gate'. This involved charging travelers for the number of people, vehicles, cattle, etc., using the Plank Road.

William is given credit for planting lilacs on both sides of the road. Evidence of these is still visible. (These lilacs may be around for a while longer - they are part of the State Island Lake Recreation Area.) It was not unusual for land owners to provide plantings of trees, bushes, etc., for the pleasure and comfort of the slower moving travelers of that day.

After William's death, August 27, 1870 (Jane died 1850, both buried in the Old Village Cemetery), son Francis G. purchased his siblings' portions of the estate and sold (248 acres by now) to Phillip Christa in December, 1875 for \$8000.00

Both Phillip and his wife, Ottila, were born in Bavaria. Their four children were born in the Detroit area. Phillip owned a marble cutting concern there. Sons John and Henry were also marble cutters. (An unverifiable tale is that the Christa's harnessed the power of the Huron River for their cutting.) Young Phillip is a farmer and oldest sibling, Mary, keeps house for them all. However Mary is the owner of the HURON RIVER STOCK FARM by 1902. To be continued. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from censuses, atlases, a portion of the abstract for the property and Milton Charboneau's First Landowners and First Land Owners and Settlers of Livingston County. Corrections and additions most welcome. 810/229-6402.)