

Copy for R.P.



# RUSSELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

8450 KINSMAN RD.  
NOVELTY, OHIO 44072

## HISTORICAL REPORT FOR THE JANOCH/NICHOLS PROPERTY

provided for the Chagrin River Land Conservancy

This property has historical significance for Russell Township for the following reasons:

1. There is an abandoned road through the property, built before the Civil War, leading from Russell Road to Route 87 at Russell's western border. It appears on the Russell atlases of 1874, 1900 and 1928, although abandoned officially in 1868. It provided a shortcut to the mills on the Chagrin River, and also leads to a cheese factory which was located on this road near where it joins Route 87. Russell had many dairy farms.
  
2. On this road is a hand-hewn sandstone bridge, with a slate layer. Besides its interesting construction, it now serves as a safe shelter for a number of water-loving species. We have photos of this bridge in our collection.
  
3. When Russell Road was the first paved road in Geauga County, residents, who had contributed labor and materials in addition to those provided by the political subdivisions, celebrated with a picnic in the grove on this property. The 1953 Pioneer and General History of Geauga County quotes "When the road was completed a basket picnic was held in the grove adjoining the Stoner property. Everyone took the day off to celebrate, baskets of food were spread on tables, and all had a gay time."
  
4. We have an Abstract of Title, listing ownership from the Connecticut Land Company until the Stoner purchase. Part of this land was in the Burton estate. In the early 1900's, some of this and smaller parcels were combined to form the large Stoner farm on the north side of the abandoned road. Dr. Willard C. Stoner, Chief of Medical Services at St. Luke's Hospital in Cleveland, lived here for twenty years. He oversaw the farm, grew a garden of medicinal plants and a peach orchard. A large stone chimney stands near the abandoned road, all that remains of the Lodge, a large building with fireplace and chandelier and electricity with an attached shed for cooking, where the Stoners entertained. Dr. John Nichols, who was Commander of the Naval Reserve in World War II and a neuropsychiatrist who established Windsor Hospital, married Dr. Stoner's daughter Ardys. By 1928 he had purchased the acreage south of the abandoned road. On the death of Dr. Stoner, these two acreages were combined to become the Nichols property. It now belongs to Nancy Nichols Janoch and Lisa Nichols Fergus, daughter and granddaughter, respectively, of Dr. Nichols. Because this land was part of large estates for many years, although part used to be farmed in the early 1900's, the old woods has been undisturbed. Photos available, as is further information.

The Russell Township Historical Society is pleased to donate the time and cost associated with researching and providing this information.