

The Christman Bird and Wildlife Sanctuary

The sanctuary had its beginnings in the 1888 when property owner, William Weaver Christman and his wife, Catherine Bradt Christman, began a winter bird feeding program during the great blizzard of that year. The Christmans sifted grass and weed seeds from the barn floor chaff and scattered them daily on the deep snow in the sheltered spots in the dooryard.

W. W. Christman was a lover of nature. He devoted his lifetime to farming, nature, writing and poetry. Christman authored "Wild Pasture Pine", "Songs of the Helderbergs" and "Songs of the Western Gateway." He was an admirer of the works of Walt Whitman and John Burroughs. In 1934, Christman entertained the noted poet, Robert Frost and his wife. Christman's son, Henry, was famous for his history of the Anti-Rent Wars with the work, "Tin Horns and Calico."

The sanctuary is located on Schoharie Turnpike, in the valley of the Bozenkill (Bozenkill is Dutch for "noisy stream") and includes a 30-foot waterfall along the Helderberg Escarpment. There are alternate layers of sandstone and shale in the large pool at the foot of the waterfall. The Christman Sanctuary was the first wildlife sanctuary in the United States that was certified by the National Park Services. The land has long been used by the Mohawk Valley Hiking Club.