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Geo. E. Cuper, Hill Manager

Lead, S. Dak. 5-16-51 R

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Sent to Bob Lee, Rapid City, S. Dak. 8-18-51

EARLY FOOTHILLS BURBANK

Ole Christensen was born in Denmark in 1857 and he came to the U. S. in 1878. He bought his ticket to Cheyenne but the conductor told him of a mule train leaving Sydney, Nebr., so he got off at Sydney and paid \$5.00 for trip to Black Hills by mule train. His trunk was hauled but the young owner walked most of the way, helping push the wagons up hills and out of mud holes. There was an Indian scare, but it did not materialize.

The next year, 1879, found this young Dane located on a pre-emption about 2½ miles south of the beginning town of Spearfish, D. T. A later survey put Ole's 160 acres farther west and in rougher country. Ole started farming with an ox team which he earned by cutting cord wood. The oxen were delivered in February and deep snows made grazing impossible, so he fed them the hay that filled his mattress and some turnips he had buried. Later he resorted to shoveling snow so the oxen could graze. He brot them thru the winter safely, but they were not able to work until June.

Like other pioneers, Ole broke the sod and planted crops; built a set of log buildings, and dug a well.

Cary Jones for Mr. C. D.

He and his neighbor, Niels Peterson, walked to Deadwood and bought flour and other staple groceries which they carried home on their backs.

In 1883 Ole Christensen went to Denmark and brot back the girl of his choice. She worked out a year to learn English, first in the home of Dr. Louthan in Spearfish, and later in Deadwood at the Van Cise home. Ole walked to Deadwood once a month to see her. They were married Mar. 2, 1884 at the Robert Hanson home in Deadwood.

Mrs. Christensen was a true helpmeet and homemaker in the best sense of the word. They were neighbors and friends of my parents, Mr. & Mrs. Niels Peterson, for many years. We children played together and the two families were closer than most relatives. We always spoke of them as Mr. and Mrs. Christensen.

Mr. Christensen soon acquired more land both in the timber and out on the flat, until he finally owned 480 acres. He started market gardening and planted an orchard. His son Albert says, "Dad grafted one tree so that it bore seven varieties of apples. He raised plums, red and black cherries,

winter pears, raspberries, strawberries, currants, gooseberries and mulberries". He planted the mulberries mostly for the robins.

The old log house was soon replaced by a good frame house and a large barn was built and painted red. Water was piped down from a spring and used at the house and for watering garden, orchards and flowers. The Christensens were very fond of flowers. In the two big hotbeds where they started cabbage, cauliflower and tomatoes, they also started asters, petunias and other flowers. I remember their lovely roses, snowballs, moss roses, verbena and other flowers. One time Mr. C. grafted a tame rose on a wild one, but it winter-killed.

The produce from garden, orchard and farm was sold in the Hills towns for many years.

Tho he specialized in fruit and garden vegetables, Mr. C. also did exceptionally well with field crops. He took first prize on wheat at the St. Louis Fair in 1904. He was much interested in fairs and exhibited at state and county fairs, often taking sweepstakes.

Mr. and Mrs. Christensen lived in their hospitable farm

home until her death on Sept. 3, 1939. At that time they were planning to retire to a new house that was being built for them on the farm of their son, Albert. Mr. Christensen moved into the new home, but was sad because "mama" wasn't there to enjoy it, too.

Having traveled by ox-team, mules, horses, cars and airplane, he passed away on May 30, 1942.