APPLES AND APPLE ORCHARDS IN SAUK COUNTY.

By Chas. Hirschinger, Baraboo.

The following communication, received by me January 6th from B. S. Hoxie, Secretary of Wisconsin State Horticultural Society, explains itself:

"FRIEND HIRSCHINGER: I have given this as the title to your paper, to be read at the coming annual meeting at Madison, of the State Horticultural Society, 'apples and apple orchards in Sauk County,' because it has gone out that Sauk County can beat the state in growing apples, notwithstanding Waupaca claims the honor." Signed B. S. Hoxie.

As soon as I found out what my subject was I inserted the following in the Sauk County papers:

It is a well known fact that Sauk Co. has at least made the best display of any county in the state at the fairs, and Milwaukee and other papers have boomed Sauk County as being in the lead on apples and other fruits, hence there seems to be a desire from other parts of the state to hear about Sauk County apples and apple orchards. And as I am selected as the victim to prepare the paper on the above subject, and wishing to present Sauk County's orchards and apples truthfully, and not knowing the extent of orchards, I am compelled to call upon horticulturists to help me, which I hope you will do cheerfully. This you can do by writing me letters, giving therein the numbers of trees you have in your orchard, number of acres, and about the number of bushels, raised per year, for five to ten years. The varieties, not to exceed ten in number that are most profitable for market, and such other information as you feel willing to give me.

I want to hear from the invincibles that have kept up faith amid discouragement, and are still faithful and pressing forward, both professionals and amateurs. To make my paper complete, I also want to hear from those that have once had orchards and failed. Tell me why you have failed, and how you feel about it. Whether you still have faith in even a single variety of apples. If you know or hear of a good seedling apple send me one, or tell what you know about them. The same with new Russians. I want to hear from those having Russian orchards, and I want to hear from all parts of Sauk county.

I want the dark side and the side that is not so dark. Friends, when you read this say to yourselves, "an answer is wanted from me." You will not surprise me if your answer should be somewhat discouraging. Please attend to this at once. Send along your letters, and in due time you shall hear from me. County papers please copy. Address,

Chas. Hirschinger.
Baraboo, Wis.

The first answer received was from Prof. A. Wood, who sent me two seedling apples; the tree, he says, is hardy. Apples about size of the Westfield Seek-no-further, and similar in quality, and is a Sauk county seedling, but has not as yet been propagated.
Mr. Geo. Townsend, an old settler and orchardist, also has a seedling apple which he thinks very promising. Tree twenty years old and very hardy.

Mr. J. Palmer also has a seedling apple of which he has had quite a number of trees grafted and set in his extensive orchard. This makes the nicest nursery tree I have yet seen and appears to be very hardy; apples resemble Walbridge in size and shape and of about the same quality. Mr. Palmer also has another seedling apple with which he is favorably impressed.

The Excelsior is an apple that originated in the town of Excelsior by Jasper Odell. The original tree is now about forty years old and has been an abundant bearer of a Walbridge shaped apple of good quality, and as late a keeper as the Willow Twig. The original tree is now said to be in good healthy condition.

The Baraboo is the only apple of my own origination that I will mention. This is a seedling of the Duchess of Oldenburg, and the original tree is twenty-eight years old, and it is an improvement on the Duchess in every way; trees of same color only not so crooked and hardier. The apple is of better quality and larger and more attractive and season same as St. Lawrence, only a better apple to eat and ship.

*Newell's Winter* — Of this variety Orange Newell is the originator, and as this variety is now so well and favorably known as undoubtedly the best and most profitable winter apple, and as the original tree is said to be at this time in good condition and about forty years old, and younger trees giving such universal satisfaction, and as it has been so long propagated, there seems to be nothing for this variety to do only to go ahead and do as well as it has done before. This variety was formerly called Orange Winter, but the name was changed in 1891, by the Sauk county Horticultural Society, and approved by the State Horticultural Society in the same year.

The foregoing are Sauk county apples and of Sauk county origin; there are many more Sauk county seedlings that promise well, but have not been sufficiently tested to need special mention at this time.

I will now speak of apple orchards in Sauk county twenty years ago. Apple growing and orcharding was considered a success, but later the severe winters of long continued cold weather, two years in succession, and followed by severe droughts, only served to show how we were mistaken, and those beautiful orchards of years ago that were once a source of pleasure to their owners, turned to be an eyesore to many, and not only did trees die on low grounds, but also those upon hilltops and on all slopes that were not protected by windbreaks of some kind from the northwest. But not all varieties shared the same fate. A few endured the severe cold, and a few orchards on favored locations, although injured some, under favorable seasons rallied again and were a source of profit for their owners, which tended to kindle up hopes again, and many in Sauk county resolved to turn over a new leaf and try again by planting varieties more hardy.
whilst some insisted that it would never be so cold again, and would plant the same varieties over again. But those have since seen their folly in planting the Pewaukee and Ben Davis and trees of that class, and now planters here seem to want trees as hardy as the Duchess and hardier, and this accounts for the large number of trees the Minnesota parties have sold here, as those men have always something that is new and hardier than can be had elsewhere; at least they say so, even if they are little worthless wild plants palmed off for De Sota; and some that have been looking for the large apples they saw by picture or in glass jars, turn out to be crab apples. But it is said it is a long lane that has no turns, and the turning point is mostly reached in Sauk county, and the nurserymen need no longer tell those that have been successful orchardists what to plant, they will tell the nurserymen what they want and wish to plant; experience has been their teacher.

There are many orchards in Sauk county, but will only speak of a few at this time, or rather let the owners speak for themselves, and as for my own orchard, I will only say that it has not only been a source of pleasure to me even if I have lost many varieties, but also a source of profit. It now covers twenty acres, of which, however, many are not yet large enough to bear fruit. I have a few trees planted in 1847—three thousand bushels has been the largest crop and 500 the smallest for the last ten years. Fameuse, Wealthy and Duchess have paid best thus far, but I am looking for profits from McMahan's, Newell's Winter, Switzer, etc. Mr. Geo. Townsend has an orchard of 450 trees, all planted the past seven years. About seventy of them bore the past season: situation on a high clay ridge with northern slope, protected on the west by timber. The following are his leading varieties: Wealthy, Longfield, Transparent, Duchess, Golden Russett, Hybernal and Germain Calville.

Mr. J. E. Palmer has in his orchard one thousand bearing trees and one thousand not yet bearing. The site of this orchard is a northeast slope and part low down land nearly on a level with the Baraboo river and what is known as Portage marsh, and is protected by bluffs and timber on the southwest and west. Mr. Palmer, who is one of the most successful orchardists in the state, attributes his success largely to its being so close to the marsh, which extends from the Baraboo to the Wisconsin river. Duchess, Fameuse, Plumb's Cider, Utter, Newell's Winter, Wealthy and McMahan's White, is given as his favorite list—3,000 bushels have been grown in this orchard in one year.

Franklin Johnson's orchard is situated on high clay ridge with timber protection, and I well let him tell his own story as reported to me.

CHAS. HIRSCHINGER, ESQ.

Dear Sir: I have about six acres in orchard. Probably from 350 to 400 bearing trees and raise from 200 to 1,000 bushels of apples per year.

Our most profitable variety has been the Fameuse. The Oldenburg has done equally well in proportion to the number of trees. I have 20 crab trees—Transcendents and Hyslop—that have been a source of income for several years. The past season they brought me $87.
In 1882 I set an orchard of 300 Pewaukee. They did magnificently for two years. The winter of '84 and '85 used them up. They did not all die at once but every tree is gone now.

I intend to set 200 trees in the spring. Of these 50 will be Duchess, 50 Wealthy and 50 Longfield. The remaining 50 will include some of the newer varieties, but more of the old favorites such as the Fameuse, Plumb’s Cider, Tallman Sweet, etc.

I am not sanguine of success. The only thing that I fear with regard to the Duchess is “the Gouger.” Of the Wealthy I fear the fruit will drop before it reaches maturity and I should like the Longfield better if it were larger.

I sprayed my trees three times during the past season and think I received some benefit from it, but do not know whether the freedom from worms was due to that or to something else. In spraying my crab trees I took great pains to make thorough work of it and my crabs were remarkably free from worms, while in an orchard adjoining me it was very difficult to find a single crab apple that was perfectly fair. The year before I picked up every little windfall and had it destroyed. My neighbor did not spray, neither did he pick up his windfalls.

Yours Truly,
FRANKLIN JOHNSON.

Thus far I have been reporting orchards of old standard varieties. I will now report one Russian orchard, that of A. G. Tuttle. This orchard embraces 110 varieties of the new Russians apples planted in 1870, two of each variety. Thirty-two of those varieties have proved desirable; they are hardy, at least passed through all winters since 1870 uninjured. Those varieties comprise all the seasons from two weeks earlier than the old early harvest down to the season of the Repka Malinda, that will keep longer than the little Red Romanite and has the advantage of that old variety in keeping in bearing; a much better apple. Those trees are healthy, vigorous, productive and as free from blight as any selection of 32 varieties taken from a list of all the rest of the world’s apples which are grown in the United States. Twelve of these varieties would take the cream of the list and would comprise all that is required by the planter of the commercial or home orchard. We find in 50 sorts not more than 10 that are better than the Duchess and many are harder. This orchard is on high ground and comes the nearest of having no protection of any that I have thus far reported. I am under obligations to A. G. Tuttle for information regarding this orchard but failed to get names of the 12 varieties he favors. Much has been said for and against Russians but facts are stubborn and the facts here are that those trees have been hardy enough to withstand even the severe and long-continued cold since 1870 and the probabilities are that we will never have a colder winter than we have had. There are many orchards in Sauk county upon which I cannot report in detail. Some orchards that are well protected and site is a north slope still have the Pewaukee and Ben Davis in bearing and some Pewaukee trees are still in good condition. There are also many large orchards recently set and many trees will be set the coming spring, and yet there are many of the best locations for orchards yet uncleared, and as growing apples has been profitable and prices good for a number of years and
DISCUSSION.

C. J. PATTEN—I would like to ask Mr. Hoxie how far in from Lake Michigan would he think it would be good orchard country.

SECRETARY—I would not limit it to one mile or ten, but I think whenever you find the soil you will be successful.

A. L. HATCH—I think Mr. Patten wants to know how far the lake influence governs apple growing?

SECRETARY—I am not well enough acquainted with the isothermal lines to say how far that influence will determine the success. I saw fine apples growing in Duluth and Superior and think you will find them growing in adjoining counties.

E. H. S. DARTT—I think it is influenced by the prevailing winds. In Michigan the prevailing winds are northeast and east; they raise apples there and peaches. The winds blow from your state. In Waupaca county the prevailing winds are east and southeast and there are a good many lakes there; then there is altitude.

H. W. WILLIAMS—I think the wind from the lakes has affected the fruit right here in Madison. On the University farm I see Prof. Henry has set an orchard away back from the lake, and that makes me think the lake winds are an injury. You can raise fruit in the sand if you dig out the sand and fill in with stones. I can make trees grow on sand. I have lots of fruit to give away.

J. C. PLUMB—About that University orchard: they had an orchard about twenty-five years ago on what is the south side of the hill, and I said to them, That is not a fair test; you have a northern slope, now plant your apple trees on that if this is an experimental farm; and they put out an orchard on the northern slope. When these two orchards came into bearing the orchard on the southern side of the hill at once began to show signs of failing, and after a couple of years they began to cut the trees down, for they did not produce fruit enough to pay for the use of the ground. On the other hand, the orchard on the northern slope bore good crops for many years and was decidedly a success. It was not cut down because it failed to bear fruit, but because no one reaped any benefit from it except the city boys, it proved to be a place for thieves and got to be a nuisance, and for that reason was cut down. It was a great pity that it could not have been preserved, if for no other purpose than to illustrate the fact that profitable orchards can be grown in Southern Wisconsin. Now the whole state of Wisconsin is beneficially influenced by the winds from the lakes, not only of Lake Michigan, but of Lake Superior.
CHAS. HIRSCHINGER — It is a well known fact that Sauk county has made as good displays at the county and state fairs as any county in the state and there seems to be a desire among fruit growers to hear about Sauk county apples and their origin. Now I know of two farmers in that county that live on adjacent farms; one of them has made a great success and the other a great failure of orcharding. One man did just as Mr. Kellogg has so often advised; he put on a whole load of manure around every tree, and the result was he killed his whole orchard. There are some as fine apples in Sauk county as you can find anywhere and they are seedlings, but we are not trying to boom these apples. I am also very much interested in the apples grown in Richland county. I believe the apples of that county, though small, are ahead of those large ones of Sauk county. I believe the Newell's Winter is the best seedling we have. It is the same that we used to call Orange Winter. It is not a new apple at all but an old one and I think it is fully twenty-three years since I first grafted it.

Q. What are the oldest trees that have come under your notice in Sauk county?

A. I can only guess at that, but I think some of them must be fully thirty-five or forty years old; one must be that old.

Q. How long have you known it?

A. I think about twenty-four years.

Q. Is the old tree, Newell's Winter, still bearing?

A. Yer, sir, it bears regularly.

A. J. PHILLIPS — I have lately been at a loss to know which is our best seedling. We used to put a good deal of dependence in what Mr. Whitney said; he declared the McMahan was the best seedling apple we had, and in the past I agreed with him. When I was at Washington, and they asked what was the best apple of the seedlings in Wisconsin, I told them the McMahan, but Prof. Goff says Newell's Winter is the best, and I am now very favorably impressed with that apple.

E. H. S. DANTT — I am known as an objector in my state and do not know but that I have rendered myself a little obnoxious sometimes by going back on boomers. I do not want to get that reputation in your state but I think you should go a little cautiously.

Sect'y — How much caution do we want with a variety twenty years in fruit?

A. L. HATCH — I want to repeat my experience with the McMahan. No apple has ever been introduced that has stood for hardness in Wisconsin like this. I have 150 trees and they are, I think, the best trees in my orchard. They will, in a period of ten years produce more money for me than any other. I had about eighty barrels last year in which the hot spell did so much damage to fruit all over the country. When that hot period struck Chicago the market went all to pieces, and apples went down to twenty-five and forty cents a barrel. I sent some of my apples to Chicago and in the lot there were two
barrels of McMahan, and these two barrels brought $6.50. I sent ten barrels at another time and they brought $32.50. I sent the rest of my McMahan's there and they brought more than any other variety. As to their hardiness; four times since my McMahan's were set out the mercury has congealed, and we took premiums on apples that the trees had come out after having the mercury go down to 52. We stuck by the Duchess until all of them went by the board. We had Duchess four inches in diameter that laid down and died. Newell's winter died. You will get more silver dollars from the McMahan than from any other. It is worth while you should know it if you are enthusiastic over Waupaca or Sauk county, I will have to tell you that Richland county has outdone them all; it has done better than any other county in the state.

CHAS. HIRSCHINGER — I want to square myself before this audience. McMahan's White had its origin in Sauk county. Mr. Palmer stands as high in Sauk county as any other man; he is after those silver dollars; he may not be quite so shrewd as Mr. Hatch and not be getting quite so many of them but he is getting them in his quiet way. I can see that next to the Newell's Winter the McMahan has stood up, but there is no apple in Sauk county that is as reliable as the Newell's Winter and I believe there is more dollars and cents in it than there is in the McMahan. I think, taking everything into consideration, that it is the better apple; it will bear heavier, keep longer and is a better seller.

C. G. PATTEN — I rise somewhat on behalf of the nurserymen of Wisconsin. Iowa people are getting wonderfully enthusiastic on the subject of planting orchards, not only one acre but hundreds of acres. We have one county that yields over 800,000 bushels of apples. I am very glad to hear the McMahan so highly spoken of, I have tried it with another seedling propagated in Wisconsin. On our black, sandy soil it has made rank growth and it has not proven so hardy. We must take into consideration the fact that it was originated on an entirely different soil from ours in Iowa, and we know it is a fact that fruits do better near the locality and on similar soil to that on which they are originated. I had in a winter, some six or seven years ago, a number of trees of the McMahan on high land. I will say to you, I am a nurseryman and the apple I am going to speak of is one of my pets, it is an apple raised from seed obtained about nine miles from Portage. After that severe winter of six or seven years ago about nine or ten of the McMahan showed signs of injury while not one of those trees from the Duchess seedling were affected. The name is a little unfortunate perhaps, I called it originally Duchess No. 3, but it is now called Patten's Greening; the original tree was transplanted from a good soil to a poor one. It is a much better tree than a Duchess tree that was transplanted at the same time to a good soil.

A. L. HATCH — Mr. Patten has touched upon something that needs an explanation. I was at South Wayne, and while there a gentleman said to me, "I have manured my trees heavily, the Ben Davis bears splendidly
and the Tallman not at all, now what is the reason?” It is because of the feeding qualities of the two trees, and that is the reason why Mr. Patten found such a difference in the two trees he has mentioned. All of these things are contained in the problem we are trying to solve.

S. I. FREEBORN—In nursery rows I have seen Transcendent crab trees killed, and you will see it when you get that extreme dip of the mercury. There is a limit in which all trees will freeze to death. I think Mr. Hirschinger has stated the case pretty well, he has a good tree in the Newell’s Winter. I wish I had set it instead of the Orange Russet. The Newell’s Winter has some faults; it is a brush heap with me.

E. H. S. DARTT—Wisconsin has some pretty good apples. My friend Patten comes here from Iowa, he is a little modest, but I think an apple grower in the west should have a good deal of cheek, and I want to say that we, in Minnesota, are going to beat you all.

J. C. PLUMB—On general principles we must study local adaptation.

E. H. S. DARTT—I do not think local adaptation is just what we want, we want general adaptation. A shrewd Yankee will get along anywhere, and I am sure we do not want local, but general qualities.

GEO. J. KELLOG—You may put down a live Yankee and then put down a live Dutchman by the side of him, and he will lay out the Yankee every time. The trouble with the apple trees in this state is they are starved to death, and I have been writing to the farmers urging them to manure their trees. I believe the lake influence affects the trees about sixty miles. I am glad Mr. Patten’s seedling came from Wisconsin; that is a good point; it puts out its limbs like the McMahan. We have had no test winters lately.

Q.—What is the best way to prevent the premature dropping of apples, especially the Wealthy?
A.—Set on the north side of a hill and pick off the fruit freely.

Q.—What is the best way to prevent overbearing of such kinds as the Longfield?
A.—Same answer will apply to that.

A. J. PHILLIPS—I have been taking some pains to look up seedling apples in this state. I was opposed to receiving Newell’s Winter until it had been tried all over the state. I was first led into growing apples by seeing an exhibit at Milwaukee from Sauk county, but I soon found out that I did not live in Sauk county, and I have been a little careful about trying kinds that had been grown at Baraboo. Mr. Palmer is, as Mr. Hirschinger said, one of the largest growers in the state. It does not do to take an apple tree that does well in some localities and infer that it will do well in all places. I know of a man that last year got more money out of the Walbridge than from any other variety, but all the same we have about discarded the Walbridge in this state.

CHAS. HIRSCHINGER—About Sauk county being such a wonderful fruit
county as Mr. Phillips said it was, I want to tell you that Sauk county is burning up just as many apple trees for wood as any of you are.

Q. Is the Wealthy successfully grown in this state?
A. It is.
Adjourned.

---

SENATE CHAMBER,
TUESDAY, 2 P. M.

President Thayer in the chair.

GEO. J. KELLOGG — The question is whether we will continue the discussion on apples or whether it will take all our time this afternoon for the reports and the election of officers?

PRESIDENT — I think we can finish the apple discussion.

A. J. PHILLIPS — "I have but little that is new or different from what I said last winter." I have spent a number of days at Waupaca and at Mr. Randall's orchard at Appleton; he had twenty seedlings; he gave me cuttings from six and I am sorry to say that but one of them is a winter apple. This orchard is one and one-half miles from Lake Winnebago. My opinion is, there is a great deal in adaptation. I have had a great many letters inquiring about the Peerless and we went to see the old tree; it was not in bearing this year. I visited the Matthew's Russet tree with Mr. Springer. He knows more about seedling apples than any man there, but he did not know the Matthew's Russet had broken down and I had to tell him. It is a broad, spreading tree and was overloaded with fruit that caused it to break down. I went to see the Okabena tree that has perhaps sold for more money than any other tree in the country. I went, with Mr. Sias, of Rochester, to see a tree that was called at first, Hart's Seedling; later they found it was originated by a man named Brett, and they called it Brett's Seedling. Mr. Gaylord, of Iowa, who is really the Springer of Iowa, has been spending a good deal of time looking up the Malinda; it was the best looking specimen of all at Washington, and I had the privilege of seeing all of the apples.

E. H. S. DARTT — Do you know of any of the seedlings that have been grafted and after many years have become profitable?

A. J. PHILLIPS — Yes, the Malinda has been. I went to see the Longfield, I saw fifty trees in bearing. I heard that Mr. Somerville, of Viola, Minnesota, had several trees in bearing; his were top-worked on the Orange Crab, which I have never succeeded in working on. I think the way is to find some tree that is as good as the Virginia Crab, if you find such a crab (one without broad branching limbs), use it and then protect the trees. You had better set one tree and prepare the ground properly than to set more without proper preparation. Set one tree, if it is only a Virginia Crab, and then do not starve it, give it some manure and protect it with lath.

5—H
S. I. Freeborn— I would like to have you tell us something about the Peerless.

A. J. Phillips— That Peerless is a little delicate question to touch upon. (A voice— Tell the truth.) Yes, I'll tell the truth. I have heard it said, "tell the truth and shame the devil." I have told the truth and raised the devil. I may not do it here.

J. C. Plumb— Inasmuch as the Malinda has been brought forward so prominently, I must say after growing it for fifteen years I have given it up as unprofitable.

A. J. Phillips— The fruit of the Peerless is good. The old tree stands in a protected place with a hedge of willows protecting it, it stands right in a corner.

Secretary— Do you think protection had any influence on the tree?

A. J. Phillips— Well, you can draw your own conclusions. I do not believe much in protection. The tree stands there. It is said of the Peerless, "it will stand on the open prairie." It has been said that the Peerless was the product of the Duchess and Tallman Sweet. Mr. Miller says his mother bought some apples in threshing time and sowed the seeds, he did not know whether they were Duchess or what. I think the Peerless at ten dollars for six trees is a very expensive tree to try. I found a man within three miles of the old tree who paid that amount for six trees. I said to him, you must have a good deal of confidence in the tree, and he said, "I do not know. I have never seen the old tree. I bought these trees because the man was a friend of mine."

S. I. Freeborn— I would like to have him tell us if he has ever seen the Bon Homme?

A. No. The Bon Homme is away down in Nebraska and I do not think it would be very good for us in the north.

C. G. Patten— I presume one reason why the Malinda has not been propagated and sold more extensively is because it is not a very popular tree with the nurserymen; it is a slender growing tree. Trees were scattered here and there among the farmers, not more than three or four trees being found in a place. Many men being questioned as to the hardiness of the tree say it is as hardy as the Duchess. One thing which has made it unpopular— it is not as popular as it deserves— is because it requires the whole season to mature its fruit and farmers gather it sometimes four weeks before it is ripe and put the crude fruit upon the market. Mr. Plumb says, "there is no place for it in Wisconsin," but I believe there are many places in Wisconsin where they would be glad of such an apple as the Malinda for it is one of the best keepers we have.

A. J. Phillips— There is a boom on the Malinda to day and it is coming into Wisconsin. I must say of the specimens I found in Iowa cellars, it was the best matured fruit I saw. Mr. Dartt is paid a salary for conducting a Tree Station and how is he to answer letters concerning the Peerless when he has not a single Peerless tree at his station? He cannot afford to buy a tree and he is to honest to steal one.