ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

F. CRANEFIELD.

My report will be divided into three parts: First, a recital of the things you already know, crops, the season, prevalence of apple scab, etc. Second, facts relating to the affairs of the society familiar to the officers and executive committee and here related for the benefit of others. Third, personal reflections, impressions and opinions.

As to the first, it may be safely stated that the 1916 apple crop in Wisconsin was in quantity less than one-half that of 1915 and in quality about the poorest that has been harvested in many years.

These conditions were due in a large measure to the season which was about the most unusual one, in many respects, at least as to its effects on fruit crops, that we have had in twenty or more years.

Favorable summer and fall weather in 1916, produced an excellent crop of fruit buds which produced abundant bloom and the promise of a full crop in the spring of 1916, in spite of this being the “off” year. The promise however was not fulfilled owing to continued cold rain followed by extreme heat and in many sections, drought. Rain so interfered with spraying that scab and other fungous diseases made unusual headway—this at least is the easiest explanation. A few orchards sprayed seasonably which produced clean fruit seem to confuse the issue.

The cherry crop also suffered from the season’s peculiarities. Cool weather in spring approaching frost destroyed many blossoms, resulting in about a fifty per cent crop.

Small fruits fared better, being less subject to serious damage from any weather conditions, except unusually late spring frosts or severe drought, neither of which occurred generally throughout the state.

Prices offset to a great extent the short crop loss; strawberries, cherries and early apples bringing extraordinary prices. This was also true of vegetables of all kinds.

A general review then of the season should leave the fruit grower in a reasonably happy state of mind. If he starts the
coming year with a stiffer determination to spray thoroughly, and if it is washed off at night to spray again the next day; if he will profit by the experience of a few who won success under unfavorable conditions his lot may be even happier next year than this year.

These are the things you already knew, here reviewed as a matter of duty and of custom.

Part Two: The work of the Society has, during the past year proceeded along the usual lines with but one or two new features.

The conduct of trial orchards and stations, ten in number, located at Poplar and Maple in Douglas Co., Holcombe in Chippewa Co., Weston, Dunn Co., Sparta, Monroe Co., Whitehall, Trempeleau Co., Gays Mills, Crawford Co., Pewaukee, Waukesha Co., Lake Geneva, Walworth Co., and Manitowoc, comprise a very large part of the Society activities and absorb a very large part of our funds. As it is the duty of the Committee on Trial Orchards to report on the progress of this work in detail only a general survey will be given.

All of the orchards and stations, the latter term being used to include the grape station at Sparta, are in good condition and serving successfully the purpose for which they were intended.

Of the forty or more varieties originally planted in the Poplar orchard, all have succumbed to the vicissitudes of soil and climate except Duchess, Wealthy, Hibernal, Patten Greening, Malinda and Longfield. On account of numerous replacements the orchard now consists of these varieties in addition to an acre of native plums. The apple trees in this orchard in health and vigor compare favorably with those in any other orchard in the state but do not equal in size nor fruiting capacity orchards of the same age in southern and western Wisconsin.

The Maple orchard, four miles away on higher ground and lighter soil, has not fulfilled its early promise. It is reasonably safe to predict that this orchard will not be more successful than the one at Poplar despite early hopes and predictions.

The Holcombe orchard, next farthest north, is yet too young to furnish a reasonable basis for prediction as to its success. The Weston orchard is in the same class. The
Manitowoc orchard is after eight years in some measure recovering from serious errors committed in the beginning and is in a fair way to serve as an excellent object lesson for fruit growers in the county.

The orchard on the county farm at Whitehall is practically a failure due wholly to my inability to persuade the superintendent of the farm to give the orchard proper or even ordinary attention. Spring cultivation has been utterly neglected for three years and a vigorous clean-up and cultivation given late in the summer when the trees should be entering the rest period. All of this in the face of repeated protest and entreaty. An appeal to the board managing the affairs of the asylum and farm also failed of results. Thorough care for two years will bring this orchard up to a fine standard but if the asylum board refuse to coöperate with us to this end but one thing remains and that is give it up and see that the blame for lack of success is placed where it belongs. The Pewaukee and Lake Geneva orchards and the Sparta vineyard may be grouped; a middling successful class. We have raised grapes at Sparta, lots of them and the flourishing condition of the vineyard would not disprove the fact that grape raising in the vicinity of Sparta should be encouraged. The one acre of grapes, Concord, Worden and Moore’s Early has cost in seven years for plants, trellis and all labor, $374.78 and has borne but $281.95, sales of grapes. Our experience however should be of value to the amateur. Grapes will ripen nicely at Sparta and with but little care an abundance of the finest of grapes may be raised by anyone in Monroe county, who has a few square rods of land.

There remains then only the Gays Mills orchard to be accounted for and this has been reserved for the last as it is in a class by itself. It is the opinion of your secretary that this orchard still holds undisputed place, not only as the best of our trial orchards but as the best orchard of its age in the state. There are two reasons for this; the natural advantages of soil and site and the excellent care given the orchard. Everything has been done that should be done and at the right time and in the right way. It may even be stated as a mathematical equation: Soil and climate + John A. Hays = Success.
At this point a brief summary of the trial orchard situation may not be out of place. All of the orchards are of value, some more than others. The degree of success, or lack of success each has attained, has been due very largely to the interest manifested by the person immediately in charge. That has been our great problem and will continue to be a problem; to conduct demonstration work efficiently through the medium of persons who are only indirectly benefited and only mildly interested. On the whole the work has been surprisingly successful considering the handicaps.

Owing to a change in the management of the department of Farmers’ Institutes and a lack of complete understanding the amount of assistance rendered the Institute during the past year was not nearly as much as in former years. This year, however, we will more than make it up. (A full account of the institute work in horticulture for the coming institute season was fully set forth in the December issue of Wisconsin Horticulture and will form a part of this report when published.)

An Orchard Census: The rather formidable task of numbering the apple and cherry trees in orchards of over two acres in extent was begun last July. While only a limited portion of the state could be covered with the funds available the results were very satisfactory and a continuance of the work seems highly desirable.

Mr. A. A. Asbahr of Portland, Oregon, a graduate in horticulture of the Oregon Agricultural College, was engaged for this work, begun July 5th, and worked 52 days using a motorcycle after the first week. In that time Mr. Asbahr covered portions of the following counties: Adams, Ashland, Bayfield, Columbia, Crawford, Door, Monroe, Manitowoc, Oconto, Oneida, Eau Claire, Jackson, Juneau, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Richland, Sauk, Shawano, Waupaca, Winnebago and Wood, covering 386 orchards. While none of the figures obtained can at this stage be considered conclusive nor of any particular value some of them are interesting:

Of the 386 orchards listed 249 were sprayed and of the total number of spray rigs 121 were operated by hand power and 128 by gasoline.

Of the whole number of Wealthy apple trees listed, 127,423, 36.5 per cent are 1 to 5 years; 10 per cent 6 to 10
years; 4.6 per cent 11 to 20 years and 48.9 per cent over 20 years.

Of 14,952 Duchess trees listed 48.4 per cent are 1 to 5 years, 17 per cent 6 to 10 years, 22.1 per cent 11 to 20 years and 12.5 per cent over 20 years.

While as stated above, the work as a whole is incomplete, there is one exception and that is Door County, or that portion north of Sturgeon Bay, as directions were given to cover this territory fully. From the number of reports turned in, 116, there is good reason to believe that Mr. Asbahr followed instructions faithfully and the figures here given are as nearly accurate as can be obtained.

In this territory there were found 104,553 apple trees and 334,522 cherry trees. Computing 100 trees to the acre, the average in Door County, this gives 4390.75 acres of orchards, 76 per cent of which are cherry and 24 per cent apple.

Of the cherry 80.9 are 1 to 5 years, 18 per cent 6 to 10 years, 11 per cent 11 to 20 years and none over 20 years.

In Bayfield county only the territory immediately adjacent to the cities of Bayfield and Washburn were covered showing 36,906 apple trees and 33,417 cherry trees.

The continuance of this work coupled with a crop report cannot help but be of very great value.

The Boys' Club work undertaken in coöperation with Prof. T. L. Bewick, consisting, on our part, of furnishing seventy-five standard strawberry plants, twenty-five everbearers and three apple trees to such members of Boys' Clubs as complied with certain regulations has been summarized by Prof. Bewick as follows:

REPORT OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S FRUIT GROWING PROJECT

T. L. BEWICK, State Club Leader.

The Conditions of the Project:

Wisconsin State Horticultural Society is to give to a limited number, twenty-five Dunlap, twenty-five Warfield, and twenty-five Everbearing Strawberry plants and also three two-year-old apple trees, one Wealthy, one Duchess and one Northwestern Greening.