The Development of Apple Horticulture in Wisconsin, 1850s-1950s:  
Case Studies of Bayfield, Crawford, and Door Counties

by

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ABSTRACT

The cultivation of apple trees in Wisconsin began as early as the 1840s. At that time, early settlers planted seedlings that were not adapted to the state’s harsh winter climate. Not surprisingly, many of the apple seedlings failed to survive. As time progressed, Wisconsin farm orchardists began experimenting with different apple varieties in their search of an apple tree that could thrive in this environment. Soon there after, the Wisconsin State Horticultural Society and the University of Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station were developed. Both organizations sought to advance the practice of horticulture, as well as educate growers on the merits of proper orchard maintenance.

By 1910, commercial orchards had appeared in the state on a large scale. During this time commercial fruit-growing districts began to appear near Sturgeon Bay in Door County, at Bayfield in Bayfield County and by Gays Mills in Crawford County. After the advent of commercial orcharding, marketing became an important component of the fruit industry; many co-operative associations were formed from 1910-1920. Later, because of the Great Depression and World War II, Wisconsin orchardists were forced to implement an active promotional plan to sell their product. As a result, many communities, which were defined historically by horticultural enterprises, established apple festivals to commemorate the heritage of apples in their region.

Over the years the face of apple horticulture in Wisconsin has changed, although it still remains a viable industry in the state. Clearly, the practice of fruit growing has declined since the boom of the 1920s and 1930s; nevertheless, it still holds an important place in the history of the state. It is the intent of this thesis to explore the development of apple horticulture in Wisconsin to ensure that its rich legacy is not forgotten.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Having grown up on an apple orchard in west central Wisconsin, I chose this research topic due to my own personal interest in the subject. Because of my upbringing, I was curious about the historical development of apple horticulture in Wisconsin. Unfortunately, this subject has not been addressed by scholars to the degree it deserves. I am proud to have had the opportunity to write this thesis and I hope that it will inspire others to undertake research on similar topics.

While studying in the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I was fortunate enough to be advised by Professor Arnold Alanen. During the writing process Professor Alanen provided me with valuable assistance, especially during the editing phase. His patience and encouragement will never be forgotten. Additionally, I wish acknowledge the assistance provided by Profs. Janet Silbernagel and Samuel F. Dennis, both of Department of Landscape Architecture, while serving as members on my thesis committee. Their insight and enthusiasm about my project was appreciated. I am also grateful for the support provided by other faculty and staff in the Department of Landscape Architecture.

Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge the assistance provided by the staff at the Green Bay and Platteville Area Research Centers as well as the staff at the University of Wisconsin Archives located in both Memorial Library and Steenbock Library. Special thanks also goes to the staff at the Door County Historical Museum and the Peninsular Agricultural Research Station, as well as to Sheree Peterson of the Bayfield Heritage Center.
Finally, I would like to thank family and friends for their support during this process. I especially want to thank my parents, Kevin and Diane Cain, for inspiring me to write this thesis. Without the experiences gained from my involvement in the family’s orchard, I never would have chosen this topic. Now, having completed my research, I am even more proud of everything they have accomplished at their orchard, and I want to thank them for providing me with the unique opportunity to grow up in such an environment. It is a part of who I am and I am truly thankful for the experience. I would also like to thank my sister, Carmen and her husband Derrick. They have been especially supportive during this process, which is something that means so much to me. Last but not least, I want to thank my partner, Erik, for his patience during this project. It has been a long road, but Erik encouraged me daily and I am so grateful for his support.
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With these developments, the practice of States and international organizations has developed by substantial measure in respect of self-determination, secession, succession, recognition, de-colonization, and several other fields. Addressing such questions as the unification of Germany, the status of Israel and Palestine, and the continuing pressure from non-State groups to attain statehood, even, in cases like Chechnya or Tibet, against the presumptive rights of existing States, James Crawford discusses the relation between statehood and recognition; the criteria for statehood, especially in

Cheese development in Wisconsin moved from southeast to west and later to the north and northwest. 1830’s. Wisconsin’s chees had to get to market. Its proximity to the Great Lakes shipping and the development of railroad transportation in the Midwest provided excellent routes for expanding the market. In 1900 the foreign type cheese region (Swiss, Brick, and Limburger) was established in southwest Wisconsin and had over 300 factories dotting the countryside. In 1950 the foreign type cheese region (Green, Lafayette and Dane counties) produced 83% of the total Swiss in the state (53,260,050 pounds produced in Wisconsin). As stated earlier, this region had a higher concentration of farmstead cheese factories than any other region in the state of Wisconsin.