

General Background for Tour of Bogs at the Birches  
Vinton N. Thompson, Agent  
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It is believed that the first cranberry bogs set out here were set out shortly prior to 1859 by Theodore Budd of Pemberton, N. J. He erected turf walls to keep out marauding animals, cleared the land and set out cranberry vines. He was successful, to say the least, but about 1880 he became interested in other cranberry properties nearer his home and sold bogs at Goosepond and the Birches to Martin L. Haines. In 1905 Martin L. Haines died suddenly and the management of the properties came under Ernest and Ethelbert Haines, his sons. In 1923 Ernest Haines became the sole owner and manager of the bogs. After the sudden death of Ernest Haines in 1935, Ralph Haines managed them for his Estate until late in 1946 when The Birches Cranberry Co. was formed and which now manages the bogs.

Some of the bogs of The Birches have been sanded more than ten times in the past seventy-five years. Many of them have now been planted for the third time. Some of them have been planted to Jerseys, then Early Richards, later on Centennials, and now to Early Blacks. For a number of years it has been a general practice here to hold the bogs until the 20th of May each year. Water for frost protection is none too adequate on the property here and is definitely inadequate at the Goosepond.

There is one bog here which is known as the Fishpond bog and lies above Bog #3. Fishpond bog was set out about 1894 with a pure strain of Early Blacks direct from Cape Cod. It was used as a nursery for the growing of vines for all of our other Early Black bogs. Vines from this bog have been the start for many large acreages of Early Blacks in this State. The bog is trashy now and has big cedars and maples growing high above the vines with the chain broken and leather leaf covering large sections of it. It was originally about a four acre bog and now about an acre and a half still bears sound crops of truly fine Early Blacks. We still mow our vines for replanting from this bog. It is truly remarkable that it still bears well despite no attention. (It has not been brushed since 1910.) Anyone wishing to see the remains can do so by just asking Lew Haines.

Lew Haines, by the way, is the authority on The Birches. He has been working here since 1904, which is a long time to spend on one cranberry property. Any questions anyone has about the property here should be asked of him.

One last thought is that this is a tour of The Birches today. Sometime in the future we hope we will be able to have you tour some of our other bogs. Also anyone wishing to do so is cordially invited to visit our Cranberry House. The J. J. White Cranberry Assorting Machine may be of interest to some.

On another part of the property, at Burr's Mills, Benjamin Thomas set out a bog about 1835.

Directions for the Tour  
(Arrows along the way will indicate the line of travel)

#1 - Icehouse Bog

Early Blacks set out in 1914.

Partially sanded on ice in 1948 with wheelbarrows, corner toward the cranberry house.

Fertilized nearly every year with varying types of commercial fertilizers. 200 lbs. of 4-12-4 was put on per acre this year.

Has been a rather consistent cropper over the years.

#2 - Three Corner Bog

Early Blacks set out in 1914.

Fertilized with 200 lbs. of 4-12-4 this year in June. In 1948 it was fertilized with 250 lbs. per acre of 0-14-7. In 1947, 200 lbs. per acre of 7-7-7 was used.

This bog has been a dependable cropper over the years.

#3 - Connor's Bog

Howes set out in 1917.

It has had exactly the same fertilizer treatment as the bog above.

This is our best Howes bog and despite an infestation of false blossom this bog picks well and has berries of excellent quality.

It has never been sprayed for rot.

It was last sanded in 1937.

#4 - Old Howe Bog

Howes set out in 1906.

Though this bog is heavily infested with false blossom it produces fair crops. The berries are of good quality.

Fertilizer treatment has been the same for this as on the above bogs.

The braken fern is a serious problem in this bog and has been for a number of years. All braken on the north side of the main ditch (toward the reservoirs) has been treated with iron sulphate (Ferrous Sulphate) this year (about July 1st). Results have been quite unusual. Some spots of braken have been seriously hurt, if not completely killed. The amount of iron sulphate applied may have been different because three different men did the work. Where the material was spread too thinly no serious harm to the braken seems to have resulted. The dry weather may have had effects on the material, since it did not rain within 10 days of the application. We intend to experiment further with iron sulphate and other chemical weed killers for braken, since it is about our most serious bog weed. We scatter the iron sulphate about 18 inches beyond the edge of the fern patch. In the future we will probably use up to 40 lbs. to the square rod.

#5 - Narrow Bog

Early Blacks set out in 1947 (Fall).

This bog was formerly a Howes bog and has come in solid grass since it was set out. The vines are slowly getting started though and we hope it will make an Early Black bog. In its fourth year, which will be 1951, we will hold the water on it until July 9th in order to stimulate the young planted vines so that they will crowd out the grass which the late holding will retard.

We have been mowing the grass twice a season with the bicycle mower and it seems to be helping a great deal in controlling the grass.

This bog was hand set, placing the vines 6x18 inches.

#6 - Long Howe Bog

Howes set out in 1933.

At times we have been undecided whether or not to tear up this bog since it sometimes seems it is almost entirely false blossom. It would always bear

enough to justify its continued existence as a Howes bog, having very sound berries of excellent fresh fruit quality.

We are now trying to see if we can make it into a top producer. The first step was to hold it late (July 9th) in 1948 and give it a good cleaning. This year it will be cropped and we hope to sand it this coming winter. The results will be most interesting to see.

At the lower end of this bog you will see (if you look closely) where we built a trestle for our narrow gauge railway to cross the bog while we sanded the bog on the right. This enabled us to keep this bog flooded and made it unnecessary to tear out any dams, as is sometimes done.

#7 - Garden Bog (on the right)

Part of this bog was set out in Early Blacks in 1923. The remaining four acres, which is in the lower corner on your right, is in Jerseys. There are about ten acres of Early Blacks.

This bog was a heavy cropper for many years and a mainstay of the business here. However, during the dry Fall months of 1944, 1945, and 1946 the cranberry girdler ruined it. Dead spots appeared and the vines assumed a very weakened condition. The bog began to rot and despite spraying, what berries set would not be carried to full maturity. In 1947 we had a beautiful blossom and an excellent set but the berries kept deteriorating right up until harvest. A crop estimate conservatively made Aug. 15th at 1200 boxes turned into an actual harvest of less than 200 which were of poor quality, even though the bog was sprayed in 1947. We sprayed again in 1948, but we failed again and only about 100 boxes of fruit were harvested.

This past winter this bog has been thoroughly sanded and we hope this will bring it back to its former prominence here. I might add that we sanded a small portion of it in 1947-48 on the ice and that particular section bore sound fruit last year and the yield was good. However, one yard beyond the sand the crop was rotten and the yield poor. This was a very striking example of what a little sand can do for a cranberry bog and was remarked upon by several growers who visited here and were shown this remarkable contrast.

#8 - Burnt Bog

Set out in Early Blacks in 1923.

This bog produced a large crop in 1947 after being late held in 1946. However, the quality was not as good as we should like to have it. Thus we sanded it quite heavily during the winter of 1947-48 with our car and track. We hope this sand will improve the quality of the fruit and increase the vigor and tone of the vines so that they will bear good crops of fruit for the next few years.

The grass and redroot in this bog have been mowed with our bicycle mower the past two years.

The first year after heavy sanding we do not harvest the crop.

#9 - Centennial Bog

Centennials set out in 1917.

Scooping and consequent injury to the vines has turned this bog into a biennial bearing bog. It crops quite well every other year and the berries, while poor shippers, make the finest cranberry sauce, we feel.

This bog has a warm place in our hearts and we intend to keep it producing well just as long as possible. It is the only Centennial bog we have left now. The others have all been, or are in the process of being replanted.

It was late held last year and brushed. We intend frequently to late hold this bog to minimize the effect of scooping injury on the crop following a large crop. We hope to sand it in the near future but have not yet set a date.

#10 - Spring Bog

Early Blacks set out in 1919.

This bog was last sanded in 1940 and has cropped well since. Currently it has its poorest crop for many years. We attribute this to the fact that it was scooped during hot, dry, early September weather last year and was damaged by doing such. The color and vigor of the vines is not what we desire.

Fertilizer treatment was with 250 lbs. of 4-12-4 this year about June 10. This bog was also brushed this Spring.

#11 - Bailey Bog

Early Blacks set out in 1912.

We feel that this is an exceedingly clean bog for being so old. In 1941 it was so full of Royal Fern and Cinnamon Fern that it was difficult to see any vines. These were hand pulled and carried off with excellent results. The initial removal was followed by a clean-up the next two summers.

It was late held in 1947 and last year produced over 80 barrels of berries per acre. It was not scooped until October 12. At this later date the cooler weather evidently was an aid in not so much scooping injury.

Last year we used some iron sulphate with good results on chain broken in parts of this bog.

This bog was fertilized with 200 lbs. of 4-12-4 per acre in June.

#12 - Wharton Bog

Mixture of Early Blacks and Jerseys set out in 1907.

The berries on this bog are always unusually sound and large in size. Despite heat damage, which was severe in other bogs here, this bog produced berries of the highest quality which were all shipped fresh fruit.

This bog has been late held this year and will be cleaned before the winter flood is put on.

We hope to sand it on ice in the year 1950 or 1951.

#13 - Jersey Bog

Set out in Jerseys in 1908.

In 1947 I put 100 lbs. per acre of nitrate of soda on this bog as a stimulant. It seemed to be dying out and I wanted to encourage new growth. Then during the winter of 1947-48 I got a chance to sand it on ice with trucks. This took only two days and we put an inch of sand on the ice.

Its recovery has been encouraging and last year it produced very well. This year it looks a little better. We hope to late hold it next year and then brush it.

Last year we put 250 lbs. of 3-12-8 on it and the berries were of excellent quality, though heat damage was noticeable.

#14 - Mary's Bog

Set out in Jersey's in 1908.

A very dirty bog with lots of fine brush. We late held it last year and cleaned up as best we could in the Fall after harvest.

We hope to replant this small bog in a few years. It is one of the few bogs we have here that does not have the stumps removed.

Where there are vines it produces a fair crop.

#15 - Ernest's Bog

We have named this after our Uncle Ernest M. Haines because it is the last bog he set out before he passed away in 1935. It is an Early Black bog set out in 1934.

This bog has been late held this year in hopes of controlling a girdler infestation which has hurt the middle section of it severely. We flooded after harvesting it early in September for girdler control last Fall. Now we hope to crop it and watch the results next year. If any remaining effects of girdler injury show next year we plan to sand it during the winter of 1950-51. This bog bears well except for about an acre in the middle. It is to be cleaned prior to cranberry harvest.