

To: Friends of Old Apples
From: Tom Brown

December 6, 2004

Apple Search---2004

I want to again thank the many people who helped me in my search for old apple varieties and their preservation. It was a productive year in which I found about seventy varieties in little over half a year. The remaining time was spent opposing a high voltage power line (unsuccessful so far) and helping a spay/neuter clinic. The apples found are as follows: Barker's Liner, Bachelor, Bingham, Biscuit, Bitter Queen, Black, Bob, Boswell, Canning, Church, Coolin Winter, Dixie Sweet, Dry Creek Pippin (seedling), Fall Delicious, Fernina Pippin, Golden Winter, Goodland, Goose Pasture, Greasy Coat, Green Bellflower, Green Horse (large), Green Mountain, Horseshoe, Ice, Jack (large, yellow), Juicy, Ladonium, Lansingburg, March Sweet, Miller Sour, Mountain, Mountain Limbertwig, North Carolina Keeper, Northern Bellflower, Palmer, Paragon, Paw Paw Sweet, Payne (red striped), Pippin, Pound (Alamance), Pound (Mt. Sinai), Rabbit Sweet, Radical, Red Pound (Nantahala), Red Rambo, Red Torque, Rhudy Sweet, Rusty Sweet (very large), Slatton Twig, Sheepnose Sweet, Smokehouse (green), Sour Russet, Squash, Strawberry (Autumn?), Stripe, Stripes, Striped Transparent, Sweet Horse, Sweet Pippin, Tennessee Greening, Upton, Vine, White Horse, White Pipka, Winter Crow Egg, Winter Green (Poorhouse), Winter Green (spicy), Yellow Milliers, Yellow Sweet, Yellow Sweet June, and York Pippin. Other apples potentially found but needing a little more identification: Chicago, Hardison's July, Lady Watermelon, and Two-Tone.

I would like to share with you the story of how one of the apples was found---the Barker's Liner. The story of this apple is told in Lee Calhoun's book, *Old Southern Apples*. In the 1800s, two men owned adjoining property in Virginia. There was a small piece of land equally owned by them, on which they agreed to set trees and share the profits. One of the men, Mr. Barker, planted a tree on the property line and it grew and became known as the Barker Line apple. Another man took cuttings from this tree to Tennessee. Later the Smith's Nursery of Franklin, TN, sold Barker's Liner apple trees.

Several years ago I had called Tim Hensley, who sells heritage apple trees in Bristol, VA. I asked him if there were any apples that he was trying to find. He said that a man who lived south of Nashville, TN, had contacted him wanting to find a "Barka Lina" apple. He gave me the phone number of Gene Turner (Brentwood, TN). I called Gene and he described the apple he and his brothers remember well. The Liner was large, flat, colored with red, good tasting and juicy, was a good keeper, and ripened late. I was sure that the Barka Lina was the Barker's Liner apple. I also thought that this apple had been in my area of North Carolina. In Alexander County, NC, three senior citizens, mentioned hearing "the old people" talk of a Liner apple in their area. Over the next three years, I mailed Gene every apple I found which somewhat fit his description of the Barker's Liner, probably six mailings. Some were close, but they were not the Barker's Liner.

While I was mailing apples to Mr. Turner, I met Dexter Henderson who was very helpful in showing me old home places in Iredell and Wilkes Counties (adjoining Alexander County). Dexter remembers many old apple varieties, including a Water Spout. I met Dexter under the most unusual circumstances---I dialed a wrong number, his. One of the home places that he took me to see was in southern Wilkes Co. and was about a half mile off the road. Two old apple trees grew at the home. Dexter said that

they were different from any he had ever seen. They closely fit the description of the Barker's Liner apple, so I mailed Gene several apples. I then received an e-mail message back from him, saying that the apple was exactly as he remembered the "Barka Lina" apple. It is a great apple and I plan grafting several of the Barker's Liner trees for him.

I would like to share with you ghost stories told to me while searching for old apples.

Bill Crawford of Jackson Co., NC, told me about the Laney Field Haint. The Laney Field was used as a short cut to the Webster School. In the early 1900's numerous people reported seeing a person riding a horse in the field carrying his head under his arm. Bill remembered seeing hunters return from this area looking "white as a ghost", after encountering the Haint. Bill's mother-in-law told of clearly hearing a team of horses running by---there was nothing there except the sound. These memories are intriguing.

Bobby Thomas of Wilkes Co., NC, told me about his supernatural encounter on Wells Knob. There were many rough, logging type roads over the Knob. Bobby was riding his bicycle on the Knob returning home. He clearly heard the sound of a team of horses and a wagon on a merging road. As he approached the intersection, the sound grew louder. After passing the intersection, he could hear the horses following him, but there was nothing to be seen. He peddled his bike with lightning speed to quickly get home. The team of horses followed him almost all the way. This was extremely frightening.

When Bobby reached home, he excitedly told of his encounter to his parents. They were interested, but did not really believe him. The very next night his family heard their mules acting very excited. Bobby and his father went out to see what had scared them. As they approached the barn, they both loudly heard a team of horses running by, but there were no horses to be seen. Bobby always avoided Wells Knob after dark.

Earl Radford of Madison Co., NC, told me of a ghost near his home. Before the Civil War, a drummer (traveling salesman) had been in a poker game resulting in a bad argument. The drummer was then later shot from his horse on Paint Fork Road. Many people have reported seeing a headless man walking beside the road. Earl was never comfortable walking on the Paint Fork Road after hearing these stories.

William Shinault told me of something which happened near Cox Chapel, VA. A local man, named Cussin Isam, killed a peddler in a general store near Potato Creek. It was then said that bloodstains would show up on the wooden floorboards every time it rained. You could also look up the creek and see a rock mass in the shape of the peddler.

Before you dismiss any of these tales, let me tell you a personal story. I did process development work in an industrial factory. One of the production supervisors, Carol James, had a heart attack. His doctor said that he could keep working as long as it was something less strenuous. They allowed him to help me and we worked together four hours a day for about five months. One afternoon I felt myself getting very tired. It was as if all the energy was draining from my body. About 4:30 PM the energy drain was most intense. After leaving work I drove around, trying to shake the persistent feeling. I went to a pick-up basketball game that night in an effort to forget the strange encounter. When I returned home, my wife said that two people had called, telling her of Carol's death between 4:30 and 5:00 PM. The very numbing feeling lasted for two long weeks.

I hope that the coming year will be a very good one for you and your family!!!

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