

ELIZABETH WHITE, Pioneer Blueberry Grower

Miss Elizabeth C. White, known as New Jersey's "blueberry queen" for her part in developing cultivated blueberries into a multi-million dollar industry, died on November 28, 1954 at her ancestral home in Whitesbog at the age of 83.

Miss White was the eldest daughter of Joseph J. White, a pioneer cranberry grower of the 1890's. In 1893, after finishing school, she began helping her father in his bogs, and operated his huge cranberry farm for some years after his death.

In 1910, Miss White began looking for a crop to supplement an off-cranberry season. Happening to run across a Department of Agriculture release written by Dr. Frederick V. Coville on the culture of the then virtually unknown blueberry, she offered her farm for Coville's experiments. By 1916 these two together had developed wild seedlings into a revolutionary, marketable fruit.

For her part in the development of the blueberry Miss White received a citation from the New Jersey Board of Agriculture for "outstanding contributions to agriculture in the state."

She became the first woman member and later served as president of the American Cranberry Growers Association. She was an honorary member of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, in which Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson had been early members.

Miss White was awarded the Wilder Bronze Medal of the American Pomological Society in 1920 for her exhibit of blueberries. More recently, in 1952, she was recipient of the Wilder Silver Medal with the following citation: "Plant breeder and horticultural scientist through whose skill and zeal the blueberry had been markedly improved as a horticultural crop."

In her later years, Miss White turned her major interest to the cultivation of native holly, and succeeded in developing a plant which rivaled the best of stocks imported from England.

We salute Elizabeth White for her role in the building of American horticulture.