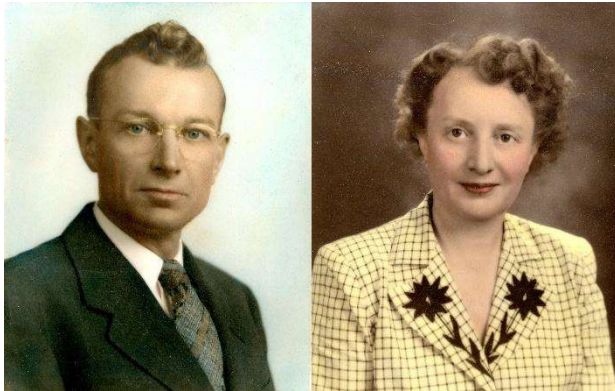


Bartling's Manitowish Cranberry Co., Inc.

May 2022 by Michael and Barbara Bartling

In the early to mid-1940s, Delbert and Myrtle Bartling were living in Necedah, WI. They had two children, Joyce, and Fred, who were born and raised there. Delbert owned and operated a creamery, and Myrtle was teaching math and science at the local high school as teachers were needed during WWII. Delbert had developed a deep cough and was eventually diagnosed with emphysema.



Around this time, Delbert's good friends, cranberry grower Guy Potter from Cutler, near Necedah and optometrist George "Doc" Millard from Wisconsin Rapids, were investigating other cranberry growing areas in the state. Working with Vernon Goldsworthy from Wisconsin Rapids, they identified a large tract of marshland along the eastern shore of Little Trout Lake in Manitowish Waters that was for sale and that Millard purchased it. Millard kept a narrow parcel on Little Trout Lake that had a cabin on it for recreation and

sold the rest to Goldsworthy.

As Delbert's disease had progressed to the point that he was no longer able to run the creamery, he took a leap of faith to pursue growing cranberries under the guidance of Potter. In 1945, the creamery was sold, and the proceeds were used to purchase 80 acres near Little Trout Lake from Goldsworthy. They also purchased 20 acres on Alder Lake. Delbert and Myrtle did not strike out on this venture alone. Myrtle's brother Herb Indermuehle and his wife Florence as well as other friends and acquaintances were also swayed by Goldsworthy's and Potter's enthusiasm and purchased land from Goldsworthy as well.

The Bartlings named their farm Manitowish Cranberry Company, Inc. and from 1946-1953 they would spend their summers in Manitowish Waters, living in a small shack at the corner of Highway 51 and what is now south Townline Road. There was no bridge over the Trout River on Alder Lake Road at the time, so to reach the marsh, they had to travel north on Hwy 51 and then around Little Star and Manitowish lakes on Alder Lake Road. As Delbert was no longer able to work, they hired Joe McClellan and other men to help in the construction of the cranberry farm. Mac McFarland had a bulldozer and a dragline, and they hired him to dig the flood ditches, make the dikes, and scalp and rough level the beds to be planted. The finish grading and drainage ditches were done by hand with shovels.



In the winter months, the Bartlings moved back to Necedah so Myrtle could continue teaching and earning an income for the family. Delbert passed away on September 9, 1953. According to an estate document, Delbert left Myrtle, "1 Ford pickup, 1 Ford truck, 1 Ford car, 2 irrigation pumps and 2 pump engines, picker, sprayer, clipper, wheelbarrows, shovels, harvest boats, Ford tractor, rakes, boxes, duster, sorting equipment, barrels, small tools, a checking account and real estate." There was real estate, which included a cranberry milling warehouse on Alder Lake Road near their home.



Son Fred was released early from his enlistment in the Navy on a bereavement discharge to return home to take over the family farm. Fred had been serving as a radio technician on an aircraft carrier patrolling in the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea during the Korean War. Myrtle sold the Necedah home and moved into a house that Fred had built on their Alder Lake property. She lived there until she died at nearly 100 years old.

Fred and wife Lenore (Speas) Bartling had married in 1951. Upon Delbert's death, they moved to Manitowish Waters from the Jacksonville, FL naval base and took over the farm operations. They lived in one of the cabins at Theisen's Twin Pine Resort year-round the first year. In 1953, Fred was managing about 25-30 acres of cranberry beds but continuing to add more. Starting in 1954 they had four children: Peter, Rebecca (Becky), Michael, and Mary.

In 1966, Manitowish Cranberry Co, Inc. purchased the adjacent farm, Cardinal Cranberry Company, from Harold Gross of Chicago. This new property added 40 acres of cranberry beds on about 100 acres of land to the Bartling farm along the shore of Little Trout Lake. Cardinal Cranberry had a larger milling warehouse and was conveniently located between the two farms. The milling equipment was combined into that building, and the old Bartling milling warehouse was used for storage. There was also a house on the Gross property and that is still used for housing farm help. Peter and Lynn Bartling lived in that house in the late 1980s to mid-1990s. There was also 80 acres of land that came along with the Gross purchase. It is located north of the farm sites and at Alder Lake Road and Cranberry Boulevard. There is a sand ridge on the south quarter of that property that is used as a sand source for the farming operations. The north part of that property was mostly low, flat woodland with some swamp, and that land was developed into 46 acres of cranberry beds in the early 1990s.

In 1978, Fred and Lenore's oldest child Peter joined the company after college at UW Lacrosse. In 1981, their other son Michael came on board with a degree in horticulture from UW-Madison. Pete and Mike continued to expand and renovate the farm.

In 1988, Manitowish Cranberry Company purchased the Alderwood resort property on 12 acres of land from Baye and Floyd Christensen. This parcel abuts the sand pit property and provides water access from Alder Lake for developing the cranberry beds on the west side of Alder Lake Road, across from the resort. The company now had 186 acres of cranberries under production. In



2007, Steven Bartling, Mike, and Barbara's oldest son, became involved in the business as Fred couldn't help anymore. He died later that year. Their other son David joined the company in 2014 with a degree in Biological Systems Engineering from UW-Madison. As expansion of the current cranberry marsh was limited due to lack of developable land and market constraints, this generation focused growing the business through renovation of existing beds, replanting existing beds with higher yielding cranberry vines. Efficiencies were also gained by innovating more efficient equipment and contracting out harvest operations to a neighboring marsh.

Koller Cranberry Co had sold their main cranberry marsh to Northland Cranberries in 1993. They did, however, keep a one-acre cranberry bed adjacent to their warehouse and home on Wild Rice Lake. By 2015, Frank passed on and their son Frank B. Koller who had died in 1977, leaving Betty as the sole owner of the property. To continue the Koller legacy in the cranberry industry through our family, Manitowish Cranberry purchased the remaining Koller assets, which included the one-acre cranberry bed, private home on Wild Rice Lake, rental home on Highway 51, and Frank's antique car collection.



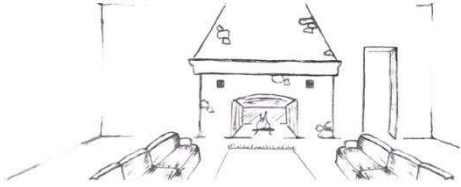
2020 Lucy, Becca, David, Barbara, Steven, and Michael Bartling

As of 2021, fourth generation growers Steven and David, now own and operate Manitowish Cranberry Co., Inc., consisting of 190 acres of cranberry beds and additional support land. The company continues to be an Ocean Spray grower-owner, and Ocean Spray Cranberries, a grower-owned cooperative, markets their fruit.

Rental Properties:

In 1988, Manitowish Cranberry purchased the Alderwood Resort property on Alder Lake. The previous owner, Floyd Christensen, had not operated the property as a resort for some time; the Christensen

ALDERWOOD RESORT



family used it as a family vacation compound. Mike and Barbara resurrected it as a seasonal resort in 1989 and continued to improve it over time.

David's wife Becca took over management of the company's short-term rental properties in 2015, which at the time was only Alderwood Resort. The resort is continuously being improved.

Purchasing the Koller properties in 2015 added two more rental properties to the company. One, on Highway 51, is a Tri-State manufactured house and the previous home of Betty Koller's mother, Anna Leasure. The other property is Betty's home on Wild Rice Lake. Both are long-term rentals.

In 2018, Manitowish Cranberry purchased the Alder Lake home of Dick and Tricia Indermuehle as they were moving to Arbor Vitae, WI. This became a year-round short-term rental property, managed by Becca.

Another neighboring property was purchased in 2020. Helen Erickson sold her Alder Lake home on 11 acres of land as she was leaving the area. This home is a long-term rental property.