

Exhibit 1. Niles, E. P., 1899. Experiments with chickens. Bulletin 96, Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, Blacksburg, VA

A few years ago the writer began to breed chickens on a small scale simply for pastime and recreation after office hours. No definite breed was at first selected and a small lot of common fowls of various colors were first secured. Desiring, however, to have a distinct breed, a trio of White Crested Black Polish fowls were purchased and an attempt made to keep them separate from the other fowls. We found, however, that, very much to our regret, the male was not easily confined and that but few of the eggs from the Polish hens were fertile. It is also to be regretted that the writer was not able to raise a single full-blood Polish fowl. It was all the more regrettable from the fact that this variety of fowl is a very novel and pretty one. It may be truthfully stated, however, that the Polish fowl is strictly a fancier's fowl and not one for general profit, especially the profit required on the farm. For the fancier who has nothing to do but spend his time with his chickens no more satisfactory fowl can be gotten. It is a handsome breed, very docile as a rule, and certainly makes a nice pet. The varieties of the Polish breed are numerous, viz., White Crested Black, Black Crested White, White Crested White, Silver Spangled, Gold Spangled, and Buff, all of which are very handsome. The crest on the head is very large and obscures the view of the fowl in nearly every direction except downward. They are, therefore, an easy prey to hawks, and for this reason alone are certainly not the farmer's fowl. Again, in winter time they must be protected from inclement weather; since the heavy crest when wet remains so for a long time, thus subjecting the fowl to colds, roup, etc. The young chicks are very delicate and must have the best of care, especially while feathering. The breed is a good summer layer, but according to the writer's experience not a winter layer. Instead of wanting to set at the end of each brood it seems to be the rule for them to cluck for a few days and then start in on another setting of eggs.

The cross of this breed on the common fowl produced a most excellent chicken. The crest was not entirely lost but was reduced about one-half in size and was invariably black. The cross was of medium size, rather long legged, wild and good rovers. The flesh had a gamy flavor, was fine grained, and, we should say as a table fowl could not be excelled. Wishing to breed thoroughbred fowls, and this variety not being satisfactory, a second cross was not tried.

The Partridge Cochin was next tried. This is a very large fowl, extremely docile and depends entirely upon having its rations given it daily, and being a poor forager would probably do very poorly indeed if made to forage for a

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living. It is a fairly good layer but sets often and is frequently broken up with difficulty; persisting on setting in the boxes or coops in which it may be shut for the purpose of "breaking it up". The writer has frequently resorted to the practice of standing the setting hen in two or three inches of water for a period of two or three days and finds this the most successful method of diverting the persistent mind of the Cochin hen. Some of the hens make good mothers but are rather too clumsy and heavy for setting. If they are to be used for such purposes, however, the nest should be so arranged that the hen will not have to jump down upon the eggs in going to her nest. If the nest is so arranged that the hen can simply walk into it, many of the Cochins will come off with good broods. The writer's experience has been that some of them make much better mothers than others. Occasionally one will trample nearly all of her chicks to death, while others will not trample upon any. We have in mind one hen to which twenty-six chickens were given and not a one was lost. For parties in town, or those who only have a small range, we consider the Cochin an excellent breed, since they stand confinement well and are content without a large range. They are easily confined and will not fly over a fence three feet high. The flesh is, however, rather coarse and for table purposes is not as good as that of many of the smaller breeds. As a cross on the common fowl we have gotten good results. The product of the cross varies in color, but is much inclined to the buff, and many of the characteristic points of the Cochin are retained. We do not know, however, that the laying qualities are improved.

Considering the cross from the standpoint of the "scrub", we consider it a very desirable one.

As a matter of experiment, one cross was made between the Partridge and White Cochin. The cross took on all the characters of the Cochin but varied in color; some black, others black with yellow pencilings, but buff predominated.

The White Cochin is similar to the other varieties of Cochans in every particular except in color. We consider the variety a little more hardy than the Partridge Cochans; having now a hen in our flock five years old, while the other variety in question has not lived more than two years for us. The White is equally as good a layer, does not want to set as often and is a better forager and makes equally as good a mother. The pluck of the male is something remarkable for so heavy a breed. The writer, has, on several occasions, known young roosters, which were raised in the same brood and never separated, to fight until exhausted and after resting go at it again and continue the

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battle in this manner an entire day.

During the present year we have tried crossing the White Indian Game on the White Cochin and the results have been most excellent. One dozen White Cochin hens were mated with a White Indian Game rooster in the spring, and as the mating was late no early chicks were hatched. In due time, however, the eggs were found to be fertile and hatched excellently well, every egg putting forth a strong, healthy chick in almost every setting. It is very interesting to note the character of the chicks resulting from such a cross. The feathering on the legs characteristic of the Cochin were greatly diminished, in some almost absent; the leg is increased in length; the feathers on the body lie close; the carriage is upright and the docility of the Cochin is entirely lost. The head is more slender than in the full-blood Cochin, yet thicker and shorter than that of the Game.

For the table they are unsurpassed. The meat is fine in texture, of a game flavor and not dry as is the flesh of many fowls; breast full and plump and legs and thighs large. The chicks are extremely hardy, scarcely one being lost after hatching. They require but little attention, are good rangers and on the farm would forage for their own living under ordinary circumstances. Then in full feather, however, a very high fence would be required to confine them. As to their laying qualities nothing can be said at this writing as this is the first season that the cross has been tried. The color is, in most cases, snow white. A number of the cross bred chicks were, however, sprinkled with black feathers, which probably came from the Game blood as the full blood Games will occasionally develop black feathers. During the coming season we shall mate the product of this cross with full blood White Indian Game roosters and will watch the result with a great deal of interest. It may be added that the Indian Game, either white or black, is a large fowl and among fanciers has a good reputation as being a good layer. The flesh is excellent. It is a good ranger, protects its young well from hawks, and to the farmer especially we believe it is one of the most profitable breeds.

For a year or two the writer tried artificial incubation and through the kindness of Mr. George H. Stahl, Manufacturer of incubators, Quincy, Illinois, secured an incubator of two hundred egg capacity for the experiment. Having, however, to be away from home a large portion of the time, while the experiments were being conducted, our success was not what had been hoped for. The hatching of chicks by artificial incubation requires the closest attention and the

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incubator should at all times be attended by the same person in order to obtain the best results. It may be stated, however, that the incubator furnished us by Mr. Stahl for this experiment is of the most modern pattern, easily managed, and with proper attention would doubtless give entire satisfaction. We hope in the near future to carry on these experiments in a more systematic manner and to be able to report better results.