

IN THE SHADE OF THE OLD APPLE TREE

by

Philip D. Jordan

There was fun under the shade of the old apple tree—country folk spread picnic cloths, old men dozed on benches, young swains courted their girls. Urchins swarmed its branches to build tree houses and to crunch into just-picked Pippins. Apples, red and ripe, became deep-crust pies and fried fritters and applesauce and jam, and were milled into the sweetest cider ever tasted. Apples were also a pain to raise.

During Iowa's earliest days, there were no apple trees. No Johnny Appleseed, with bare feet, tattered trousers, and fry pan as a hat, ever wandered west of the Mississippi sowing seeds as Johnny had in the Ohio country decades earlier. More men from Buckeyeland knew this eccentric seeder as Johnny Appleseed than knew his real name John Chapman, but this did not matter. He spread orchards across their land, and that was enough and more. Thanks to him, apples in Ohio and much of the Old Northwest not only brightened the diet of many homes but also became a staple crop. When Peter Melendy moved in 1856 from Cincinnati, Ohio to Cedar Falls, Iowa, he left behind an orchard of four hundred trees. He believed, as did many another, that apples

were a more profitable crop than any of the other fruits in Ohio. They were the fruit of fruits—the most delicious and the most useful.

Certainly, no traveler visiting Iowa during the 1830s could write as did an Ohio sojourner in 1819 that "In almost every orchard is seen a cider press, and under every tree large apples, so thick that at every step you must tread upon them, while the boughs above are breaking down with their overladen fruit. It is no crime here for either man nor beast to rob orchards." So apparent in Iowa was the scarcity of apples and so great was the urge for this versatile fruit that Charles Mason, later Iowa's first chief justice, wrote in November 1836 to his brother while enroute to Burlington, "I wish you would send me some apple seeds, as many as you conveniently can. I am told they may be gathered in great numbers about cider mills." Mason emphasized that many seeds be sent, for "I can do a good business with them." The seeds Mason received were among the first imported into Iowa. But from them did not spring the first orchard.

Probably, although no one can be quite certain, Louis Honore' Tesson, a French-Canadian trader who traveled the Upper Mississippi, received permission in 1799 from the lieutenant governor of the province of Upper Louisiana to settle at the head of the Des Moines Rapids, somewhere between Keokuk and Montrose. Tesson, under the grant's terms, was to missionize the Indians, to teach them ways

to cultivate the earth, and to plant trees and sow seeds. From his residence in St. Louis, where his father was a tailor, Tesson laid in supplies, including a hundred seedling apple trees and packed them on mule back to his wilderness hut. After about four years, the Tesson settlement collapsed, and it is a matter of conjecture whether his trees had yet blossomed and borne fruit. A visitor, coming upon the abandoned Tesson place in 1832, however, reported that fifteen trees were bearing apples of an inferior quality. When the original Fort Des Moines was constructed in 1834, the orchard still produced apples. Gradually the trees died, and the site itself was inundated in 1913 by the waters of the Keokuk dam.

Mason's orchard, however, did prosper, although Eastern raisers scoffed at the idea Iowa would ever be anything but a corn-raising region. It never, in the wide world, could possibly become a state where fruits could flourish plentifully and profitably. This refrain, repeated endlessly, always was the same: "Iowa is no fruit state." Dudley W. Adams, secretary of the Iowa State Horticultural Society, "feared—nay, was convinced—that this great garden State of ours was unadapted to fruit-growing." He warned potential fruitmen that they must reckon with an untried climate and with unknown, new, and different soils. "Fruits," Adams continued, "wholly unadapted to these new conditions were our inheritance." He bluntly stated that the greatest obstacle to successful apple culture is "the pitiable

discouragement and everlasting home-sick whining of the faint-hearted."

No one can deny that pioneer apple growers failed and were disappointed. No one can say that the state for years did not depend, at least in large part, upon shipped-in apples, arriving at river ports by steamboats. The bulk of these, of course, were dried. But steamers also unloaded, up and down the Upper Mississippi, thousands of young apple trees. The Cedar Grove Botanic Garden and Nursery, near Salem, Iowa, in 1840 stocked thirty-six thousand trees of forty varieties. Other nurserymen, including Reuben and Gustavus B. Brackett, of Keokuk, Dr. James Weed, of Muscatine, and Kauffman & Borland, at Iowa City, thrived as apple-



tree merchants. Farmers loaded bundles of saplings into wagons to carry them to newly-purchased land and there set them gently into good earth near recently completed log cabins. Then followed a time of patience, for it took six years or more for a tree to bear fruit. Aproned women, during summer heat, carried buckets of water. During winter's cold, straw protected treasured saplings from freezing blasts.

Young trees, planted when Burlington was a territorial capital, were carrying fruit in 1845, and so were others in the vicinity. Benjamin Tucker planted trees on what became the Burlington property of Charles E. Perkins, president of the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad. Perkins, in honor of Tucker's orchard, named his residence "The Apple Trees." By 1849, Avery's Nursery, six miles south-

west of town, published notices throughout the area that it had twenty thousand fruit trees for sale. The majority were apple trees. Neally & Brothers Bird's Nest Nursery of Burlington promised it would deliver trees without charge to the levee if buyers wished to carry them home by boat. Northern Spy apples, grown by James W. Grimes on his Burlington property, were exhibited at a fruit growers' convention in 1853 in Chicago. Grimes, in addition to his political interests, was an enthusiastic horticulturalist. He was so anxious to aid in developing fruit growing in Iowa that he and J. F. Tallant, a local druggist, edited and printed in 1854 *The Iowa Farmer and Horticulturalist*, a journal of practical guidance. This magazine stimulated in part the organization in July 1855 of the North Western Pomological Convention, which first met in Burlington in September. Only a few years earlier, in 1849, the Southern Iowa Horticultural Society had held its initial convention.

Meanwhile, apple-tree planting was moving steadily away from the southeast counties and those bordering the river into interior counties to the west and north. Newcomers, worried by the expense of opening a farm or orchard and feeling the impact of the Panic of 1857, were obligated to be both economical and prudent. Many a discussion was held around the lamp-lighted kitchen table about how to gain the most benefit from meagre cash at hand. Each purchase was debated and justified. For those who yearned for trees and looked forward to the time when the frost was on the pumpkin and their fodder in the shock and when they then might relax in the warmth of a wood-burning stove and crack hickory nuts and reach

Note on Sources

This story of the gnarled, old apple tree, the small cider mills, and mention of a popular song with its haunting line, "And the love in your eyes I can see," is written with the assistance of the usual resource materials. These include the diaries and letters of the Mason, Grimes, and Charles Elliott Perkins family letters and diaries; runs of the reports and transactions of the Iowa Horticultural Society and the *Iowa Agricultural Reports*. *The Iowa Farmer and Horticulturalist* and *Wallace's Farmer* were helpful beyond measure. *The Palimpsest* for April 1923 carried an article on Tesson's apple orchard; issues for April and August 1943 discussed Suel Foster and David W. Lotspeich. Much information was gleaned from newspapers for the period covered, namely the 1850s to past the turn of the century. Among these were the *Iowa Sun and Davenport and Rock Island News*, *Dubuque Daily Express and Herald*, *Muscatine Democratic Enquirer*, *Guthrie Sentinel*, *Burlington Hawk-Eye*, *Sioux City Eagle*, and *Sigourney Weekly Democrat*. Files of these on microfilm are owned by the author. Mr. Stanley Grant, Burlington, with long experience in the supermarket and fruit trade, was exceedingly helpful. Roy H. Youngren, formerly of the Lagomarcino-Grupe Company, aided materially, for he, for years, purchased apples for the Iowa trade.



"Farmer's Home—Autumn" by Currier and Ives (1864).

into a bowl of apples, decisions were difficult. Some bought trees with cash. It was possible to begin an orchard another way. Some nurserymen announced that "Land, horses, cows, or corn would be taken in exchange for apple trees." Farmers, recognized as good credit risks, were permitted to place orders in December and pay in whole or in part the following spring.

There was still another question to be answered: if trees, by one means or another, were bought, what kinds should be selected? What varieties would flourish best on Iowa land and in Iowa's climate? Both laymen and professionals debated these points—sometimes with too

much heat and too little light. By the eve of the Civil War, the Iowa State Agricultural Society published a recommended list in three categories—acid apples, sweet apples, and apples best for marketing.

Among the acid apples were the Red June, Early Joe, Jonathan, Willow Twig, and Roman Stem. Some of these varieties have long since disappeared. In the sweet apples class, the Sweet June stood first, followed, in order, by the Jersey Sweet, Ramsdel's Sweeting, and Winter Sweet Paradise. The Jenning, Wine Sap, Westfield, and Seek-n-Further, the Society said, were the best types for general market sale. Generally nurserymen through-

out the state stocked all these varieties and endorsed them. These types of trees, from four to seven years old, retailed at four cents each, although prices varied slightly from community to community.

Judge Mason's seeds and saplings, some of which his brother sent him in 1836, matured so beautifully that the Judge's daughter, Mary Josephine, exclaimed over them in 1863. "The apples," she wrote, "are very good now. We are going to have a great many." The Mason farm and residence lay to the southwest of Burlington and, in addition to growing apples, raised blackberries, strawberries, and gooseberries. Home-grown apples, during the Civil War, were packed carefully and sent to troops not only in training at, for example, Davenport and Keokuk and Burlington but also to wounded soldiers convalescing in military hospitals. Surgeons frequently penned letters to local soldiers' relief societies expressing appreciation for apple jellies and even apple wine.

By the time, after four years of dreadful conflict, peace finally came, Iowa apple culture was firmly established. Agricultural implement dealers in 1869 were selling patent apple pickers, fruit ladders, and pruning saws and hooks. David Leonard left Burlington that year to attend the American Pomological Society's convention in Philadelphia. He carried with him fifty varieties of apples grown successfully throughout Iowa. Representing the Iowa State Horticultural Society—he was its treasurer—Leonard informed delegates that practically every Iowa county, with the exception of Clarke, Decatur, and Woodbury, was more than satisfied with orchard production. Two years later, Union County reported that "The early settlers

paid but little attention to raising fruit, believing that fruit could not be made profitable; but it is now difficult to find many farms without young orchards."

So enthusiastic, indeed, were horticulturalists that E. H. Calkins, addressing pomologists, let his prose soar: "While California may justly boast of her fine grapes, Delaware of her peaches, Florida of her fine grapes, and our whole 'Sunny South' of her many delicious semi-tropical fruits; Iowa wears the proud laurels of producing the best of apples." His rhetoric appeared justified, for the American Pomological Society, meeting in Richmond, Virginia, had just awarded Iowa first prize on an exhibit of 118 varieties from the state's central counties. Other entries, said the judges' chairman, "were overshadowed by the great superiority" of the Hawkeye exhibit, "in fairness, correctness of nomenclature and the selection of sorts."

Calkins, had he known John Greenleaf Whittier's "The Minister's Daughter," might have replied to the judge's praise with these lines:

Behold in the bloom of apples
And the violets in the sward
A hint of the old, lost beauty
Of the Garden of the Lord!

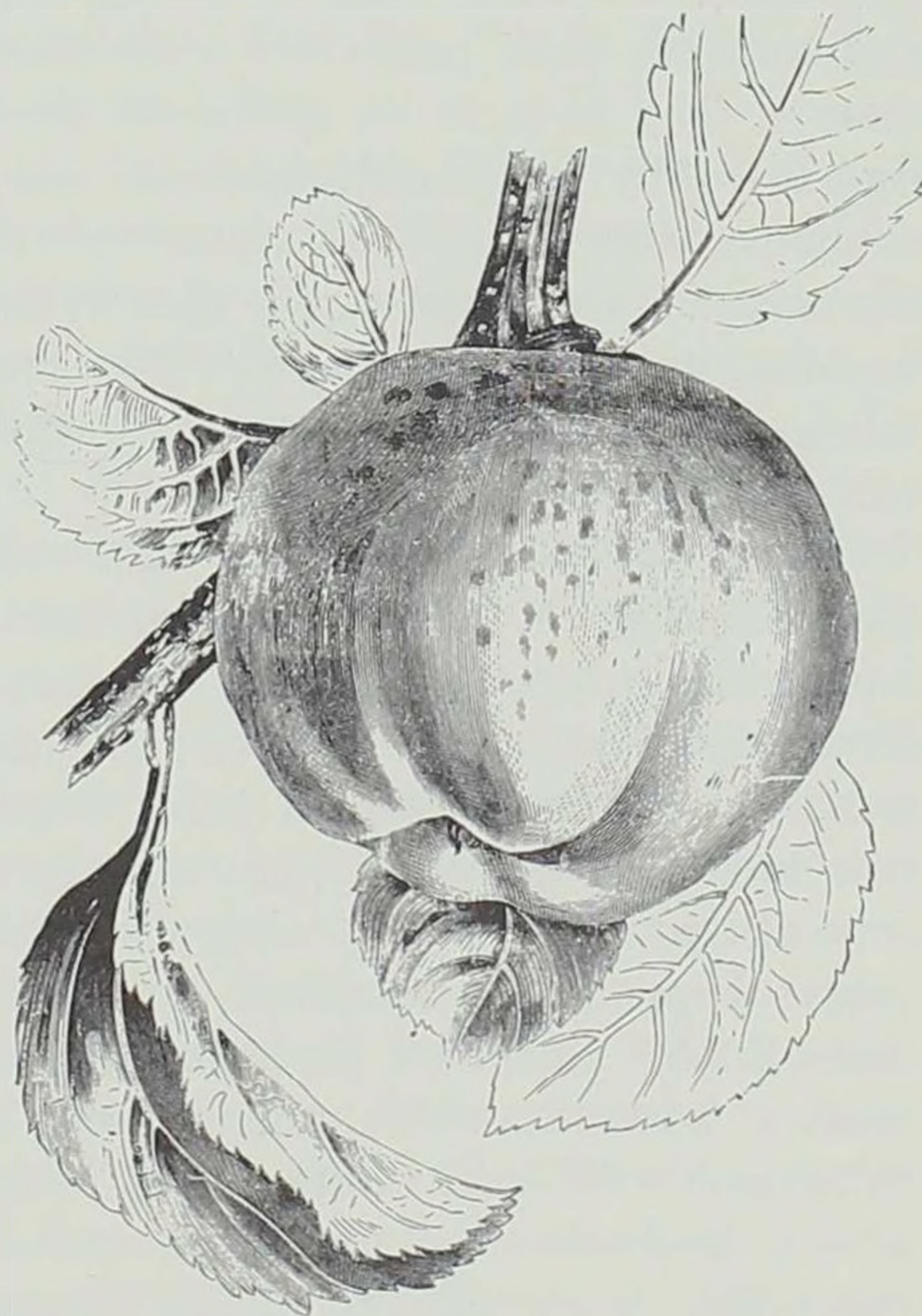
Yet neither prizes nor poetry, appropriate as they were, closed the saga of apple growing in Iowa. Although production increased during the 1880s, apples were scarce and high priced in some sections of the state, so that housewives, on a meagre budget, continued to use the dried fruit. A bushel of apples cost as much as \$1.25 in 1853, while dried apples sold for from eight to ten cents a pound. Shortly after the war, in 1866, apples,

graded as to quality, ranged from eighty cents to a dollar a bushel. Yet in August of that year, although early apples were abundant, they were going as low as thirty cents a bushel. In 1870, the range was between thirty and fifty cents a peck. Dried apples were selling at thirteen cents a pound. Inclement weather in southern Iowa in 1880 destroyed fully one-half of the winter apple crop, and prices went up accordingly. To salvage what they could, farmers lined wagons with straw, placed apples on top, and covered them with additional straw. Blighted fruit, in this manner, was carted to cider mills, where raisers found they netted from twenty-eight to thirty cents a bushel. George W. Shaw, of Garden Grove, fed a thousand bushels to his hogs. During the 1890s retail prices per bushel fluctuated, according to grade and demand, from a low of seventy or eighty cents to a high of \$1.25. There were times when inferior fruit rotted on the trees.

Wizened, blighted fruit was only one among others of growers' problems. Apples are perishable, unable to sustain long-distance transportation. It was more economical, during the 1880s, to move apples in bulk than packed in barrels. Two bushels filled a barrel, and a barrel cost forty cents. Freight charges plus barrels left no adequate margin of profit for keepers of small orchards. "We will have to wait patiently," sighed a grower, "until freight rates are reduced by law to about one-fifth of present rates, and until some smart Hawkeye invents a paper barrel that will not cost more than five cents and answers every purpose as well as a wooden one."

The best shipping apple, maintained J.

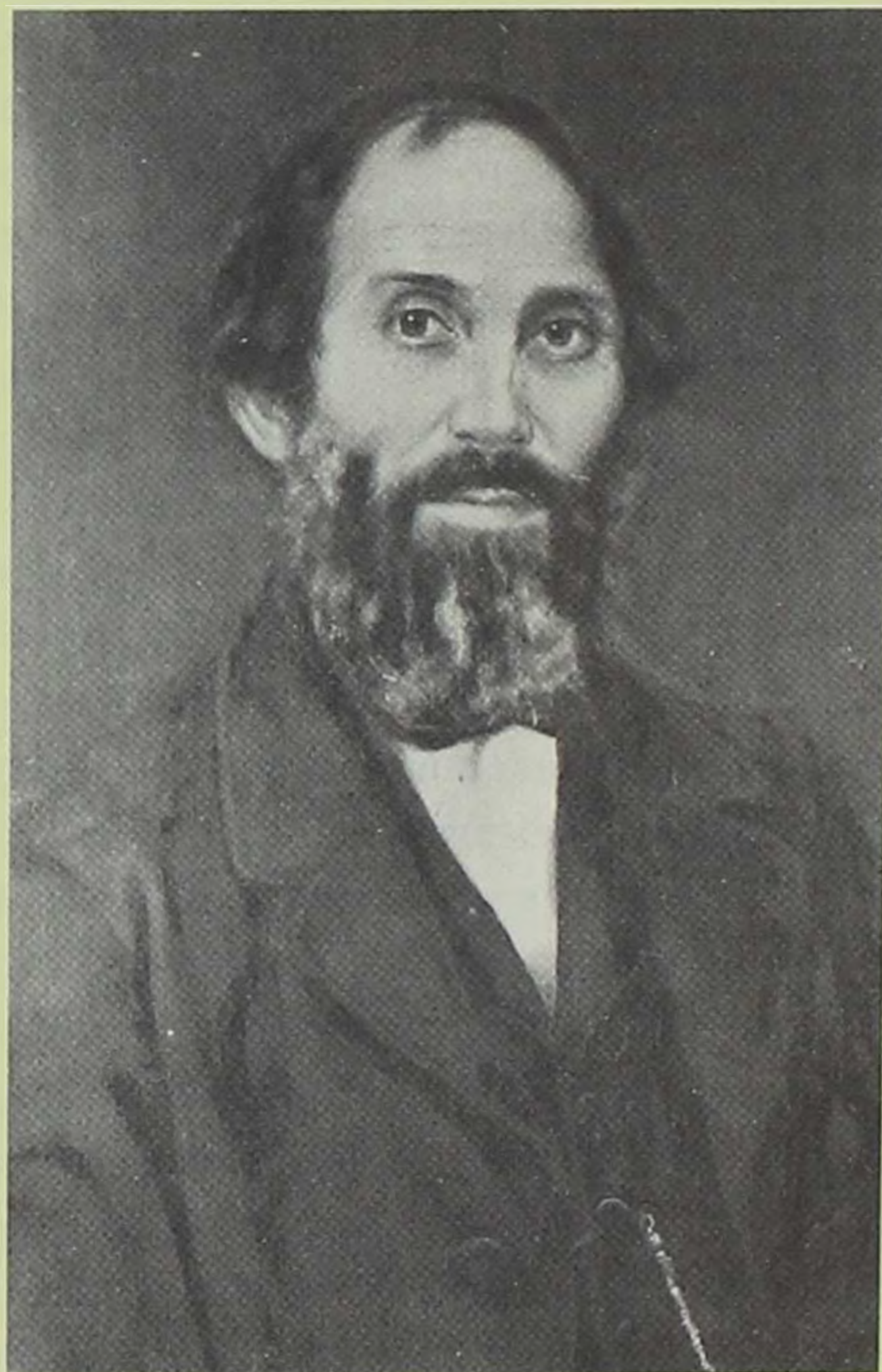
J. Austin, a Waterloo raiser, was the Ben Davis. C. P. Hunt, also of Waterloo, agreed that the Ben Davis returned the most dollars on young trees, but pointed out, as did others, that these trees were short-lived and normally produced only four or five good crops before they broke down. The general opinion was that the Ben Davis was the "tenderest" of all Iowa apple trees. It was also agreed that the best cider apples were the White Winter Pearmain, Rawle's Janet, Small Romanite, and Ben Davis. "One who has never drank cider from nice, yellow Pearsains," commented George W. Shaw, Garden Grove, "has missed one of the good things of life."



The Tetofski apple, a strain imported from Russia in an attempt to find an apple which could withstand the frigid winters of Iowa (reproduced from the Second Annual Report of the Michigan Pomological Society (1872), 458).

The major and most vexing problem, however, was increasing competition from apples grown in Michigan and shipped into Iowa. State dealers complained they were compelled to compete with Michigan fruit which was put up in clean barrels in an "artistic manner by those used to the business." Again and again the point was pushed home that locally grown apples could not be sold in western markets as successfully as Michigan apples were because Iowa apples were inadequately packaged. Customers in "our towns and cities," it was repeatedly emphasized in farm papers and journals, "that want and will have apples of the *best quality*, such as Jonathan, Grimes' Golden, and Fulton, and to meet their needs we must raise them if they have to be grown on trees that are only half hardy and are only moderate bearers." H. W. Lathrop, one of the most knowledgeable apple men in the business, put all this succinctly: "The 'fastidious few' will not be content with what will gratify the 'hungry million!'"

Lathrop, in effect, was saying that, with the exception of individuals who made raising their primary business, too many farmers who owned a few trees and marketed small quantities paid scant attention to proper culture. Apple raising, it was agreed, was a crop that required years of practical experience. "I sometimes think," moaned a professional, "we need a horticultural missionary, and a colporteur with horticultural books to go among the farmers and give them instruction." Yet, in the face of almost certain evidence that Iowa would never make apples a profitable, major crop, as contrasted, for example, with corn and hogs, stubborn individuals continued to insist



Suel Foster

that "orcharding" would pay. George H. Van Houten, of Lenox, was such a spokesman. Not even Josiah B. Grinnell, devoted as he was to agricultural progress, would have dramatized the future of the apple industry as did Van Houten.

"The vast Northwest is before us," Van Houten told the Western Iowa Horticultural Society, "and as Iowa and eastern Nebraska are the present outposts of fruit-growing, we need have no fears for an over production of fruit. If the Eastern and Middle States can find a profitable market for fruit beyond the seas, as they are now doing, why can not we find a profitable market in the vast Northwest which is being rapidly settled up?" Van Houten supplied his own reply. "Besides

the extension of the present railroads, with the almost innumerable new roads which will be built in the future, will open a market in the vast and wealthy mining districts of our Western Territories, where they not only have money but the disposition to buy, and buy largely Then, friends, plant fruit trees; do not plant *sparingly* but plant *plentifully*, and if it so be that you do not live to eat the fruits thereof, others will survive you, who will bless the hand that planted the trees that bear the luscious fruit, and that remain as monuments to your memory when you are gone." After Van Houten's emotional, but uneconomic, address, L. A. Williams, Council Bluffs, perhaps made the most pertinent rejoinder. He said he preferred raising potatoes and onions.

Suel Foster, a founder of the Iowa State Horticultural Society in 1866, would have rejected Williams' response as treason. Foster's ardor and devotion, not only in his home town of Muscatine but also throughout the state, sometimes exceeded common sense. A conservationist as well as an horticulturalist, Foster was deeply interested in agricultural research. He was one of the original members of the board of trustees of the agricultural college at Ames. His articles in, for example, *The Iowa Farmer and Horticulturalist* and yearbooks of the Iowa Horticultural Society, were widely read. Unfortunately, Foster died in 1886, a time of crisis in the apple industry. His pomological colleagues then were debating the planting of "experimental" orchards and quibbling over the wisdom of apple culture as a profitable pursuit.

A major obstacle to successful harvests, admitted in part by Foster and indicated

years earlier by skeptics, was that Iowa's climate was uncongenial to apple raising. This was obvious to many when Foster died. "Our late winters," confessed many growers, "have blasted all our prospects." Every orchard was in a desolate condition. Such discouraging reactions were based upon the inclement winters of 1857, 1872, 1886, and during the following decade. There were other reasons why disgruntled growers felt their crops were poor in quality and low in quantity. Traveling tree peddlers, it was charged, "humbugged" farmers by selling them trees unsuitable for the soil into which their roots went. Even nurserymen were castigated. The saplings they sold, it was claimed, were so inferior that they "were killed down to the frost line."

An Iowa delegate in 1866 to the Illinois Horticultural Society convention, spoke emotionally of losses in both the Hawkeye and Sucker states: "The destruction of their [Illinois] orchard trees, caused by 'old Boreas' breathing forth his blasting, blinding, blighting blizzards the past few hyperborean winters, is but little less than the same destruction on the West bank of the Great Father of Waters." Ben Davis apples were riddled with rot. Treating apple enemies such as apple curculio and the codling moth came to naught. Man after man recited his disastrous experiences. Perhaps R. P. Speer, Cedar Rapids, summed up as well as anyone the troublesome year of 1886. "All of the old varieties of the apple, except the Duchess, Tetofsky, Whitney, Wealthy and Alexander have proved too tender for northern Iowa; and if I were to tell the whole truth, no other variety of the apple has proved hardy enough for any part of the State,



"American Homestead Autumn" by Currier and Ives (1869). Like many of the popular colored lithographs of the period this scene shows an idealized version of country life; in this case, apple-picking.

except on the loess soils near the Missouri river." He laid down some precepts: good apples, those capable of salvage, must be shipped the shortest possible distance, for the risks of the long haul were far too hazardous.

Hundreds of family orchards, within the next decades, went unattended, and a few professional, large-scale growers permitted their trees to grow or die as they might. Others, by 1890, turned attention to cherries, plums, pears, and even strawberries. Although the winter of 1890 left no fatal wounds on trees, a summer drought killed off many. Later in the season, sunscald appeared, corrupting the thin skin of the Wealthy apple. In Des Moines County, old orchards were being replaced by new ones, but—and this is significant—small fruit was rapidly becoming a paying crop, bringing better returns than ap-

ples. Although the picking in Poweshiek County was "very light and the quality inferior because of worms," some new orchards were planted, but agents and tree peddlers noted their sales were down. Wapello County, however, was producing at the turn of the century large returns from orchards which received adequate care.

Pomologists, realizing but not always admitting that apple raising would never be a support crop, continued to whistle up the wind by urging innumerable techniques and methods to increase production. Failures, it was argued, resulted from planting in a wrong location, planting unsuitable varieties, and planting carelessly and giving improper management during the trees' first three years. Never plant on a southwest slope. Do not mulch too soon or too much. Level an orchard's grade and

sow with red clover. Trim limbs which start in the wrong direction. Trim as soon as sap starts in the spring. Stake young trees. Seal cracks with grafting wax. Protect trees against sunscald, hail, rabbits, and mice by winding hemp stalks around trunks. Professor J. L. Budd, Ames, in 1894 considered the Pointed Pippin as a "true, iron-clad and a very perfect tree." Confusion mounted when others declared there was no *perfect* tree and that planting and care and cultivation made slight difference. To these critics, the Wealthy, Grimes' Golden, and Jonathan were as good or better than Budd's Pointed Pippin. Such heresy, if heresy it was, was countered by a defender who rose up in a meeting and recited Shakespeare's:

Our doubts are traitors,
And make us lose the good we oft
might win,
by fearing to attempt.

Only a prophet, said an apple planter, could foretell the future of orcharding. This, perhaps, was correct, but it did not take much of a soothsayer to realize that, during the final decade of the nineteenth century, the apple in Iowa had failed its promise. Even the Southeastern Horticultural Society, representing a region where

apple culture had been relatively successful, began to doubt the usefulness of itself and other groups of the same nature. Although lip service still was paid the apple, many felt in their hearts that the fruit, as a paying crop, had betrayed them. This does not mean that apples with sweet fragrance no longer bloomed and came into fruit or that all Iowa raisers repudiated their stands of trees.

David W. Lotspeich, Harrison County, was a notable exception, for his trees, unlike those of others, thrived. On a southern slope near Woodbine in 1894, he established an orchard and began selling nursery stock. He nourished so many diverse varieties that neighbors wondered at his audacity. Alternating his planting, he placed an early-bearing tree next to a late-bearing one, and a tree known to have a short life next to a long-lived one. The well-known Jonathan, Grimes' Golden, and Ben Davis were spaced between the Gano, Winesap, Geniton, and York Imperial. Lotspeich's crops, it was said, proved profitable, but even so the quality was impaired by parasites, cold winters, red cedar rust, and Illinois canker.

To combat codling moths and disease, Lotspeich designed an ingenious, home-

We find education a good thing in apple pickers; from middle of September to middle of October is our picking season; ten cents an hour and board is the usual price; students, clerks, schoolmarms, and teachers, make the best of pickers and sorters; the deft handling and good sense in assorting, show a cultivated conscience with good judgment.

Geo. W. Shaw of Garden Grove, Iowa
in *Transactions of the Iowa Horticultural Society*, 24 (1889), 175.

made spraying machine drawn by a horse and operated with a hand pump. All in all, however, he fought a losing battle. He first sold his crop locally, but after 1910, small consignments were sent to regional outlets, primarily through commission houses in Council Bluffs. A carefully selected bushel of his Grimes' Golden won an award in 1912 for the best box of Iowa-grown apples. Henry Wallace, editor of *Wallace's Farmer*, presented a golden disc as the prize. Yet, even though Lotspeich was knowledgeable and his fruit superior, he never shipped on a grand scale and seldom, if ever, realized a handsome enough profit to make the venture really worthwhile. Corn growers and hog breeders did much better.

Indeed, at just about the time Lotspeich received his medal from Wallace, hard-headed men had reached the conclusion that many had suspected, but failed to confess even to themselves: Iowa never would raise apples on a sufficiently large scale to make the crop a fundamental of the basic economy. The big profits were in dairying, livestock, and diversified farming. It was the freight loads of cattle, sheep, horses, hogs, corn, wheat, oats, rye, barley, potatoes, and grass and flax that railroads were carrying out of Iowa which brought profits into Iowa.

This, however, does not imply or infer that no apples continued to grow in Iowa, that the crop returned no profits to local growers and vendors, and that the apple no longer was a luscious, favorite fruit for eating and cooking. It does mean, for example, that not a single major article on apples appeared in the agricultural yearbook for 1900. It does mean that the old pomological societies were petering

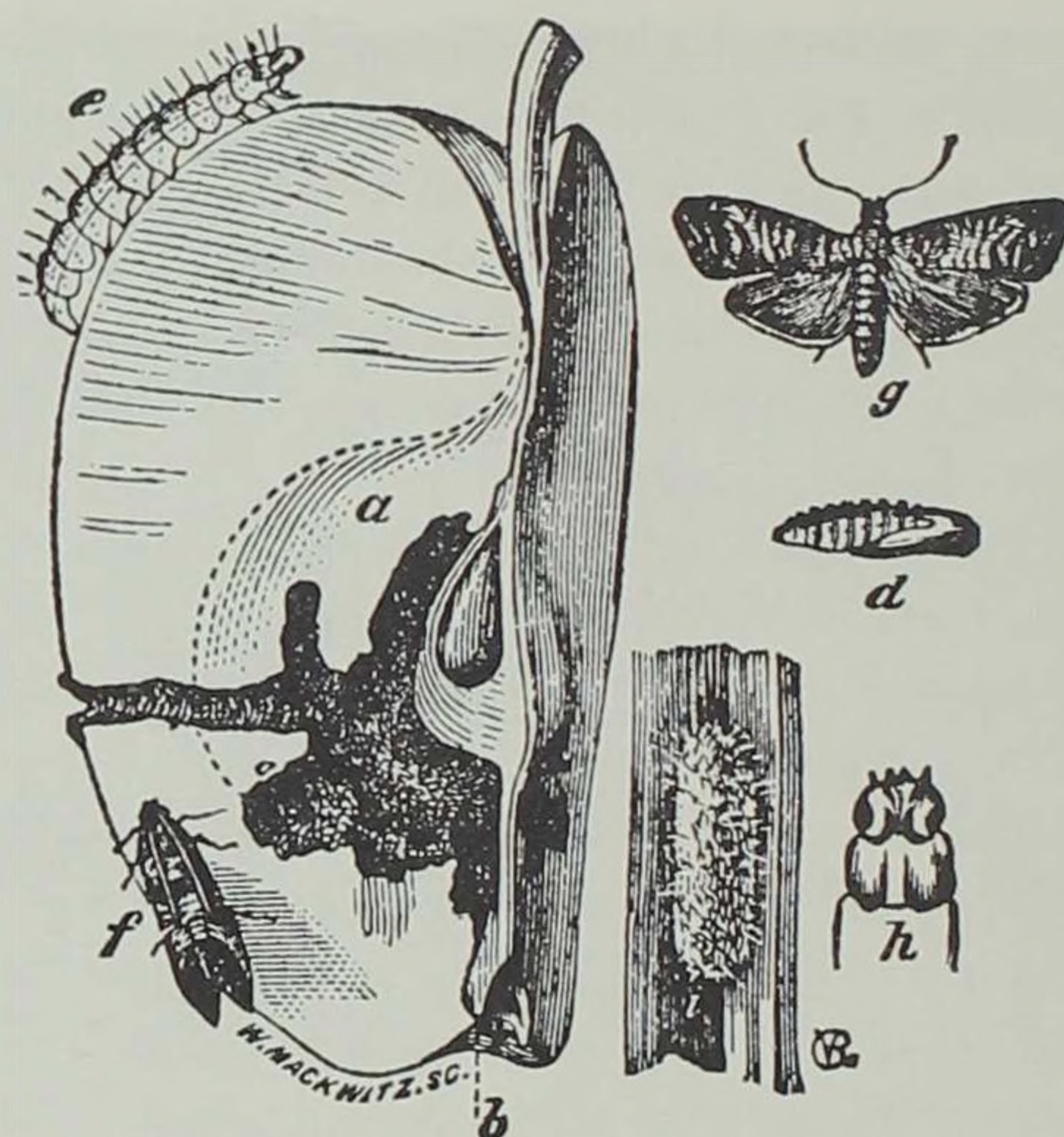


FIG. 14, Codling Moth, *a*, section of apple infested; *b*, point of entrance; *c*, the full grown worm; *d*, head and first segment magnified; *e*, the cocoon; *f*, the moth; *g*, same with wings expanded.

The apple-grower's deadly enemy, the codling moth. This sketch and description is from the Transactions of the Iowa Horticultural Society, 13 (1878) 386. Information on pests and disease were common in the pages of the Society's publication.

out. It means that the small farmer, keeping a few trees for his personal use and disposing of a few bushels locally, turned to more profitable crops. It reflects also a change in national life—the transition from a rural, agricultural culture to an urban, industrial format. There is something else also. Nurserymen, operating on a large scale as big businesses, prospered. They, after picking time, placed thousands of bushels into cold storage to sell, when prices were right, to wholesale distributors, grocery chains, and supermarkets. Both the Bryant Nursery, near Burlington, and the Weir Nursery, near Biggsville, Illinois, to name only two examples, followed this practice. A Lagomarcino & Co., dealers in foreign and domestic fruits, was

established in Burlington during the 1870s. For years, it purchased quantities of Iowa-raised apples. After the turn of the century, Lagomarcino bought a huge orchard in the state of Washington. From there, through its Burlington office, it sent apples, sometimes in refrigerator cars, throughout the nation. The company's old, heavily-built freight wagon, brightly painted in shades of yellow and orange, long since had been discarded. Their apples now flew across the country by fast express.

Yet, despite modernity, old, gnarled apple trees still cluster close to scores of farm homes to break into pink bloom in the spring and to groan with the weight of their red or yellow fruit in hot summer or crisp autumn. Apple pies go into electric ovens, not wood stoves. Children, running to catch school buses, snatch an apple or two. An apple still fills the toe of many a Christmas stocking. Even bobbing for apples is not entirely forgotten. Now and again, a family-operated cider

mill still spills sweet liquid, unfortified with vitamins and lacking preservatives, into awaiting cups.

The apple may no longer be a basic crop, but it grows and is used and sold, and, perhaps more than anything else, it continues, in the minds of many, to stand as a symbol of "long hours of summer play" and "summer's songs and autumn's sigh." Perhaps this nostalgia, even if over sentimentalized, was responsible for the tremendous, popular success in 1905 of Egbert van Alstyne's, otherwise known as Harry Williams, "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree," a song frequently played by town bands in squares and parks during Saturday night concerts of the long ago. In a way, the song was a dirge, for within fifteen years, World War I and the lack of pickers together with increasing apple crops in Illinois, Kansas, and the Far West had caused the majority of local raisers to forsake their orchards. From about 1920 on, Iowa no longer could boast of being an apple-raising state. □



Despite the difficulties of apple-growing in Iowa, the Hawkeye state has contributed to the world one of the most popular apple varieties: the Delicious. The original Delicious, called the Hawkeye by its first grower, Jesse Hiatt, sprang up in an orchard in Madison County. The first Delicious tree (left) died in 1940, but has sprouted again and bears new life.