

## The Society Since 1920

Change in so broad a field as horticulture is likely to be gradual and not easily recognized from year to year. But if any period of 40 or 50 years is compared with the previous or an earlier period the changes may be great indeed. This is the case with Iowa horticulture and its principal representative—the Iowa State Horticultural Society.

The period from 1920 to 1966 is characterized, along with lesser changes and emphasis, by the recognition of specialization within the overall field of horticulture itself. This brought a transfer in interest from fruits to other areas; a tremendous and continuous growth of activity in all phases of plant ornamentation; and the contributions of horticulture to many forms of recreation such as parks, playgrounds, and roadsides. It also brought an unbelievable expansion in commercial services and supplies to every type of gardening and gardener—amateur, commercial and professional, small scale or large, urban or rural alike; and a complete change in leadership personnel. It shall be the province of this section of the history of the Iowa State Horticultural Society, on this 100th birthday, to trace and relate the development of these aspects of horticulture in Iowa.



By the year 1920, Iowa farming had settled into a field crop and livestock pattern. The need for home gardens and orchards for food was being met by gigantic commercial supplies, produced in the best climatic and other favorable environments, and transported under refrigeration to local retail stores where they were easily available to everyone. Automobiles and improved roads made shopping easier.

An annual horticultural society program of two or three days which included talks on all branches of the subject lost interest for people now specializing on one branch only. The existing Society of Iowa Florists, the Iowa Fruit Growers Association, the Iowa State Vegetable Growers Association, and the Iowa Beekeepers Association were neither large enough nor had sufficient financial backing to sustain a program of services to print reports, to carry on correspondence, and to conduct exhibits commensurate with the needs and wishes of their members. In 1920 the Iowa State Horticultural Society officially adopted an expanded program of service to the specialized groups by offering them the use of its office personnel and facilities for correspondence, coordination of programs, bookkeeping, and other forms of encouragement. The named organizations and the newly organized Iowa Nurserymen's Association (1920) affiliated with the Iowa State Horticultural Society that year.



Gladiolus growers, rose enthusiasts, and garden clubs organized state-wide societies in the twenties and affiliated formally with the State Horticultural Society in 1925, 1928, and 1930 respectively. These actions are historically significant because they reflect official recognition of the equal status of amateur and professional horticultural interests of the State. Although gifted amateurs were numerous and influential in the activities of the parent Society from its beginning, it was in the twenties that organizations, whose objectives were to make life itself more lovely, more wholesome, and happier for thousands of people and who had no profit motive to serve, received official status. This recognition marked the end of the horticultural pioneering era in Iowa.

Previous to 1920 the body of the board of directors of the Society was elected—one from each congressional district. To better represent the horticultural interests the constitution was changed from a geographical to a subject basis, each affiliate to elect or appoint a director. The change, though radical in principal, was not violent; all the affiliating societies were state-wide in character and the final result was satisfactory from both geographical and subject points of view. By 1924 the change was complete.

By 1920, a personality of great influence entered the service of the Society—Robert S. Herrick, a completely dedicated energetic public servant.



For the next 26 years, Bob Herrick gave himself without reserve to managing the activities and finances of the Society and often two or three of its affiliates at the same time. He coordinated their varied programs successfully and won the respect and affection of the state legislators, half-a-dozen governors, and horticultural people in every corner of Iowa. Secretary Herrick was the active executive who set up seven of the nine Midwest Horticultural Expositions from 1920 through 1932. As agent for the Fruit Growers Association, he conducted a supply service in pesticides and certain garden needs not so readily available in the twenties and thirties as later. Herrick's ability to balance his budget and to get the maximum value from every dollar spent on behalf of the Society was proverbial.

Robert S. Herrick was born on a farm five miles from Littleton, Colorado. He graduated from Colorado Agricultural College in 1908. He came to Iowa State College as Extension Horticulturist in 1912. As a fruitgrowing specialist, Herrick was instrumental in getting hundreds of farmers and fruitgrowers to spray and care for their orchards. Bob made his home in Des Moines, bought a 120-acre farm in Madison County near Bevington, and upon retirement moved there. In 1956 Herrick sold the farm along with the 20-acre apple orchard which he had planted and which he used to demonstrate his theories on the use of hardy stocks,



new varieties, and various cultural practices. Then Herrick returned to the home farm in Littleton, where he died in 1960 at the age of 78 years.

Herrick was so much a vital factor in the history of the Iowa State Horticultural Society during the period 1920-1966 that a brief list of his contributions and honors is in place. During the 42 years he served Iowa horticulture officially, 204 of his papers and reports were published in the *Proceedings*, and he personally edited 26 of these reports. He served as President of the Iowa Rose Society, as President of the Iowa State Horticultural Society after his retirement as Secretary in 1948 and 1949, and as President of the Iowa Fruit Growers Association from 1950 to 1953. In 1946, along with Professor B. S. Pickett of Iowa State College and E. S. Welch of the Mount Arbor Nurseries at Shenandoah, Herrick shared the honor of receiving one of the first three "Gold Medals for Service to Iowa Horticulture" ever awarded by the Society.

The first executive offices of the Society were in the homes or personal business quarters of the early secretaries. Professor Budd was housed in facilities of Iowa State College. When Wesley Greene assumed the office in 1899, he was assigned rooms in the State House in Des Moines with handsome cases for the library and with good walnut furniture. Annual meetings were sometimes held in the dignified Senate Chamber and



the exhibits, mostly varieties of apples in those years, were staged in the Capitol rotunda. By 1920 most state departments, including the Horticultural Society, needed more room, and shortly thereafter the Society moved to the Bryant School building on the northwest corner of the State House grounds. There it remained until 1949, when the building was razed and the offices were moved to the recently acquired International Harvester Building on Court Street.

The twenties were a happy, prosperous period for the Iowa State Horticultural Society. Every second year state funds supplementing admissions and other Society income enabled the Society to stage a Midwest Horticultural Exposition, whose fame and influence spread far beyond Iowa borders.

The secretary's office added two permanent assistants for clerical, editorial, and bookkeeping services. In a typical year, 1929, the busy staff set up or participated in 89 meetings which were attended by 2,907 people. The Office had 1,521 callers, and it sent out 38,398 pieces of mail. The secretary personally made 67 orchard and garden calls.

It is to the glory of the Iowa State Horticultural Society that it increased its usefulness and prestige in the decade of the thirties, a time of financial depression and frustration. In 1937, for example, the secretary's office reported 103 conferences and meetings with 9,670 people present.



There were 1,479 office callers; 61,146 pieces of mail sent out; the secretary spent 87 days in the field; and answered 76 orchard and garden calls. This was a large increase over a similar report made 10 years before. The exuberance and optimism of the twenties were missing but the service to home garden food production and the solace and relaxation of gardening itself in this period of anxiety could not be measured.

Throughout the entire period of the depression, state and county fairs, local garden clubs, and the state federation continued to hold shows with even better quality exhibits, far more exhibits, and larger attendance than even the Midwest Expositions themselves had commanded.

In 1932 the State Horticultural Society lent a helping hand to a national apple industry which was faced simultaneously with prices far below the cost of production and with spray residue regulations which could not be met. In desperation, the growers formed "The National Apple Institute" to study, advise, and act on their problems. Several state horticultural societies helped finance the infant Institute, including that of Iowa. The Institute was generally successful in its objectives and once on its feet required no further help.

In 1930 the Federated Garden Clubs and the Iowa State Horticultural Society started a contest to locate and mark a few of the giant trees in the State. Some truly magnificent specimens were re-



ported in 1932 which deserve mention here. A tree with a spread of 90 feet and a trunk circumference of 15 feet located on the estate of Jonas A. Mulford, several miles southeast of Independence, was the champion elm. Champion trees were reported for oak, species not specified; hard maple, *Acer saccharum*; soft maple, *Acer saccharinum*; cottonwood, *Populus deltoides*; and willow, *Salix alba*. The largest tree reported was a cottonwood, with a trunk circumference of 23 feet and a height of 100 feet. It was located near Perry in Dallas County on the F. M. Livingston farm. Further search was discontinued after 1932 but many people were interested in the location of these magnificent specimens representative of hundreds of equally lordly trees in Iowa. Very impressive ceremonies accompanied the dedication and marking of these great trees.

During the past 45 years the Iowa State Horticultural Society, along with other sponsoring groups, has helped erect a number of markers to memorialize certain historical events. The first of these was a suitably inscribed boulder memorializing the original Delicious apple tree which still stands on a farm near Peru in Madison County.

A 15-ton granite boulder, suitably inscribed, was located on the schoolhouse grounds in Montrose to commemorate the location of the first orchard planted in Iowa by Louis Honoré Tesson



in 1799. The Montrose Woman's Civic Club, the Iowa State Horticultural Society, and the Historical Memorial and Art Department of Iowa cooperated in promoting and financing the project and united in impressive dedication ceremonies on August 16, 1930.

On May 7, 1950, the Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa cooperating with the Iowa State Highway Commission dedicated a marker in Sioux City on the Blue Star Memorial Highway. Later, October 22, 1950, a second marker was dedicated at Rock Rapids. These paid tribute to the Nation's Armed Forces serving in World War II.

The Frank Chapman Pellett Memorial was dedicated on July 11, 1954, at the site of a five-acre living memorial northeast of Atlantic. Two boulders suitably inscribed mark the entrance to this wildlife area. The Iowa Beekeepers Association and friends of Pellett cooperated with the Iowa State Horticultural Society in this ceremony.

An event which was destined to be historically significant in the annals of the Society was the affiliation of the Greenkeeper's Association in 1939. This organization, now the Iowa Golf Course Superintendents' Association, started in the twenties, grew and prospered with the aid of inspiring short courses and a program of research sponsored by the Department of Horticulture at Iowa State College and a series of summer meet-



ings at various country clubs around the State. It is now regarded as one of the strongest organizations of its kind in the country. This organization bridges professional and recreational aspects of horticulture with great success. The landscape features of turf, trees, shrubs, and flowers are combined in the interests of this group; and it was a natural step to include park, campus, school grounds, playgrounds and stadiums, roadsides and cemeteries with the well-established golfing group.

The Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa was formed at a Garden Short Course at Ames in 1928. Initially there were 26 clubs with a combined membership of 1,832. By 1931 there were 65 clubs, in 1945 the number reached 115, and on January 1, 1966, the Federation listed 184 local clubs with a total membership of 5,444. The Federated Garden Clubs is by far the largest affiliated group in the Iowa State Horticultural Society. Two of its early presidents should be mentioned—Mrs. Sarah Sigler, Indianola, and Mrs. Oliver James of Winterset. They were truly dedicated women without whose able guidance the infant organization might have floundered in the early years of the great depression. Mrs. Sigler was president in 1931 and 1932, at a time when her great personal charm and organizational ability were essential. She was a clever gardener and flower arranger in her own right and lent a mature and live-



ly vision to the place of garden clubs in civic projects such as parks, clean-ups of towns, and roadside planting. Mrs. James succeeded Mrs. Sigler and presided most capably in 1933 and 1934. In addition, she contributed a tremendous service to the Horticultural Exposition in Marshalltown, at several State Fairs in Des Moines, two or three times at the Dairy Cattle Congress in Waterloo, and many times at the annual meetings of the Federation in Ames. This modest, highly capable woman made a contribution to the garden clubs of inestimable value.

Like the two preceding decades, the forties started eventfully. World War II began in Europe. In 1941 Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, and the United States was at war around the globe. In common with a wide variety of agricultural organizations, the Iowa State Horticultural Society geared its activities to the needs of the moment, curtailing exhibitions, economizing on travel and imported program talent, and emphasizing the food production aspects of gardening. A great national home gardens for food movement was encouraged by the United States Department of Agriculture, the National Victory Garden Institute, and extension services throughout the land. Indeed the promotion was so appealing that the public took the movement to its heart; newspapers, radio, television and all communication media supported it. Organizations like the state horticultural societies,



garden clubs, seedsmen and plant growers were able to give the practical advice, leadership, guidance, and encouragement without which the "Victory Gardens" would often have been sad failures. For the three active years of the program, the Iowa State Horticultural Society was everywhere conducting meetings, giving advice, and bringing would-be gardeners and landowners together for the production of food at or near home.

With the coming of victory and peace the Society followed a program of routine service for the balance of the decade. Throughout the thirties and the forties there was a growing approachment between the Society and the Department of Horticulture at Iowa State College. The Society held its annual meetings and exhibits at Ames and the College coordinated the horticultural short courses with the Society program.

In 1944 and 1945 the Society launched a program of special recognition for horticultural achievement. Spasmodic honors, ribbons, cash prizes for exhibits, and gavel presentations had previously been awarded, but no continuing policy of rewards for outstanding contributions existed. Two prized recognitions, first awarded in 1946, were the Honor Award with a Gold Medal and the Certificate of Merit. The Honor Award with the Gold Medal goes to those who make an outstanding contribution to Iowa horticulture or to the Horticultural Society or to both. The Certifi-



cate of Merit is given to those whose activities have been more on a local or in many cases on a state-wide basis. During the 20 years since the Honor Award was first presented in 1946 to R. S. Herrick, B. S. Pickett and E. S. Welch, it has been presented to a total of 50 men and women. At the moment 10 of these have died but the remaining 40 can be considered as leaders in Iowa horticulture today. During this 20-year period 61 men and 32 women have been awarded the Society's Certificate of Merit.

In 1945 Robert S. Herrick resigned the secretaryship and was succeeded by William Collins, a very personable, able horticultural graduate of Iowa State College. Under his direction, the Society continued to gain in prestige, membership, and usefulness.

It has been a custom in the State Horticultural Society, as it is in many organizations, to present the retiring president with a gavel. In the late 1920's Professor J. C. Cunningham of Iowa State College secured some wood from the original Delicious apple tree and fashioned a number of gavels from it. Later Secretary Herrick did the same thing. One of the first retiring presidents to receive one of these gavels was A. T. Erwin in 1925. It is not known how many gavels were made but the last one was given to H. E. Nichols when he retired as president in 1954. This means that at least 13 retiring presidents received a gavel made



from wood from the original Delicious tree. In 1965 Professor Erwin, now living in Des Moines, Washington, presented his gavel to the Washington State Horticultural Society, since that state produces most of the nation's Delicious apple crop.

The relationship between the Iowa State Horticultural Society and the Department of Horticulture at Iowa State University has been very close throughout the years. The head of the Department of Horticulture is an ex-officio member of the board of directors of the Society. Perhaps, as mentioned elsewhere, the department heads who were most active in shaping the policies and leading the activities of the Society have been J. L. Budd, S. A. Beach, and B. S. Pickett. However, considerable credit should be given to Dr. Ernest Haber, who followed Professor Pickett, and to the most recent head, Dr. John P. Mahlstedt.

Since 1917 five members of the faculty have served as president of the Society: S. A. Beach, A. T. Erwin, B. S. Pickett, H. L. Lantz, and H. E. Nichols. Secretary Budd was also head of the Department of Horticulture and Forestry, and Secretary Herrick and William Collins were selected from the University staff.

The number of state-wide societies or associations affiliated with the Iowa State Horticultural Society has varied since the five that first joined in 1920. During the past 45 years two of these groups felt they were strong enough to go it alone



—the Society of Iowa Florists withdrew in 1955 and the Iowa Beekeepers Association some five or six years later. At this time (1966) there are 12 state-wide groups, all interested in some phase of horticulture. Since 1960, five groups have affiliated: Iowa Irrigators Association, the Iowa Christmas Tree Growers Association, the Chrysanthemum Society, the Iowa Commercial Honey Producers Association, and the Iowa Nut Growers Association. The Nut Growers is an older group interested in preserving the native nut heritage of the State. It was reactivated in 1966. It is interesting to note that half of the groups are made up of people who are engaged in some horticultural business or profession. In the other six groups are principally people who follow horticulture as an avocation.

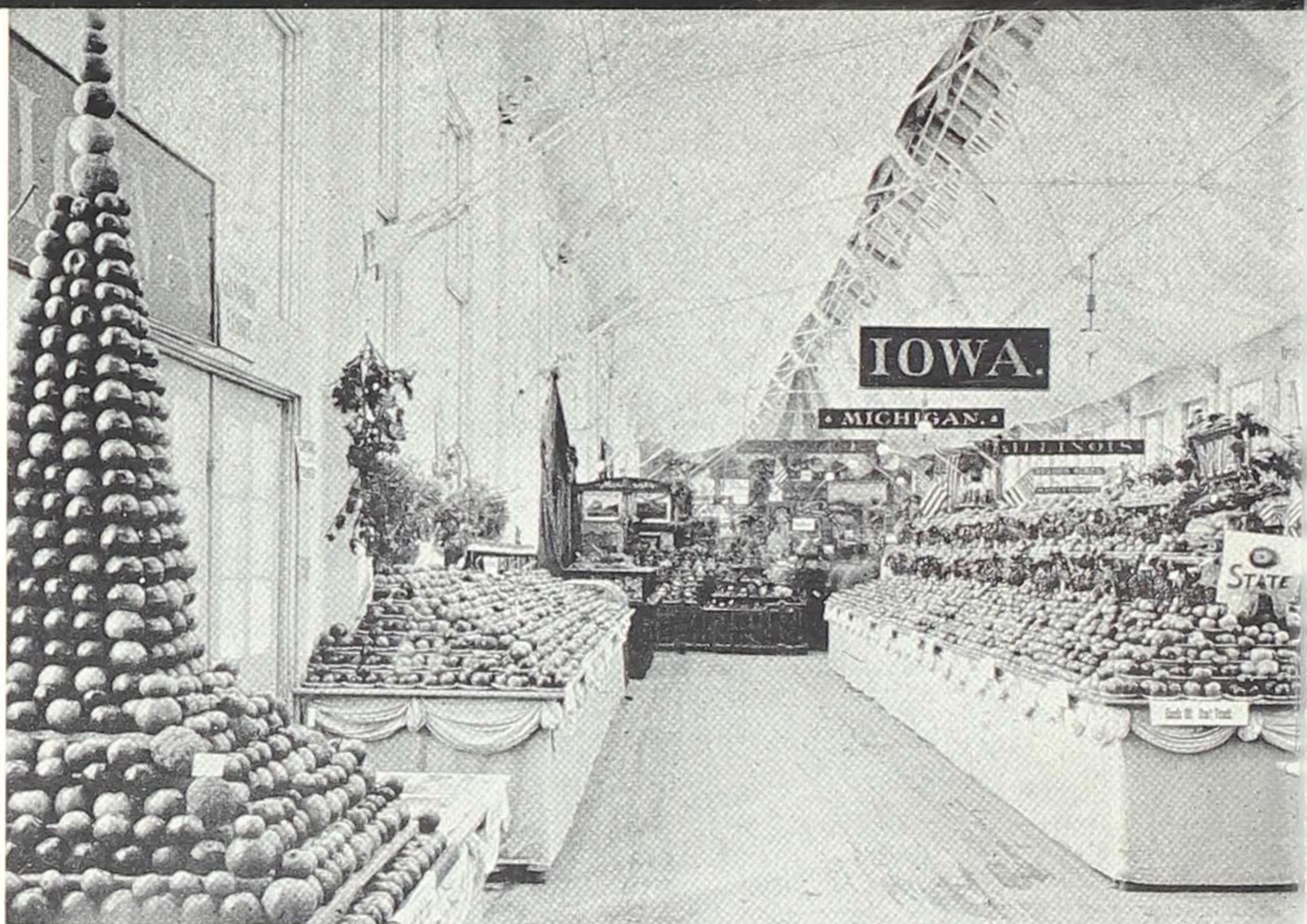
In 1955 the funds under which the proceedings of the Society had been published since its founding were cut off and only statistical reports have since appeared in the general reports of the Iowa Department of Agriculture. This action must be recorded as a major disaster to the organization. The 89 published volumes of the Society contain a vivid history of human hopes and efforts equal in courage, intelligence, and industry to any factual history in any field of human effort anywhere. Here are recorded the successes and failures of the gardening observations and experiences of 100 years. The varieties which are now grown in the orchards,



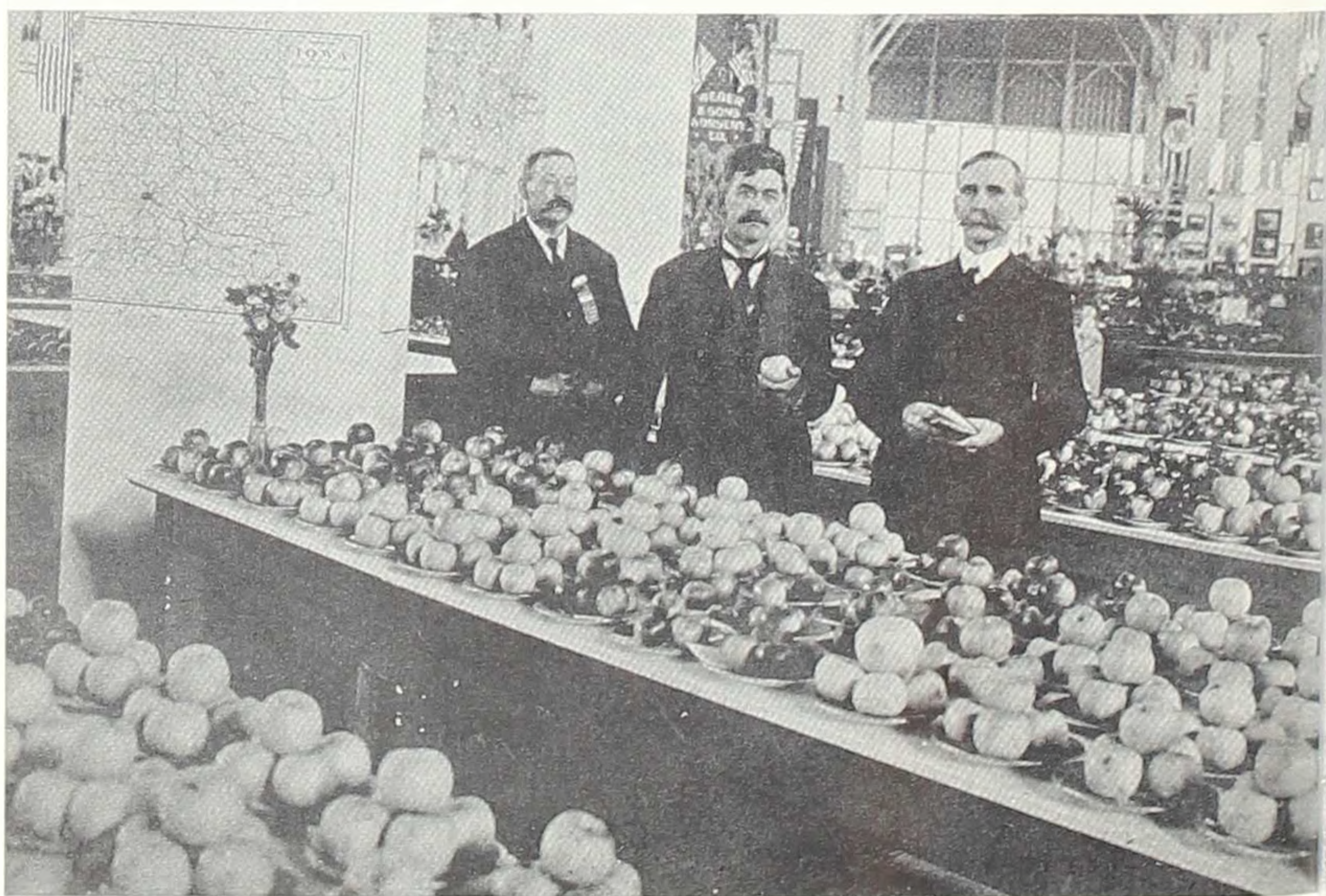


Lifelike wax apples modeled by G. B. Brackett for the Iowa display at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. He made models of about 300 fruit varieties growing in the State in 1875. The plate was used to display fruit at the St. Louis World's Fair.



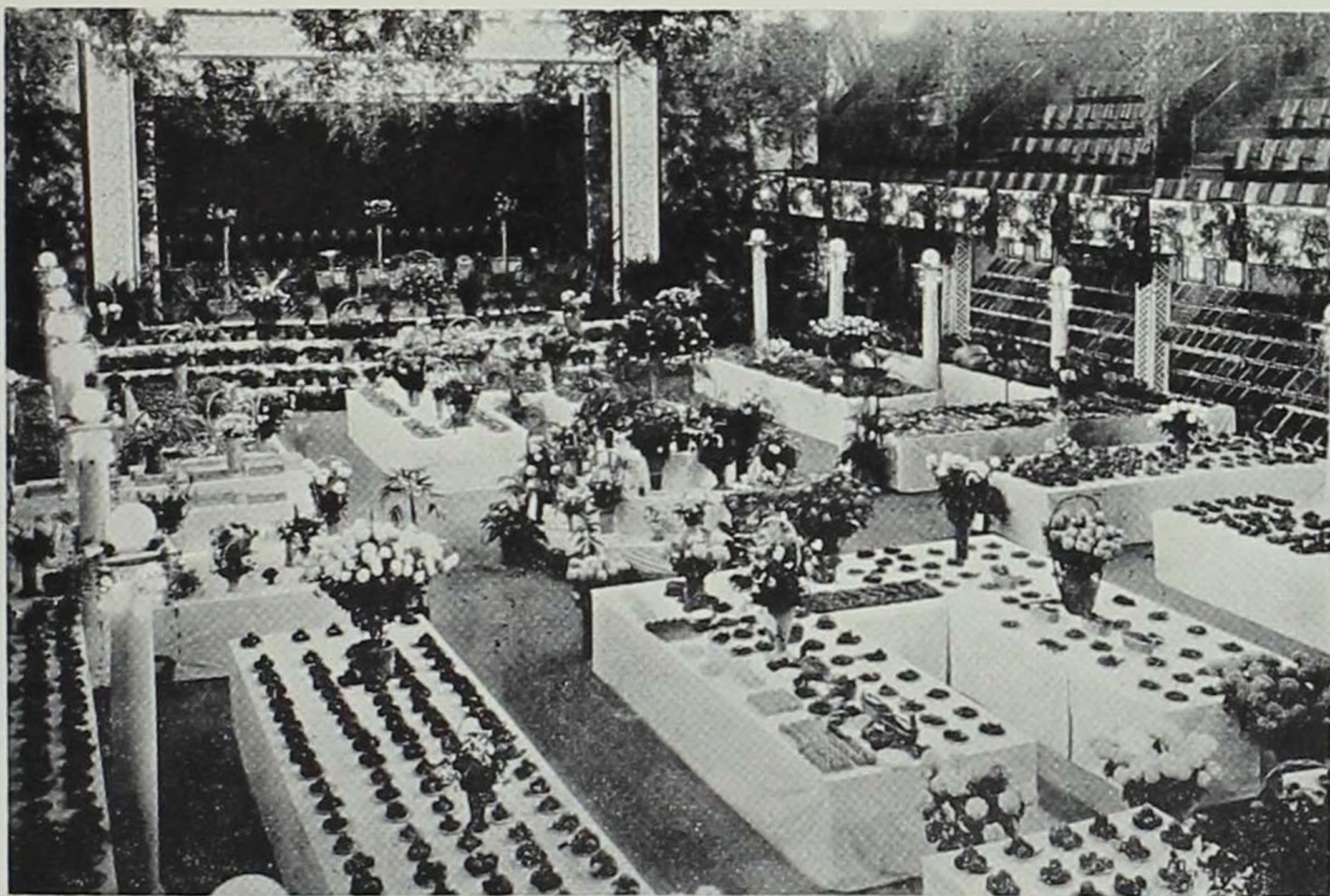


Iowa fruit exhibit, World's Fair, Chicago, 1893.



Iowa fruit exhibit, World's Fair, St. Louis, 1904. Left to right: J. W. Murphy, Glenwood; M. J. Wragg, Des Moines; and Silas Wilson, Atlantic.





Midwest Horticultural Exposition, Council Bluffs, 1922.

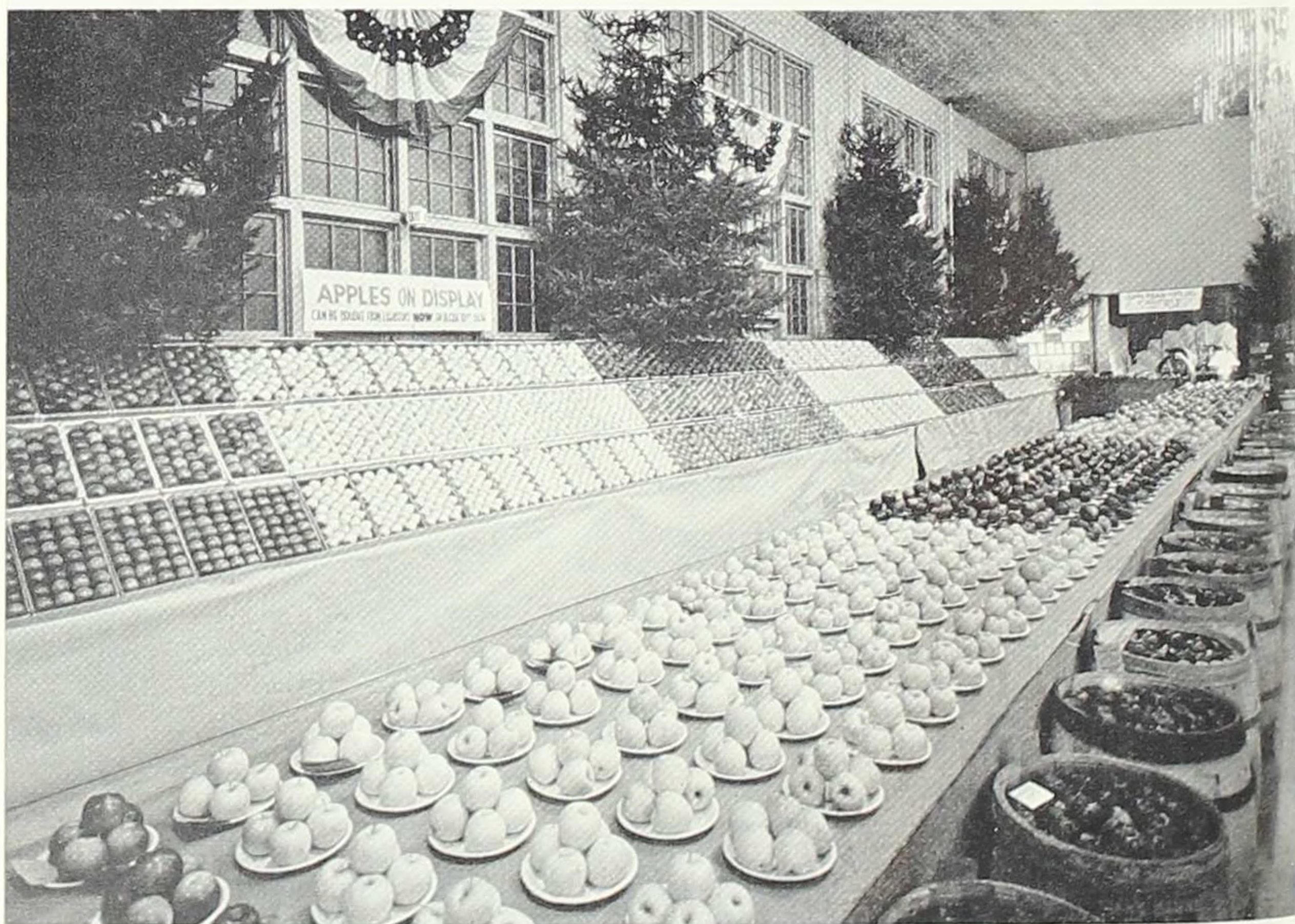


Iowa exhibit, Central States Horticultural Exposition, Kansas City, 1927.  
(Staged by H. E. Nichols.)





Part of the flower display, Midwest Horticultural Exposition, Marshalltown, 1932.



Part of the apple display, Midwest Horticultural Exposition, Marshalltown, 1932.



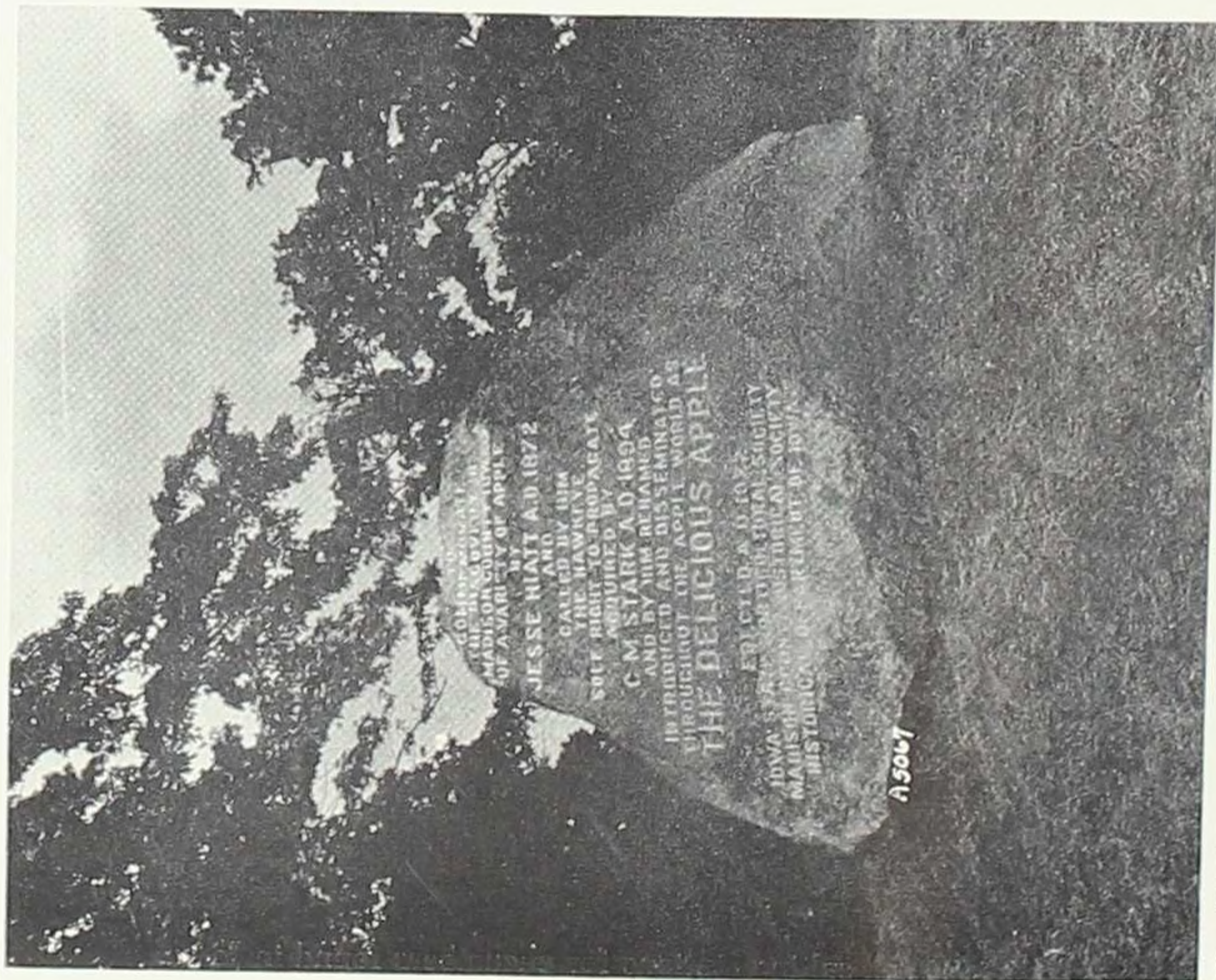


Honey exhibit, Iowa State Fair, about 1947.

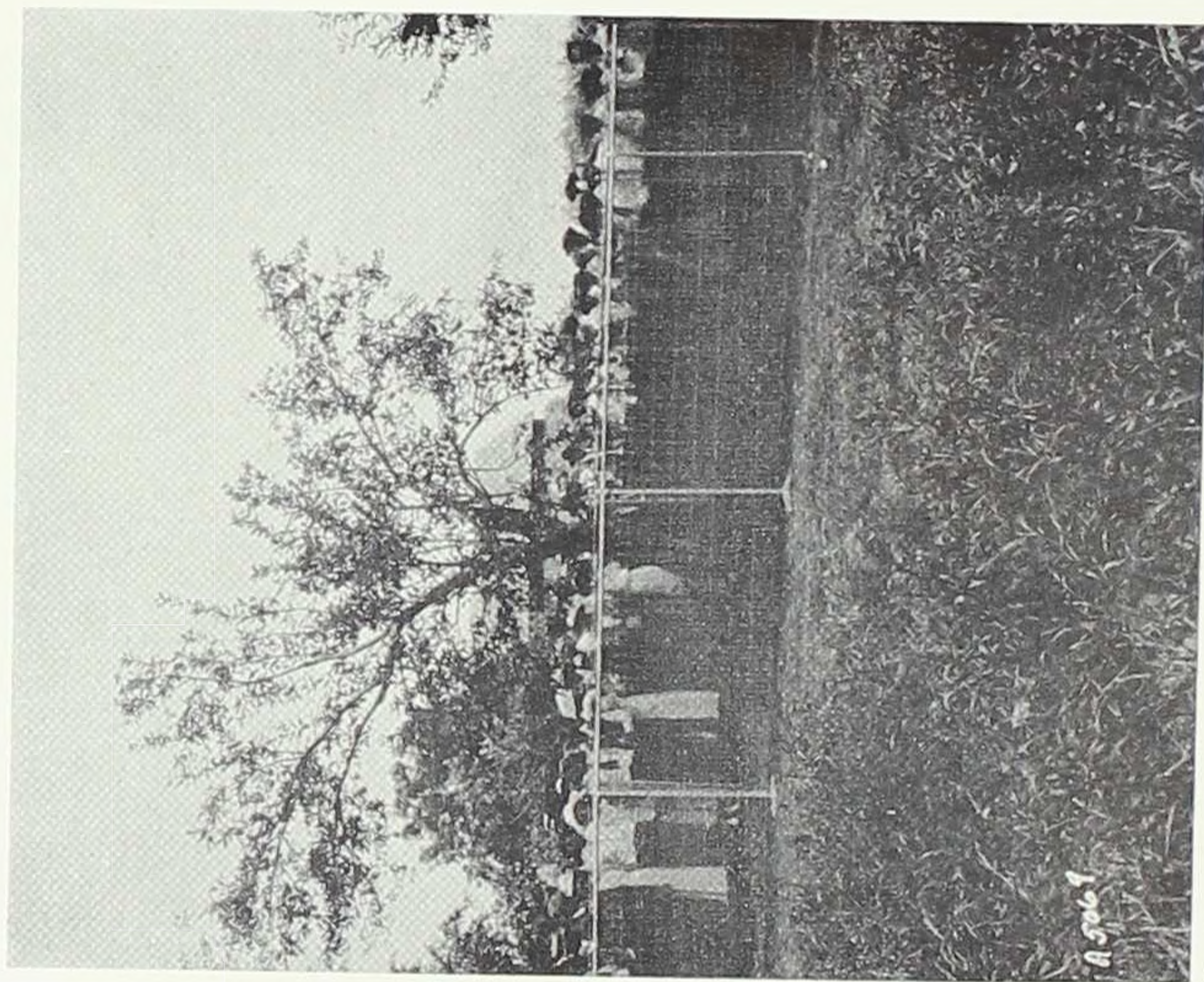


One of several salting stations for cucumbers found in Iowa.





The Delicious apple tree marker was erected in the Winterset City Park in 1922.

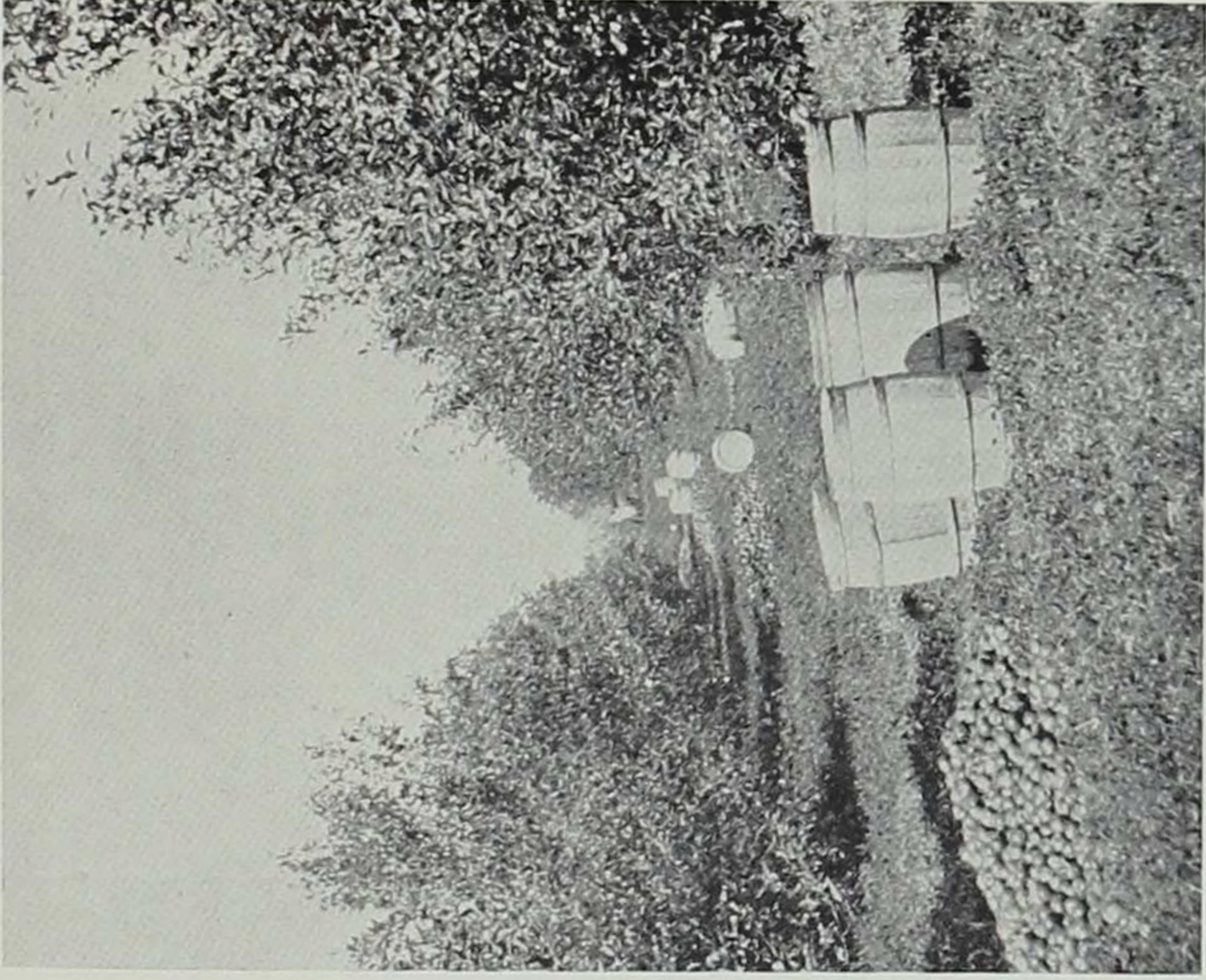


Dedication ceremonies for the original Delicious apple tree—  
August 15, 1922.



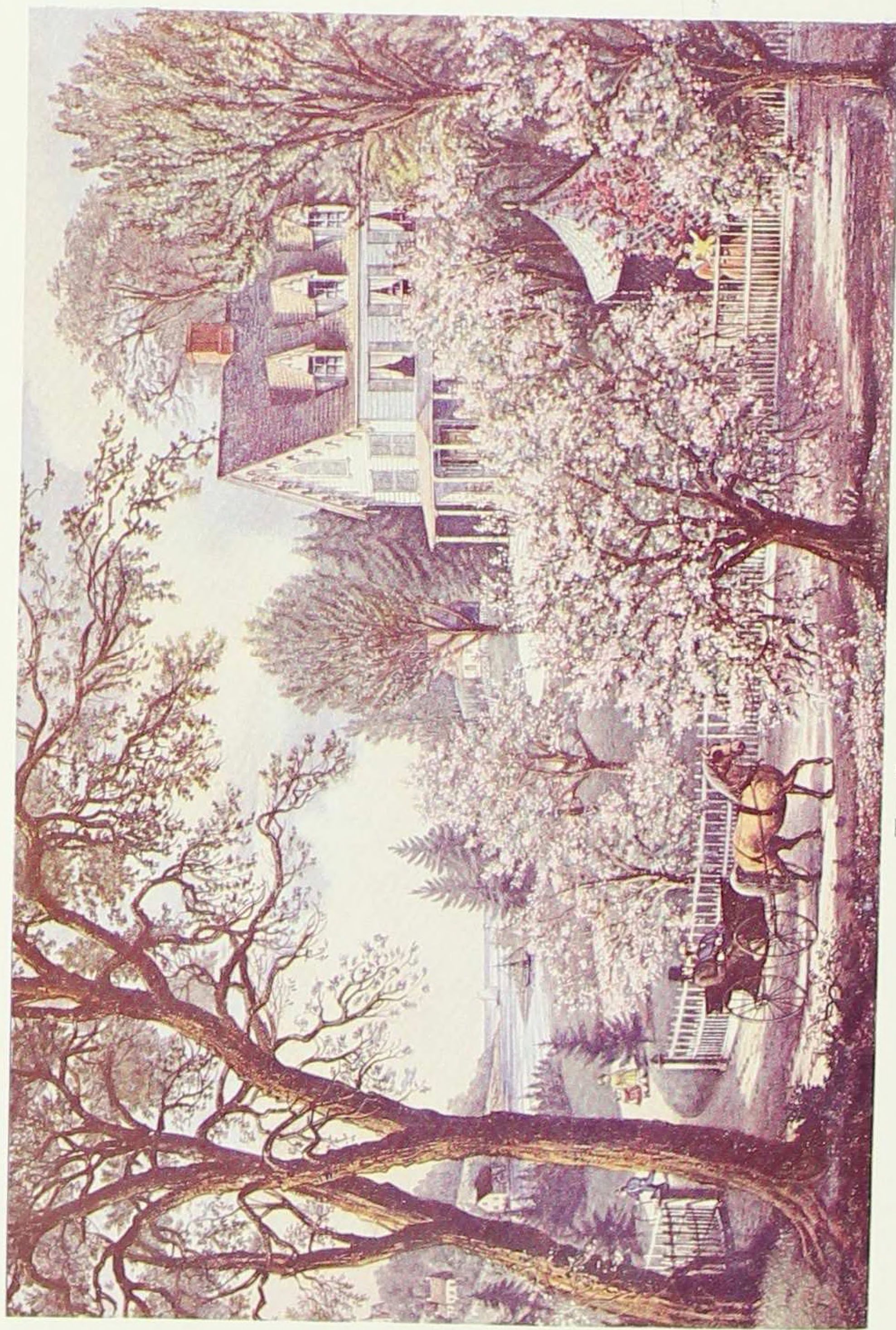


Largest apple tree ever found in Iowa—near Danville. Now cut down, it was 50 feet high in 1915. Left, Wendell Williams, Danville fruitgrower; right, Professor S. A. Beach, ISC.



Apple harvest. F. Bradford's Orchard, Glenwood, Oct. 1902.





THE SEASON OF BLOSSOMS

By Currier & Ives, 1865





*By Currier & Ives, 1869*

AMERICAN HOMESTEAD AUTUMN





Sampling watermelons at Fruitland, August 26, 1895. Man in center, with umbrella, is W. H. Hoopes, grower and dealer in melons.

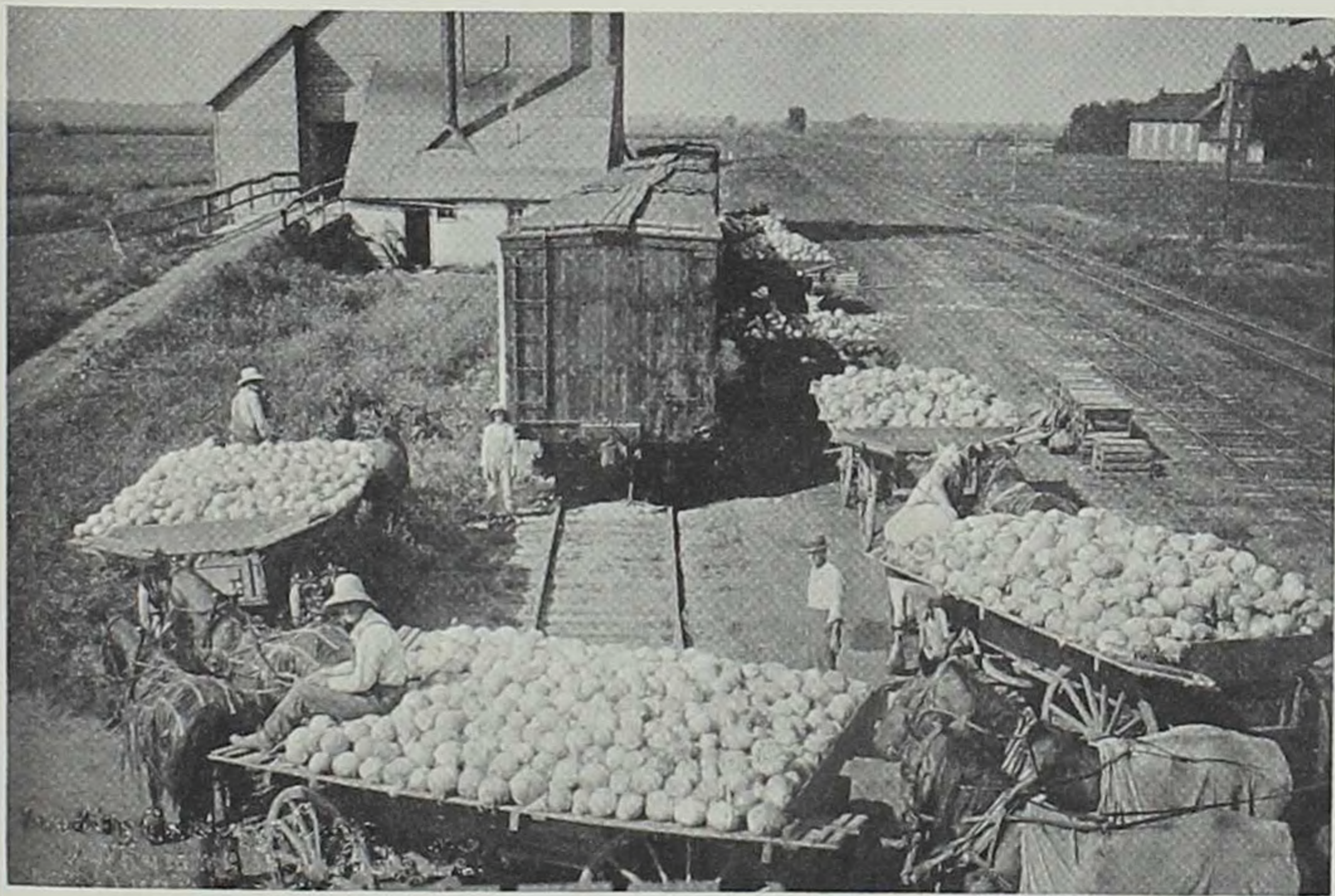


Muskmelons grown by John Holliday, left, of Fruitland, 1955.



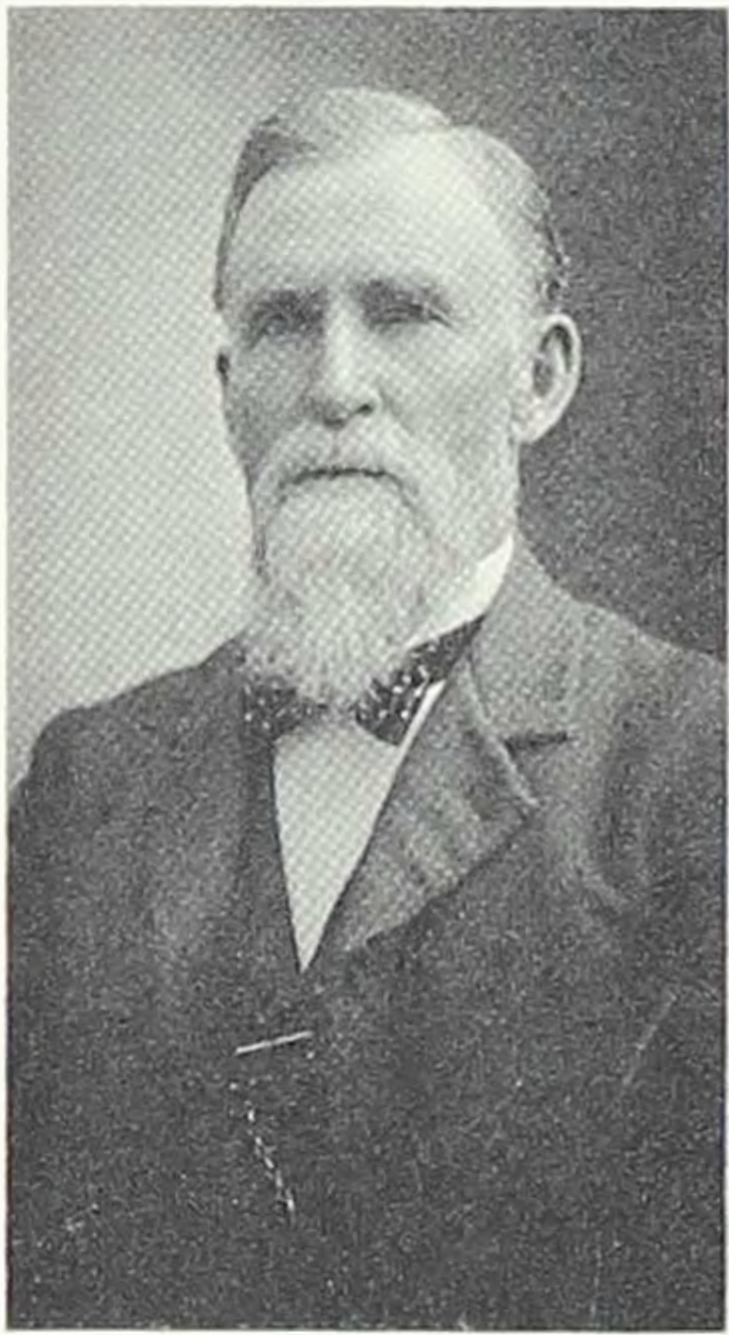


Potatoes sacked on the Sam Kennedy farm, Clear Lake.



Cabbage being loaded for shipment, Nichols, 1916.





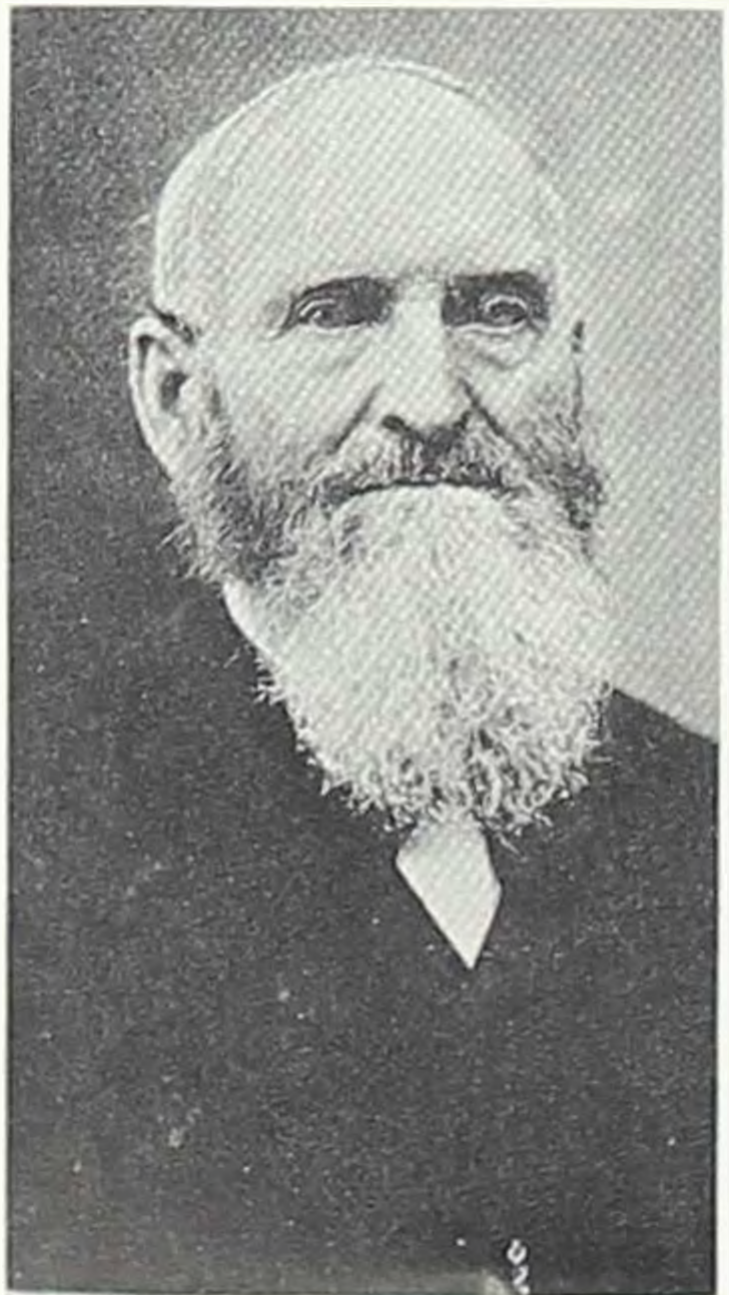
C. G. PATTEN  
1832-1921



J. L. BUDD  
1835-1904



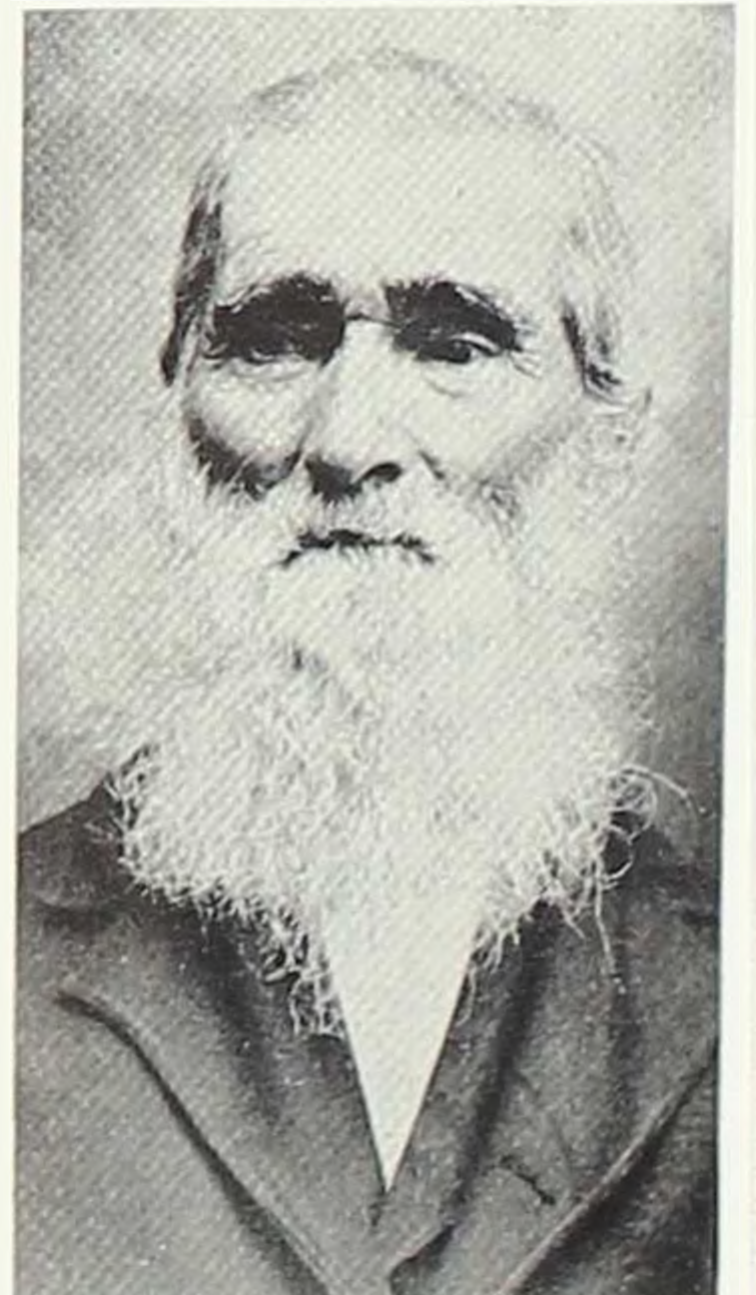
C. L. WATROUS  
1837-1915



H. W. LATHROP  
1819-1902

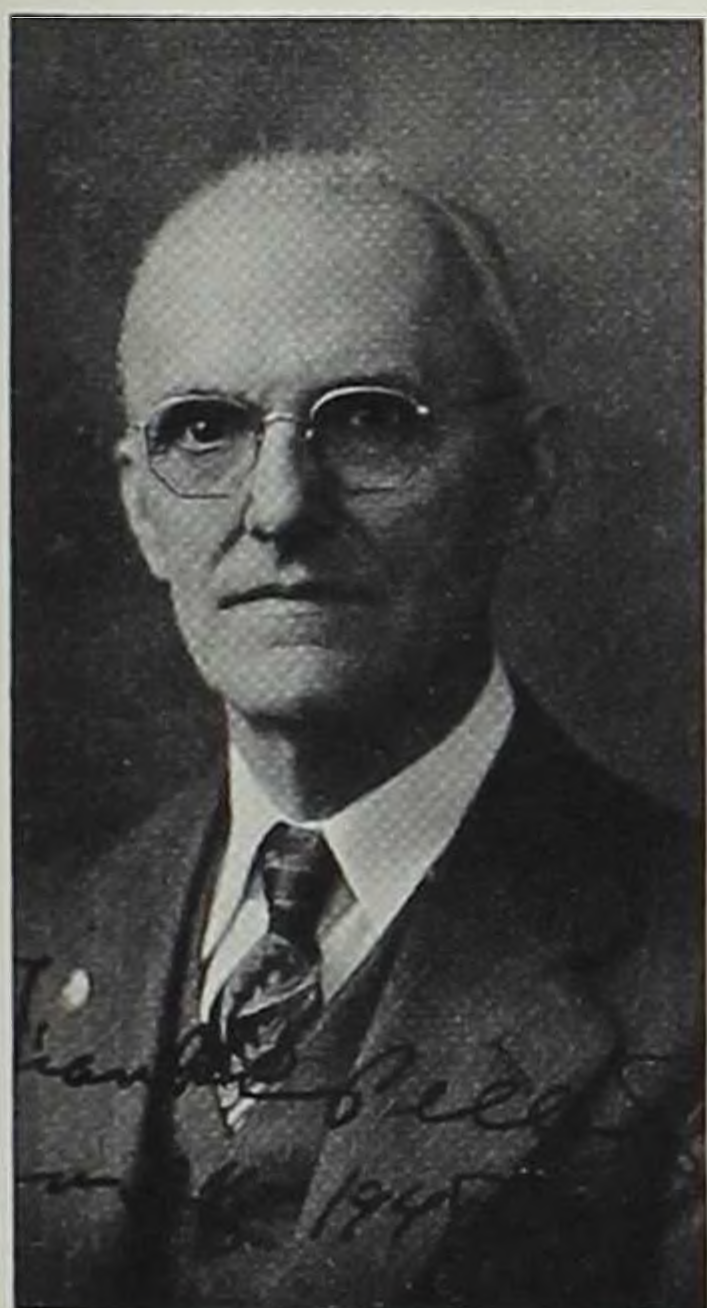


S. A. BEACH  
1860-1922



H. A. TERRY  
1826-1909





F. C. PELLETT  
1879-1951



R. S. HERRICK  
1882-1960



SAM KENNEDY, 1883-  
Vegetable Grower



A. T. ERWIN, 1874-  
Oldest living member



MRS. L. N. HOCKETT  
Only woman president

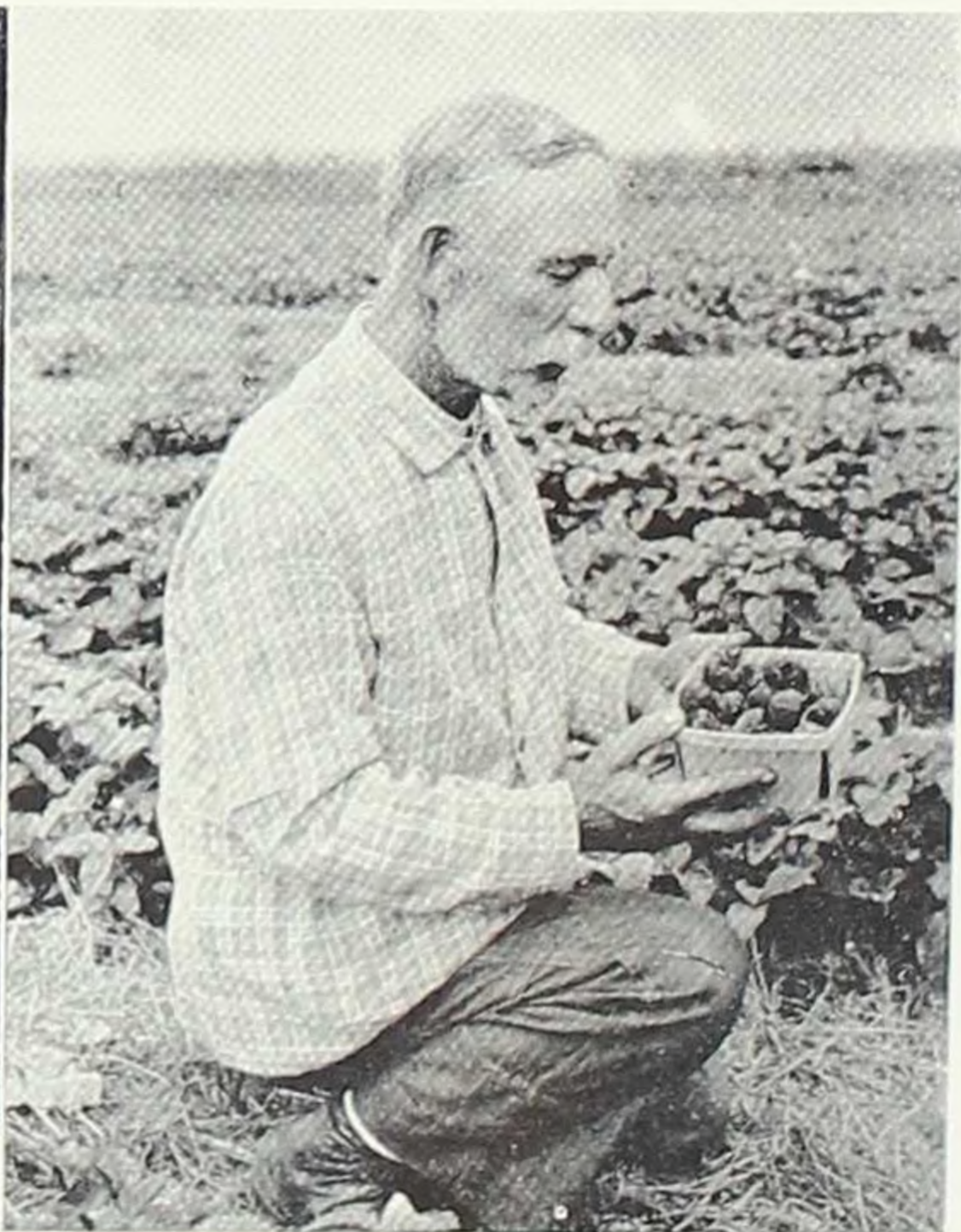


R. M. CLARK, 1892-  
Fruitgrower and exhibitor





Presentation of the Suel Foster plaque to Iowa State College, 1941. Left to right: Mrs. J. E. Hoopes, Muscatine, a neighbor of Foster; F. C. Pellett, Atlantic; and Victor Felter, Indianola, president, Iowa State Horticultural Society.



(Left) Professor B. S. Pickett presents watch to R. S. Herrick in recognition of 25 years' service as secretary of the Society, November 17, 1944. (Right) Harlow Rockhill, Conrad, with his Rockhill Strawberry about 1922.





Retired members of the Horticulture staff, ISU, left to right: E. C. Volz, floriculture; B. S. Pickett, retired department head; and H. E. Nichols, pomology.



Dedication of the Blue Star Memorial Highway marker at Missouri Valley, October 18, 1953. Similar markers were erected in Sioux City and Rock Rapids.





This new Geranium variety—*Galaxie*—was developed by Professor Griffith Buck of Iowa State University, Ames, and introduced in 1965 by the Department of Horticulture, ISU.



vineyards, vegetable and flower gardens of Iowa are those whose merits were brought before the public in the proceedings of the Society. Growers, scientists, distinguished horticulturists from all over the world contributed a thousand authoritative papers to these books. They contain a record of the growth and changes in this important activity of the people of Iowa. The published proceedings of the Iowa State Horticultural Society are outranked in volume, comprehensiveness, and age only by the State Horticultural Societies of Massachusetts, Michigan, and Illinois. One cannot say that any one of the leading services of the Society is more important than another but the published wisdom of generations is at least indispensable.

B. S. PICKETT