

THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

VOL. XLIX

ISSUED IN MARCH 1968

No. 3

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Strawberry Time

Early in June, 1835, a detachment of United States Dragoons marched up the Des Moines Valley. Near the present site of Oskaloosa a dragoon lieutenant recorded in his journal that the soldiers were traversing prairies "covered with strawberries" in such abundance "as to make the whole track red for miles." As they marched northward at the rate of about fifteen miles a day, the ripening of the strawberries coincided with their progress and gave them "this luxury for many weeks, increased by the incident of one of our beeves becoming a milker."

Although the United States Dragoons rode through miles of strawberries in 1835, Albert Miller Lea, a young dragoon lieutenant on the expedition, failed to forecast the prospects of Iowa as a fruit-growing State in his *Notes on Wisconsin Territory*, a guide to the "Iowa District" or "Black Hawk Purchase." For a score of years many of the pioneers seriously questioned the practicability of raising fruit in Iowa because of

the uncertain growing season. Eastern and southern horticulturists, jealous of the rapidly developing West, contributed to this attitude by commenting dismally on the climate and fruit-growing potentiality of the upper Mississippi Valley. To such misrepresentation, the Iowa newspapers responded by publishing contradictory items. "We understand," declared the Bloomington (Muscatine) *Herald* on October 11, 1844, "that a quantity of ripe wild strawberries, of the second growth were gathered on the Cedar river a few days since. What will our Southern friends, who suppose our season too short for the ripening of common crops think of this production of Iowa?"

In horticultural optimism, few writers surpassed John B. Newhall, who declared in his *Sketches of Iowa* published in 1841, "perhaps, no country on earth can excel this, in its adaptedness for rearing the choicest fruits and fruit-bearing shrubs. Wild fruits, crab-apples, berries, wild plums, strawberries, &c., are remarkably fine," Newhall concluded, and are a "great convenience to the judicious housewife in spreading her rustic table with excellent preserves." Yet as late as 1856 another immigrant-guide writer, Nathan H. Parker, deplored in his *Iowa Handbook* "the absence of a full supply of fruit." "When our State shall have her orchards, and garden fruits growing . . . then a great *preventive* of disease" will be provided.

There were other advocates of the healthfulness of fresh fruits. On August 4, 1843, the Bloomington *Herald* carried a long essay in praise of home gardens. "We pity the man that has no garden," because he thereby is deprived of half his happiness. A garden, insisted the author, "exerts a salutary influence on the heart," as well as the nutrition supplied by its rich and luscious products — "the cool, refreshing salad, the juicy melon, the fragrant strawberry, the purple plum, the delicious grape, and other fruits so grateful to the palate, so conducive to the health." At least one resident of Muscatine County was aware of such possibilities for, beginning with the March 17, 1843, issue of the Bloomington *Herald*, Dr. James Weed had been advertising his "Iowa Pomological and Horticultural Gardens" located a half mile north of Bloomington at "Pomona Villa." This was probably the earliest advertisement of its kind in Iowa, although Comstock & Avery were in the same business at Burlington.

Few editors wielded a greater influence on their readers than did Charles Aldrich of Webster City. Writing on the subject of "Strawberry Culture" in the *Hamilton Freeman* of August 5, 1858, he declared: "There are many ways in which our prairie homes may be made beautiful and attractive, which involve but slight expense. We shall speak of but one of these at this time — the cultivation of strawberries. Considering the little

trouble incurred, nothing adds more to comfort and luxury. They require but little attention, and may be made a source of considerable profit. A few persons in this vicinity have undertaken the experiment, and found it profitable. There is no earthly reason why every person who owns a farm or a garden should not have a fine bed of strawberries. There ought to be at least one hundred beds planted in this County during this month — the earlier the better." Since it was impossible to get improved varieties so far "from shore," Aldrich advocated the cultivation of the wild prairie strawberries. "It is not impossible," he argued, "that we may have native strawberries, that on cultivation may prove equal to any in the world. It is worthwhile to try the experiment."

The strawberries which the United States Dragoons had trampled under foot and which Charles Aldrich had urged cultivating were of the meadow variety (*Fragaria virginiana*) native to eastern North America. This meadow strawberry differed considerably from the beach strawberry (*Fragaria chiloensis*) found along the Pacific Coast from Alaska to Chili. Since the *Fragaria virginiana*, which takes its name from the colony whence it was imported into England, was the most palatable species, it was crossed with the European and Oriental varieties, as well as *Fragaria chiloensis*, which had been taken to

Europe by the Spaniards. It is a well-known fact that our modern strawberry was "born in North America, traveled to Europe, and finally returned," much improved. Evidently the Indians liked strawberries, for the Chippewa called the month following the summer solstice the strawberry moon.

Because of their perishable nature, strawberries cultivated for market had to be grown near large centers of population. Commercial production in the United States began about 1800. By the time Iowa settlement began in 1833, Nicholas Longworth, a prominent horticulturist of Cincinnati, Ohio, and grandfather of a former Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, made an important contribution to strawberry culture by recognizing sex differences and eliminating the sterile types. A landmark in the strawberry trade was the origination of the Wilson berry at Albany, New York, in 1851. It remained firm after being picked and therefore was good for shipping. For years it was the most popular type in Iowa and continued to be advertised in seed catalogues as late as 1908, an unusual record for this highly cultivated fruit.

The tremendous increase in population, the growth of large cities, the coming of the railroads, the offering of awards for strawberry jam at local fairs, the organization of the State Horticultural Society in 1866, and the introduction of commer-

cial varieties all combined to stimulate the production of strawberries in Iowa. By 1862 Charles Aldrich was able to claim that J. S. Smith of Homer had the "finest strawberry garden in this county." Smith had "three or four varieties," which had produced several bushels that season, and in a few weeks he would "be able to furnish thousands of plants to any who desire them."

The cultivation of the strawberry in Iowa was soon reflected in the social activities of the people. In addition to strawberry and cream around the family board, the frugal housewife learned to make tempting jellies and preserves. In 1854 *The American Home Cook Book* instructed its readers just how to make strawberry cream and strawberry ice cream. It also told how to preserve strawberries, both with and without sugar.

A Michigan recipe of more than seventy years ago, which has been preserved in *America Cooks*, doubtless found favor with many Iowa housewives. The foundation was a rich biscuit dough divided evenly in two jelly cake pans and baked in a quick oven. After spreading each layer with butter, the cook was instructed to have ready two quarts of strawberries, part of them lightly crushed and generously sugared one hour before, to draw out the juice. The crushed berries were to be spread on the lower cake while the other berries were to be piled on top of the upper layer. The cake was then set in the oven and just before

-serving all the syrup that had formed was poured over the entire short cake. No whipped cream was allowed to addle this luscious dessert.

In addition to pleasing the home circle, strawberries attracted many persons to the ice cream parlors. On June 9, 1856, the *Iowa City Republican* noted that Parker's ice cream rooms on the "Avenue" would satisfy all "lovers of good things" with their strawberries and ice cream. "We can attest the merits of the compound," the editor declared, "and if the reader doubts our testimony, just let him go and test the dish for himself." A few days later George Ohmer opened his "fashionable" ice cream saloon opposite the Baptist Church in Iowa City. The editor of the *Republican* assured his readers that he had "practical knowledge" of the "superb" quality of Ohmer's ice cream and strawberries. Doubtless, the twenty-seven places in Davenport which, according to the *Weekly Gazette* of July 2, 1857, were open evenings for the sale of ice cream, featured strawberries in season.

In 1861 the *Dubuque Weekly Times* warmly recommended that a buggyride in the moonlight, when topped off with a delicious bowl of strawberries and ice cream, would serve as a proper elixir for the jaded young man who was inclined to take "too much of a pork and beans view of things." If, after hiring one of Judd's livery teams, securing an "engaging piece of calico,"

and devouring a delicious portion of strawberries and ice cream at Longworth's nursery, the young man did not "lose his appetite, commence reading poetry, buy a flute and toot Annie Laurie," the editor felt certain he did not have a "soul above buttons." Although a girl was indispensable and moonlight a "great institution" the editor felt that "Judd's team and the strawberries are very important adjuncts."

Sundays and holidays, in addition to moonlight nights, always offered an opportunity for young people to get together. Circus day also provided an outlet for fun and frolic. On June 16, 1880, the Iowa City *Republican* chronicled:

An innocent young man, with his girl came to the city Thursday, from the country to see the show; and soon after the parade—after lady "Empress" had pranced up the street—the young gallant concluded to add to his "girl's" pleasure and delight for having accompanied him to see the elephant, he therefore suggested that they have something to cool their thirst. So he took his girl by the hand and walked into one of our soda-vending places, and asked for a glass of strawberry flavored soda, which was drawn for him, when he took up the glass and drank about half of it, and then passed the glass over to his girl, and inquired the price and went down in his pocket for a nickel; meantime his lass had disposed of the remainder of the soda, when he turned and said: "Jane ain't yer glad ye come?" He then took Jane by the hand, and they walked off, and no doubt Jane was glad she came to see the show.

Perhaps the happiest and most colorful element

of the social scene was contributed by the strawberry festivals. In all sections of Iowa, in cities large and small, in churches of all denominations, strawberry festivals were among the most popular activities. As June approached, citizens awaited anxiously for reports on the strawberry crop. On June 11, 1857, for example, the editor of the *Davenport Gazette*, after noting that the ladies of St. Paul's Church in St. Louis had held a strawberry festival, hungrily commented: "Ladies and strawberries — sweetness doubly distilled. We wouldn't mind getting up a private strawberry festival, if we only had the strawberries — but none have yet shown themselves in the market."

Since the northern section of Iowa was usually a fortnight behind the southern part of the State, editors kept an eagle eye open for the first report from below. "The Ladies of Keokuk," noted the *Dubuque Herald* of May 29, 1861, "gave a strawberry and ice cream supper on Thursday evening last — admission ten cents. Who will have the first strawberry and cream here this season?"

Church societies were prone to swing into action the moment strawberries appeared on the market. On June 8, 1859, the *Iowa City Weekly Republican* called attention to a strawberry festival to be given by the Ladies' Benevolent Association of the "Old Stone Church" at Market Hall. Although the spring of 1861 was "somewhat backward" the *Anamosa Eureka* of May 17th

noted that strawberries were in bloom. On June 14th the editor observed that the ladies of St. Mark's Church were making arrangements to hold a strawberry festival. Nine days later the *Eureka* recorded: "The Strawberry Festival at the Fisher House Hall last Tuesday evening was a very pleasant affair. The Hall was beautifully decorated with flags, pictures and oak boughs; the refreshments delicious; the ladies pretty and lively; the gentlemen liberal, and the singing by Messrs. Shaw, Lamson, Sherman and Clark, was excellent."

Strawberry festivals were frequently held for some specific church benefit. At Oskaloosa in 1865, the ladies of the First Presbyterian Church held a strawberry festival in the City Hall on June 20th for the purpose of procuring a bell. In 1868 the ladies of the Central Presbyterian Church at Des Moines held a similar festival to raise funds to replace the bell which had been destroyed by fire. Since nearly all the old settlers had contributed to the old bell, the *Iowa State Register* hoped that Des Moines citizens would eat plenty of the "rich strawberries and delicious ice cream" and thus insure the procurement of the new 1600-pound bell. At Des Moines in 1876, the young ladies' Catholic "Sodality" held a three-day strawberry festival to raise money for the purchase of a library. About \$125 was taken in the first evening, and more on the second.

Because of the limited season it was sometimes difficult for all the churches in the larger cities to hold a strawberry festival. Thus, at Clinton in 1869, the Congregational, Baptist, and Episcopal churches held their festivals in Spencer Hall within the period of two weeks. The Baptists and Episcopalians charged ten cents admission while the Congregational ladies charged a quarter. The latter price was probably due to the fact that the Congregationalists gave the first festival of the season when berries were more expensive. The editor of the *Clinton Age* was indignantly aware of these high prices: "Strawberries are all the go now," he declared on June 4th. "They go down with the greatest of ease, though the expense sometimes gives a person the gripes. Strawberries ought to be sold now for about 15 cents per quart — we mean for a quart of strawberries, not for a quart box with the bottom in the middle."

Since the strawberry season was limited, the competition for patronage was keen. Thus, on May 27, 1868, the *Iowa City Republican* noted that the Y.M.C.A. would hold an "Ice Cream and Strawberry Festival at Metropolitan Hall on Wednesday evening for the promotion of the objects of the association." According to the *Republican*:

The small receipts from the lecture course last winter has left them short. They are unable to improve the public library as should be done, and carry on their other

enterprises, without more money. Let all the people who would favor their work turn out to-night and assist them to more funds

In the same issue of the *Republican* the editor noted that the young ladies of St. Mary's Church in Iowa City planned to hold a similar festival in Metropolitan Hall on Thursday evening "for the benefit of their new church building fund. They ask a generous people to aid them in their most laudable enterprise. The best of the season will be furnished, and every effort made to give a pleasant entertainment to all their friends."

That the generous citizens of Iowa City were responsive to such entertainment was recorded in the *Republican* of June 3, 1868:

Tableaux and Festival.—The ladies of the Congregational Church will give a Tableaux Exhibition and Strawberry and Ice Cream Festival next Wednesday evening at Metropolitan Hall, for the purpose of aiding in their building enterprise. They will offer a rich treat in tableaux, and music under the direction of Prof. Smith, the choicest entertainment that can be got up, and hope for a generous response from a generous people in aid of their important enterprise.

The editor did not return from Davenport in time to see the "Tableaux" but received some laudatory remarks about it from a former resident of New York City. His train was back in Iowa City in time for him to observe the speed with which the ice cream and strawberries disappeared.

He also noted that the net proceeds for the "Tableaux and Festival" had netted the Congregational ladies \$175, which he considered "a fine result for so unpretentious an affair."

Not all church sociables turned out so well! On June 24, 1868, the *Iowa City Republican* announced that the Episcopal Ladies would hold an "Ice Cream and Strawberry Festival" at Metropolitan Hall on Wednesday evening where they would present the "choicest delicacies of the season" in the "neatest and most artistic manner." The editor observed that "they deserve, and we doubt not will have, a crowd." A week later, on July 1, 1868, the same paper recorded:

The Ladies of the Episcopal Church had a very nice entertainment last Wednesday evening. Their ice cream was delicious, their strawberries first rate, their cream the pure article and their attentions charming but there were far too few to take the benefit of them. The people all went to the University [commencement exercises] and when through there it was time to go home We trust these ladies will hit upon a more fortunate evening next time."

Possibly the Episcopalian ladies may have lost some of the feminine touch and originality which had been clearly evident in their Society only ten years before. On June 30, 1858, the editor of the *Iowa City Weekly Republican* noted:

The Festival—The Episcopal Society at Metropolitan Hall on the evening of the 23d inst., was a very pleasant

affair. Much credit is due the directors and manager for the orderly arrangement and decorous taste exhibited in the entire preparation. To us, a somewhat casual observer of the beautiful as evolved in Heaven's first law, order, all seemed in consonance with that cardinal, paramount law. From the Bouquet Pyramid, the Post Office enchantress, the fortune-telling Miss to the tin padlocked box and "grab-bag," all and each had their places and duties assigned, and both filled and performed them with an exactness and a will, that gave to the entertainment its peculiar and highest merit. Ice cream and Lemonade moderated to some extent the tropical evening. Strawberries and Cream, and divers varieties of Cake, were provided in great abundance. We must be indulged in saying, that for ourselves, we much enjoyed the Festival; and if the smiling countenances of the fair, and the merry ringing laughter of the gay, be any index, by which to determine the law and the measure of enjoyment in others, then we think there were many, at least comfortably happy, on that evening.—And to make, and to be made happy, we take it to be, the primal virtue and excellence of all such and kindred entertainments. For then, is it only true,

"The glad circle round them yield their souls
To festive mirth and wit that knows no gall."

At Cedar Falls in 1873, the Methodist ladies held a strawberry festival in the lecture room of the church for the benefit of the Sabbath school. The Baptists at Shellrock netted over thirty dollars toward a fine two-hundred-dollar organ at their strawberry festival in 1872.

At Sioux City in 1869, the First Congregational Church held a strawberry festival at

Hedges's new building on June 17th which proved a "grand success" socially and financially. The *Glenwood Opinion* of July 28, 1866, recorded an equally successful festival held by the Baptists in the courthouse. "Ladies were out by the hundred and men too, and something less than four hundred thousand barrels of Ice Cream was consumed, Lemonade, Straw Berries, Black Berries, Peaches, Cake and other things were there in great abundance. . . . Receipts of the evening \$120.70; expenses \$42.05.

Special entertainment was frequently provided at strawberry festivals. At Clinton the Baptists sponsored an auction of "useful and fancy articles" in 1869; good singing and a number of interesting tableaux were offered by the Baptists of Shellrock in 1872. The "Centennial Strawberry Sociable" at the Centenary Church in Des Moines in 1876 had members of two Sabbath schools impersonate famous American personalities of a century ago. The Washingtons, the Lafayettes, the Penns, and several other "ancient" characters were scheduled to dish up the ice cream and strawberries in the "most approved style."

On May 13, 1886, the *Fort Dodge Messenger* urged its readers to be sure to attend the Presbyterian Festival in Mr. Doud's new building on May 21st. Apparently the local season had not opened, for strawberries were still being shipped in on June 4th when the Episcopal ladies served

strawberries with cake and cream in Doud's building. Although these imported strawberries sold as low as ten cents a quart, it was believed that the local supply would scarcely change these figures. Ice cream, cake, and strawberries, served to the music of an orchestra, were offered by the Methodist ladies of Fort Dodge on June 18th. So commonplace had strawberries become by this time that a report from Kalo-Otho read: "Picking strawberries and growling about the hard times are occupations of our farmers."

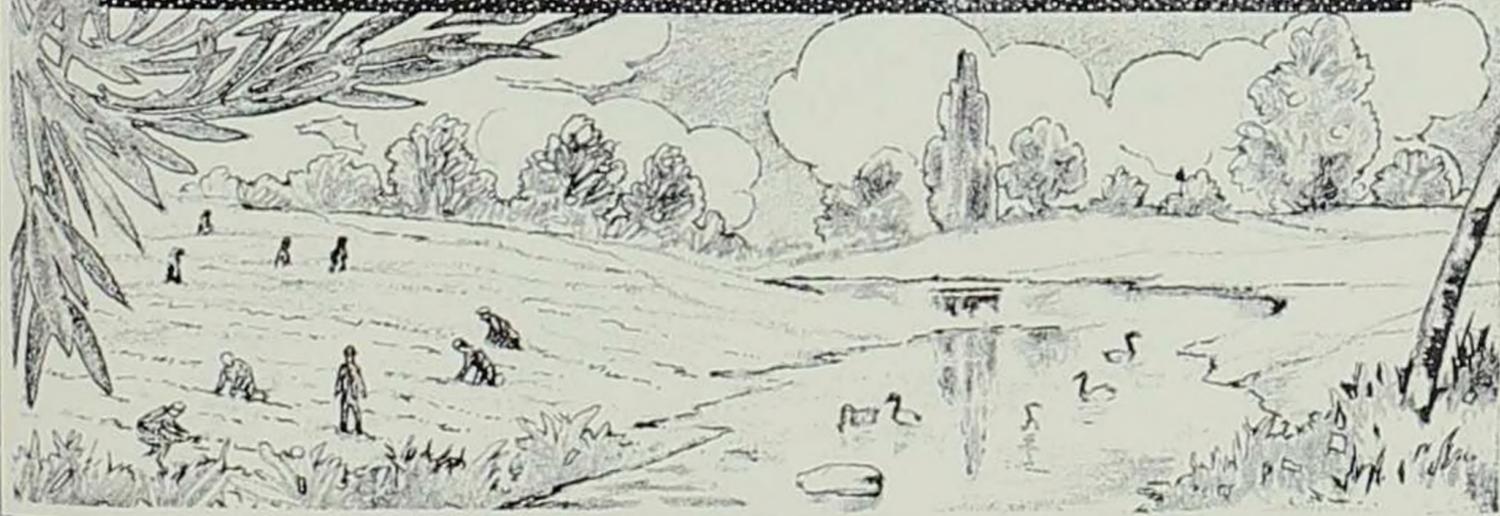
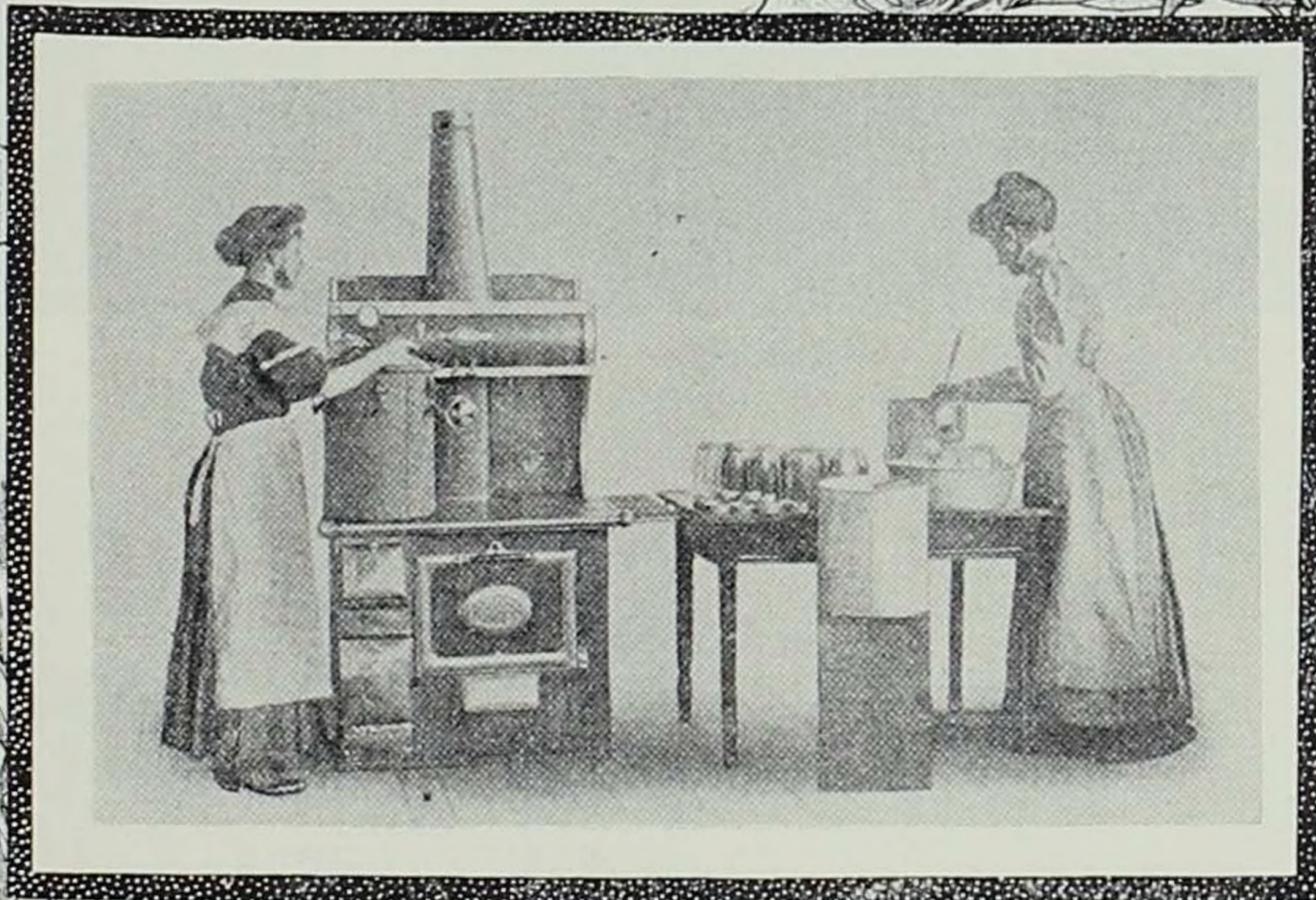
An entirely different type of strawberry festival was celebrated by some Muscatine youngsters in 1844. J. P. Walton, George Magoon, and a couple of their playmates found wild strawberries so abundant on Muscatine Island that the ground looked "more red than green." The boys gathered all they could carry and then repaired to the Magoon pantry and helped themselves to cream and sugar "while the old folks were in town attending meeting." After enjoying their repast, J. P. Walton recalled, "we adjourned to the attic to engage in a game of seven-up. When it was nicely in progress, the old folks returned, and found us 'treed' in the attic. We got down and departed in the best manner we could, leaving George to make matters right."

In times of plenty, Iowans were often surfeited with strawberries. On June 21, 1866, the editor of the Oskaloosa *Weekly Herald* exclaimed:

THE FRUITMAN AND GARDENER

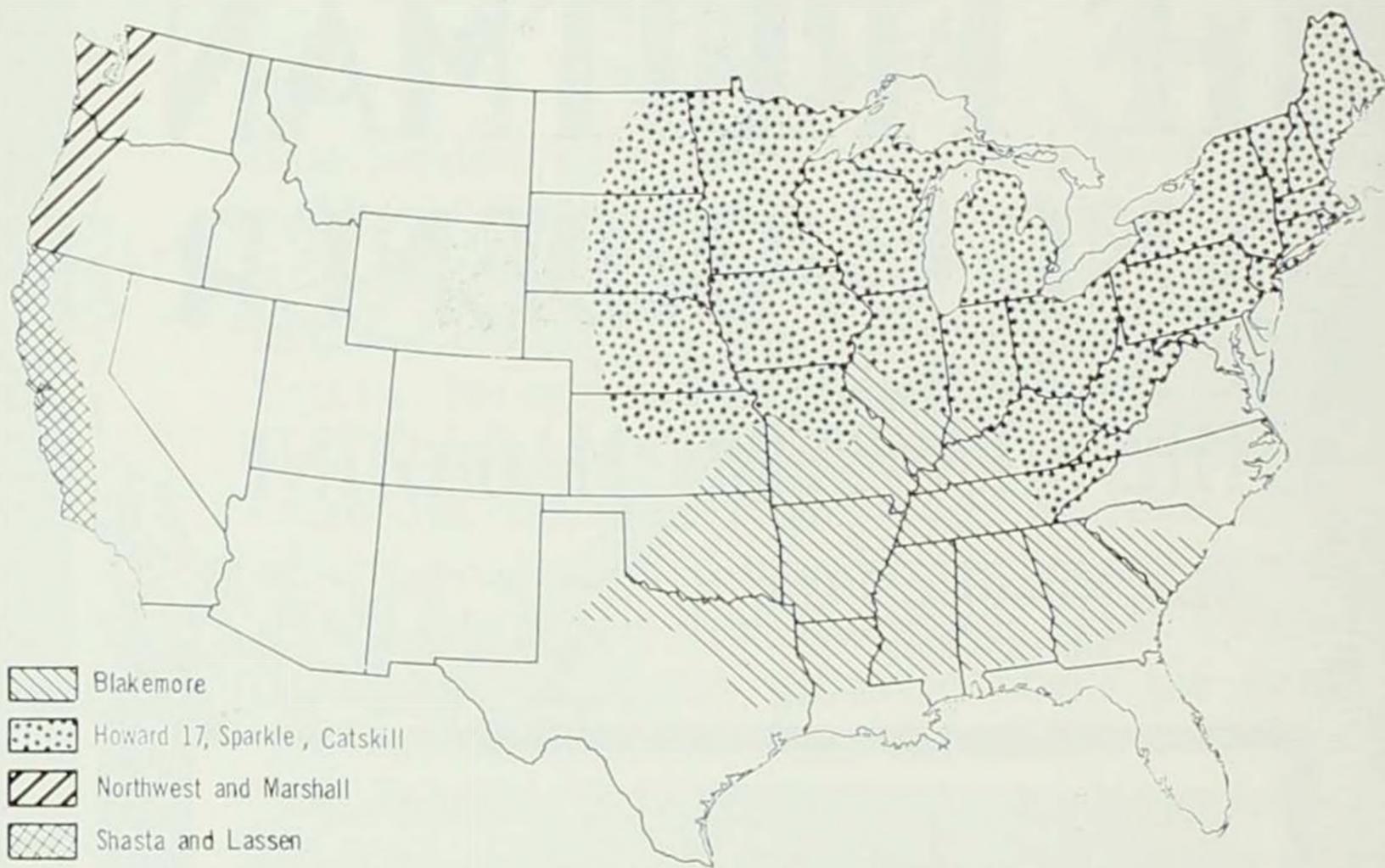
INCLUDING
THE STRAWBERRY MAGAZINE

May Number, 1912
Fifteenth Year

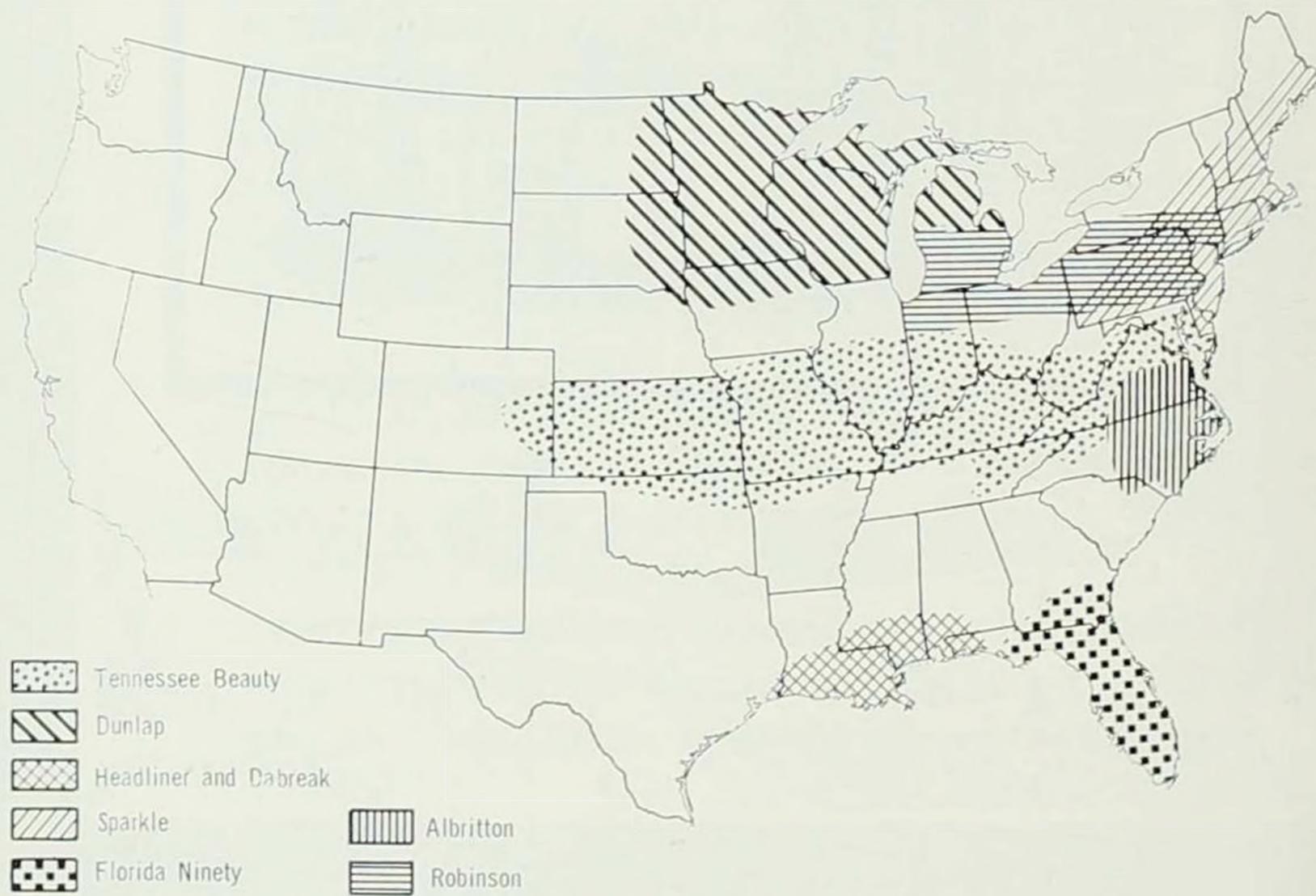


Even before the opening of the 20th Century this magazine began publication in Mt. Vernon, Iowa. The inclusion of the words — *The Strawberry Magazine* — is indicative of the importance of this fruit in Iowa.

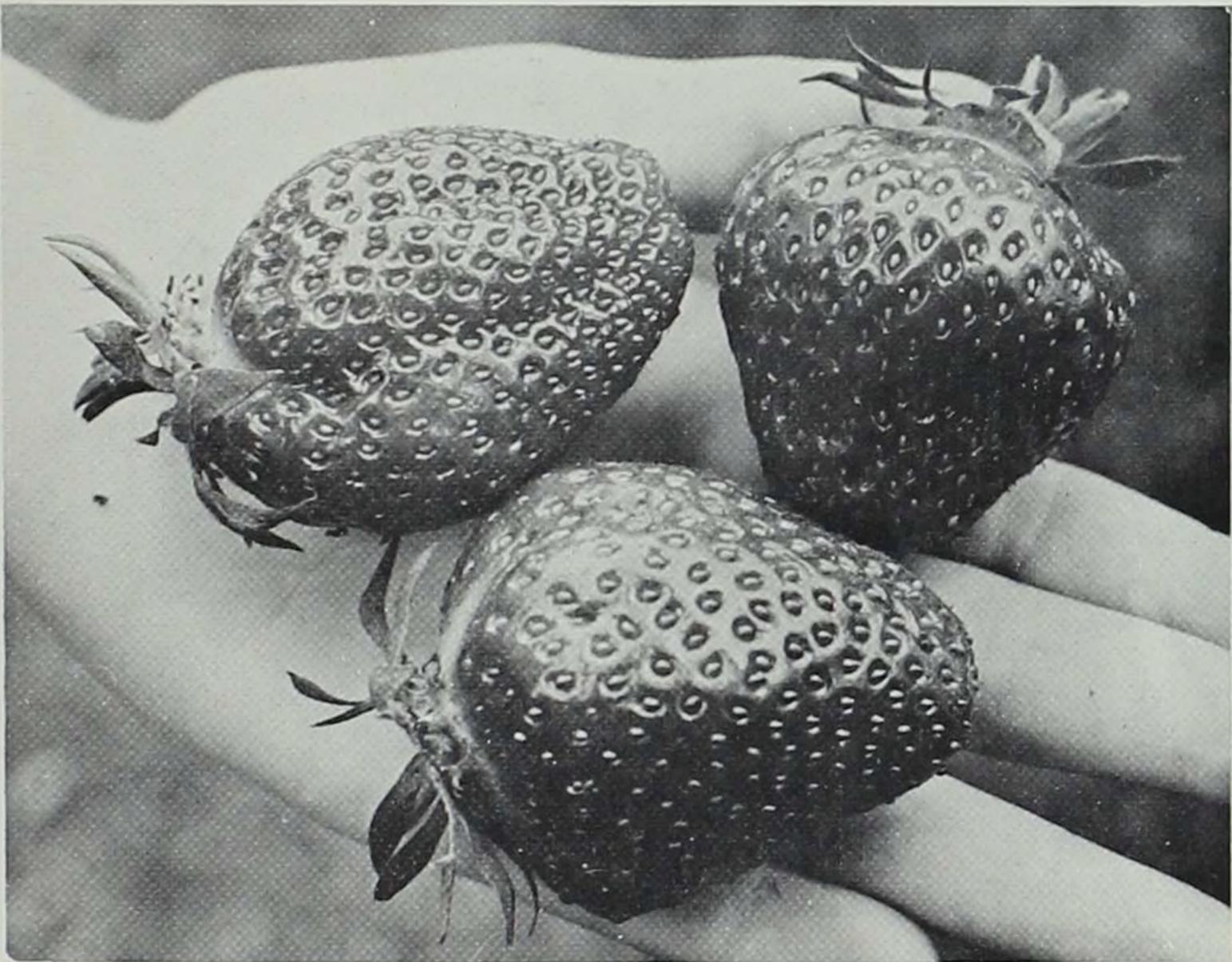
STRAWBERRY VARIETIES IN THE UNITED STATES: 1964



Map showing the regions in which Blakemore, Howard 17 (Premier), Sparkle, Catskill, Northwest, Marshall, Shasta, and Lassen are grown extensively.



Map showing the regions in which Tennessee Beauty, Dunlap, Headliner, Dabreak, Sparkle, Florida Ninety, Albritton, and Robinson are grown profitably.



Perfection of fruit is sought in every variety grown.



DN-957

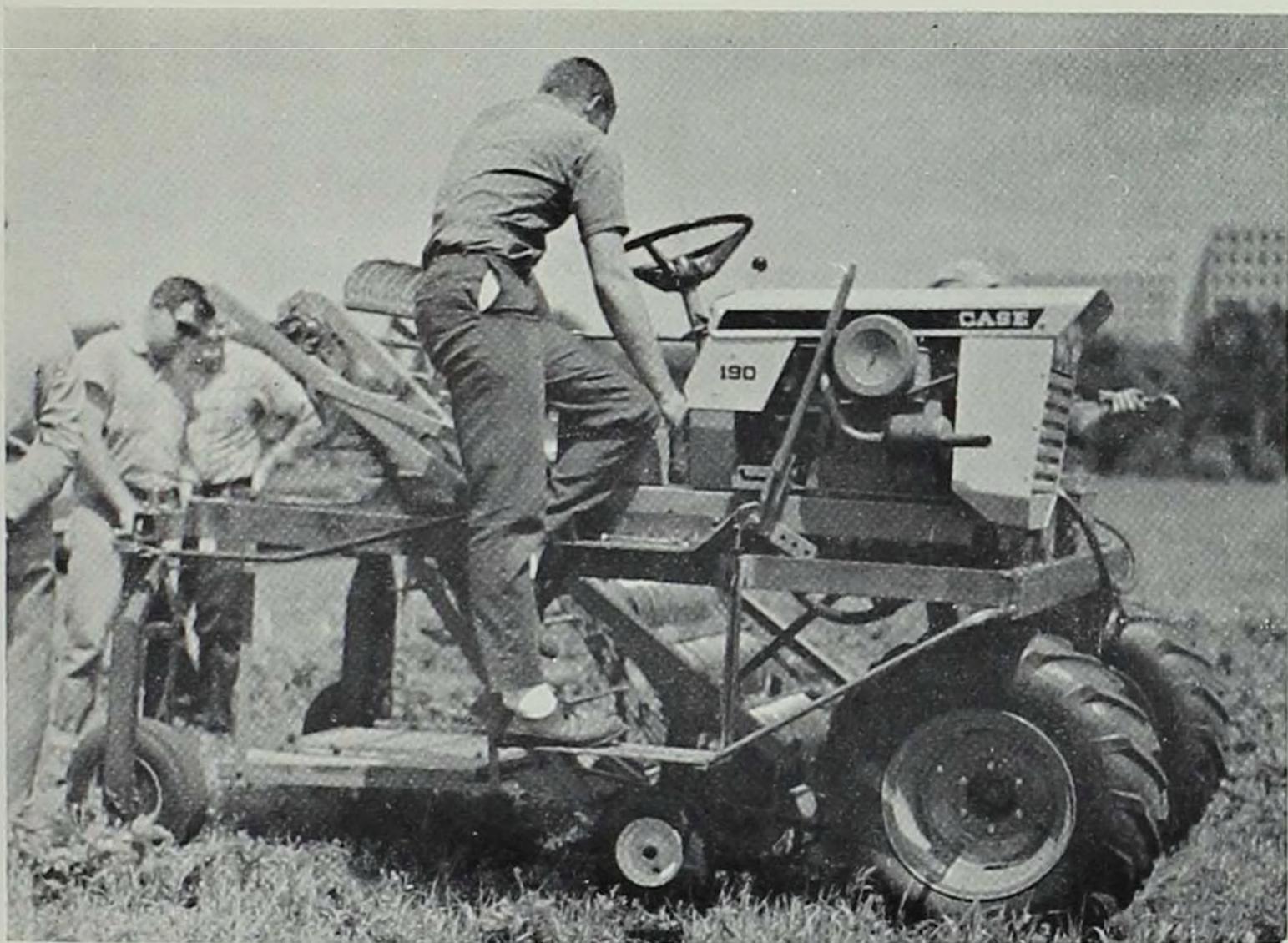
Map showing the location of the principal commercial strawberry-producing regions, the approximate ripening time in each region, and the northward progression of the strawberry season.



Strawberry pickers on Elmer Trimble's farm at Sandusky in the 1920's. The price per box started at 2c and gradually advanced to 3c, 4c, and 5c, by which time the cost began to become prohibitive and, after 1945, commercial growth in Iowa dwindled and strawberries were imported from California and the South.



Sidwell's truck hauled crates of strawberries from Sandusky in Lee County back to the ice cream plant at Iowa City.



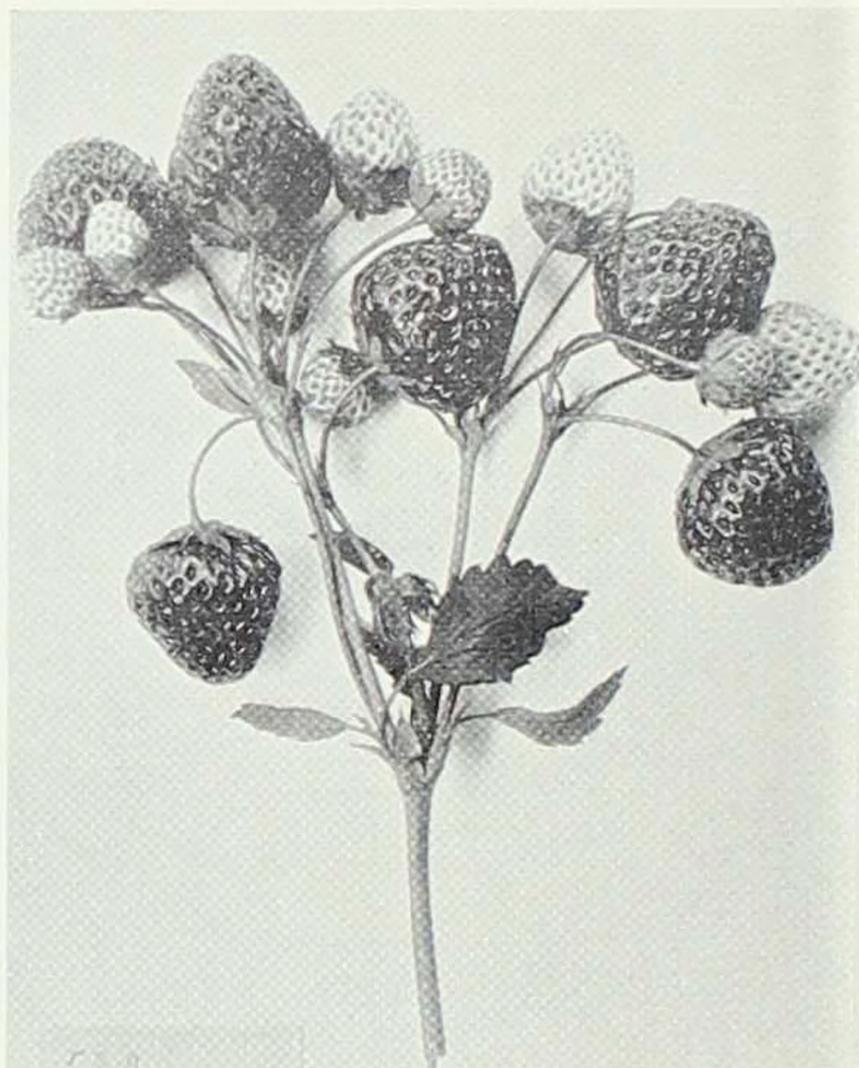
A strawberry picker undergoing tests at Ames. The effectiveness of the machine depends on two things — a firm berry that will not crush easily, and a plant, most of whose berries will mature at the same time.



The problem of picking the fruit mechanically is extremely difficult. Certain varieties afford a more efficient harvest because the berries ripen at the same time. The machine, however, is less efficient when fruit develops over a period of time.



"Especially for you . . ." says Mary Clare Denisen as she appears to prefer a basket of the new home-grown Cyclone variety. Mary is the daughter of Dr. Ervin L. Denisen of Iowa State University, who developed the Cyclone variety.



A fruit cluster of the Narcissa, a strawberry variety of high quality. It was developed from a cross of Royal Sovereign and Howard (Premier) made in 1923 and introduced by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.



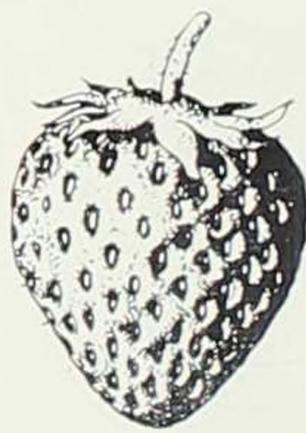
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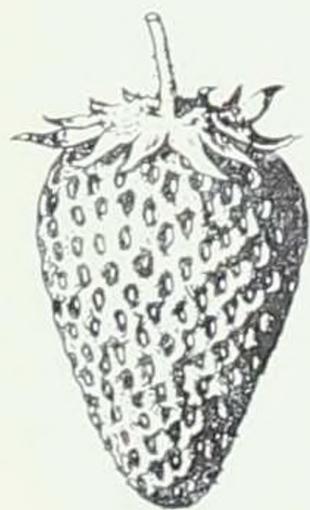
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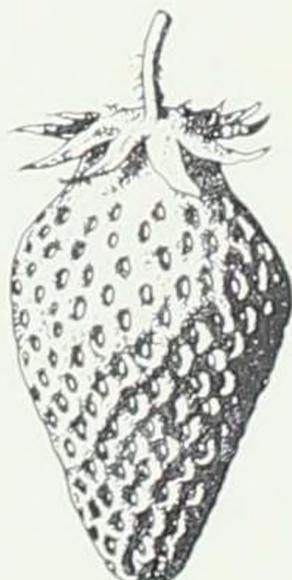
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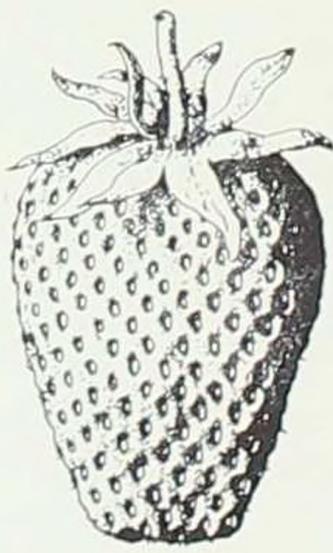
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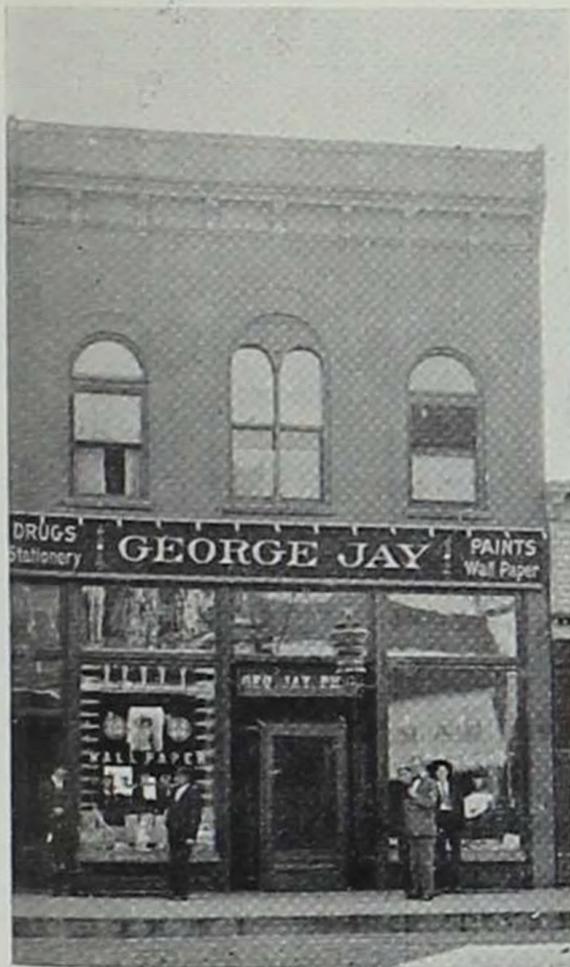


LONG WEDGE



SHORT WEDGE

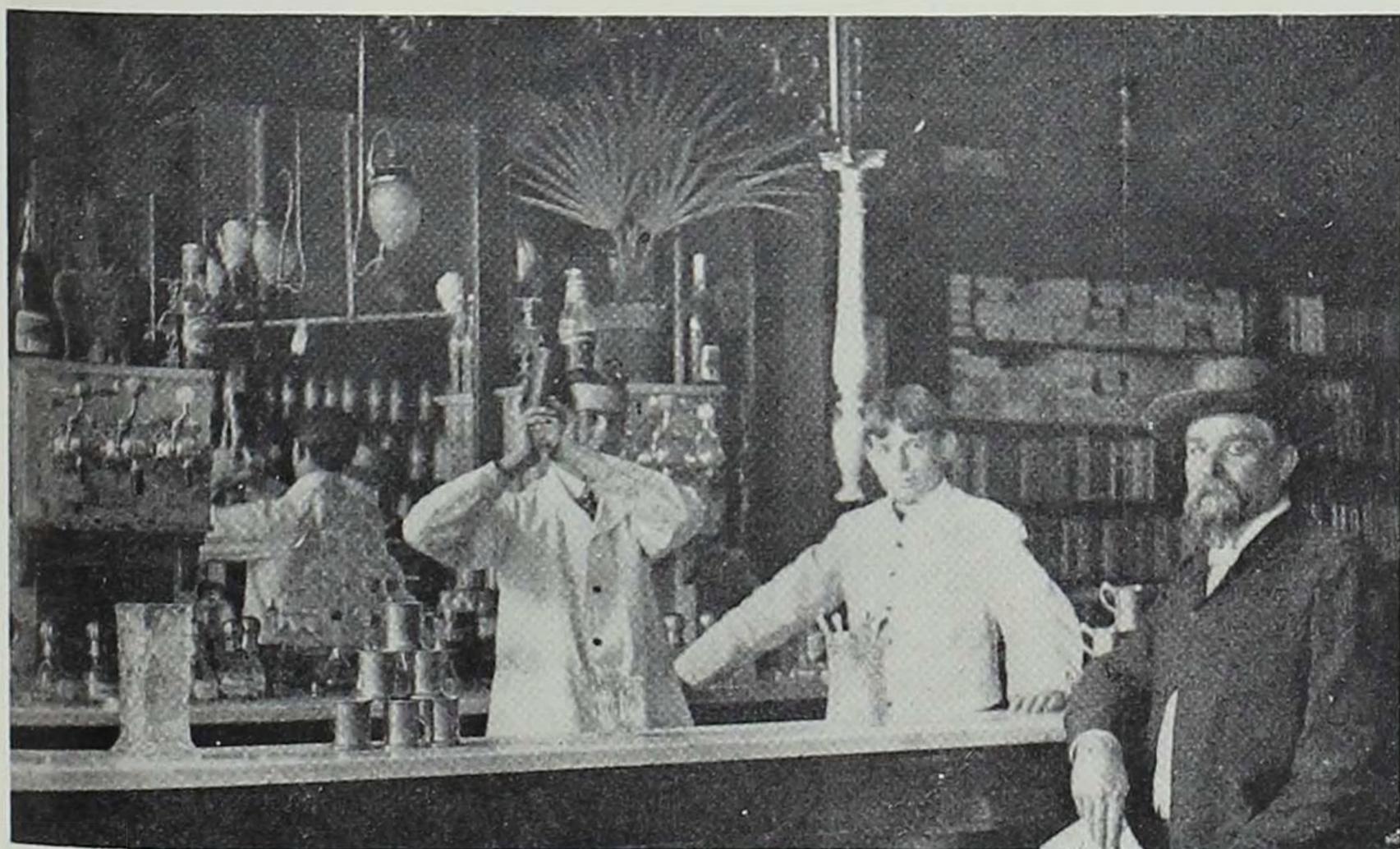
Different shapes to be found in strawberry fruits.



Drug stores and ice cream parlors, as well as church sociables, used many strawberries.



A strawberry soda at the Jay drug store would be a delight to Shenandoah citizens of any age.



Prior to 1920 strawberry was a favorite flavor in almost any Iowa drug store.

**Make Big Money
from Small
Space on**



STRAWBERRIES

\$1,000.00 an acre revenue is common occurrence in growing strawberries. Mr. Eli Messer, Dunkerton, Iowa, called on us the other day and said that from only about one-fourth of an acre he sold \$300.00 worth of strawberries last year. This is more money than many farmers make from a twenty-acre field. Strawberries are easy to grow on any well drained soil. They rank among the first fruits for quick results. We only offer varieties that we know from experience are absolutely right and will not disappoint. They have proven to be the best and are self-pollinating. Very small space, 10x20 ft. will produce an amazing quantity of luscious berries for the home table or for canning. Space three or four times that size will bring in a handsome revenue. No garden complete without strawberries. Resolve to put in a patch this year. The quickest growing, cheapest and most economical fruit food. They are healthful, providing iron for the system, which purifies the blood.

SENATOR DUNLAP—One of the best known strawberries. Trial, tested and proven, strong grower, easily handled by expert or beginner, medium to large in size. Deep rich red color, excellent quality and flavor. Conical in form. If part of plants are thinned out yield and quality of berries greatly improved. Fruit firm, splendid keeper and shipper. Good for the beginner, will bear fruit in spite of neglect and ill treatment, but will respond tremendously to a little care.

DR. BURRELL—Sometimes called the million-dollar strawberry. Evergreen has heard of this famous much advertised popular berry. Plants are being sold by originators and true agents throughout the United States at fabulous prices. Very vigorous grower; long rooted, drought resisting plants; little later than Dunlap. Fruit very large, dark red, delicious berry, good shipper. We offer guaranteed true to name Dr. Burrell plants at very low prices.

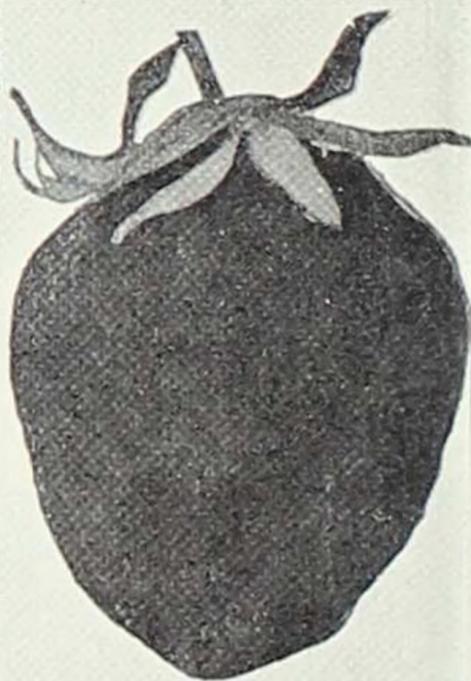
PROGRESSIVE (Everbearing)—Very best everbearing variety on market. Strong and absolutely hardy. Highest quality, bright red, fine keeper on vine or in box. Medium size blossoms, strongly staminate and every bloom makes perfect berry. Produces good crops over three months in fall when weather conditions are favorable.

CHAMPION (Everbearing)—A better perfect blossoming big variety. Talk of the country and sought by every berry fancier. Sure cropper, larger than Progressive, quality as good or better, rich red color. Has long drought-resisting roots. Commercial growers have found they can bank on Champion for fall berries in great abundance.

Prices	Postpaid		Purchaser pays express	
	50	100	100	1000
Senator Dunlap	\$.75	\$1.10	\$1.00	\$3.50
Dr. Burrell	.80	1.25	.95	4.25
Progressive (E. B.)	1.10	1.90	1.65	6.25
Champion (E. B.)	1.55	2.75	2.50	9.75

JUMBO STRAWBERRY—Enormous berry: 18 to 20 of them will fill berry box. If you want to create a sensation just put in 50 or 100 of these plants and you will be surprised at the results; big leaves afford shade to the enormous loads of fruit that this plant produces. Postpaid: 10, 75c; 25, \$1.65; 50, \$2.75; 100, \$5.00.

All strawberries shipped at proper planting time.



RASPBERRIES and DEWBERRIES

RASPBERRIES

We have selected only the best tried and tested varieties and have left out the mediocre.

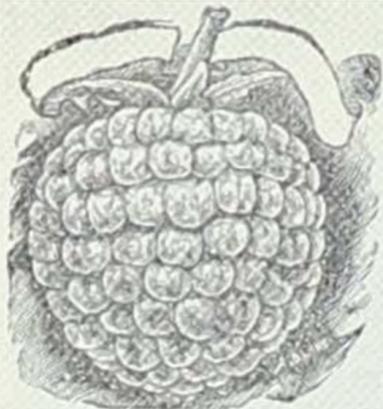
ST. REGIS (Everbearing)—Red. Remarkable red berry, which will yield fruit first season. Though not large berries are of excellent quality and firm. Ripens early, plant hardy, excellent canner.

CUTHBERT or QUEEN OF THE MARKET—Red. Remarkable strong and hardy variety. Stands northern winters and southern summers, equal to any, very large, rich crimson color, excellent quality. Good shipper.

CUMBERLAND—Black. Largest of all black caps, firm, fine shipper, profitable for market; healthy vigorous grower, perfectly hardy. Fruit nearly 1 inch across, very prolific yielder.

12	Postpaid		Customer pays Express	
	25	50	100	1000
65c	\$1.20	\$2.20	\$1.00	\$37.00

Above prices on all raspberries.



DEWBERRY

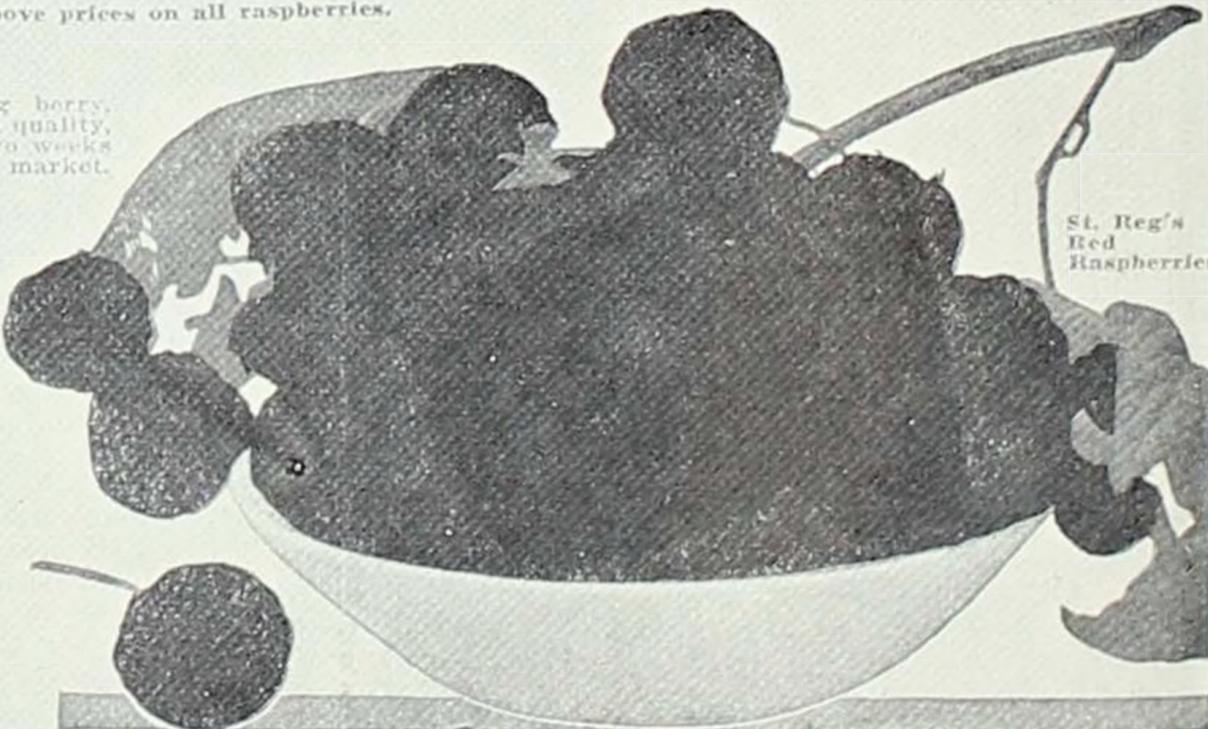
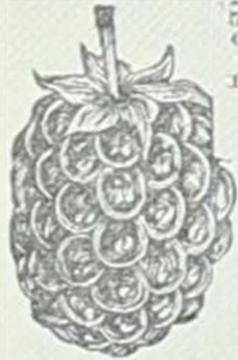
LUCRETIA—Sometimes called trailing berry, very hardy and productive, fruit highest quality, large, sometimes 2 inches diameter. Two weeks earlier than blackberries. Sells good on market.

Postpaid	Customer Pays Express		
12	25	50	1000
60c	\$1.00	\$1.50	\$2.50
			\$18.00

Blackberries

Prices	Postpaid
12	\$.85
25	1.25
50	2.75
Customer pays express	
100	\$ 4.75
1000	42.50

MERSEBEAU—Vigorous grower, upright, produces stout stocky canes, enormous yielder, extra size berries, brilliant black, retains color under all conditions, sweet, rich, without core. Unsurpassed, good shipper and keeper. Best all-around variety.



THE GALLOWAY CO.

Waterloo, Iowa

Galloway's Spring and Summer 1925 Catalog offered a variety of items. Included was a handsome color advertisement offering strawberry and raspberry plants for sale.

"For the first time in life we have had enough strawberries. Strawberries with sugar, strawberries with cream, strawberries with sugar and cream, strawberry puddings, strawberries just from the vines, strawberry shortcake, strawberries — we've had enough." In 1867 a Keokuk citizen, who had attended "all the festivals" that season suggested "Pork and Beans for a change in the way of luxuries." Another resident of Keokuk cancelled his subscription to the *Gate City* because it contained too many items about festivals. "And from the bottom of our heart," the editor declared, "we pity the individual who can't take our paper because we urge upon our people to patronize festivals gotten up under the auspices of and for the benefit of the churches of all denominations in our city."

Nevertheless, many Iowans were interested in the cultivation of strawberries. Stir the earth in strawberry beds in May and keep down the weeds, the *Northwestern Farmer and Horticultural Journal* of Dubuque advised its readers in 1861. A year later, Charles Aldrich grew a Longworth strawberry in his garden which measured over four inches in circumference. Although this was not half as large as the editor of the *Hamilton Freeman* expected to raise, it was said to be a "little ahead" of anything yet grown in the Webster City area. Aldrich was so proud of his strawberries that he flew into a rage when

the robins began to eat them in 1868 and, "regardless of all poetry and legends," started "shooting them away."

At Oskaloosa in 1865, Dr. D. A. Hoffman picked six hundred strawberries from three Wilson's Albany plants. In the following year his strawberries were not only prolific but large and delicious. He had rivals however. The Oskaloosa editor was a "living witness" to the fine flavor of Silas Scott's strawberries, one of which measured seven and a half inches in circumference and ten of which weighed seven ounces. "Who can beat this?" the editor queried. Apparently "Master John Hoffman" could, for he brought in eight strawberries of the Agriculturist variety which weighed seven ounces!

The editor of the Anamosa *Eureka* asserted in 1874 that the newly-introduced Col. Cheeny strawberry surpassed all other varieties in richness and delicacy of flavor. In June, 1876, the *Iowa State Register* praised the "beautiful" and "luscious" Charles Downing variety that had been raised by W. S. Sims. "Strawberries are now down to eating prices," the Des Moines editor declared. "They were selling at the fruit stands yesterday for from ten to twelve and half a box." The first annual report of the State Horticultural Society in 1867 indicated that Wilson's Albany was the most popular variety in Iowa.

Prior to 1875 the Charles Downing, Green's

Prolific, the Colfax, Metcalf's Early, and the Agriculturist were all mentioned frequently. In 1871 Benjamin Green insisted that "Downer's" was "emphatically *the* berry for those who are too busy or too lazy to cut runners and spread straw and sawdust." J. L. Budd felt that Russell's Prolific would "not pay for ground rent and trouble unless mixed." On May 9, 1873, the editor of the Cedar Falls *Gazette* declared: "We've been laboring with great diligence for four years to cultivate strawberries and the result has been one quart and a quarter of delicious strawberries, worth twenty-five cents, cash, and costing \$9.40. We've concluded to try onions, in hope, if nothing else, of raising a good smell."

Although Iowa has not led in strawberry culture, some kinds have originated in this State. In 1894 R. D. McGeehon, who had fruited some 175 to 200 varieties, wrote to the *Western Garden and Poultry Journal* that the Older variety, which had originated near Independence, was one of the best strawberries on the market. Harlow Rockhill of Conrad, Iowa, was a pioneer experimenter with the everbearing strawberry. In 1908 Rockhill crossed the Dunlap and Pan American to produce his well-known Progressive, one of the hardiest varieties then grown in this country. According to Iowa State College experts, the Dunlap, the Premier, the Beaver, the Blakemore, the Dorsett, and the Fairfax were popular leading varieties in

1945. The Gem and Rockhill (Wayzata) were recommended as the most satisfactory fall or ever-bearing varieties.

Southeastern Iowa seems to have been an excellent region for strawberry culture. As early as 1864 Rankin & Taylor of Burlington advertised a thousand bushels of strawberries for sale to dealers and festival sponsors in surrounding cities. Most strawberry cultivation has been on a modest scale, however, the farmer's wife frequently taking care of the patch. "As a general thing," a Buchanan County enthusiast wrote in 1894, "men seem to have little taste for raising berries, except with a spoon, but in spite of uncharitable remarks about them, men are scarce who are not ready to give what work is needed to fertilize and plow a small garden patch."

A highly successful strawberry cultivator was Elmer Trimble of Sandusky in Lee County. Returning from service in World War I, Trimble began planting strawberries on from two to four acres of land. When questioned by the writer, he verified the following quotation recorded in the *Iowa Farmer* for August 1, 1919:

Montrose in Lee county, is in the center of a great strawberry region. Over \$40,000 was paid out to growers this season and the returns would have been much larger if boxes could have been procured. The shortage of boxes prevented shipments. Rather than allow them to go to waste the farmers gave them to anyone

who would furnish their own containers and come pick them.

Trimble had from 30 to 40 neighbors who raised strawberries. He usually planted 2 to 4 acres from which he would generally get 100 or more crates of strawberries to the acre. Trimble planted such varieties as Blakemore, Dunlap, Howard 17 (Premier), Warfield, and Klondike. Originally he paid 2c per quart for picking strawberries, but this figure gradually increased to 3, 4, and finally 5c per quart. As the price advanced, it became increasingly difficult to make a profit and the industry gradually gave way to California commercial growers after World War II.

Trimble's picking crew numbered anywhere from 20 to 30 men, women, and children. In good times the farmers about Sandusky would ship out 20 to 25 carloads of strawberries. They had their own Association for a number of years but ultimately joined the Montrose Berry Association. Although he did raise sweet corn and tomatoes for the Keokuk market, Trimble's first love was the strawberry patch, even though it meant long hours and tedious work. "I never could observe Decoration Day," he recalls, "because that was strawberry time."

Although most of the strawberries raised in Lee County went to Chicago or Minneapolis, an interesting traffic grew up with the Sidwell and

Russell (now Sanitary Farm Dairies) Quality Chekd ice cream plants at Iowa City and Cedar Rapids. Irving B. Weber, president of Quality Chekd Dairy Products Association, recalls making yearly trips to Sandusky in the 1930's where he contracted with Elmer Trimble and his neighbors to supply his firms with the Dunlap variety of strawberry. Strawberry ice cream, according to Mr. Weber, "was second only to vanilla in popularity at this time." As Irving Weber recalls:

Processing a year's supply of strawberries proved no easy task. Truck loads were brought daily from the strawberry fields at Sandusky to Iowa City and Cedar Rapids, where church groups, anxious to "earn money" for special projects, would wash, stem, and "pick over" the strawberries. They were then crushed and mixed with sugar, two pounds of strawberries to one pound of sugar, and frozen and stored.

The church groups received 3c per quart stemmed at the outset, with the rate being increased to 4c and then to 5c. Not only did the ladies of the churches "make money" but judging from "the buzzing" they had a jolly good time.

A crate of strawberries when washed, stemmed, and "picked over" weighed approximately 24 pounds. To this was added 12 pounds of sugar. The crushing and sugaring was done in a 5 gallon ice cream can with a "milk stirring rod." The 24 pounds of strawberries and twelve pounds of sugar produced about 4 gallons of finished product. The cans were then filled to 5 gallons before being frozen.

The prices of strawberries at the field usually started at about \$7.00 per crate and as the season progressed

usually dropped to \$6.00 and then \$5.00 per crate. If the strawberries were small the rate was often stepped up. This often was the case towards the end of the season. While the public always prefers the large, fat, so-called "juicy" strawberries, Irving Weber observes, the smaller, "wized" berries had more flavor.

A somewhat more efficient method developed later when a group of church ladies at Sandusky did the processing right "at the field." The berries were immediately crushed, sugared, and placed in an ice cream cold storage truck where freezing started immediately.

In 1945, Professor H. E. Nichols, Extension Horticulturist at Iowa State College, declared: "Most of the strawberries in the State are grown in small patches. There are small commercial plantings around all our larger towns but they usually do not produce enough for local use. Until recently there was a commercial area near Sandusky and Montrose in Lee County, but the acreage there has been greatly reduced in recent years."

Strawberry picking has always involved labor problems. Writing in the January and February issues of *Iowa Horticulture* in 1908, William Langham of Cedar Rapids declared that children, visitors, and dogs were the worst nuisances in strawberry time. He recommended for all dogs a gun with a silencer covertly fired. A threatening rain, a circus, or any unusual occurrence was sufficient excuse for strawberry pickers to take a holiday.

The editor of the *Winterset Madisonian* was a real strawberry lover. On June 9, 1904, he wrote:

Some way strawberries don't taste real good until strawberry time comes. The March and April berries from the south country seem unseasonable and never appeal to us. We want the June greenery, the oriole's song in the big elm, the first green peas and new potatoes to go with the strawberry, and we want to pick them out of our own patch, heaped up milk pans full, and not have to return thanks for three gritty berries and two wads of crust and call it a shortcake.

The following week, on June 16, he wrote:

The strawberry bed is, or should be, the center of attraction for every well regulated family just now. No other fruit quite takes the place of the strawberry. It is so easily raised, has so few enemies, is so prolific and reliable and lasts such a long time. Beautiful to look at, fragrant to the smell, delicious to the taste, we pity any man who cannot or will not raise it.

A week later, the same editor wrote:

We set out a new strawberry bed the other day, a bed six rods long and one rod wide. It took just about a half day to do the work after the land was prepared. No work which we will do this year will pay so large a return.

The average American boy has been one of the natural hazards of small strawberry patches. In 1878 a West Union editor warned: "If those boys whose appetites for strawberries exceed their regard for the commandment, continue their investigations in the 'patch' of Wm. Ash, they will catch it; this according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, which changeth not."

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN