

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

A History of the 'Green Newtown Apple' in Oregon

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The logic behind setting a pioneer orchard in the Oregon Historical Society's BYBEE-HOWELL PARK was to present a record of Oregon history that had contributed a multi-million dollar industry to the state's early well-being. Many fortunes were made from the very exclusive grafted-material that Henderson Lewelling brought to the Pacific Coast.

The first problem was to decide whose orchard of Oregon was to be represented. Certainly, different elevations demanded different varieties and, since this orchard was on a territorial theme, the only answer seemed "put them all in." Thus a museum-collection of pioneer fruits was collected and set to represent all the fruits mentioned in pioneer Oregon.

To authenticate a variety became a monumental task of research. Every conceivable source of information was gone over for the words, "apple," "pear," "cherry," "orchard" or other horticultural subject.

Nursery lists, pomologists, and accounts of pioneers listed two different, distinct, types of 'Newtown' apples. Both the 'Green Newtown Pippin' and the 'Yellow Newtown Pippin' appeared in these records; yet, no one seemed to establish, permanently, the difference.

Since the 'Green Newtown Pippin' was listed in so many early fruit lists, an attempt was made to find and include the variety. When asked for scion material or information, growers would state that the only difference, if any, was due to cultural or climatic conditions.

The first clue to a difference came from the "Apples of New York" in

which S. A. Beach states that the 'Green Newtown Pippin' tree was a slow grower, of medium size, sometimes becoming large. Laterals shorter, *twisted*, spreading and drooping more than those of the 'Yellow Newtown Pippin'.

The second clue comes from the 1897-8 Biennial report of the Oregon Board of Horticulture in which Dr. J. R. Cardwell reports on "Oregon Fruits—Wild and Cultivated." Cardwell states that the "spurious 'Yellow Newtown Pippin'—since called 'Green Newtown Pippin' was brought out by mistake by Lewelling in 1847. Lewelling attempted to correct his mistake several years later in having A. J. Downing, personally, point out the 'Yellow Newtown Pippin' growing in the nursery row. But, the same mistake was made again and Oregon did not get the 'Yellow Newtown Pippin' for several years."



'Green Newtown' apple in Pioneer Orchard, Oregon Historical Society.

¹McGraw Experimental Garden, 2705 S.E. 166th Street, Portland, Oregon 97236.

Final Confirmation is graphically stated by an early day Oregon pomologist and writer, David Newsom. Newsom writes to the *Oregon Statesman*, Feb. 27, 1858 regarding fruit varieties for Oregon: "This variety much resembles the 'Yellow Newtown Pippin' in its wood and fruit. The 'Green Newtown Pippin' succeeds well, root-grafted on large stocks—when it becomes profitable and sure. In soils deficient in lime or poor in quality, or if poorly cultivated, this fruit is deficient. The limbs of this variety may be known by a *peculiar short crook*."

Further inquiries netted no 'Green Newtown Pippin' as such until a century-old 'Newtown' was noticed grow-

ing in the Bybee-Howell Park. Very noticeable were the short, crooked limbs that covered the entire tree. At last, the 'Green Newtown Pippin' had been found, and within my park. There are other old trees in this same park, one of them being the 'Yellow Newtown Pippin' without the short crooked limbs.

It is the author's opinion that the 'Green Newtown Pippin' was accidentally or purposely "rogued" out many years ago and that the difference was never established for the enlightenment of the trade. It is ironic that sometimes the 'Green Newtown' apple is advertised on the grocery shelf . . . if only they knew the difference.

Request for Wilder Medal Nominees

Once again, we ask members of the American Pomological Society to submit nominees for the Wilder Silver Medal to the Wilder Awards Committee. As last year, the Committee will screen the nominees, after which some of you will be approached to prepare resumes for the selected candidates.

The Wilder Medal has been one of the world's most highly prized pomological awards since it was established in 1873. It is conferred on meritorious fruit varieties, and individuals or organizations who have rendered outstanding service to pomology, especially work related to fruit variety improvement.

Significant contributions to the science and practice of pomology other than fruit breeding are also considered. Such contributions may relate to any important area of fruit production such as rootstock development and evaluation, anatomical or morphological studies, or unusually noteworthy publications in any of the above subject areas.

Last year's recipient was Robert Carlson of Michigan State University. For the names of recipients between 1953 and 1973, see *Fruit Varieties Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 2, April 1974.

The Wilder Awards Committee has also been asked, this year, to come forward with a strong candidate for the National Medal of Science of the National Science Foundation for outstanding contributions to knowledge in the physical, biological, mathematical, or engineering sciences. Any previous recipients of the Wilder Medal could, of course, be eligible candidates. Your recommendations would be welcomed by the Committee as soon as possible.

Whether your nominations are for the Wilder Medal or the National Medal of Science, we would appreciate a brief, strong statement concerning your nominees.

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