

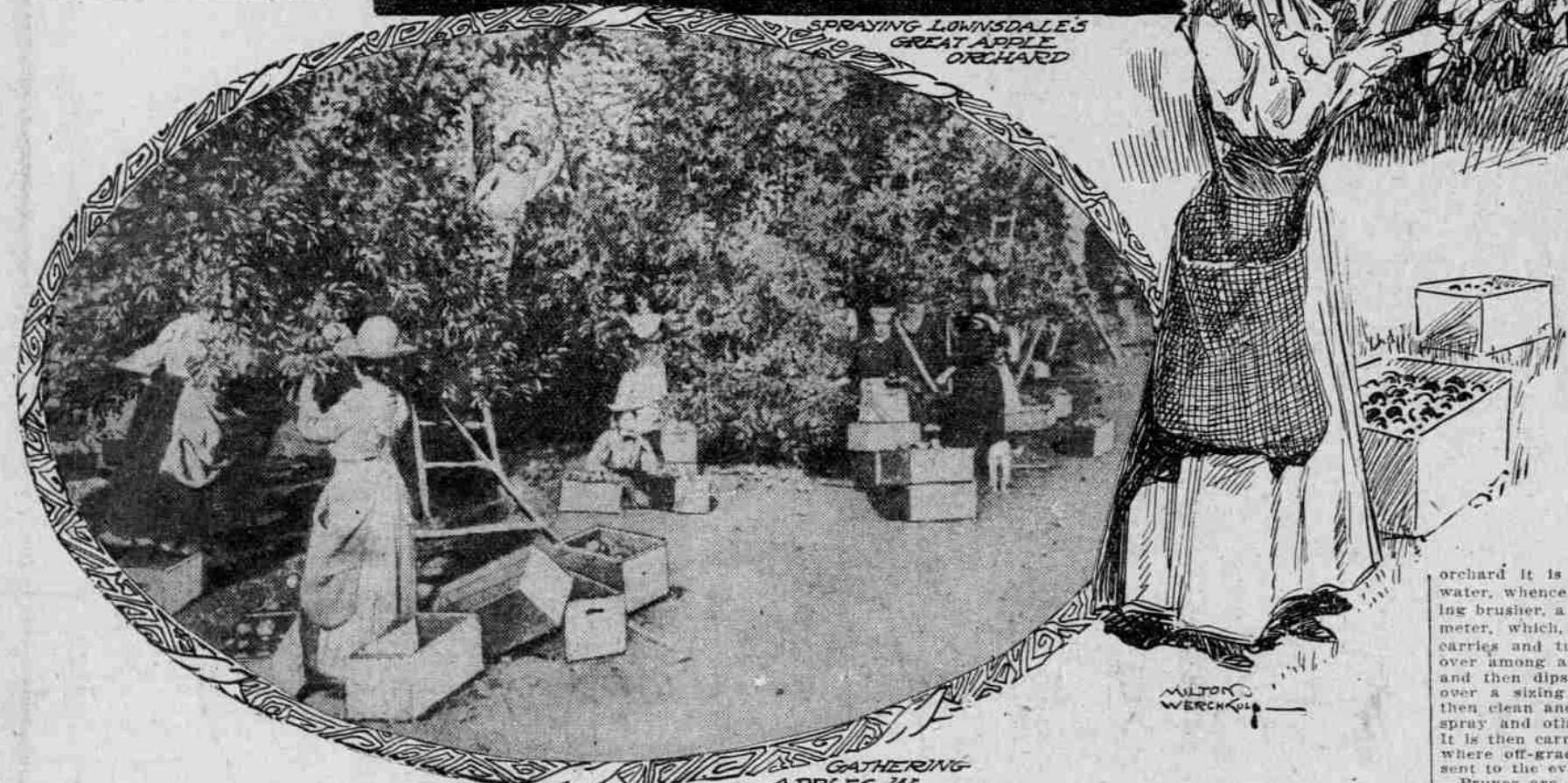
WILLAMETTE VALLEY. THE ORIGINAL HOME OF THE BIG RED APPLE

This Section of Oregon is Fast Regaining the Reputation It Enjoyed in Early Days

By J. E. Cooper.

THE Willamette Valley has again come into her own as a producer of apples of the highest quality. In pioneer days this beautiful valley was known as "the land of big red apples," because of the luscious quality and the exquisite form and color of its fruit. But the great development of the fruit industry in California and the lack of transportation to more distant centers robbed the valley of its markets. Then the interests of the farmers became so varied that these old orchards were neglected, forgotten and soon passed into a ghostly semblance of their primal glory. But with ample transportation facilities, the opening of new markets and the neglect of trees in the apple-growing sections of the Eastern and Middle States, new commercial orchards have been planted in many localities throughout the valley. The recent apple fair held in Portland has demonstrated conclusively that apples of the very highest grade are raised in the valley, and growers have become infused with new vigor and enthusiasm for their work. A new interest is lent to the planting of trees, and several thousand acres will be planted in the valley this winter. Many residents of other apple-growing sections are flocking into the valley, attracted by the magnificent showing of fruit made at the November fair, and the next two years promise to be record-breakers in the planting of apple trees.

The largest commercial orchards in the valley are the Wallace orchard, in Polk County, managed by C. A. Park, and the Lownsdale orchards, in Yamhill. The



Wallace orchards are almost wholly of Spitzenbergs and are great producers of high-grade fruit. The crop of 1907 was very light, but in 1908 boxes were marketed through Hood River channels. Mr. Park expects an enormous crop on his trees this year and is making extensive preparations for handling it by up-to-date methods.

The paraphernalia of a large apple orchard, the complex operations during the summer season, the intricacy of gathering and caring for the fruit after it leaves the tree are as spectacular as in any of the large orange groves of the South. The great 238-acre orchard of M. O. Lownsdale, of Lafayette, Or., is a fine example of advanced method and system in orchard operations, and probably contains more labor-saving devices than any orchard on the Coast. This is in fact the largest individual apple orchard west of the Rocky Mountains, and to the development and carrying to maturity of this great undertaking its owner has devoted the best years of his life.

The orchard consists of Baldwin, Spitzenbergs, Yellow Newtowns and Ben

Davis—the leading commercial apples of the world. The chief characteristics of the fruit of Yamhill County, where this orchard is situated, are the great size and beauty of Baldwins, the brilliant scarlet and high flavor of Spitzenbergs, the solidity and at the same time juiciness of Yellow Newtowns and the exceptional keeping quality of all varieties.

Many innovations and improvements have been devised by Mr. Lownsdale, including new cultivators, new methods of spraying, the handling of a crop by machinery after it reaches the warehouse, new methods of storing fruit and of handling it in the warehouse, new styles of packing to present fruit in the most attractive manner to the buyer. Mr. Lownsdale is a past master in these matters and is a leader in all that pertains to the apple business. His methods are copied widely by apple-growers throughout the state.

The roussure of a crop begins in Mr. Lownsdale's orchard when five spraying machines, mounted on wagons, with their crews and attendants, are among the trees just previous to blossoming time. A

crew consists of two men spraying from a platform over the engine, seven feet from the ground, and one man following the team with a lead of hose to spray underneath the fruit, and what is missed by the overhead men. Another man with a team delivering spraying material to the tireless engine complete the crew.

Three sprayings are given during the summer in this orchard, though many sections have hitherto thought it necessary to spray six and seven times. Thinning of overloaded trees, constant cultivation and watchfulness during the summer, great care in picking fruit and in hauling to the warehouses, make it necessary to employ an army of men and women, whose handling of the several operations are intricate as well as static. All fruit is thoroughly washed and graded by specially constructed machinery before being stored. This is an innovation found in no other apple warehouse in the world. The apples are stored on ventilated trays, through which circulate draughts of air, controlled by special inventions of Mr. Lownsdale. This careful work is the secret of the keeping of

fruit by Mr. Lownsdale until apples from other orchards are off the market, enabling him to secure high prices for his output.

There is no question about the keeping quality of the Willamette Valley apple if it is properly handled. Apples in this valley are of extremely high flavor, which is due to the extraordinary amount of juice and spicy oils they secrete.

After the apples have been stored on ventilated trays, through which is a whirl of draughts, they soon begin to sweat. The draughts take care of the moisture by rapid evaporation and soon an "oil" appears on the surface of the fruit, giving it an appearance of having been dipped in varnish. This is the fruit's preservative. These spicy oils and juicy secretions (the very elements that produce delicacy of flavor), if given off while apples are stored in bulk, will tend to hasten the ripening of fruit. But if evaporation be provided for by proper methods of handling draughts these high-flavored apples will keep longer than the drier fruit of many localities.

When the fruit is brought from the

orchard it is emptied into a vat of water, whence it passes into a revolving brush, a machine six feet in diameter, which, revolving under water, carries and turns the fruit over and over among a combination of brushes and then dips it out, where it is run over a sizing machine. The fruit is then clean and free from evidences of spray and other objectionable matter. It is then carried to the sorting tables where off-grades are taken out, to be sent to the evaporator.

Prunes are sorted as to variety and put upon trays to be run into the warehouse, where they are stacked upon each other, 30 high, to await the packing season, which ordinarily commences after January 1.

McLownsdale claims to produce the highest type of Spitzenbergs grown on the Coast, which means in the world, and his fruit is well known among the commercial handlers. The apples from this orchard are taken year after year by the same customers who express great satisfaction with them and with the distinctness of their pack. A recent letter to him said: "Your magnificent fruit is packed superbly. In fact, during our 26 years of handling apples, we have never seen as fancy a pack of fruit." Mr. Lownsdale's crop was very light last season, but this season was general all over the United States and prices for fancy fruit ruled very high. Mr. Lownsdale sold his finest Spitzenbergs for \$5 and his next size for \$4 per box.

"Yet," he said recently, "the quality of fruit this year is not up to the average—apples are too large, too fat, and abnormal physical conditions of fruit are everywhere evident. It is a

mistake to say that because the crop was light it would be of high quality—give me a tree comfortably filled and normal in all conditions and I will always gather from it the finest fruit."

Mr. Lownsdale is the president of the Willamette Valley Apple-Growers' Association and has been the most potent factor in bringing the Willamette Valley to the front rank as an apple-producing section.

APPLES IN LINCOLN COUNTY

By C. B. Crossno.

AT this time the world's consumers of good apples are looking to Oregon for their supply, and thus creating a hearty rivalry between the different sections of Oregon as to which locality produces the best apples. Lincoln County does not lay claim to the banner for process to produce the best, but is proud to be recognized as part of Oregon, and its location places our county in the ranks as a producer of good, sound apples as good as the best on a commercial scale. Being situated on the western slope of the Coast Range, facing the Pacific Ocean, the codling moth and worms that are the pests of other sections are unknown in Lincoln County.

Once our people planted only small orchards for family use, there are many such orchards in Lincoln County. A number of these orchards have been bearing annually heavy crops of fine apples for over 25 years, with little or no care or cultivation. The bodies of these old trees are as smooth as the alders, with no moss or dead limbs to mar the beauty of the tree. The fruit each year is large, sound and well colored; no trace of worms or other pests—a test sufficient to prove that Lincoln County is simply immense in its possibilities.

But the idea of commercial orchards is new to our people. In 1906 a few carloads of apples were shipped. This winter 14 cars are being sent over the Corvallis & Eastern Railroad, and large quantities have been sold to con-

sumers in Portland and the Valley to people who appreciate a good thing when they see it. One man who is shipping ten cars would ship twenty were it not for the recent little panic. He brands each box of apples with his name, locality, and guarantees the fruit sound and free from worms.

Our people are coming to a glad awakening regarding the great possibilities of the country tributary to Yaquina Bay, and are planting commercial orchards and incorporating a horticultural union to work for better pruning, cultivation, packing and marketing of their apples. Our apples grow without irrigation. All varieties known in Oregon do well here, though the hill and bench lands raise the best apples. We have thousands of acres of such lands, which are still cheap and can be easily cleared.

In one three-acre orchard on Yaquina River, last season, there were packed 134 boxes of shipping apples. The owner also sold 200 bushels of apples out of the same orchard to people in the Willamette Valley who desired an apple they could eat in the dark. Yet this orchard had very little care. With what nature has done for us and with cheap land, a good harbor and a railroad, the prospects for apple-growing in this district are very bright.

S. G. Irvine, of Newport, made an exhibit of apples at the recent fruit fair at Albany, and though his exhibit was in competition with an extra fine display, it attracted much attention and had the favorable mention of various Willamette Valley newspapers.

PANORAMIC VIEW OF EXTENSIVE COMMERCIAL PEACH ORCHARDS NEAR THE DALLES, OREGON, THE COLUMBIA RIVER

