

Appleseed Foundation Acquires Browne Hall as Permanent Home

June 16, 2021. Negotiations for the future location of the Johnny Appleseed Education Center and Museum concluded happily last week when Franklin University handed the Johnny Appleseed Foundation the keys to historic Browne Hall, the Museum's home since 2018. The Foundation, which owns the museum collection, is now the owner of its home, and plans are underway for unboxing and re-displaying the collection.

Tentatively, the plan will be to re-open the Museum to the public on or near John Chapman's 247th birthday, this coming September 26.



Browne Hall in a colorized postcard from 1912, when it was the University's women's dormitory.

The purchase was made possible by this spring's fundraising campaign. That campaign, based on GoFundMe.com, is still active: Now that the Foundation owns its home, funds are needed for building repairs and upgrades, and for ongoing operating expenses. See the following article for details if you'd like to help.

When the Museum moved to Browne Hall in 2018, it shared the space with Urbana University's Miller Center for the Visual Arts. Now that the Foundation has acquired title, the Museum will be able to make use of the entire downstairs space, more than doubling its footprint. This will allow the collection to

be re-organized to better tell the story of Chapman's life, and his role in American history and folklore.



Browne Hall Reception area pre-pandemic

Fundraising Continues for Johnny Appleseed Museum

As reported here in the last issue, the Johnny Appleseed Foundation has begun a national campaign to raise funds in support of operating expenses at its Education Center and Museum in Urbana, Ohio.

First fruit of the campaign was the money with which to buy Browne Hall from Franklin University, which acquired the building, together with the Urbana University campus, in 2014.

This April, representatives from the non-profit Preservation Ohio inspected the building, and met with the Foundation to report on its condition. They found the building to be in good shape, though the roof needs repairs, and some of the mortar in the 130 year old brickwork needs attention.

Work is already under way to switch utility, security and insurance costs from Franklin University to the Foundation. The hope is that the fundraising campaign will generate sufficient interest to assure operating costs for the first year or two.

As an extra incentive, a generous donor (who wishes to remain anonymous) has offered a \$50,000 challenge, proposing to match donations up to that amount with an equal amount. If you would like to help, you can find the Foundation's GoFundMe page at <http://www.gofundme.com/f/save-the-johnny-appleseed-museum>.

The Cider Press and Farm Economy: Part One

As with wheat or corn, or any other crop planted by frontier farmers, growing the crop was only the beginning. For wheat, once harvested, there was threshing to separate the grain from the stalk, and milling to turn the grain into its usable form, flour. For corn there was shucking, scraping kernel from cob, then either drying and milling for grits, or salting and soaking for hominy.



And so it was for apples. While a few varieties were "keepers," able to

retain texture and flavor in cellar storage, apples intended for human consumption mostly required processing. Coring and slicing in rings prepared them for drying: but there was not a lot of room for hanging apple rings in the early farm cabins. Wealthier farmers built drying kilns—you can visit one today at the Johnston Farm Museum in Piqua, OH (see photo opposite)—but for most households on the Ohio frontier, making cider was the more common method of processing.

As the woodcut (left) illustrates, this was a two-stage process. First the apples were ground to a pulp (the term of art is *pomace*) in some sort of mill; then the pulp or pomace was squeezed to extract the juice in some sort of press.



Before the era of canals and railroads, getting mechanical equipment to Ohio was prohibitively expensive, and those able to manufacture it locally were rare. So even though machinery like that in the woodcut had been in use for a few hundred years, on the frontier people generally resorted to a time-tested method from ancient times, as illustrated in the painting by William Mount below.



Cider Making. William Sidney Mount (c. 1840), from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

In the background at left a man drives a horse around a circular trough, into which several bushels of apples have been poured. The horse is dragging a large stone wheel, which crushes the apples, producing the pomace. Under the shed is a large wooden tub with a copper pipe coming out the bottom. Pomace is shoveled from the trough at left to the tub in a cart (not shown). The man at right uses a long lever to press a weight down on the pomace in the tub, forcing cider out the tube and into the waiting barrel. The key

machinery uses wheel and lever, but no metal parts bigger than a nail are required.

Even as simple a setup as this was beyond what most pioneer farmers could do for themselves. Just as most farmers hauled their grain to a miller, they hauled apples to the local cider press.

In Michael Pollan's best-selling *The Botany of Desire* (Random House, 2002), he emphasizes the alcoholic consequence of cider-making, and suggests that John Chapman's work was "planting cider orchards," in an era when hard drinking was widespread. But in doing so, he misses an important distinction about frontier life.

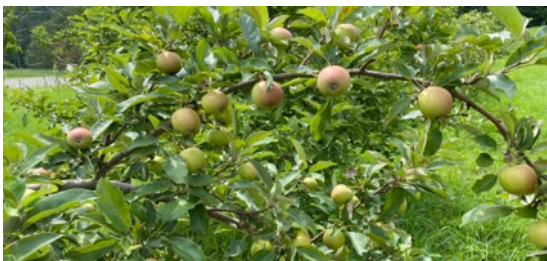
Any present-day purchaser of genuine cider (as opposed to its pasteurized cousin, apple juice) understands that even with refrigeration, cider ferments in a short time: and our frontier forebears had no refrigeration. But fermentation does not conclude with the production of alcohol, it goes on to convert the alcohol to acetic acid, or vinegar. And vinegar was of extreme value in the farm household: vinegar and salt were the two most effective tools for preserving meats and vegetables in that pre-refrigeration age.

Pollan was not completely wrong. The New Englanders who settled in Marietta, and later in the Western Reserve and the upper Muskingum valley, were cider drinkers, in a day when to drink "cider" meant to drink its alcoholic form (typically like beer, at 4 to 6%). John Adams, as president, is reported to have started each workday with a pint of the stuff. But this was at a time when drinking water was genuinely risky, and commercial dairies didn't exist. Lightly alcoholic beverages were a safe alternative.

And most early Ohioans, coming from Pennsylvania and Virginia, drank whiskey, not cider.

What Chapman provided the early settlers was a multi-use crop: apples were widely fed to the hogs early settlers raised for market; "keepers" could liven up the harsh winter diet of meats and grits; dried apples provided holiday sweetness; and vinegar, made at harvest time, could preserve greens, root vegetables, eggs and meats, and made a useful degreaser.

William Kerrigan sums it up in his *Johnny Applesseed and the American Orchard* (Johns Hopkins University, 2012): Chapman was blessing the frontier with "the democratic apple."



Teacher's Corner **The Apples are Coming!**

by Judith Maule

A few days ago I was in the apple orchard at Scott Farm in Brattleboro, Vermont. The trees looked so healthy. Each glossy green leaf was firmly attached to a twig where small green apples nestled. It was very peaceful in the orchard. I was inspired by the trees. They know just what to do. They stay focused on the work of growing apples.

An apple orchard is a perfect place to sharpen your observation skills. You can record the growth of the apples from week to week by taking photos or by drawing the changes you see in the apples as they grow to full size. Find a notebook or a camera and begin your exploration.



A Grade 3 drawing of an apple tree. Using blunt or broken crayons helps children ignore outlining

This will be the start of your personal science or art collection. The apples won't be ready to eat for a month or two, so you have the rest of the summer to draw them, photograph them and record their growth. Then if you are able to visit an apple tree or apple orchard monthly you can continue your collection throughout the year by recording the changes that take place every month.



Deep red Rome Beauty apples

Apple of the Month: Rome Beauty

Last issue we highlighted the Roxbury Russet, which holds the claim of the earliest American varietal. Now we turn to the first Ohio varietal to make its way to fame and fortune: the Rome Beauty.

The following account is summarized from a USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Project in Lawrence County, OH (2012–2013):

Apples were not long in following the Ohio Company settlers, who arrived in Marietta in 1788. Col. Israel Putnam had led the settlement: in 1795, apple scions (twigs for grafting) were sent to Marietta from the ‘Putnam Orchards’ back in Connecticut. In journal accounts, the 23 varieties were carried from New England packed in beeswax in saddlebags, and arrived in Belpre, Ohio in May 1796. The day after their arrival, trees were grafted with the scions brought from New England to Ohio. This was thought to be possibly the first time grafting had been utilized in the Northwest Territory.

It was from this orchard along the river that the Rome Beauty originated. According to Putnam family history, Israel Putnam's son A. W. Putnam had built a larger new home around 1800, "moving up" quite literally from a log cabin close to the river.

Mr. Joel Gillett, an itinerant moving his family west from New England, leased the cabin from Putnam in 1815, before planning a move to Rome Township, in Lawrence County, further down river. Before leaving in 1816, Gillett took a number of grafted apple trees and paid twenty-five cents each. One sprout, cut from a grafted Russet scion, was treated as an original seedling

and this sprout, according to the historic Putnam account, was the Rome Beauty as it is known today.

Joel Gillett and family made their way down the Ohio River and purchased approximately 100 acres in southern Rome Township, next to the river, where he built a log house. With the grafted fruit trees brought from the Putnam nursery, Joel planted an apple orchard. The sprout that was cut from the Russet scion was given to his 14 year-old son, Alanson, for planting. It was smaller than the rest, and Joel, being a good New England Federalist, is reported to have told his son, “Here’s a Democrat. You may have this one.”

A few years later, Alanson’s tree was producing such nice fruit that people began to take notice of “Gillette’s seedling,” as it was called initially. The fruit was red and juicy and tasted sweet. Horatio Nelson Gillett, a cousin of Alanson’s, was the first person to collect scions from Alanson’s tree for grafting. Other farmers also began to take scions of the tree.

The following are varieties described in the *Transactions* of the Cincinnati Horticultural Society, which we referred to at p. 304, and which we then stated we should notice again. They are supposed to be natives of the West :—

Home Beauty, called also Gillett’s seedling from its having been raised by Mr. Gillett of Lawrence Co., Ohio. Fruit, above medium size, oblong form, bright red on a yellow ground; flesh, white, subacid. The fruit holds on the tree well, and it keeps till spring. A vigorous growing tree, and prolific bearer.

Keller’s Seedling.—Originated on the farm of Mr. Ferris, Montgomery, Ohio. A small fruit, of a dull red color, defective in flavor, and only valuable for its keeping qualities.

Helen’s Favorite.—Raised by Mr. S. Widney, Troy, Ohio, and figured in the *Western Farmer and Gardener*, Vol. V. It is of medium size, roundish form, slightly depressed at the ends, with a dark red skin, approaching black, and a remarkably tender buttery and juicy flesh, very delicately flavored. It keeps till mid-winter. The description answers very well for the *Fameuse*,—perhaps it may prove that variety.

The Rome Beauty first appears—misspelled—in Hovey’s Magazine, a national monthly for horticulturists, in 1846

H.N. Gillett started a nursery and began to promote this new apple. In about 1830, a neighbor, George Walton, named the apple the “Rome Beauty” in honor of Rome Township, and the fine appearance of the fruit. After this, most of the orchards in southern Ohio contained mostly the Rome Beauty apple. The original tree lived on a sandy knoll in a corner of a field near the Ohio River until 1860, when it was undermined and washed away by high water.

So the Rome Beauty comes directly from the

popular Roxbury Russet, and it soon gave its parent some competition. Ohioans, used to the tangy russet's flavor, tended to prefer it. But as commercial apple production, made possible by the coming of the railroads, took off, the Rome Beauty came to occupy an important place in the market, as this 1859 report to the Ohio Pomological Society notes:

Among all the apples brought out from New England, or introduced here, the Putnam Russet soon became the prominent one. In 1810 or 11, whole orchards were planted of it. . . Now the Rome Beauty is most in demand. Many kinds that did well for a number of years, have become diseased or worthless, but the Russet still maintains its good name. It has never been a trait of our nurserymen to be seeking for new kinds, and hence but few were introduced after the first, till they were common in other parts of the State. The Russet they found a great, sure and constant bearer, of all good, well-matured apples, superior for eating, cooking, drying and cider, and it still maintains its character, although, abroad, the Rome Beauty is now most in demand.

—George Dana Jr. to the *Ohio Pomological Society*, 1859

Dana didn't mention that the Roxbury was that rare apple, not only an exceptional "keeper," but whose flavor actually improved as it ages. The Rome Beauty did not inherit those qualities (though it keeps better than some). Commercially, its appeal is in its medium to large size and uniform bright red skin. For the consumer, the Rome is a cooking apple, and there it excels because it keeps its shape in baking. This makes it excellent for baked apple and apple tarts or pies. You might want to try one in the recipe below:

Maple Bacon & Pecan Baked Apples

Ingredients:

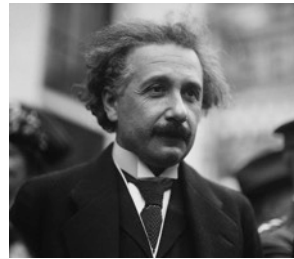
- 6 Rome Beauty apples, washed and cored
- Maple syrup (you'll use less than a half cup, but pour straight from container)
- 6 strips bacon, fried and crumbled
- 1/2 cup of chopped pecans or walnuts
- 1 teaspoon of Mrs. Dash or another salt-free seasoning (or cayenne for the adventurous)
- 6 1-inch cubes of cheddar cheese

Directions:

- Heat oven to 350°
- Slice the bottom of each apple so it sits upright, and place them in a buttered baking dish

- Mix the chopped nuts and crumbled bacon in a small bowl with a tablespoon of the bacon grease and the seasoning, then spoon mixture into each core
- Tamp down the filling gently, top off each core with syrup
- Place in heated oven for 50 minutes. Ten minutes before it is done, place a cube of cheddar atop each apple and continue baking

Next Issue: Part Two. In which Ohio becomes the center of manufacture for the combination mechanical mill and press.



Science, Art, and Religion

Albert Einstein and John Chapman are separated by a century, but each in his way was committed to a life of usefulness. This reflection of Einstein's, shared at a symposium on science and personal philosophy in 1930, would likely have appealed to Chapman's belief that the natural world opened our eyes to something beyond itself.

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe is as good as dead: his eyes are closed.

The insight into the mystery of life, coupled though it be with fear, has also given rise to religion. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty, which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms: this knowledge, this feeling is at the center of true religiousness.

—Albert Einstein, in H. G. Leach (Ed.): *Living Philosophies: A Series of Intimate Credos* (1931).



About the Johnny Appleseed Foundation

Around 1992, The Johnny Appleseed Foundation, for many years based at the Dawes Arboretum in Newark, Ohio, was re-incorporated in Urbana, Ohio in order to raise the public and private funds with which to create the first museum wholly devoted to Chapman's legacy: The Johnny Appleseed Education Center and Museum. The museum collection, originally displayed in Bailey Hall on the Urbana University campus, was relocated to the campus gateway at Browne Hall in 2018.

Urbana University's connection to John "Johnny Appleseed" Chapman went back to the middle decades of the 19th century, when Chapman—woodsman, orchardist, entrepreneur, and Swedenborgian missionary—encouraged the founding of a college to prepare young men and women to spread the "good news straight from Heaven" he found in Swedenborg's writings. Urbana College (later Urbana University) was the fruit of that encouragement, as the apple was the fruit of his orchards.

In 2014 Urbana University, then in dire financial straits, was acquired by Franklin University as a branch campus. Franklin invested roughly thirty million dollars in new or improved programs and facilities at Urbana over the next six years; but when the Covid-19 pandemic struck in the Spring of 2020, and the State of Ohio closed all college campuses, Franklin, fearing further losses, permanently closed the institution.

The Johnny Appleseed Foundation is a 501c(3) non-for-profit organization.

About the Apple Core

The Apple Core is the official newsletter of the Johnny Appleseed Society, published bimonthly in February, April, June, August, October, and December, to members of the Johnny Appleseed Society.

About the Johnny Appleseed Society

The *Johnny Appleseed Society* is a nonprofit educational organization which seeks "to preserve and promote the legacy of John 'Johnny Appleseed' Chapman (1774 - 1845) through both educational activities, and the wide dissemination of educational materials that relate John Chapman's work and values to the world in which we live."

Membership is open to all who share our purpose. Annual dues are \$25 for voting members, \$10 for student members, and \$250 for Life membership. For more information, visit:

www.appleseedsociety.net



Heirloom apples in the lower orchard at Scott Farm, near Brattleboro, VT
(<https://www.scottfarmvermont.com>)