HARVEST FEST

*Sustain me with dainties, refresh
me with apples....*

Song of Solomon 2:5

On Saturday, Oct. 5, 1991 Cornell Cooperative Extension will host a Harvest Fest at the 4-H Fair Grounds near Knowlesville. This will include a Flea Market from 9:00-5:00, a chicken Barbecue from 4:30-6:30 and a Barn Dance from 7:00-11:00 P.M.

As we now begin to shift gears from summer to fall, we recognize and observe the bounty of the fall harvest. Foremost in the fruitage of the season are of course, apples. The Harvest Fest will include exhibits and identification of various species of apples. Around the turn of the century Orleans County was one of the largest producers of apples in New York State. The vintage photo here shows Dr. Frank H. Lattin, who was our Assemblyman from 1917-1930, admiring some speciman apples being shown him by a pretty young lady at Floral Hall on the old Orleans County Fair Grounds. Frank Lattin himself, was a fruit farmer from Gaines, who also owned and propagated apple orchards in Oswego County as well.

From a Treasury of American Superstitions we find much about the apple: "An Apple a day is said to keep the doctor away, but of course we know that apples have no magic power to prevent or cure disease. However, the potassium the apple contains is a highly essential mineral in the human body. In the light of scientific discoveries, the old saying may have more than a grain of truth in it.

"Of a different sort is the superstition that green apples causes a stomachache. Opinions are divided on this question. However, predominating is the report that on the whole, there is nothing in green apples to cause such physical discomfort.

"Apples play a great role in Christmas as well as Hallowe'en festivities. If the sun shines through the limbs of the apple trees on Christmas day, it is a sign there will be a good crop of the fruit next year. Ducking for apples is still fun for young people on Hallowe'en and Thanksgiving. Most customs like these go back to pagan times and pagan ceremonies performed in honor of Pomona, a Roman goddess who presided over fruit trees.

"The apple has been used in magic of all kinds since remotest times, especially for prophesying special events, to assist in finding a husband, or to help those in love.

"The esteem in which the fruit was held anciently as attested by the story of Adam's temptation when Eve offered him an apple. Because the apple tree was represented by the ancients as the Tree of Life and Knowledge, it has given rise to countless myths, fables and legends, and it figures prominently in the folklore and superstitious beliefs of peoples and races the world over.

"The list of legendary references to apples, besides the story of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, is notable. It was the wedding gift of Zeus to his daughter, Hebe. It was born in the hand of Aphrodite, and watched by dragons in the Garden of the Hesperides. The apple figured in one of the twelve labors of Hercules. It was the prize for beauty awarded by Paris, and also known as the Apple of Dicord, leading to the Homeric Trojan War, Iduna, wife of Bragi, son of Odin, kept, in her magic basket, the apples of which the gods must eat to obtain eloquence, knowledge and perpetual youth.

"The apple was grasped at in vain by Tantalus in hell. In Atlanta's race, three apples saved Hippomenes, who married her. They comforted the love-sick maiden in the Song of Solomon. Apple trees formed the groves of the blessed Isle of Avalon, known as the 'Isle of Apples.' Walt Disney revived the fairy tale of Snow White in which the apple contains the sleeping potion, and this animated picture story has been enjoyed by millions.

The apples of the Garden of Hesperides are generally believed to have been pomegranates or oranges, but the fact remains that they are called 'golden apples' to this day, and there is no one who can prove that they were not apples. It was the fruit of the gods!"