

APPLE HARVEST

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Bethinking of Olde Orleans

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Our picture from a glass plate negative was taken around 1903, showing apple pickers in a local orchard. This goes back to the time when almost every farm had a few acres of land devoted to apple orchards.

The first apple orchard in Orleans County was planted by Matthew Dunham Jr., in 1809 near Kuckville, Town of Carlton.

In our orchard scene we not only see pickers, but also men who would have been sorting the fruit. At the time apples were shipped in barrels made by local coopers. The 1903 Orleans County Directory lists 32 barrel manufacturers or coopers.

These barrels were faced on the top with the best appearing apples so that when opened up on destination the fruit gave an attractive appearance.

The man to the far right is using a barrel press to pop the head into the barrel for closure and then shipment. Horse-drawn wagons in the background are loaded with barrels ready to be drawn to a local railway depot.

The man on the ladder is wearing an apple picking bag for gathering the fruit. Once the bag was full it was dumped into the sorting rack in the middle of the photo. Naturally, the best and biggest apples were sorted for facing the top of each barrel.

Dwarf variety trees have taken the place of the tall growing apple trees seen here. Hence the need for 30-foot-high ladders is no longer needed.



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