

Mango Growing Around Early Miami *

By HAROLD W. DORN

My brother, Robert, and I had our introduction to Miami on a bright October day in 1910. We had come South with farming on our minds. The Florida East Coast station was yellow then as now, but the frame houses and the rock streets were white, the coconuts in Royal Palm Park were green and brown, and Biscayne Bay was a heavenly blue. The city boasted 5000 souls and, with a strong premonition of its destiny, called itself the Magic City.

It had then, more than now, an anxious interest in its tourists. But when the railroad cancelled its faster winter trains, sometime after March first, the population, both city and rural, returned to its more durable interests in agriculture and real estate. Spring, to a greater degree than winter, was the time when its tomato crops were matured, picked and marketed. The fields stretched along the country roads, whether paved or mere winding trails, from the large Little River and Arch Creek sections on the north down west of Miami to Larkins (now South Miami), and even Perrine, on the south. Another section was starting in the glades around the new settlement at Homestead. Dade County was even then, and has continued to be, the largest tomato growing section in Florida.

This county in the early century had an almost equal interest in fruit growing. Primarily the plantings were in grapefruit groves, with their principal area west and south of Miami and bordering the Coconut Grove area. The Peacock brothers, the Merricks, the Hicksons and many more were taking advantage of the favorable prices for early grapefruit, in which Dade County so far had almost a monopoly. At a guess, 1910 saw an important production from some 800 to 1000 acres, ranging from a few scattering young groves in the Redland area up to the Bryan groves in Dania and Fort Lauderdale. Broward County had not yet been carved out of Dade. At no time has orange growing occupied an important place here.

Along with the citrus family, Robert and I, in our first exploring, found a scattering of two other families of trees, avocados and mangoes. By Novem-

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ber any mango fruit was long gone and it was almost impossible to find a late avocado. But trees of both were scattered here and there through the young city and around nearly all the homesteads, north, west and southwest. Gradually we pieced together the story of these two tropical trees, confined by their tender nature to this section relatively free from winter frost.

Even then there were a few commercial grove plantings of avocados in budded varieties, though there were far more seedlings, ranging from a couple of trees to several acres. Mango growing was confined to scattered trees, mostly seedlings, except for several small blocks of budded trees. The reason for this looks much plainer now than then, when mango growing, as an industry, was in its earliest stage. Today the grower finds a bewildering bill of fare of mango varieties for his planting. In 1910 and 1911, he probably planted the seed of the fruit some neighbor had given him and shortly produced the identical thing in one of the three common seedling varieties, the Turpentine, the Red Elevens or possibly the Peach. All were small and certainly not distinguished looking fruit. All had an attractive flavor to the mango fancier, but were filled with fibre which was firmly attached to the large seed. Definitely they were no basis for commercial culture and sale, though a few did find their way, packed in hampers or tomato crates, to the few cities in the rest of Florida large enough to have a trade in fruit.

I can still recall these seedlings poured out in the old fashioned display window of the grocery store of E. N. Brady at the southwest corner of present Flagler Street and Miami Avenue, then as now, the center of Miami. They made their presence known by their aroma as one passed inside the swinging screen doors, brightening up the dark interior with their yellow shades, with some pink on the turpentine and even a little red on the Red Elevens, where the black spots did not cover it.

The progressive mango fan, even then, had a little better choice than that. It was possible to buy nursery stock in several budded varieties if one could find where. The most famous of these was the Mulgoba, with a more distinguished history than the small random overflow from the West Indies which Miamians knew best. Its introduction from its original home in the foothills of India was the first important step in a modern mango industry for Florida. This had happened unnoticed years before. In 1889 Professor Elbridge Gale and the United States Department of Agriculture had collaborated, with an assist from a favoring Providence, in bringing three small live trees half way around the world by ship. Undoubtedly they were in-arched stock, the cumbersome method by which superior mango varieties

were then propagated. Professor G. Marshall Woodrow, formerly Professor of Botany at the College of Science, Poona, India, (near Bombay) said in his booklet, *The Mango*, published in 1904, "Plants of the Mulgoba variety were sent to Florida by the writer in 1889, and have given much satisfaction".

Travelers agree that mango trees dot the landscape of India, many several hundred years old, with the native rulers propagating those most desirable in their gardens. The Indian mango, unlike the scrub West Indians, is monoembryonic and does not come true from seed. There had been a selection for quality going on in India for centuries, both by natives and the English, from which our Department of Agriculture reaped the benefit, as did we.

These trees were planted by Professor Gale near West Palm Beach, which has had an honorable share in the development of this tropical fruit. The freeze of 1895 radically changed the horticultural geography of Florida, as did the later ones of 1899-1900. Even the comparative safety of West Palm Beach was not enough and two of the trees died. However one Mulgoba was left and in 1898 it produced a good crop of fruit. From so slender and precarious a beginning has come an industry, but slowly and with many other chapters.

This fruit was evidently a tremendous advance over the small seedlings. Even today, after nearly sixty years, the Mulgoba has no superior in basic quality. It has been the most distinguished of all imports from India. Practically without fibre, its smooth flesh has a delightful, mild but piquant flavor. Many of its descendants excel it in size and outward color, though its fruit hanging outside the trees has a large patch of distinctive scarlet. Its great trouble has been its failure to bear fruit regularly. The original trees in India are reported to be at an elevation of some 3000 to 4000 feet, quite different from this new home at sea level. More than one fruit tree has been thrown completely out of stride by a great change in surroundings (or ecology, if one prefers), by differences in altitude, temperature and moisture. Fortunately the climate of Florida corresponds, though not too closely, to the dry winters and wet summers of the mango's native home.

Offhand, I would think Mulgobas of the lower East Coast have produced fifteen or more commercial crops in the past forty-five years. We have had one tree in our old home grove which seems to have done a little better than that, even though only a dozen or two fruit may result. The trees seem to do best after as cold a winter as does not actually frost the terminal wood, perhaps confirming their origin in a more chilly altitude. In the warmest winters,

they may not even bloom. It must be said here in extenuation, that no variety of mango in Florida has produced forty-five crops in forty-five years. Not even the persistent seedlings can withstand freezing weather, nor can they set a crop with frequent rains during blooming period. There must have been about ten years in forty-five when frost or rain has prevented a mango crop, more often in the first thirty years than the past fifteen. The last severe cold in south Florida was in January, 1940; it appears that our winters have become a little milder. Yet one raises Mulgobas for love, not for money.

Other selection of varieties was decidedly limited. It was possible, even then, to buy trees of the Paheri and Bennett Alphonse. George Cellon listed the first in his catalog and he had a little private stock of the second. Both were original imports of the new Bureau of Plant Introduction of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. This is where Dr. David Fairchild enters the picture. He had been placed in charge of mango introduction and from 1901 on had sent in some eighty selected Indian varieties to the Miami Garden. Paheri and Bennett proved to be two of the best.

The full name of the latter is Douglas Bennett's Golden Alphonse. Bennett was another of those far-ranging Englishmen in India, who had helped to tidy up and catalogue the fruit trees of that sub-continent. He had found a number of Alphonse varieties, including the "white Alphonse" and others. The Bennett was, (and is, for there are still a few trees around), hardly larger than the old seedlings. However, its quality is outstanding. Without fibre, it has a fragrance all its own, and its smooth flesh has a highly distinctive flavor. Even its skin, with its olive green tinge and pale yellow color when ripe, is different. It has always seemed to me as marked off from all the other Indian varieties which have fruited here.

Over on the other side of Florida, the Reasoner brothers had even then made some direct importations of their own from India. Due to lack of roads until the late twenties, they seemed as far from Miami as Alabama is today. It was not until 1928 that I finally visited their nursery on a country road southeast of Bradenton, where I saw their importations from perhaps thirty years earlier. Unfortunately none had proved to be outstanding by Florida standards, nor had most fruited freely in their new home. Their large Gola and Langra Benarsi have been fruited on the lower East Coast, in fact we had a few to pack this year. A few enthusiasts still keep the old varieties alive. But the experience of the Reasoners, as well as the Bureau of Plant Introduction, has shown how difficult it was to find mango trees at any

Indian cross-roads that will conform to the exacting demands of tree culture and successful modern fruit marketing in the United States.

There was another mango variety to be obtained in Dade County, the Cecil. Out in the country, on the old Orange Glade Road, then 20th Street in the city, and now 8th Street or the Tamiami Trail, where the present 17th Avenue crosses it, was the home and original citrus grove of the Hickson brothers. Back from their white house on the corner stood this tree, already large. There Robert and I saw for the first time the scaffolding and small wooden tree boxes needed in the inarching practice. Then and for some years later, there was only one nurseryman who could bud the difficult mango in the general manner of citrus propagation, George Cellon, of whom more later.

The Cecil was named for the younger Hickson brother. It is, of course, the same as the Manila of the countries below us, a yellow fruit of rather small size, long and narrow, with a long seed and little fibre. It has a tart flavor, which some still prefer, in this day of sweet mangoes. Undoubtedly it belongs to the other great family of mangoes, the Indo-Chinese or Saigon, many of which, but not all, come true to variety from seed.

In the late spring and summer of 1911, when our tomato farming was finished, Robert and I had the opportunity to investigate the local mango situation. On our motorcycle, we two visited and interviewed nearly everyone we could hear about who had an interest in both mangoes and avocados. It was soon plain that two men could qualify as authorities on these tropical fruits, Edward Simmonds and George B. Cellon.

Edward Simmonds was in charge of the old Brickell Avenue Plant Introduction Garden, a gift or loan from some of the Brickell family. It was on the west side of Brickell Avenue a few blocks south of the Miami River, reached from town by the Avenue D or Miami Avenue bridge. Simmonds and his wife were English, from London. He, as a practical gardener of great skill, and a product of the famous Kew Gardens, was also an executive with considerable imagination. The function of this small section of the United States as host to the immense plant variety of the far-ranging tropical world, permanently excited him. Not only could he make these frail travelers from the tropics grow and flourish, but he had a vast enthusiasm for their possibilities.

His assistant was Charles Steffani, since then for many years Agricultural Agent for Dade County. His superior in this project, both so practical and so idealistic, was Dr. David Fairchild, head of the Bureau of Plant Introduc-

tion, but Fairchild was traveling over the tropical world, in India and elsewhere. In all our random visits to the Garden in those early years, I think we met him in person only once, before he made his permanent home here, in the late twenties. It was a good team; Fairchild selected and shipped these tropical plant possibilities and Simmonds took care of them on arrival and did his best to make them flourish. Far from all of these immigrants succeeded in their new home; that was recognized as one of the unavoidable hazards of this planned migration.

Edward Simmonds was never too busy to show his large and flourishing plant family to visitors. Something must be done with all these silent boarders, and interest aroused among those who would spend their own time and money in expanding their culture. The Department of Agriculture had a very practical objective, to introduce a sufficient volume of commercial plants and trees to assure that, after a period of trial and error, they would contribute not only to a greater variety of food and other products for Americans, but also add to the wealth of the American producing sections. There are other interesting stories among their importations, probably the greatest in drought or disease resistant grains. Lower Florida, however, was fortunate in that the products of so great an area of the tropical world were funnelled into a small section. That section, it must be said, was not truly tropical, but the nearest to it available on the U. S. mainland. Frosts descended upon us, occasionally severe, and these new plants all had that gauntlet to run, before their value to us was proved.

Simmonds was a quiet man with a friendly smile and a rollicking eye, which took in everything. He and his charming wife lived in a frame house on Brickell Avenue in the northeast corner of the Garden. He was never to be found there except at meal time. Somewhere out in the small maze of slat-houses and planting bins, he and his assistants labored silently, with an air of secret and urgent enterprise. There we would find him, with a battered old felt hat atop his graying hair, planning some new move in his campaigns. What was new? Oh, yes, he would say, here is something I want to show you, and away we would go. New plants had arrived and were or were not doing well, some tree was doing famously, here was a new fruit. The Garden was old enough so that the present showing in some items was impressive, but not so old that it had become routine. Simmonds and Steffani and the station itself, even in that quiet setting, seemed to be in a perpetual excitement, at least to anyone interested in horticulture.

In that summer of 1911, we saw for the first time the fruit of some of the Bureau's mango introductions, and on the original trees, or at most one

remove. That Sundersha tree near the house was large, with an impressive crop of the enormous fruit. Simmonds shook his head a little. With all the show, it wasn't a good mango. It proved later to be a somewhat better parent than a fruit in its own right. The Amini was loaded, good color, but small. I believe he had the Paheri in bearing, too, not showy, but he was enthusiastic about its eating quality. Then there were other mango trees, large enough to bear, but with no fruit. Showing the label and giving it an extra pat, he would tell us when the tree had been imported and from where and what the fruit should be like. Some trees were small and if they did not bear this year, probably they would next.

He was engaged in work on avocados, too. As I recall, he had a good sized Pollock tree, and either then or soon, his seedling of the Pollock, which was named after him. This Simmonds he was watching carefully and in it he felt surer every year that the growers could avoid the tendency of the Pollock to fail to bear in some years. The big importation of Central American avocados was still a good many years ahead.

Two things were much on his mind. One was the new Haden mango. We had heard of it before, but here was first hand information. Its fame had in a way already preceded it. In the previous summer it had borne an excellent crop on the estate of Captain Haden at Coconut Grove.

Captain John J. Haden, of the Eighth U. S. Infantry, in 1896 had been stationed at Fort D. A. Russell in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Eye trouble forced his retirement. While planning to move somewhere in the southeastern states, he happened to note an article in *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, describing the new Flagler railroad that had just been completed into Miami. A subscription to the new and lively *Miami Metropolis* sharpened his curiosity, so in the early fall he came to Florida, with his wife, Florence.

After traveling around central Florida for a time by wagon, they arrived in Miami in November, 1896. He was shown the still older Coconut Grove section by two pioneer real estate men, Fred Morse and E. A. Waddell. The first time he took Mrs. Haden there, they went from Miami to Coconut Grove by boat and walked back by the old hammock road. They soon bought a thirteen acre tract overlooking the Bay, about a mile south of the old Peacock Inn, and built their home there.

From the start, the Captain was interested in tropical plants and fruits and collected all he could find, especially mangoes. When the original Mulgoba tree in Palm Beach County produced its notable crop in 1898, he had

gone to see it. He brought home a couple of dozen fruit and soon planted the seed in grove formation southeast of his house. This was east of the extension of Douglas Road south from the old Coconut Grove road, now known as Ingraham Highway. Mrs. Haden later sold that part of the property to Hugh Matheson. Most unfortunately, Captain Haden died in 1903 and never saw the full result of his experimental planting. Mrs. Haden continued to live on the old place for many years, until she died recently, a gracious lady who was always grateful for any praise of her husband's fruit.

The block of trees bore there for many years. On all I have seen, the other fruit was smaller, though most had at least some color. Only one tree had this large, brilliant red and yellow fruit. In the summer of 1910 it produced a heavy crop, which had deeply impressed the local horticulturalists. These are the important dates for the mango in Florida, 1898 and 1910.

Nature works slowly and with the mango at least, makes her own crosses. Every effort for man-made crosses of this fruit by artificial pollination has failed, right up to today. Because of this, the other parent of the Haden mango is unknown, but the evidence points strongly to the old seedling turpentine variety rather than the Red Eleven, the only two possible sources. It is notable that the fruit is larger than both its parents together and its color higher than their combined color. The early season, the thick, shiny skin, and the seed fibre evidently come from the turpentine. The shape and the flavor are evidently a combination.

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the Haden mango to the industry that was starting to develop. It was the first break-through into notable size and color, with acceptable quality. Even today, after direct competition with a seemingly endless array of newer varieties, Haden fruit runs more heavily than most to the sizes which the various commercial outlets prefer,—not including its "dwarfs", of course. Its clear, bright colors dominate the assortments of other fruits in the grocers' bins. Some of its blood is in many of its present competitors.

The Haden also represents the hybrid strain, which is important to us in domesticating foreign fruits. The Indian imports, with a different background, at least in altitude where found, crossed with the already adapted sea-level relatives, usually produce trees better suited to our conditions, and more prolific. Simmonds was a strong advocate of this crossing. It has proved an especially valuable advance in our fall-bearing avocados. The entire Booth series of hybrids is the result of a natural crossing of Guatemalan imports with the local West Indian type.

Edward Simmonds had secured some quantity of budwood from Mrs. Haden the previous summer, part of which he had turned over to Cellon, the nurseryman. He himself had some growing buds in his older trees, but of course had nothing for sale.

Simmonds other enthusiasm was for the Saigon mango. This, also known as the Chinese or Indo-Chinese type, is the other great family of the mango. Its native home was in Indo-China, the Philippines and other tropical mainland and islands of that vast area. He had received a barrel of seed from the Bureau some nine years before, shipped from the port of Saigon. The resulting trees were his especial pride in those days. He admired their strong growth, and their long, glossy, dark green leaves. This indicated, he was sure, a better adaptation to our conditions than the Indian type, which at times, in the rocky upper end of the Garden, could look a little stunted and its leaves rather shabby. He had some fruit to show, but we noticed that even then not all his trees were bearing. These Saigons were the typical long yellow fruit, not highly differentiated, without fibre and with only occasionally a touch of pink. They mostly come true from seed.

The necessity of budding any Indian variety, to give the grower any assurance of uniformity of product, had been a limiting factor so far, as budding, even inarching, had proved decidedly difficult. The prospect of planting a grove from seed looked easy and cheap. I have often wondered what would have happened if the Haden had *not* come along just at that time. Dade County might have started off the same way it had on avocados, with seedling groves of long yellow and green mangoes, and lost another ten years. We would have been about even with Cuba, the other West Indies and Mexico, whose better fruit is mostly the same type.

It became evident that we *had* to visit George B. Cellon, as he seemed to be the key to any actual planting of mangoes. Luckily he wasn't far away. To reach his nursery our motorcycle took us up the then Avenue B, now Second Avenue Northeast, from down-town Miami to Buena Vista, now at 36th Street. This was then the only road north from Miami. Buena Vista was a separate suburb and on the way there one could see Biscayne Bay off to the east through the pine trees. At Buena Vista we turned west on the Allapattah Road (36th St.), which led out to the farming section there. Three quarters of a mile west, Cellon owned some thirty or forty acres of land on the south side. This was planted to oranges on the road frontage, behind the mortared native rock wall that surrounded his whole domain. We turned off on a private road, later to become Seventh Avenue, Northwest.

Down this was his house, a two story cement block building. Perhaps it was a fragment of France in this new country, for it looked like some rural villas there. The stone of the house was "rusticated" in the European manner, and the front had a two story portico. The wall in front was curved into the driveways that led around the house, and marked off by pillars with a jaunty cement capping. Back of the house lay that mysterious and mostly secret area of his slat houses, where he was then and later to perform those miracles of tree production.

George Cellon was a descendent of a French family that had emigrated to South Carolina long before. He himself had been born in north Florida. In Gainesville, Florida, he and his brother had operated the East Florida Nursery through the later part of the 19th century. That "East Florida" is interesting. Cellon himself went back to the period when the distinction was not yet between North and South Florida in the popular mind. There hardly was a South Florida to be reckoned with; one lived in either East or West Florida.

The terrible freeze of 1895 had badly damaged his nursery in Gainesville. He, like Flagler and many others, heard reports of that far southerly section of Florida, where coconut palms grew wild and the orange trees had not been damaged. When Flagler extended his railroad to Miami, and another freeze followed, George Cellon had moved here. His nursery catalogues proudly stated "Established 1901". He had immediately planted a small grove and started his new nursery. He had done it all alone and had never changed his location.

Robert and I first met him on that hot summer morning, posting his ledger in his office in the northwest corner, ground floor of that timeless house. He was a slight dark man, never robust, dressed in his working clothes, like everyone else. He could dress up to go to bank or on a trip with the best of them in those days, when almost no one but Everest George Sewell really dressed up in the modern manner. I never realized until later how thoroughly French he was, intelligent, canny, cautious, earthy, direct and ruthless in judgment of people, with a profound practical sense of what could and what could not be done. Yet, for a practical man, he lived a life of "calculated risk" in this new country. The orange grove had been planted as a hedge of caution, but launching a nursery business devoted to avocados and mangoes among the few thousand souls from Palm Beach south at the turn of the century was pure audacity. He had seen from the start that the climate gave the section its unique advantage in tropical fruits, while half of Florida could still grow citrus.

That judgment, which was to be vindicated ever since, he explained to us that morning. He took us out into the nursery, where the more tender plants stood in their rows of small wooden boxes under the half shade of lattice, with the older trees out in the sun to harden. He went over the limited varieties with us, the best which that period and an intelligent search afforded. He had the Pollock and Trapp avocados, both West Indians, of course, and both local products. The Pollock had been found in a yard on the north side of Miami, north of old First Avenue and south of the original cemetery that bordered the west side of Avenue B. The Trapp tree had originated beside the home of C. L. Trapp and Harlan Trapp on the small bluff overlooking Biscayne Bay, opposite Dinner Key. In those days the Trapp fruit was not picked before September and October and often held into November, even December.

In mangoes, he had trees of the Mulgoba, Paheri and Bennett Alphonse for sale. The Mulgoba had been his particular pride. His current catalog had a plate duly trade marked, showing the fruit in the primitive printing colors of the time. He had the best nurseryman's instinctive grasp of a good commercial fruit. The common seedling mangoes were beneath notice, but the Mulgoba could be halved and eaten with a spoon, as the plate showed. He also bought, shipped and sold both mangoes and avocados, continuing this for some years. When we called on him again a little later, he gave us a Mulgoba fruit, I think our first.

Of course, Cellon knew all about the Haden mango. It should supersede the Mulgoba to a great extent but it still had to be proved in commercial planting. He was right then engaged in converting a few sticks of budwood into the first thousand of the many thousand nursery trees he was to produce, a feat of horticultural magic for which he was uniquely equipped. He finally did this in just under two and a half years. But no details now, please. This was going on in a part of the enclosure which no one except him and his men ever saw. Others tried to bud the mango, but Cellon and Del Drawdy, his assistant, actually did it.

On that first visit we also met Mrs. Cellon. She was the Lula of the Lula avocado, which is another story. Like some daguerreotype out of an old album, she fitted the shadows of the timeless house, quiet, and shyly smiling. They had no children.

We were to see a great deal more of George Cellon. In the next dozen years, we were to buy some thousands of small trees from him, both avocado

and mango. I recall taking the mule and wagon from our location on present Sunset Road and driving up to the nursery for more than one load of trees in their shingle boxes. With a few errands in town, it took a full day, there and back. I would think that the late Tom Pancoast of the Collins grove at the Beach and Dorn Brothers could have given as good a recommendation as anyone on the quality of his trees and their ability to grow and produce freely under reasonable care. Cellon had an immense, and sometimes vocal, pride in his own integrity, with which I could never differ. I can see him, under a mango tree, clipping off a corner of his plug of tobacco with his budding knife, and shaking the knife at me. "Harold," he would say, "you and Robert plant these trees yourselves, plant them high and keep them watered as I tell you, and they will grow. They are racehorses." That last word was emphasized by a final shake of the knife, with all the pride of their creator. And they were racehorses.

On the south side of Sunset Road, and the east side of 69th Avenue, if it were carried through as a public road, is a row of mango trees,—or what is left of it, after the perils of wood fires that were to plague the county for thirty years. The first of these are Mulgobas, the south part the first Haden trees that we bought from Cellon, planted in November, 1912. They are some of the first Haden trees ever put out for commercial planting in this or any other county. They passed from our care, when the grove was sold after the 1925 boom. I chanced on George Cellon on the street in Miami during that land boom. He shook his head sadly. No one was buying trees any more (neither were we!). Everybody wanted just to buy and sell land and horticulture was temporarily forgotten.

This advocacy of planting tropical trees for a tropical country impressed Robert and myself from the start. Undoubtedly Simmonds and Cellon were right. We had already picked out some land west of present South Miami and were told by a number of growers, even then, that this should be one of the best locations for both avocados and mangoes in the County. It had been ten years since Florida had experienced a bad freeze and the main citrus section in central Florida was reported to be pushing south rapidly along the Ridge and elsewhere.

Yet the larger grapefruit growers of the county mostly considered avocados and mangoes beneath them. Or at least they were too experimental, with very limited demand. None of the Peacocks, the Hicksons, the Potters, the Davis brothers, with several groves in charge, the Friendly Groves under Mr. Jones, or Charlie LeJeune or Dick Rice, branched out into avocado grow-

ing. The Hickson brothers and Ed Davis were interested in the mango, but on a small scale. George Merrick, who was coming up with a rush, did most of his expanding in grapefruit acreage after 1910, and became the largest owner-shipper of citrus in the county, before he turned to subdividing land. All these men rode with the grapefruit market into its decline. Other sections of the state increasingly undermined Dade County's advantage, even in the early season, and the land boom in 1925, plus the hurricane in 1926, practically finished the entire citrus section around Miami. The Redland area continued, but with increasing difficulty.

So the planting of avocado groves, and mangoes, too, was practically all in the hands of new interests. In the period between 1910 and 1920, the largest single block on the mainland was the Bliss grove, running from present northeast Second Avenue east to the Bay from about present 40th to 50th Street. It comprised about 40 acres, and was later sold to James Deering. Still later Biscayne Boulevard was pushed through it and it has now disappeared in the vast increase of urban home building. So has the large grove, planted by the Collins family on Miami Beach, west of Indian Creek and north of Dade Boulevard, once the largest single producing avocado grove in the county, which meant in the United States. Both these groves had a bordering row of mangoes around them. The Trapp was the principal avocado variety, because it would outlast the summer period of Cuban imports. The avocado was far better known than the mango in the North, mostly because of the Cuban fruit. Yet the two fruits were usually mentioned together and their history is closely intertwined.

The man who, aside from Cellon himself, first plunged into a main planting of mangoes was W. E. March. He owned the Halcyon Hotel, Miami's especial pride, next only to Flagler's Royal Palm. He also owned and farmed the old Frohock tract of glade land north of Snapper Creek and west of the railroad. In the course of our first farming, adjoining his large tomato field, we had met him and learned of his mango planting. This consisted of Mulgobas, with I think a few Paheris, and was located on the old Cutler Road, now occupied by the Fairchild Garden. To reach it, we continued along the Bay road several miles below the W. A. Larkins home and dairy, at the east end of present Sunset Road. It had two long rows of very large Mulgoba trees along the road, with smaller trees behind them. March either shipped his own fruit or George Cellon bought it from him. It was not until some years later, when March sold the grove to Snowden, the oil man, that we bought a couple of crops of the fruit.

The frontispiece of Cellon's 1912 nursery catalog was an enlargement of a photograph, in colors, with some artistic license, showing a large well-fruited Mulgoba tree in the foreground with smaller Mulgoba trees filling in the rear. Under the tree are George, in his Sunday best, and W. E. March, also in coat, tie and hat, plus four visitors from India. These young men, one with turban and one with fez, are labeled The Hindoos and, as I recall, were visitors from an Indian agricultural college, evidently interested in what was happening to their mango in this strange, rocky country. In the lower left corner is inserted the Cellon trade-mark, two halves of the Mulgoba in red and yellow, on a small plate, with a spoon under the loose seed. I must confess I regard the picture with an affection beyond that justified by its artistic merit.

Another factor in the nursery business in tropical fruits, not much later, was William J. Krome. He had been engineer for the extension of the Florida East Coast Railway to Key West, making a brilliant solution of the problem of a dependable road-bed between the Keys. His avocation was the raising of avocados and mangoes on his grove a mile and a half north of Homestead. Later, he started a nursery at the same location. His avocations alone would have been full time work for anyone else. When the county road was put through to Homestead, it gave the new town much readier access to the outside world, and we traveled down to see him and Mrs. Krome occasionally. Later we bought several blocks of avocado trees from him, which did well.

I recall visiting him one Saturday afternoon about 1920 at his small office and shed in the grove at the northeast corner of present Krome and Avocado roads. He had been keeping records of production from his Trapp avocados from some years, as an extra-extra chore. Even then the Trapp was considered to be a tree given to good crops in alternate years. A great part of this was caused by holding the fruit to the latest possible dates. However, he told me that he had just found that his trees with the most pronounced alternate year tendency had in the previous six years borne a higher total of fruit than those that had borne every year. The willing workers carried a crop until they were exhausted, and after a rest, went at it again. Humans are like that, too. Krome himself, in a way, was like the willing workers, as I thought later. A slender, taut, withdrawn man, he had no mercy on himself and died much too young of a failing heart, and perhaps a similar exhaustion. The last time I saw him, Francis Dolan and I were calling on him about our fight to secure a duty on foreign avocados and we needed his

counsel. He was propped up in bed, under doctor's orders, with a mind as clear and incisive as ever. Only the body had failed him.

He ranged around in the expanding world of varieties in both fruits, and with Cellon, was a pioneer on the new California and Guatamalan avocados. I recall buying a Cambodiana and a Totafari mango from him from my home place, but the Haden was still king. However it did not do as well in the Redland district as it did around Miami. The best nurserymen were constantly on the prowl for an extension in varieties. Partly this would be for profit, but there was a large intangible motive of extending our knowledge, as well as our standing in the world of horticulture.

Mrs. Krome followed her husband most ably in the fields of groves and nursery. From the earliest days they had built up an extensive and interesting collection of mangoes and she fortunately continues today to be one of our foremost authorities on mango varieties.

By 1920 Robert and I undoubtedly had more avocado trees under our care than anyone in the Miami area, unless it was the Collins grove. But our groves were scattered, and mostly we managed them for other owners in the North. As to mangoes, that is Hadens, whether we exceeded the Collins grove I do not know. It still had a good many Mulgobas, showing its early start. The Haden had fully lived up to its advance billing. Many householders, after one look at its brilliant coloring, wanted a tree for their yards. Our increasing number of newcomers would plant several acres of avocados and perhaps only a few budded mangoes. Quite commonly mangoes were used for an outer row, partly as a windbreak. Their faster growth, greater height, and heavier head, plus the fact that their fruit came off before the hurricane season, made this eminently sensible.

Our own problem was to interest people living a thousand to 1500 miles away in putting money into fruits of which they had hardly heard. Even samples by mail in season did not produce as much interest as we would have liked. A doctor in Chicago, even if he had spent some winter vacations here, was much like the big local grapefruit growers. He was accustomed to seeing Florida grapefruit in the stores for six months of the year, knew it well, and had bought a great many. But there were only a few expensive avocados in the best fruit stores. He would really have to hunt for a mango in Chicago, or its season passed so swiftly that he had missed it. Our winter tourists could see mango trees in bloom, but never any mature fruit. They could go out any day and pick grapefruit and oranges. Dr. Fairchild was always con-

cerned with the ultra-conservative taste of the American people in the matter of new foods. I am sure that many of our samples of new fruits, that we considered both fine eating, attractive and highly marketable, met with a lot of "consumer resistance". We were still planting grapefruit and oranges, but we would manage to wangle an order to plant a couple of acres of the new avocados and anything from a couple of trees to a windbreak row of the still stranger mango.

Our efforts to make these new fruits known had an even more important angle for us. We had started to ship avocados and mangoes ourselves in 1913 and in 1914 we built a packing house on the Larkins side-track of the Florida East Coast Railway for all local produce, vegetables as well as fruit. The largest local item was still tomatoes, though R. W. Brown here had almost a monopoly on them at the start. Our largest line was grapefruit, with a volume from 1915 to 1925 some ten to twenty times that of avocados.

At the start mango volume trailed away behind even avocados. The Haden trees we had planted from 1913 to 1915 finally started to come into production. However, Dade County had received a bad blow in the freeze of February, 1917. Some of our finest trees from Cellon were entirely killed, when less than a year old. Avocado trees three and four years old were killed back to wood an inch or more in diameter. Mango trees suffered also, but it was interesting to note that the damage was not quite so drastic as on the West Indian varieties of avocados. Out in the northwest section of Miami even some citrus trees were badly hurt. On the other hand, the new Homestead area produced a few avocados that same summer, having missed as low temperatures as we, and the Collins grove escaped much damage. Yet our tender tropical charges that were still alive came back nobly. Within a year it took close examination to find where they had been hurt. However, this freeze placed the variations of the county and its climate in perspective for us. No other low temperatures in 45 years have been any worse, though a number other freezes have been destructive to tropical trees in that time, and tender vegetables have been hurt still more often.

In the summer of 1920 we had our own first important crop of Haden mangoes, all from young trees and of most reassuring quality. At the start, anthracnose did not seem to exist in our new section and we did not realize how well off we were. That trouble from black spotting started later and the end of the next ten years found the situation very much impaired.

The twenties witnessed further increase in mango production, especially in the first five years. A state census in 1925 showed about 8000 mango trees

planted in Dade county, within its present boundaries, less than 150 acres. There was serious cold in 1928 and at least one rainy winter. The collapse of the land boom in 1926 turned peoples' thoughts back to fruit growing and farming, but very few had any money and progress was slow. That decade saw the first of the hybrid mango additions to the Haden. These were the green and prolific Brooks and the huge and brilliant Springfels.

After 1930 the finding of new hybrid mangoes stepped up. It was all due to the valuable habit in individual residents of planting the seed of some fruit they had admired. Mostly these were Haden fruit, with some Mulgoba and Sundersha. Only one parent is known in any case and sometimes determining either parent later is a guess. By now we have many grandchildren of the first hybrids in bearing. The Haden set a standard difficult to surpass, but the proliferation of new varieties,—or at least new seedlings,—continues endlessly. Anyone with a promising seedling tree can have more like it budded, or turn the tree over to some nurseryman, and presto, another new variety appears. Some hybrids have been crosses with the Saigon type. The Saigons themselves have been neglected all along, mostly because of the steady commercial requirement for high color.

Today we are probably in the middle period of the mango in Florida, with many contenders for popularity. Similarly forty years ago in middle Florida, a great number of orange varieties had their advocates. It is doubtful that the mango, in its final mature stage, can ever be limited to the equivalent of the Pineapple and Valencia orange for larger planting, but there looms a gradual "combing out" of varieties. Undoubtedly promising new fruits will continue to appear and we may yet find the perfect mango.

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