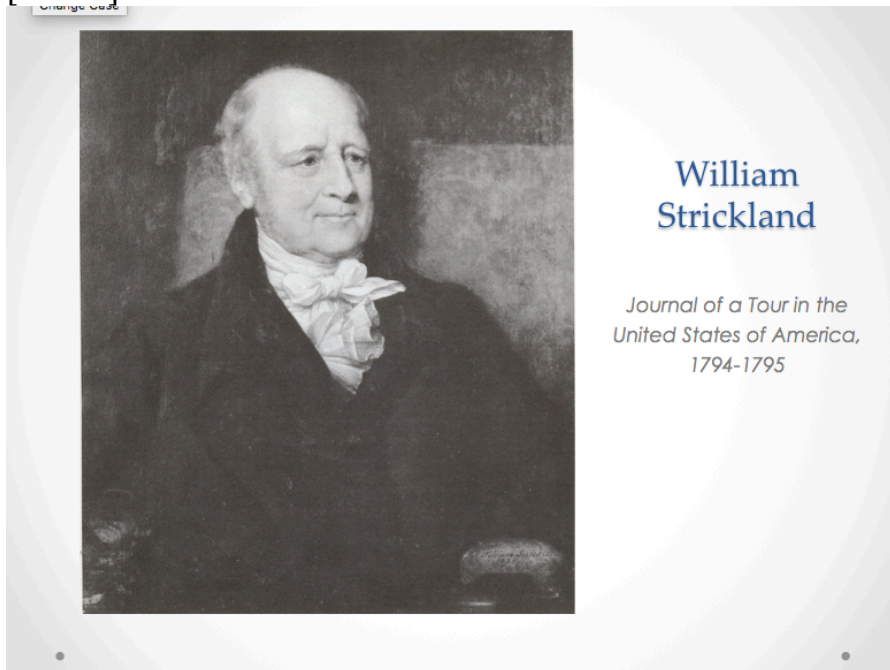


## Newark's Celebrated Cider

In September 1794, William Strickland passed through Newark on his way from New York to see that natural wonder, the Great Falls in Paterson. When he got to Newark, he dined at Archer Gifford's tavern, "The Hunters and the Hounds," at the corner of Broad and Market.

[Slide 1]



Strickland liked Newark; an Englishman, he found that the mix of "stone, brick, and weatherboarded houses, many of them handsome and elegant," reminded him of villages in the southern counties of England. But what most attracted his attention was not the houses, or the handsome new Presbyterian Church, or the nascent shoe industry. It was the orchards. In his journal, Strickland noted, "These orchards are said to produce the best Cyder in the U:SS: which goes by the name of Newark Cyder, some of which has been kept 20 years." He added, "The people are now busily

employed in the first crushing of the apple, but this is only for common use, the best Cyder being made later in the Season.”<sup>1</sup>

[Slide 2: George Inness, “Spring Blossoms”]



Strickland’s account provides a useful reminder that for almost half its existence, Newark and for that matter the rest of Essex County were celebrated more for orchards and apple cider than for anything else. Where were these apple orchards? The short answer is everywhere – not just in Newark, but all over Essex County, planted when Belleville, Irvington, the Oranges, Bloomfield, Montclair and the Caldwelles were still part of Newark. There must have been thousands and thousands of fruit trees in bloom each spring -- not just apple trees, but peach, pear, plum, and

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<sup>1</sup> J.E. Strickland, editor. *Journal of a Tour in the United States of America, 1794-1795* (New York: The New-York Historical Society, 1971), 67.



cherry trees as well. In our own day, we enjoy the flowering cherry trees in Branch Brook Park, but I suspect that wonderful annual show is just a faint echo of what many fields around Newark and the rest of Essex County looked like for 175 years after it was settled. Take George Inness's "Spring Blossoms, Montclair, New Jersey," now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, that he painted around 1891 after many orchards had been cut down, and multiply it in vast numbers and extend it in nearly all directions and you can begin to imagine springtime in Newark and Essex County.<sup>2</sup>

In this part of our program, I will touch on a few examples of early orchards, cider mills, and distilleries in Newark. To get at this information, you have to search in early records of land transfers and estate inventories; the task gets a bit easier for the period after the American Revolution when newspaper ads noted the features of properties put up for sale. You can also get some clues by examining account books kept by the Harrison and Camp families who operated cider mills in the area in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

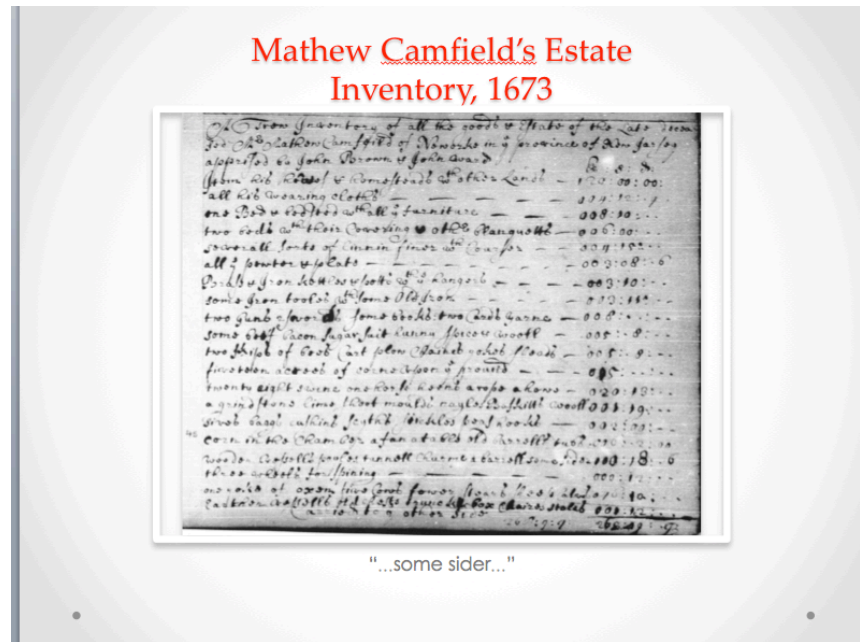
Orchards in Newark go right back to beginning. The original settlers of Newark either brought apple scions with them from New Haven Colony in 1666 and 1667 or sent for them soon afterwards. They no doubt planted their orchards and other

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<sup>2</sup> George Inness, "Spring Blossoms, Montclair, New Jersey," ca. 1891, Metropolitan Art Museum, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/11234>

crops during that first year, even as they were building their houses; after all they had to feed themselves.

[Slide 3]



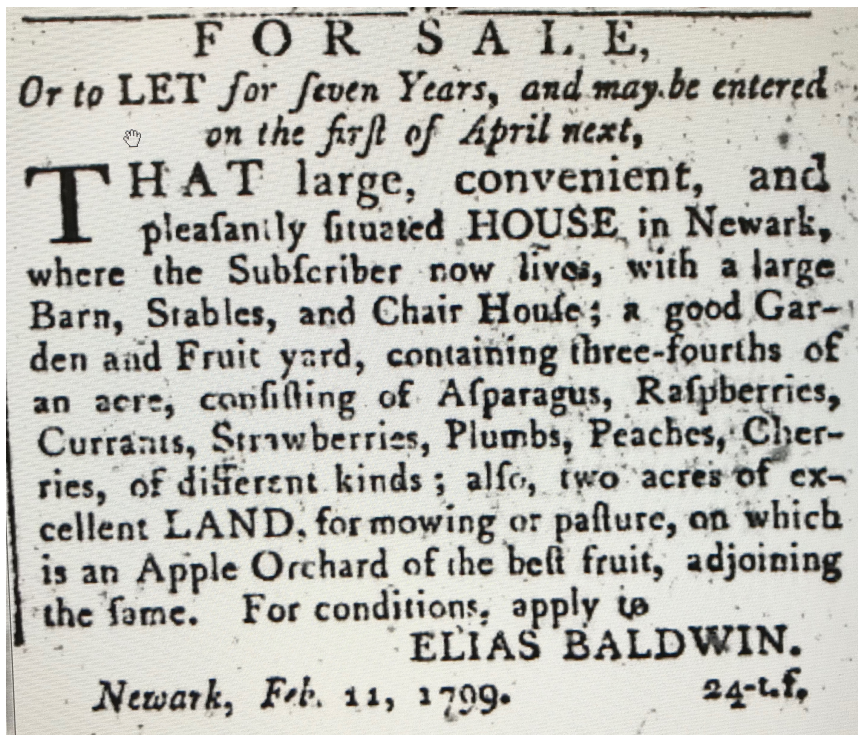
As early as June 1673, Mathew Camfield's recently-planted orchard had produced enough cider that it was included in his estate inventory following his death.<sup>3</sup>

In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, there are frequent references to orchards in records of land transfers. For example, Abraham Pierson, Junior -- the second minister of Old First and later the first president of Yale University -- acquired property from the estate of Lawrence Ward in January 1678. It came with a "Dwelling house, Well,

<sup>3</sup> S.H. Congar, "Newark, One Hundred Years Ago," *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, Volume XII (January 1858), 28. The recorded copy of Camfield's estate inventory made by John Brown and John Ward is in the New Jersey State Archives, Deed Book 3 (East Jersey), 88-90.

Yard, Barne, Garden, & Orchard.”<sup>4</sup> Even at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, more than a hundred years later, many Newarkers still grew much of their own fruit on land in downtown Newark.

[Slide 4]



For example, Elias Baldwin advertised his house and barn for sale in 1799, along with “a good Garden and Fruit yard, containing three-fourths of an acre, consisting of Asparagus, Raspberries, Currants, Strawberries, Plumbs, Peaches, Cherries of different kinds; also, two acres of excellent LAND, ...on which is an Apple Orchard of the best fruit...”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Indenture dated January 21, 1677[8], Newark Town Book 1691, f. 3, New Jersey Historical Society, MG267, Box 1, File 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Centinel of Freedom*, February 19, 1799.

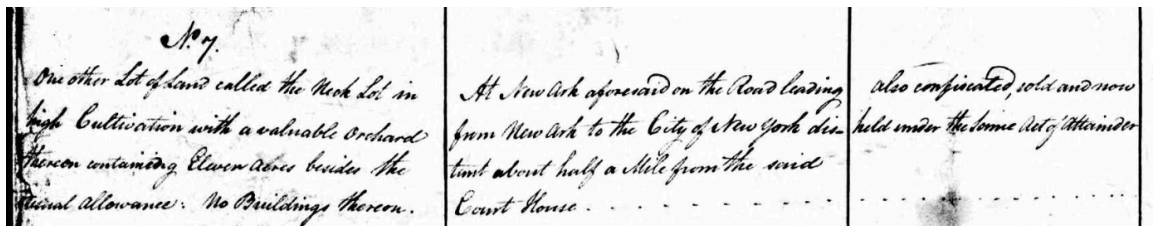
[Slide 5]





This view of Newark from 1820 will help to orient us.<sup>6</sup> It shows Market Street connecting with Ferry Street, the road that took people and goods to the ferry to Paulus Hook; more generally, it shows what was then called the Neck and is now known as Down Neck or the Ironbound, before there were any railroads. As you can see, the lithographer included various groves of trees, probably meant to represent orchards.

[Slide 6]

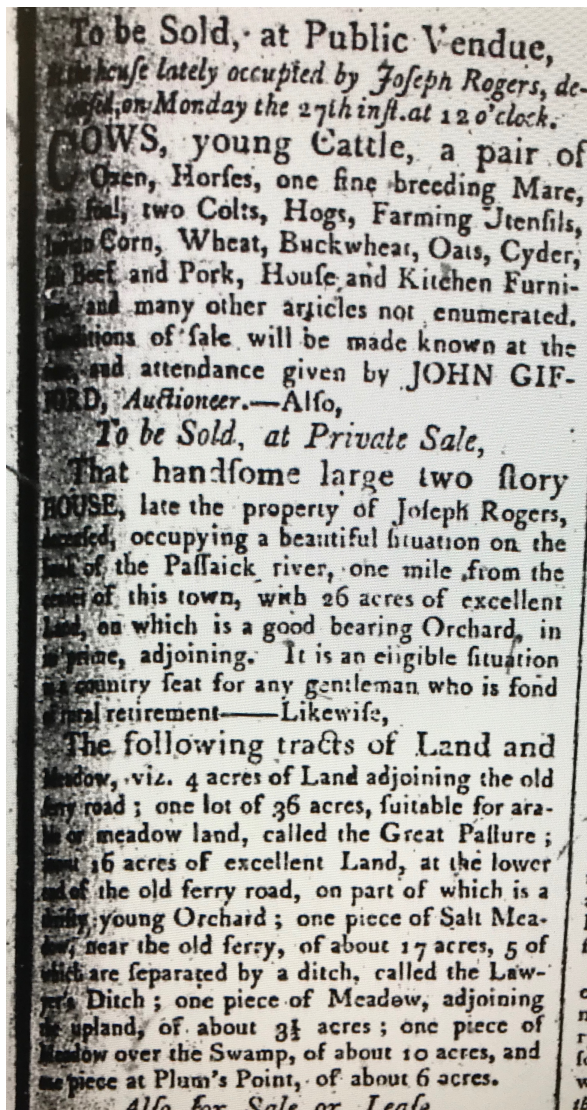


In the 1770s, David Ogden, a New Jersey supreme court justice, advisor to Governor William Franklin, and perhaps the best-known Newark resident at the time, owned an 11-acre tract called the “Neck Lot” that he described as being “in high Cultivation with a valuable Orchard.” Because Ogden was a leading Loyalist during the American Revolution, his orchard was seized along with his seventeen other properties, including his house on Broad Street sold by the state of New Jersey to help fund the war effort. After the war, Ogden put in a claim to the British Government for the loss of his vast holdings, including the Neck Lot that he said was located “on the Road leading from New Ark to the City of New York [i.e., Ferry

<sup>6</sup> “Newark, (East of Mulberry St. 1820-5),” Newark Public Library Digital Collections, <https://cdm17229.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p17229coll8/id/4123/rec/1>

Street] distant about half a mile from the...Court House" That description places Ogden's orchard on just the other side of today's Pennsylvania Station.<sup>7</sup>

[Slide 7]

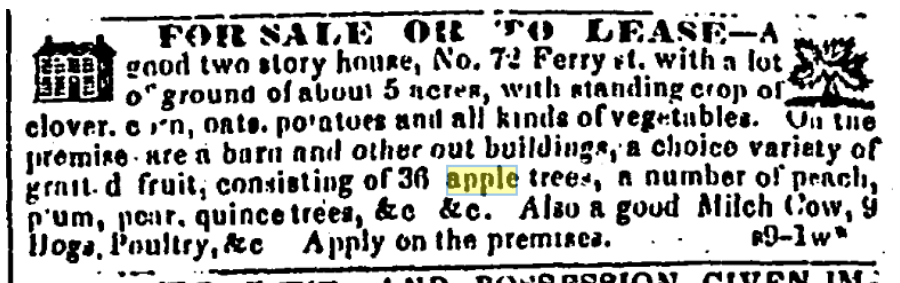


To be Sold, at Public Vendue,  
the house lately occupied by Joseph Rogers, de-  
ceased, on Monday the 27th inst. at 12 o'clock.  
**COWS**, young Cattle, a pair of  
Oxen, Horses, one fine breeding Mare,  
a foal, two Colts, Hogs, Farming Implements,  
Indian Corn, Wheat, Buckwheat, Oats, Cyder,  
Beef and Pork, House and Kitchen Furni-  
ture, and many other articles not enumerated.  
Conditions of sale will be made known at the  
sale, and attendance given by JOHN GIFF-  
ORD, Auctioneer.—Also,  
*To be Sold, at Private Sale,*  
That handsome large two story  
HOUSE, late the property of Joseph Rogers,  
deceased, occupying a beautiful situation on the  
bank of the Passaic river, one mile from the  
center of this town, with 26 acres of excellent  
land, on which is a good bearing Orchard, in  
prime, adjoining. It is an eligible situation  
as a country seat for any gentleman who is fond  
of rural retirement.—Likewise,  
The following tracts of Land and  
Meadow, viz. 4 acres of Land adjoining the old  
ferry road; one lot of 36 acres, suitable for ara-  
ble or meadow land, called the Great Pasture;  
and 16 acres of excellent Land, at the lower  
end of the old ferry road, on part of which is a  
very young Orchard; one piece of Salt Mea-  
dow, near the old ferry, of about 17 acres, 5 of  
which are separated by a ditch, called the Law-  
rence Ditch; one piece of Meadow, adjoining  
the upland, of about 3½ acres; one piece of  
Meadow over the Swamp, of about 10 acres, and  
one piece at Plum's Point, of about 6 acres.  
*Also for Sale or Lease*

<sup>7</sup> David Ogden's Claim for Losses, "Records of the Claims Commission," National Archives (UK), AO 12/16 f. 50-60. When Ogden's property was sold by the Commissioner for Forfeited Estates in a series of sales beginning March 1, 1779, Robert Neil bought a 10½ parcel "in the Neck," presumably this orchard, for £940; 'Essex Commissioners Vendue Book,' New Jersey State Archives. Ogden valued the property at £470, suggesting that Neil's purchase was probably priced in New York currency.

Another example: In 1799, John Gifford auctioned the estate of Joseph Rogers, who lived along the Passaic River, a mile from the center of town. Rogers had a 26-acre orchard near his residence, plus a 16-acre tract of “excellent Land, at the lower end of the old ferry road, on part of which is a chiefly young Orchard.”<sup>8</sup> That description puts the second orchard just inside the Ironbound, again not far from today’s train station. It could well have been one of the orchards that William Strickland admired during his visit in 1794.

[Slide 8]



My third example of an orchard in what is now the Ironbound is from 1841, when Elizabeth Morris, the widow of Jonathan Morris, put her house and a 5-acre garden lot at 72 Ferry Street up for sale. It’s hard to imagine now given how built up the Ironbound is, but 177 years ago she cultivated “a choice variety of grafted fruit, consisting of 36 apple trees, a number of peach, plum, pear [and] quince trees” just two blocks from today’s Pennsylvania Station, as well as “a standing crop of clover, corn, oats, potatoes and all kinds of vegetables”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Centinel of Freedom*, March 19, 1799.

<sup>9</sup> *Newark Daily Advertiser*, September 14, 1841. The advertisement does not indicate the owner, but Elizabeth Morris, widow, was listed as living at 72 Ferry Street in *Pierson’s Directory of the City of Newark for 1839-40*. In Pierson’s first Directory for 1835-6, her address was given as Ferry, near Union.

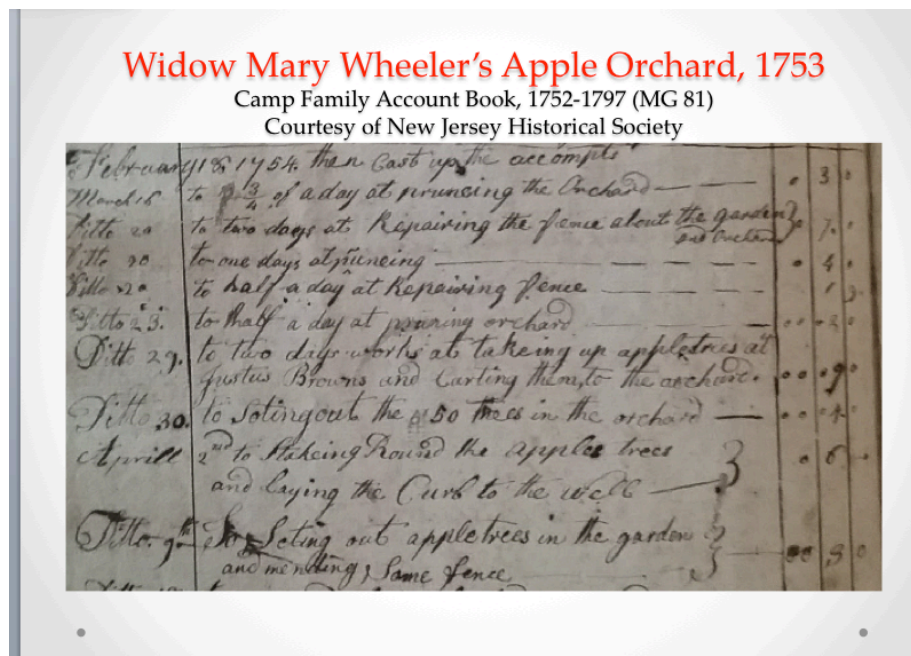
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 OF THE CITY OF  
**NEWARK**  
 N. J.  
 Surveyed by Marcus Smith for J.C. Sidney.  
 Published by M. Dripps.  
 103 Fulton St. New York,  
 Turnpike Road to New York  
 1850.





Apparently, a sale didn't go through because as late as 1850 this area of the Ironbound was still undeveloped and noted as belonging to the estate of Jonathan Morris.<sup>10</sup> Today, Iberia Restaurant and its parking lot cover about half of Elizabeth Morris' property.

[Slide 10]



Apple orchards took a lot of work in the spring and again at harvest time in the fall.

We can get a glimpse of what was involved from the tasks the Camp family undertook in 1753 for Mary Wheeler, a widow, and recorded in their account book<sup>11</sup>.

[Slide 11]

<sup>10</sup> "Map of the City of Newark," surveyed by Marus Smith for J.C. Sidney, 1850. Newark Public Library,  
<https://cdm17229.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p17229coll12/id/874/rec/53>

<sup>11</sup> Camp Family Records Books, New Jersey Historical Society, MG 81, box 1, file 1, ff. 8, 24.

## Widow Mary Wheeler's Apple Orchard, 1753

### Spring

March 16: ¼ of a day at pruneing the Orchard  
March 20: two days at Repairing the fence about the garden and Orchard  
March 20: one day at pruneing  
March 20: half day Repairing fence  
March 23: half day pruning the orchard  
March 29: two days work at takeing up apple trees at Justus Browns and Carting them to the orchard  
March 30: set[t]ing out the 50 trees in the orchard  
April 2: Stakeing Round the Apple Trees and Laying the Curb to the Well  
April 9: set[t]ing out apple trees in the garden and mending some fence

### Fall

September 6: making 10 barrells of cyder  
September 6: carting 6 barrells cyder to the Still  
September 6: carting 4 barrells cyder to the Still  
September 21: making 7 barrells of cyder  
September 24: 5 barrells  
October 4: making 4 barrells of Cyder  
October 15: half a days work at picking apples and Cut[t]ing Stalks  
October 17: one days work picking apples  
November 2: making 7 barrells of Cyder  
November 6: carting 12 barrells of cyder to the creek  
November 13: carting 6 barrells of cyder to the creek

Over a three-week period in early Spring, from mid-March to the beginning of April, before the grain crops could be planted, they pruned her apple trees, repaired the fences, and planted 50 new apple trees that they bought from Justus Brown. The apple harvest started at the beginning of September when they had enough apples to make ten barrels of cider and continued for 9 or 10 weeks to the beginning of November. They took some of the early season cider to a still, but it appears they sold the more valuable end-of-season cider, since they took it to Bound Creek, where they had a dock and could ship it to merchants in New York City.<sup>12</sup>

This trade in apple cider developed very early on. By the 1680s, less than twenty years after the first settlement, travelers in East Jersey remarked on “the abundance

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<sup>12</sup> The Camp family traded with merchants in New York City from a launch on Bound Creek. William H. Shaw, *History of Essex and Hudson Counties*, New Jersey (Philadelphia, 1884) Vol. 2, p. 695.

of good Cyder, especially at one town called Newark which is esteemed at New York, and other places where it is sold..." In 1684, another traveler reported to friends in Edinburgh, "Newark made about a thousand barrels of Sider last year."<sup>13</sup> That's probably an exaggeration, but even half that amount would suggest that Newark orchards were already well established.

Cider making is a seasonal task, of course, so most owners of cider mills operated them to supplement their year-round business. For example, in the 1740s and 1750s, Samuel Harrison ran a cider mill in today's West Orange as an adjunct to both his sawmill and his fulling mill for preparing woolen cloth.

[Slide 12]

**Samuel Harrison's cider mill prices, 1740s**

- If you make your own cider with your own apples, using Harrison's mill and cider press: 3 pence per barrel
- If Harrison makes cider for you with your apples: 1 shilling per barrel
- If Harrison makes cider for you with his apples: 11-13 shillings per barrel  
= to about 3 days' wages for a laborer

Note: a barrel contained about 32 gallons

Harrison charged 3 pence per barrel if you made your own cider with your own apples using his mill and cider press (a barrel contained about 32 gallons); if

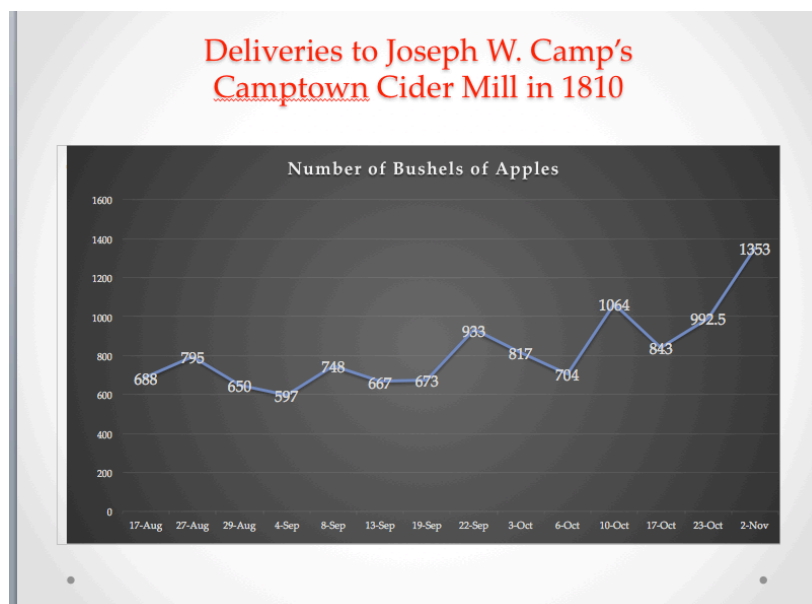
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<sup>13</sup> Letter of Gawen Lawrie to the Scots Proprietors, March 26, 1684, printed in William A. Whitehead, *East Jersey Under the Proprietary Governments* (Newark, 1875) 424. John Reid noted in 1684 that Newark had made a thousand barrels of cider the prior year; Whitehead, 430.

Harrison made cider for you, again using your own apples, he charged 1 shilling per barrel. But if he sold you a barrel of cider from apples he supplied, he usually charged 11 to 13 shillings per barrel, equal to about three days' wages for a laborer.<sup>14</sup>

The Camp family in Camptown (Irvington) had a sawmill, store, and something close to a contracting business in addition to the cider mill they operated from the 1750s to the 1820s.<sup>15</sup> Two other examples: in the 1770s, Uzal Ward, a stonecutter, had a cider mill near Old First Church to supplement his two stone quarries, a grist mill, and a sawmill in north Newark;<sup>16</sup> and in Bloomfield in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Samuel Pitt kept a store and ran a paper mill in addition to his cider mill.<sup>17</sup>

[Slide 13]



<sup>14</sup> Samuel Harrison's Account Book, New Jersey Historical Society, MG108.

<sup>15</sup> Camp Family Records Books, New Jersey Historical Society, MG81.

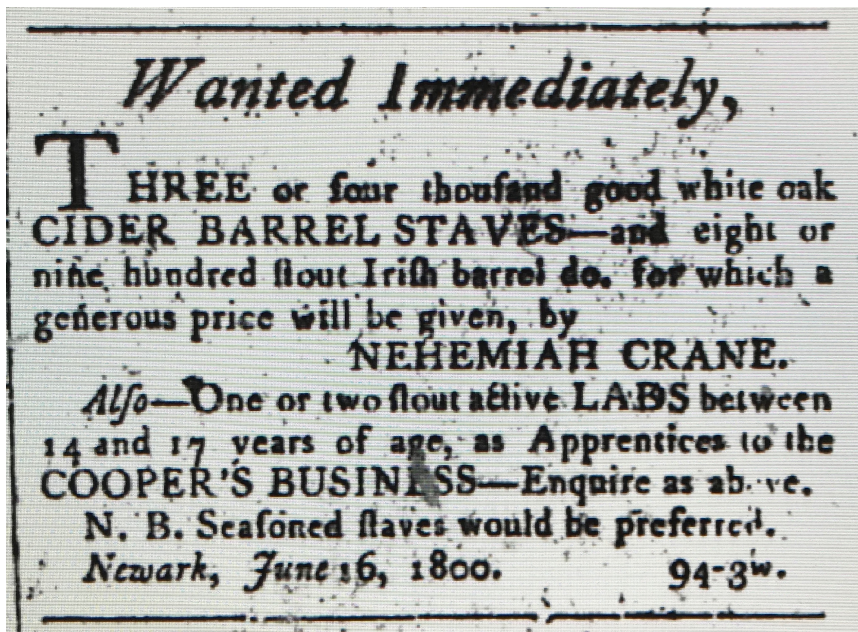
<sup>16</sup> "Evidence in the Case of Uzal Ward," Records of the Claims Commission, National Archives (UK), A.O.12.15 f. 65.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph Fulford Folsom, editor, *Bloomfield Old and New* (Bloomfield, 1912), 61.



By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, cider mills could be substantial businesses with a great deal of activity squeezed into a 10 to 12 week period. In the fall of 1810, Joseph W. Camp, a schoolteacher, opened his mill in Camptown for deliveries on 15 days. He took his first delivery on August 17 and the last and largest delivery on November 2. The number of bushels of apples delivered per day varied from just under 600 early in September to more than twice that, 1,353 bushels on November 2. Altogether, he turned more than 12,253 bushels of apples into cider at his mill in 1810. Assuming that it takes about 10 bushels of apples to make a 32-gallon barrel of cider, Joseph Camp's cider mill alone made over 1,200 barrels of cider in 1810. That was probably an abnormally good year, but his mill was just one among many operating in Newark and Essex County early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>18</sup>

[Slide 14]



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<sup>18</sup> "Daybook Apples," Camp Family Records, New Jersey Historical Society, MG 81, Box 9, 1-15. Joseph Camp did not keep such complete delivery records for other years, so it is difficult to make annual yield comparisons.

Of course, all this cider making created demand for barrels to put the cider in. In June 1800, Nehemiah Crane placed an ad in Newark's *Centinel of Freedom* newspaper for "Three or four thousand good white oak Cider Barrel Staves," enough that is for 90 to 120 barrels; he added, "Seasoned staves would be preferred."<sup>19</sup>

From the very beginning, Newarkers reserved a portion of their cider for distilling into "cider spirits," or what later became known as applejack or Jersey lightning.<sup>20</sup> Sometimes they also made apple beer, although in much smaller quantities. Writing in 1684 about the settlers in East Jersey, Gawen Lawrie reported, "for drink they have good Beer and Cyder, and those that are desirous may have Wine of several sorts, and other kinds of strong Liquor."<sup>21</sup> In 18<sup>th</sup> century Newark, Joseph Hedden, who lived for 96 years, was famous for drinking "a generous draught of pure Jersey distilled liquor" each morning before getting dressed.<sup>22</sup>

While it is apparent that stills were operating in Newark in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the earliest description I have found is from 1731. In that year, a Newarker named Dr. Schutte put his property up for sale, including "a Distilling-house, with Stills, and all

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<sup>19</sup> *Centinel of Freedom*, June 17, 1800.

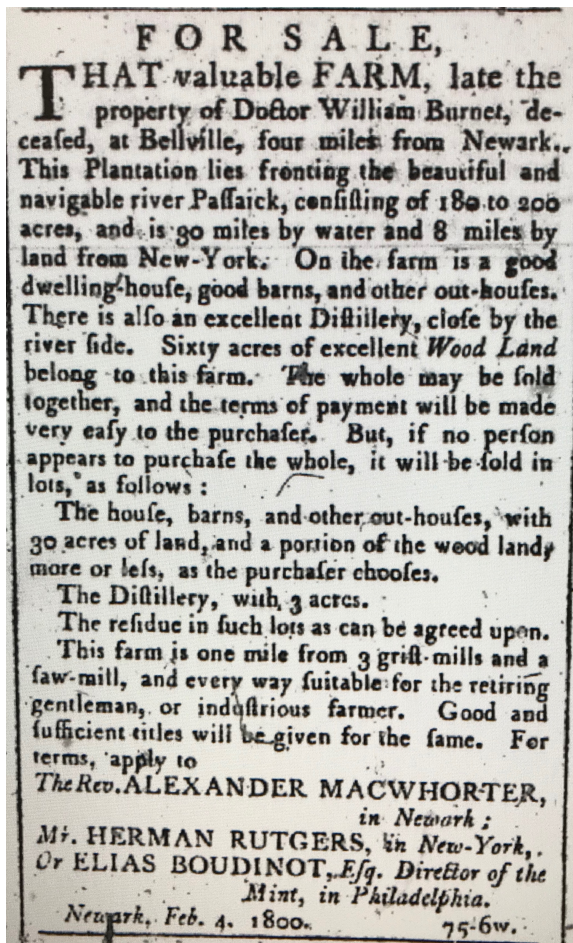
<sup>20</sup> Harry B. Weiss, *The History of Applejack or Apple Brandy in New Jersey from Colonial Times to the Present* (Trenton, NJ, 1954; reprinted 1975).

<sup>21</sup> Letter of Gawen Lawrie to the Scots Proprietors, March, 26, 1684, printed in William A. Whitehead, *East Jersey Under the Proprietary Governments* (Newark, 1875) 424.

<sup>22</sup> Francis Bazley Lee, compiler, *Genealogical and Memorial History of the State of New Jersey* (1919), Volume III, 1120.

conveniencies ready for distilling of Strong Liquors, and especially of Syder.” He added he was willing to instruct the buyer “in the art of Distilling.”<sup>23</sup>

[Slide 15]



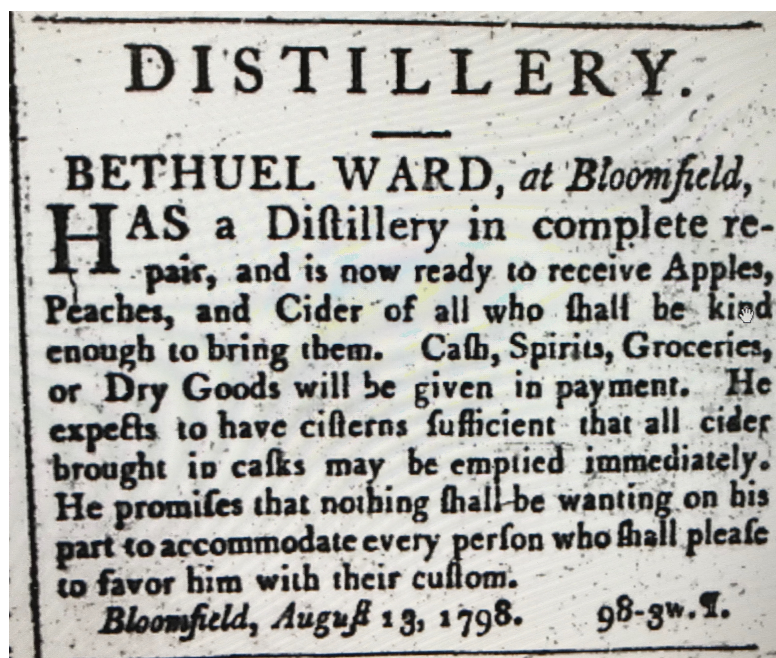
Dr. William Burnet, the most prominent patriot leader in Newark in the 1770s, lived on Broad Street but owned a farm in what would soon be called Belleville that included a distillery on 3 acres, “close by” the Passaic River.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> New-York Gazette, June 7, 1731, printed in William Nelson, ed., *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey* (Paterson, 1894), 247-8.

<sup>24</sup> *Centinel of Freedom*, February 11, 1800. Burnet died in 1791; his residence was on Broad Street in Newark. The distillery was part of a 180-200 acre farm, but his executors were willing to sell the distillery separately.

Several distilleries were established after the American Revolution, as the trade in cider and cider spirits resumed and increased. In 1792, the firm of Holmes and Crane in Cranetown (today's Montclair) announced they had made a "considerable enlargement to their Distillery." Later that same year, Nathan Squire and Simeon Harrison completed their distillery in "Orange Dale," as the Oranges were briefly called, and made it known that they were ready "to receive Cider, Apples and Peaches." They said they would pay "eight quarts of Spirits (duty free)...per barrel for Cider, and the same for ten bushels of Apples."<sup>25</sup>

[Slide 16]



One last example: in 1798, Bethuel Ward opened a distillery in Bloomfield, assuring customers that he expected to have "cisterns sufficient that all cider brought in

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<sup>25</sup> Woods's Newark Gazette, September 13, 1792.



casks may be emptied immediately.” In those cash-poor times, he offered to make payment in spirits, groceries, or dry goods as well as cash.<sup>26</sup>

That’s a quick overview of orchards, cider mills, and distilleries in Newark and surrounding areas up to about 1800. I could multiply these examples, especially for the rest of Essex County. What rarely come through in early records is which varieties of apples were grown and why Newark cider earned such a good reputation; that becomes clearer as the 19<sup>th</sup> century progresses – and that’s what Fran will discuss now.

Timothy J. Crist  
June 18, 2018  
Newark History Society

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<sup>26</sup> *Centinel of Freedom*, August 28, 1798.