

## EARLY INTRODUCTION OF THE AVOCADO INTO CALIFORNIA

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*LOS ANGELES*

I have been asked by some members of the California Avocado Association to make a report of my attempt to introduce the aguacate into Southern California, and to do so I have to call upon my memory for the facts, as I made no written record at the time. Mr. J. C. Harvey, a gentleman who has traveled much, first called my attention to the tree and he gave me an aguacate seedling, which I planted on my place at College St. in 1891. This produced a small dark fruit of delicious nutty flavor, and a person that tasted this small fruit who had a great deal of knowledge in aguacates, by having been in Mexico, claimed that the nutty flavor in this fruit was a flavor not found in any of the paguas from Mexico, and he considered this fruit about the best aguacate. I think Mr. Harvey obtained the seed of this tree from Mexico and at the end of seven or eight years this tree died, but the new trees from seed of the old tree were left at College St., when I sold the place. Mr. Harvey had aguacates and paguas trees, these being the distinguishing Mexican names between the thin skinned and thick skinned varieties.

Mr. Buddington of Alpine St. had one tree and Mr. Miller of Hollywood another one. I became much interested in this fruit and Mr. Harvey reserved a few he had for his own use. I determined to look elsewhere and learned from the Wells Fargo Agent here that they had an agent in Atlixco, Mexico. I wrote then and very fortunately in this way opened correspondence with a very intelligent gentleman, Mr. Fuentes. In January, 1893, and for more than two months thereafter, I received from him shipment of paguas, which were received through the Express Company in good condition. Later, however, he began to ship me aguacates, which, owing to the heat in crossing the desert, reached me in such bad condition, that for the future, I ordered only the thick skin variety which I was convinced by experience were the only ones fit for the importation in this way, and the most interesting fruit for commercial purposes. I planted the seeds from this fruit and my friends, noting the beauty of the trees and later the fineness of the fruit, became also interested. This fruit, which was hitherto almost unknown here, became much better known.

Later I gave my friends both seeds and young plants. I recall Mr. Cecil C. R. Sumner of Hollywood who owned the place now owned by Mr. Walker. No doubt the trees given to Mr. Sumner produced the Royal, Challenge and the Walker Prolific. I also remember Mr. R. M. Pogson of Hollywood has planted several of the trees given to him and Mr. Habersham of the same place, the seeds given to him producing the Dickey No. 1 and No. 2, and the Blakeman. Mr. Taft of Orange was much impressed by the fruit grown on my home place and took buds from the best trees that I had on my place. Mr. Garcia, whose place is at the foot of the mountain, east of the place of Mr. W. A. Spinks, was delighted to see the fruit on the trees at my place and bought buds from all the trees

and made a great success in producing the best fruit in California. Popenoe of Altadena obtained buds from several of the trees which I had grown from seeds. Mr. E. S. Thacher of Nordhoff, Ventura County, took great interest in the aguacate fruit and when he found the good quality of fruit that I had on College St., raised from fruit imported from Mexico, bought a great many buds from the Murrieta Green and Murrieta Purple.

It has been a great pleasure to me to watch the progress of this favorite fruit, and I am glad of the great interest that this Association has taken in this matter. No doubt with the help and careful attention in this new enterprise from this Association, great benefit will be not only to Southern California, but also to the people that may select the new idea to raise this magnificent, interesting and profitable avocado.

Any experience I may have gained in developing this new industry, I shall be more than happy to help this Association with. I feel sure that failure of the tree in some instances to meet expectation, is largely the result of inattention or one of knowledge as to the needs in a climate to which it is foreign.