

**California Avocado Association 1934 Yearbook 19: 52-53**

**Charles Parkman Taft**

*Born in Ohio, 1856 Died at Orange, Calif, May 10, 1934*



Charles Parkman Taft



Fascimile of Meyer Medal Awarded to Mr. Taft in 1924, for distinguished service in introducing new fruits.

The quiet passing of Mr. Taft at his home in Orange at the ripe age of seventy-eight, marks the loss of an outstanding figure in sub-tropical pomology. For more than half a century, at Orange, California, he devoted his life to the introduction, improvement, propagation, and dissemination of new and better sub-tropical fruits. While his work included a very large variety of fruits, his fame in foreign lands rests chiefly on his results with the Loquat. His loquat varieties Champagne, Premier, and Advance are grown throughout the world and, we believe, have not been surpassed. He also did much work with the persimmon, cherimoya, sapote, feijoa, Natal plum, several guavas and eugenias, the papaya, and even the jaboricaba.

In 1899 Mr. Taft began his work on the avocado, and raised hundreds of seedlings, selling some and planting many on his own place. He originated many varieties, the best of which bears his own name. The Taft avocado is a very excellent commercial fruit, but the trees are so slow coming into bearing that the variety is no longer popular with growers. While many kinds of new fruits were grown for novelty and pleasure, Mr. Taft threw all the weight of his influence behind his belief that the avocado was worthy of a commercial industry. To this end he helped organize the California Avocado Association and served on its first board of directors. He published papers on the avocado in the first two yearbooks, and gave numerous lectures before Farmers' Institutes. His beautiful exhibit of the then best varieties at the Panama-Pacific Exposition which he kept supplied with fresh fruit all summer and fall did much to attract attention to California grown avocados.

Mr. Taft was elected an honorary member of this association in 1924, and later in the same year was awarded the Meyer Medal by the U. S. Department of Agriculture for distinguished services to the country in introducing, creating, and establishing many improved varieties of fruits.

It was for love of his work that Mr. Taft carried on through the years. Shunning publicity, he worked unceasingly, and being of simple tastes was apparently content with a modest income. He never attempted to promote any new variety which he originated. Mr. Taft was quiet, kindly, and lovable. He was more than generous of his time and strength when students, scientists, and investigators from throughout California and many foreign countries made a rendezvous of his experimental grounds. Mr. Taft's great influence was entirely for good. Those of us who were fortunate enough to know Mr. Taft personally, fully appreciate the benefaction of his life.

J. E. C.