

AN APPRECIATION OF THE WORK OF THE LATE JACOB MILLER

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With the death on May 19, 1920 of Mr. Jacob Miller of Hollywood, the avocado industry of Southern California saw the passing of one of its oldest pioneers.

Mr. Miller's interest in the avocado began in 1883 and continued throughout the remainder of his life.

His contribution to the early development of the industry was important from two standpoints. The first was the proof that the fruit could be successfully grown without damage by frost and the second was the arousing of interest in the fruit and the consequent distribution of trees through a broad district.

Mr. Miller obtained his first avocado tree from Mr. John Grelck, an uncle of Mrs. Miller. Mr. Grelck on a visit to Guatemala had his attention attracted to the fruit and upon his return he brought a number of young trees with him. One of these trees which was afterward known as the "Miller" was given by Mr. Grelck to Mr. Miller and by the latter set out on his ranch at the mouth of Nichol's Canyon at a point which is now marked by the intersection of Hollywood Boulevard and Ogden Drive. Mr. Miller at this time was raising garden truck for the San Francisco market and knew that the district was frostless.

Mr. Grelck planted the remainder of his avocado trees on his own place at what is now Main and Twenty-fifth streets. The following winter saw severe damage from frost to the Grelck trees and to avoid losing what survived in some subsequent frost the plants were moved to the Miller place. Among the plants which were brought by Mr. Grelck and given to Mr. Miller after the frost at the Grelck place were the cherimoya, mango, tamarind, plumaria, coffee, papaya, rose apple and other rare tropical fruits.

The following is an expression of Mrs. Theresa Burdette, a daughter of Mr. Miller:

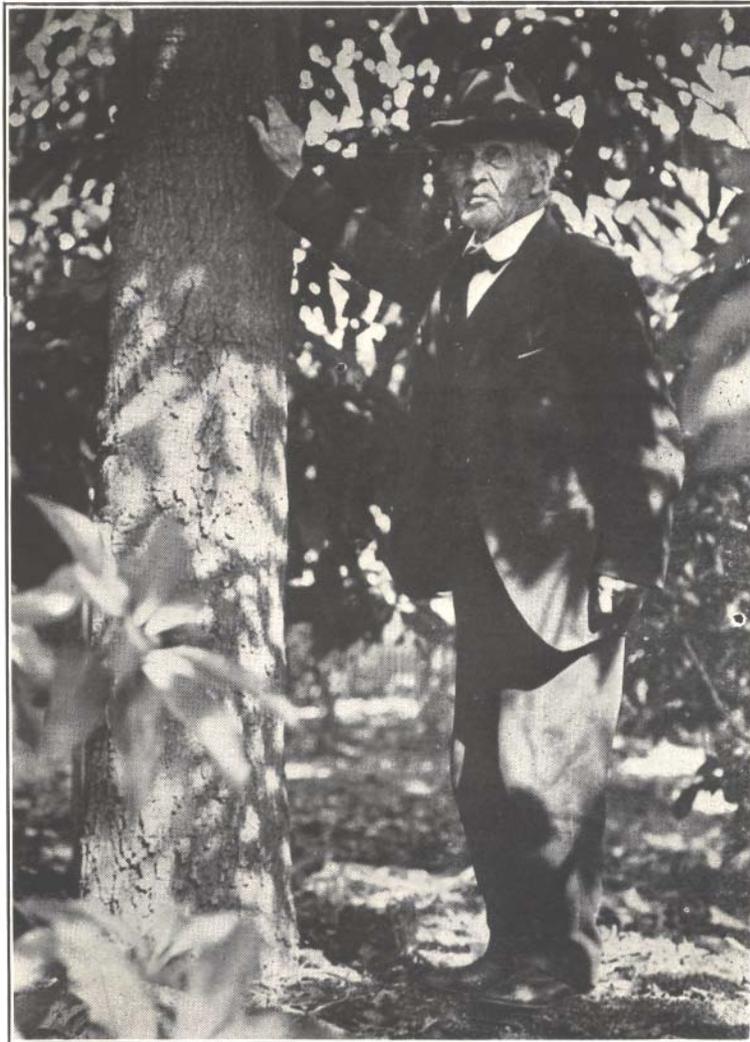
"In the early days the old tree which is now known as the "Miller" was crowded into a garden of a great variety of plants, and under those conditions it bore very sparsely. A young pine which was planted on the side of the morning sun shut out the light and sunshine and the avocado soon showed signs of its influence.

"About 1896 it was found necessary to transplant the avocado to its present location about a city block north of its original location. It revived and in two years was again bearing fruit. It is this year bearing the heaviest crop in its history some of the branches being very heavily laden with fruit and the entire tree ranking as very prolific.

"In the early days the seeds of the fruits were planted by my father and little by little quite a collection of trees was gathered. These trees were sold or given to numerous persons who had eaten the fruit at our home and wanted to take a tree with them. In this

manner seedling trees from the Miller were quite widely distributed. Later budded trees were also given out.

"If it had not been for the tender care given these first trees they probably would have been lost to California for many years. To my mind it was my father's natural love for all plants that made it possible for California to begin at such an early date to figure in the history of the avocado industry." history of the avocado industry."



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