

The Up and Doing Editor of THE MINNESOTA Farmer and Gardener

Marjorie Kreidberg

"IT IS EXPENSIVE business—the publishing of a journal like the *Farmer and Gardener*," wrote Lyman M. Ford, editor of the state's first agricultural publication. The initial 32-page issue appeared in November, 1860, the last in April, 1862. Short-lived as the journal was, it remains a rich archive of contemporary farm life, agricultural progress and problems, a record of early effects of the Civil War. Here are descriptions of women's work, plans for state and county fairs, agitation for railroad development, instructions for building an ice house, a greenhouse, and a smokehouse. Here are persuasive appeals for "home manufactures" needed in the young state: barrels for shipment of grain, pork, and flour to out-of-state markets, the forging of plows, man-

ufacture of grain cradles, horse rakes, forks, spades, and other farm implements, woolen mills for the "Lowell of the west," pottery and glassmaking, all the "kinds of business that will pay." Here is the exuberant optimism of the pioneer orchard farmer ("Let the 'croakers' who are forever lamenting the fear that 'apples won't grow in Minnesota' now dry up") and the guarded optimism of the editor who reported the discovery of iron ore in Morrison County—if it "abounds" it will be a source of great wealth in the upper country, in time." Here is the fulfillment of Ford's objective to publish a journal that "should be taken and read by all classes of our citizens"—farmers, gardeners, "owners of a lot or yard," businessmen, ladies, politicians, teachers, naturalists, and all who intended to make Minnesota their home.¹

The *Farmer and Gardener* was born in a spirit of optimism even though its history is a record of starts and stops and sputterings. A strong supporter of the movement to start the paper was Colonel John H. Stevens, one of Minnesota's prominent early citizens, who was active in state and county agricultural and horticultural societies. In 1861 he managed the *Glencoe Register* in McLeod County. Later he served as Minneapolis' first register of deeds, a state legislator, and at various times newspaper founder, including two agricultural journals that followed the *Farmer and Gardener*.²

Stevens was on the executive council of a newly or-

¹ *Minnesota Farmer and Gardener*, 1:2, 32, 202, 204, 281, 309 (November, 1860, July, August, October, 1861), hereafter this will be cited as *F and G*. Only two sets of the journal are known to exist; both are in the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) library. See also Theodore C. Blegen, *Minnesota, A History of the State*, 372 (Minneapolis, 1963). The author is indebted to Alan Woolworth, research fellow at the MHS, for special help in searching out Ford's activities in Minnesota.

² Here and below, see Isaac Atwater, ed., *History of the City of Minneapolis*, 979 (New York, 1893); Merrill E. Jarchow, *The Earth Brought Forth: A History of Minnesota Agriculture to 1885*, 11 (St. Paul, 1949). Jarchow's book is the most complete account of early agriculture; it names the newspapers that followed the *F and G*. On Stevens, see Daniel S. B. Johnston, "Minnesota Journalism in the Territorial Period," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 10:328 (St. Paul, 1905); *F and G*, 1:3, 326, 352 (November, 1860, November, December, 1861).

Mrs. Kreidberg, whose articles have appeared in earlier issues of this journal, is the author of *Food on the Frontier: Minnesota Cooking from 1850 to 1900* (1975).



LYMAN M. FORD, about 1890

ganized state agricultural society. Meeting in St. Paul in March, 1860, its members agreed that an appropriate paper for the state's farmers should be started but with no "pecuniary aid" from the society. Stevens quickly volunteered to take responsibility for the publication that became *The Farmer and Gardener*. L. M. Ford, another member, founder of the state's first successful nursery, offered to conduct the horticultural department. Others agreed to contribute to the paper and to get subscribers. When Stevens returned to Glencoe, he realized his "home interests" were too many to permit him to engage in so hazardous an undertaking. The influential farmers turned to Ford, who agreed to take on the enterprise, and Stevens then offered to serve as assistant or corresponding editor. Consequently the names of both men appeared on the masthead of each issue.

Ford arrived in Minnesota from Saratoga County, New York, in 1850, when he was 25 years old. Although he had lived on farms until he caught the "western fever," at some time during his early years he qualified as a teacher. That was his declared profession when he reached the state. Ford secured a claim of 160 acres between St. Paul and St. Anthony, "valued at \$680, that was to become the Groveland Nursery."³

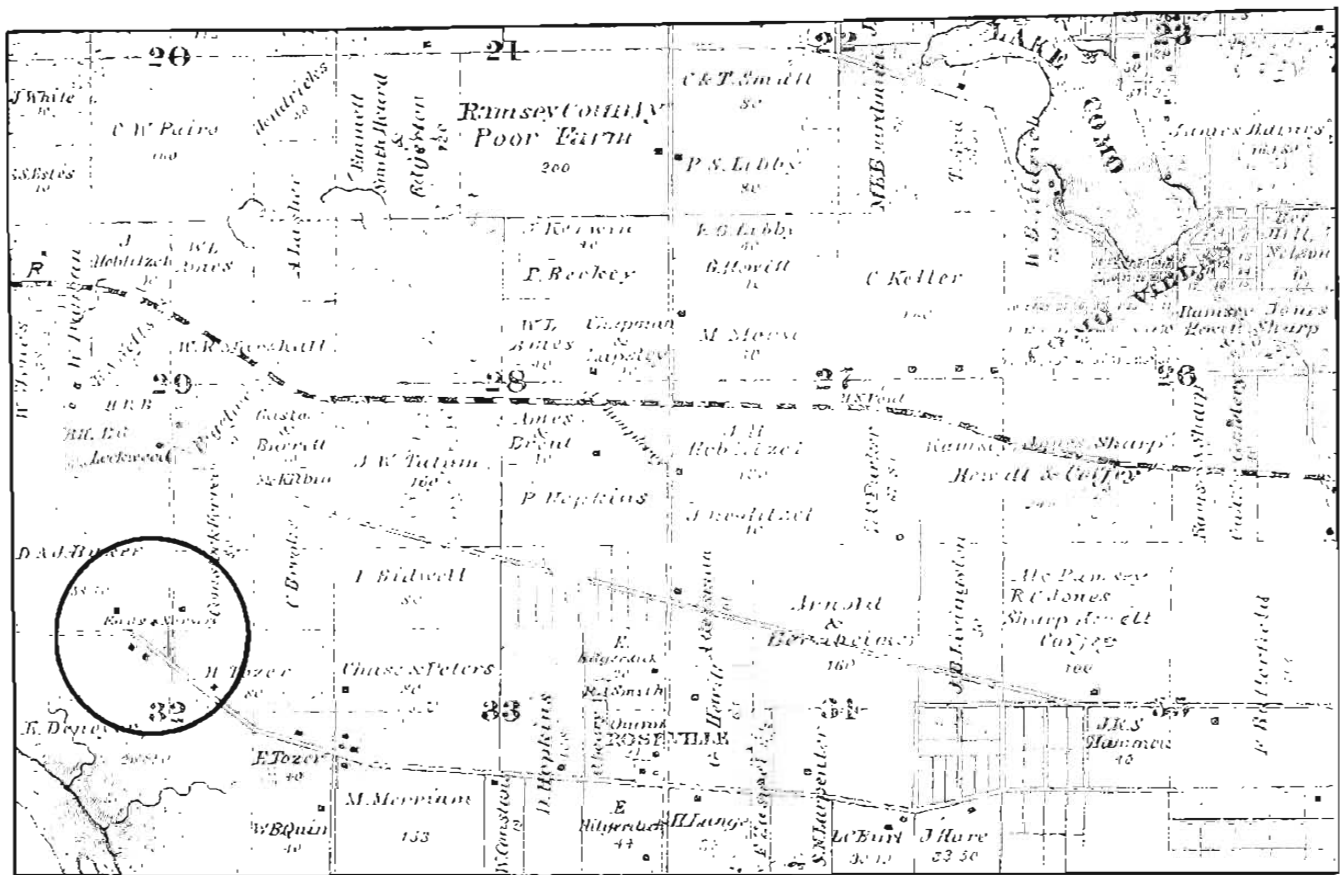
Years later Ford recalled his first winter in the state, when he "taught a class in French and a singing school, which was the first ever organized in that upper country." He also helped start a school district and took charge of the new school when a "suitable teacher" could not be found. In 1852 he was still involved in teaching part of the time, but the following year he established the "pioneer nursery" on his land by "taking up some apple trees that came up in the dooryard of the small building standing on the place when bought."

Ford expanded the nursery stock to include vegetables, small fruits, ornamental trees, evergreens, shrubbery, and later, flowers. Precisely when the pioneer greenhouse was built is not known, but before 1855 the enterprising Ford secured an experienced "bouquet maker" from Cincinnati who put together "floral luxuries" for anyone who would go to the Groveland Nursery to get them. In those early years one of Ford's profitable decisions was the purchase of 200 "clumps of Turkey rhubarb for \$200 from an Ohioan"; within a year he sold the "leaf stalks and roots" from the plants for more than \$400. He remembered selling certain early-bearing strawberries that yielded 40 cents a quart "before others got a start in that line." Ford furnished printed catalogs with price lists and advertised in locally published books and newspapers and later in the *Farmer and Gardener* even though for some years his

³ Here and below, see L. M. Ford, "Autobiography," in *Minnesota Horticulturist*, 26:281 (August, 1898); Patricia C. Harpole and Mary D. Nagle, eds., *Minnesota Territorial Census, 1860*, 61 (St. Paul, 1972). The state's first nursery was started by Rufus P. Upton, a St. Anthony pioneer, in 1851 on the lower part of Nicollet Island; R. I. Holcombe and William H. Bingham, eds., *Compendium of History and Biography of Minneapolis and Hennepin County, Minnesota*, 50 (Chicago, 1914). On the naming of Groveland, see *Minnesota Democrat* (St. Paul), July 29, 1851.



COLONEL John H. Stevens, Ford's assistant editor



FORD'S NURSERY, lower left, shown here on an 1867 plat map of Rose Township

nursery was the only source of plants and bouquets in the region.⁴

During a trip to Davenport, Iowa, in 1854, Ford obtained certain varieties of fruit and ornamental trees, flowers, and house plants "Not heretofore introduced into Minnesota." He increased his holdings in the fall of 1855 when he bought the St. Paul Nursery, but during the winter that followed he lost most of the pear, plum, and cherry trees he had in stock at both establishments. Such clear evidence that only some varieties could withstand Minnesota winters led him to caution residents against buying trees and plants from nurseries "below" where winters were not so harsh. He suggested that Minnesotans be chary of Janesville or Racine, Wisconsin, nurserymen who were attempting to sell roses for one dollar that "are not worth 10 cents in this local-

ity." Three years later a St. Paul newspaper reported that "Minnesota seeds are in great demand at the South, and that their peculiar excellence consists in their quicker germinating qualities over those raised in that locality. Mr. Ford, of the Groveland Nursery, shipped yesterday for St. Louis nearly a hundred boxes of seeds of his own raising."⁵

After 1855, when Ford married Abbie Guild in Sandusky, Ohio, he always referred to the nursery in terms of the partnership of himself and his wife. When the couple left Sandusky for Ford's "cherished Minnesota" they carried roots from the bride's favorite flowers. Abbie Ford took an active interest in the nursery greenhouse. Soon some of the flowers became known as "Mrs. Ford's plants, which she would train for the fairs of St. Paul and Minneapolis or for presents to intimate friends." She arranged a bridal bouquet of roses, her husband wrote, "the first seen in all that upper country containing such flowers." Perhaps because the couple had no children, Abbie had more time to devote to her husband's greenhouse and the successful floral business. The beauty of the Fords' handiwork displayed "refined and cultivated taste" and transformed their grounds into "a fairy-like spot," according to pioneer teacher, Harriet E. Bishop. Ford took pride in his wife's

⁴ Ford, in *Minnesota Horticulturist*, 26:282; *Groveland Garden and Nursery Catalogue* (St. Paul, 1855); *Minnesota Weekly Times* (St. Paul), May 24, 1856, May 1, 8, 1857; A. D. Munson, ed., *Minnesota Messenger*, 50 (St. Paul, 1855); all issues of the *F and G*. The nursery stood on Raymond Avenue three blocks south of what is now University Avenue.

⁵ *Weekly Minnesotian* (St. Paul), April 29, 1854; *North-Western Democrat* (Minneapolis), March 22, 1856; *St. Paul Pioneer and Democrat*, October 27, 1859.



ABBIE G.
FORD, in the
early days of
her marriage

accomplishments and her role as attendant at the various fairs where Groveland Nursery products were displayed.⁶

Fair exhibits and advertising contributed to the prosperity of the nursery. In 1856, when an addition to the greenhouse was nearly completed, fire destroyed the entire structure and its contents. Ford estimated the loss to be between \$1,200 and \$1,500. Eight years later the Fords were victims of another, more costly fire. Their house, "a comfortable villa," an adjoining seed house, other "outbuildings, a printing office, and store house" were consumed in the blaze, which was thought to have started from a "spark flying out of a chimney, and getting under the shingles, which, from the long drought, easily ignited." A barn, a hothouse, and the winter nursery, standing some distance from the residence, were spared. Furniture and clothing were saved, but the Fords lost a "splendid horticultural library" and other books and ledgers. Some of the "most valuable specimens of evergreens in the Northwest" were destroyed. One newspaper reported that the printing materials had been rescued. Only days before the severe fire, the fences around the property had been partially burned in a prairie fire. Ford calculated his "loss on buildings and stock, at over four thousand dollars, on which there was no insurance."⁷

THE PRINTING MATERIALS on hand at the Groveland Nursery were acquired in the fall of 1860 specifically for the *Farmer and Gardener*. Initially Ford had planned to have the typesetting done at a print shop in St. Paul until "several presses with material for printing a paper were offered [to him] on advantageous terms." By the time the second issue of the journal was ready, it was produced on the "first printing paper manufactured in Minnesota or the great North-west," produced in St. Anthony at the mill of Cutter and Secombe.⁸

Ford believed "Home manufactures of all kinds are

very much needed in order to render a community wealthy and independent." He encouraged home industries, from plow factories to vinegar works. All "parties are benefitted," he wrote, if everything "we wear, use, eat, or in any manner use in our business" is produced in the state. "The thousands of mechanics, artisans, and factors of overcrowded cities and marts of the East, and old world, must be invited to settle here. . . . Thus the consumers of our beef and grain and pork are here where we can reach them."⁹

Ford tried to reach out as well to make the *Farmer and Gardener* a successful home industry. He directed his strongest appeal for subscribers to those who operated the 18,000 farms already established in the state. "Every farmer, however well posted he may be in regard to his business should take an agricultural journal. — Very few, at this day, are so old foggy as to think of doing without one or more of such papers." Farming in Minnesota was "entirely different," the editor wrote; therefore, the Minnesota agricultural paper was more useful and provides farmers an opportunity to "communicate with each other."¹⁰

Ford apparently limited his appeals to his own journal. His frequent attempts to win subscribers at the \$1 yearly rate failed in spite of offers of increasingly attractive premiums. In February, 1861, an agent who obtained a hundred subscriptions or more could earn a cash reward of \$40 in addition to his commission and either a fruit or ornamental tree, a shrub, or a plant chosen for him by the editor. To "every lady who will send us \$10 and twelve subscribers," Ford promised 25 "papers of choice flower seeds." Directions for the culture of the seeds appeared on each packet. For a single subscription sent to the *Farmer and Gardener* office with a postpaid envelope, five "papers" of flower seeds were mailed to the sender. Members of the clergy were offered a year's subscription for 50 cents. The list of premiums continued to increase, but the numbers of subscribers did not. Later, bonuses of agricultural books published by C. M. Saxton of New York were added to the list of premiums that included trees or farm implements of equivalent value. "Parties getting up large clubs of subscribers may secure a plow, fanning mill or something of great value." A sewing machine

⁶ Ford, "Mrs. L. M. Ford and Her Flowers," in *Minnesota Horticulturist*, 25:40 (January, 1897) and 26:282; Bishop, *Floral Home; or, First Years of Minnesota*, 152 (New York, 1857).

⁷ *Minnesota Weekly Times*, December 6, 20, 1856; *St. Paul Daily Press*, May 13, 1863; *St. Paul Pioneer*, May 14, 1863.

⁸ *F and G*, 1:56 (December, 1860).

⁹ *F and G*, 1:91, 283, 325 (January, October, November, 1861).

¹⁰ Jarchow, *Earth Brought Forth*, 10; *F and G*, 1:2 (November, 1860).

valued at \$50 was the premium for 150 subscriptions at the discounted price of 75 cents a year. Another inducement long available was a "clubbing" arrangement, an offer to "furnish the FARMER and either of the Saint Paul Weeklies for \$2 per annum."¹¹

In January, 1862, the editor wrote "Our present circulation is fair for the first year, but if one-tenth of those who might be benefitted by reading the FARMER and GARDENER would but subscribe, we should have a list of several thousand." Ford revealed he had fewer than five subscribers among the most "able and prosperous" farmers from the "largest and best counties" in the state. In general, he wrote, "those who have promised most in the way of sustaining us have actually done the least." While "many said we were sure to fail others asserted that the thing could not be done by any such *hard fisted tillers of the soil*; in other words, it required some *fancy chap with kid gloves and a gold headed cane*. We held a different opinion," he added "and have kept the FARMER and GARDENER above water most of the time at least."¹²

Still he was troubled that several thousand Minnesota farmers subscribed to eastern agricultural journals. On the "subject of fruit and floriculture, it is about as safe to follow the directions of the old man in the moon or his various signs, as to depend on any eastern paper that has come to our notice." Minnesota farmers need the "experience of our own cultivators in every department of the farm and garden." Ford encouraged correspondence from readers, published their letters, and reported individual experiences in crop and livestock production and fruit and flower growing. Despite the promotion of the journal as the true "guide" for farmers and its collateral value for people of other occupations, despite discounted subscription rates, practical and useful premiums, after 16 issues the "thirty-two page 8

vo. magazine, devoted to agriculture and horticulture gently departed 'where the woodbine twineth.'"¹³

THE PAGES of those 16 issues illuminate a time and a place as well as the spirit of a man who was neither a seeker nor maker of great fortunes, but a man of vision nevertheless. Ford published at a time when wheat was the farmer's staple crop. Paid for in gold or currency, converted to flour in Minnesota mills, it was shipped down river in flatboats, "a new feature in the trade of this upper country, and the best plan to be adopted until we get a railroad." The *Farmer and Gardener* chronicled the wheat story from sowing to stacking, from acreage planted to yield totals, from threshing costs to freight rates. Regardless of the ever-increasing importance of that crop, Ford urged farmers to cultivate other plants as well and named them. Hemp was one he recommended, a plant that could be turned into cordage, plowlines, and clotheslines that for state consumption alone would be profitable.¹⁴

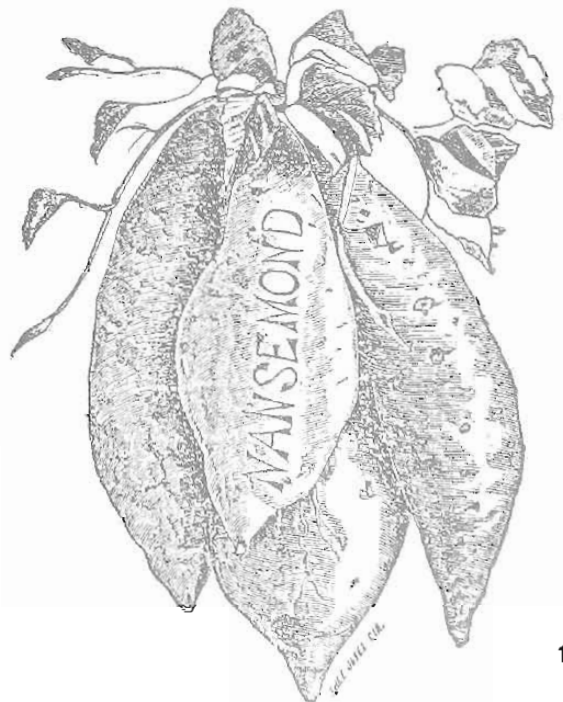
Ford never used the word "diversify" when he wrote his suggestions of other crops to plant, but the list was varied enough to provide farmers with wide-ranging ideas and practical choices. He wrote about a climbing herb called madder, used as a dye stuff, of sugar beets valuable for livestock feed, of hops for brewing, of grapes, chicory, sorghum, and sweet potatoes. Either grow sweet potatoes in Minnesota or "dispense with the luxury," he said. "We cannot afford to eat them — at least until more of the cloth we wear — the reapers, threshers, shovels, hoes, and a thousand other things, are made by our own mechanics, instead of being imported from other States." Ford called sweet potatoes and sorghum "Southern plants," but he was convinced both crops could be grown successfully in the

¹¹ *F and G*, 1:128, 188, 348 (February, June, December, 1861).

¹² *F and G*, 2:3 (January, 1862).

¹³ *F and G*, 1:186 (June, 1861). On eastern agricultural papers such as *The Cultivator* (Albany, N.Y.), *Farmer and Gardener* (Philadelphia), and *New England Farmer* (Boston) published at this time, see Stephen Conrad Stuntz, comp., *List of the Agricultural Periodicals of the United States and Canada Published During the Century July 1810 to July 1910*, 4, 81, 85, 112, 113, 121, 128, 139, 182 (U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Miscellaneous Publication No. 398*—Washington, D.C., 1941). Papers closer to Minnesota were published in Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. For a review of the state's journals, see Everett E. Edwards, "Agricultural Periodicals," in *Minnesota History*, 18:407-414 (December, 1937), C. C. Andrews, *History of St. Paul, Minnesota*, 360 (Syracuse, N.Y., 1890).

¹⁴ *F and G*, 1:80, 97, 107, 196, 204, 225, 271, 293, 2:45, 104, 111 (January, February, July, August, September, 1861, February, April, 1862).



"upper country." He drew on personal experience in sweet-potato culture in Minnesota when he named the best variety to plant, the ideal soil, and the good management that would yield a "fair crop—nearly every year." Even a "few rods devoted to their culture will produce enough for a family of ordinary size."¹⁵

Ford's concern turned away from the family dinner table to a timely profit-making opportunity when he urged farmers to raise sheep. To convince them of the potential advantage, he published letters to the journal from Minnesota's successful sheep raisers. He reported wool prices, suggested markets, and advocated establishment of a "home manufacturer" to convert fleece to wool. Here was a crop to provide "cash at the door at a season of the year when a harvest of this kind is especially acceptable to the farmer."¹⁶

Whether the subject was wool, grain, cranberries, beekeeping, buttermaking, or vegetable growing, the *Farmer and Gardener* clearly reflected Ford's conviction that the wealth of Minnesota was destined to come from agricultural resources. He encouraged newcomers to "cultivate the soil, which requires less capital than almost any other kind of business," pointing out to settlers of "limited means or no means at all" that "Good land" near St. Paul was available to rent for an annual payment of \$2 to \$3 per acre.¹⁷

Continued agricultural expansion needed the related support of "home manufactures" to build up "our home interests." In St. Paul "we have now quite too many merchants, lawyers, real estate dealers, doctors, clerks, mechanics, etc. What we do want here and in other towns of Minnesota is men of means who can engage in some kind of manufacturing business, as there are few things made in our State that are used and consumed largely every year." Ford lamented that only about 30 of 1,000 reapers sold in Minnesota were manufactured in the state. "When will these machines be made at home?" he asked. Patronize and encourage home manufactures, he stressed, "all kinds are very much needed to render a community wealthy and independent."¹⁸

ONE immediate benefit to farmers was an institution already in place, the Minnesota State Agricultural Society. And 28 county agricultural organizations provided opportunities for farmers to profit by exchanging information and experiences. Ford, a leader in both state and county bodies, tried to rally farmers to the cause of building strong local societies. Join, he wrote, hold fairs, attend, and exhibit. He praised, he prodded, he criticized. He urged holding fairs early, because "Farmers have not the time later in the season to leave their work, and we think the chances are better for good weather." He commended the lively newer societies in Blue Earth, Freeborn, and Faribault counties, ex-

pressing concern that many others—including Ramsey, Washington, and Benton—are not in "working order." He castigated the legislature for doing nothing to bolster the "now feeble" county organizations.¹⁹

In August, 1861, Ford applauded the Hennepin County society that "gets up the best fairs of any county in the State," but reminded the officers that "no really good fair can be gotten up without a good floral hall attached, and well filled with the sweet and beautiful. Nothing certainly is more attractive for the ladies, and should they not attend the Fairs, the men would soon follow their example, which would soon result in the death of any society."²⁰

As a special attraction for the fair of 1861, Ford invited Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*. He asked the eastern journalist to speak "not for political purposes—but in order to have him see our glorious wheat fields and water-falls; to witness the display of huge vegetables and roots at Fort Snelling—to inhale our Minnesota atmosphere, behold her clear skies, and to become acquainted with us and our State from personal observation. After such a visit, we think a much less number of those pushing westward, would seek a home in Kansas or Pike's Peak." Greeley accepted. Ford believed that his influence "would do much to send emigration to our State." The bitter defeat at Bull Run abruptly changed Greeley's plans. He wrote Ford that he could not leave his work at the *Tribune* until a "brighter day" comes to our "distressed country."²¹

In spite of Greeley's change of plans and the anguish of the war, Ford was determined to hold the fair. Minnesota "being at a great distance from the scene of strife," he argued, and the state's considerable dependence on farm products were sufficient reasons to schedule the event. To the editor's dismay, he stood alone

¹⁵ *F and G*, 1:35, 69, 70, 78, 79, 136, 227, 262, 264, 278, 293 (December, 1860, January, May, June, August, October, 1861).

¹⁶ *F and G*, 1:194, 195, 297, 368 (July, October, December, 1861).

¹⁷ *F and G*, 1:65, 67, 123, 211, 267, 292 (January, February, July, September, October, 1861).

¹⁸ *F and G*, 1:267, 312 (September, October, 1861).

¹⁹ *F and G*, 1:35, 99, 258, 268, 334, 362, 2:73 (January, February, September, November, December, 1861, March, 1862). Although other states appropriated as much as \$200 to \$300 to help county societies, the Minnesota legislature of 1862 refused to allocate \$25 to its county organizations.

²⁰ *F and G*, 1:232, 233 (August, 1861).

²¹ *F and G*, 1:66, 153, 172, 251 (January, May, June, August, 1861); Ford, in *Minnesota Horticulturist*, 26:282. The Fort Snelling fair location was changed to St. Anthony to save 1861 fairgoers the cost of "getting a team or paving for a passage to the grounds." By having the Fair at a large town there are several thousand who would have to go but a short distance."

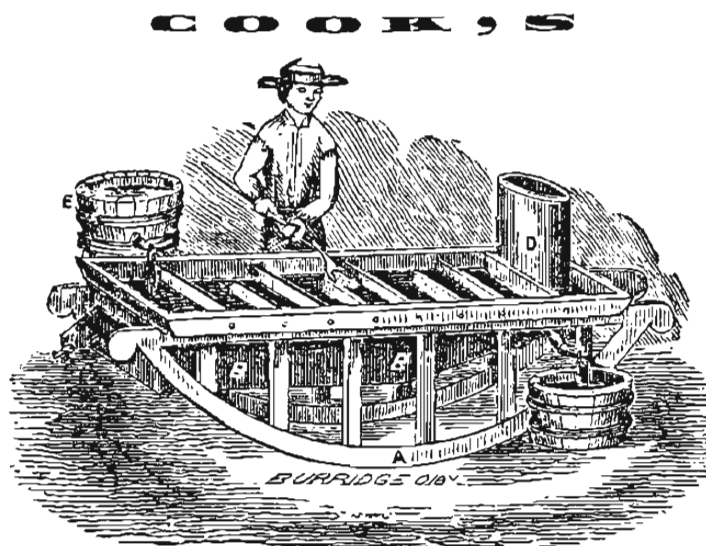
when the other members of the state agricultural society's board voted against holding the 1861 fair because of the "unhappy crisis." Later that fall he observed that the "war and the stormy weather interfered sadly with the Fairs this season."²²

With regard to the Civil War, Ford wrote "We do not propose to discuss this great subject, but merely as one of those who feed the world, to give our humble opinion in regard to the prospects for our agricultural interests." When the "national troubles" began, he commented on a universally held perception that "everything the farmer could raise would command a high price." Therefore he advised readers to grow all the crops practicable, and simultaneously warned them "not to get involved in debt by hiring too much help." He noted as well farm help "is not so easily obtained as heretofore, on account of the rush for the 'field of battle' instead of into the wheat field."²³

The unsettled conditions and corresponding high tariffs on sugar convinced Ford that state farmers already engaged in "sorgho-culture" would particularly benefit. He envisioned large-scale production of sorghum in Minnesota that would lead to a "great revolution in our agriculture." Ford was convinced that the plant could become more profitable than wheat and in time bring "millions of dollars" to the state. To support his claim he published letters from Minnesota farmers who described their experiences in sorgho-culture. The technique for "working up" the cane required a \$45 mill to extract the syrup and an evaporator of equal cost to convert the concentrated liquid into crystals. One farmer wrote he sold his best syrup for 70 cents a gallon and would "much rather raise an acre of Sorghum than an acre of corn."²⁴

Despite a war of "much greater magnitude than any body ever dreamed of," prices of all crops continued low in 1862. Ford expected a moderate improvement in the farm economy in April when the Mississippi opened to navigation and the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers would be "free for trade most of the way." He welcomed the prospect of the additional market for Minnesota's "surplus wheat, flour, corn, etc." Nevertheless, he repeated his warning to farmers to keep out of debt.

EACH ISSUE of the *Farmer and Gardener* began with a helpful outline of "Work for the Month," which provided readers with an agricultural calendar for the sea-



SUGAR EVAPORATOR

sons. On planting, for example, the editor recommended setting beets eight to ten inches apart; carrots, parsnips, vegetable oyster and "the like" closer, and onions at intervals of three or four inches. Hoe cabbages when the "dew is on," he wrote, "but never go near your beans or lettuce at such a time, or you will have plenty of rust and blight." Cultivate melons, cucumbers, and "other vines" only when dry. Tomatoes, beans, cabbages, and most things should be hilled up somewhat in hoeing. Vegetables will do better in hot and dry weather if the "soil is stirred up often and deep."²⁵

Look over every "department of the garden," Ford cautioned, to be certain the young growths are properly thinned. "It is much better to have less in number and more in size." And gardeners must get rid of "pesky weeds" that "monopolize" the garden. Weeding is "healthful exercise for ladies," inspiring them to rise early while the "dew is still on the grass, and the June roses scent the air." Nothing is better adapted to give an elastic step and rosy cheek without the chemist's rouge" and also save "many a doctor's bill." The editor's advice on growing flowers was directed to "ladies particularly" because of their "duty to make home pleasant and attractive, and if the 'woman folks' have no time to embellish the door yard and the flower garden, the men and boys must take hold."²⁶

Ford believed every front yard—even one "enclosed by a crooked rail fence"—needed the adornment of flowers and shrubs. Everyone should plant annuals because they are "not expensive, and a dollar will get twenty to thirty choice kinds." Larkspur, coreopsis, Drummond's phlox, and candytufts were considered hardy sorts. Ford instructed readers to avoid "rough fence stake, but have some made and painted green."

²² *F and G*, 1:265, 270, 334 (September, November, 1861).

²³ *F and G*, 1:161, 173, 2:1 (June, 1861, January, 1862).

²⁴ Here and below, see *F and G*, 1:36, 69, 136, 293, 2:1, 124 (December, 1860, January, May, October, 1861, January, April, 1862).

²⁵ *F and G*, 1:136, 211 (May, July, 1861).

²⁶ *F and G*, 1:145, 176, 211, 242 (May, June, July, August, 1861).

and they are an ornament as well as the flower which they are designed to support. . . Without neatness," Ford wrote, "pleasure grounds and flower gardens are by no means attractive, while if well managed they are a constant source of pleasure." During dry weather, when beds need watering, Ford cautioned, "It is of no use to give water in the ordinary way of pouring it on the surface of the ground, which soon evaporates and leaves the earth hard and in bad condition. Some of the soil should be removed before applying the water and replaced after it has become somewhat dry. When water is applied it must be done in a thorough manner."²⁷

Ford's monthly check list included not only all "beautiful and fragrant gifts of Flora" but "cherished" house plants as well. Those that were put into the garden during the summer needed to be covered in late September to prevent damage from frost, or dug up and brought back inside. Heliotropes, Ford warned, freeze easily and rose geraniums "endure but little cold." But he scoffed at people who "think it is too cold in Minnesota to keep house plants in winter. A good room and a suitable stove is all that is needed to keep them safely." Hardy plants—oleanders, monthly roses, hydrangeas, lemon verbenas, fuchsias, and chrysanthemums—should "remain in the cellar at least two or three months, in order to get a little rest." All plants kept in the underground enclosure required occasional watering if the soil became dry.²⁸

To skeptics in the state who said "we can't raise fruit," Ford countered with reports of successful fruit

growers and gave advice on the cultivation of apple trees and small fruits such as blackberries, raspberries, gooseberries, strawberries, currants, and particularly grapes. Many of his friends, Ford wrote, contemplated cultivating choice fruits in an orchard house, or some building in which the fruit would be protected in the winter. He remarked on the possibility of peaches, nectarines, and apricots that could be grown in such an environment, asking readers to submit any "new ideas on this subject." Pointing out that "not one family in a hundred" in the state enjoyed an adequate supply of fruit, Ford challenged all landowners to "raise a few seedling apple trees, and we will ensure a fortune to the man who will originate *one good hardy variety*." "Who will secure the fortune?" he asked. An immediate concern was to persuade Minnesotans to plant small fruits in "quantities sufficient for their own table, but also for market, drying, canning, and for wine."²⁹

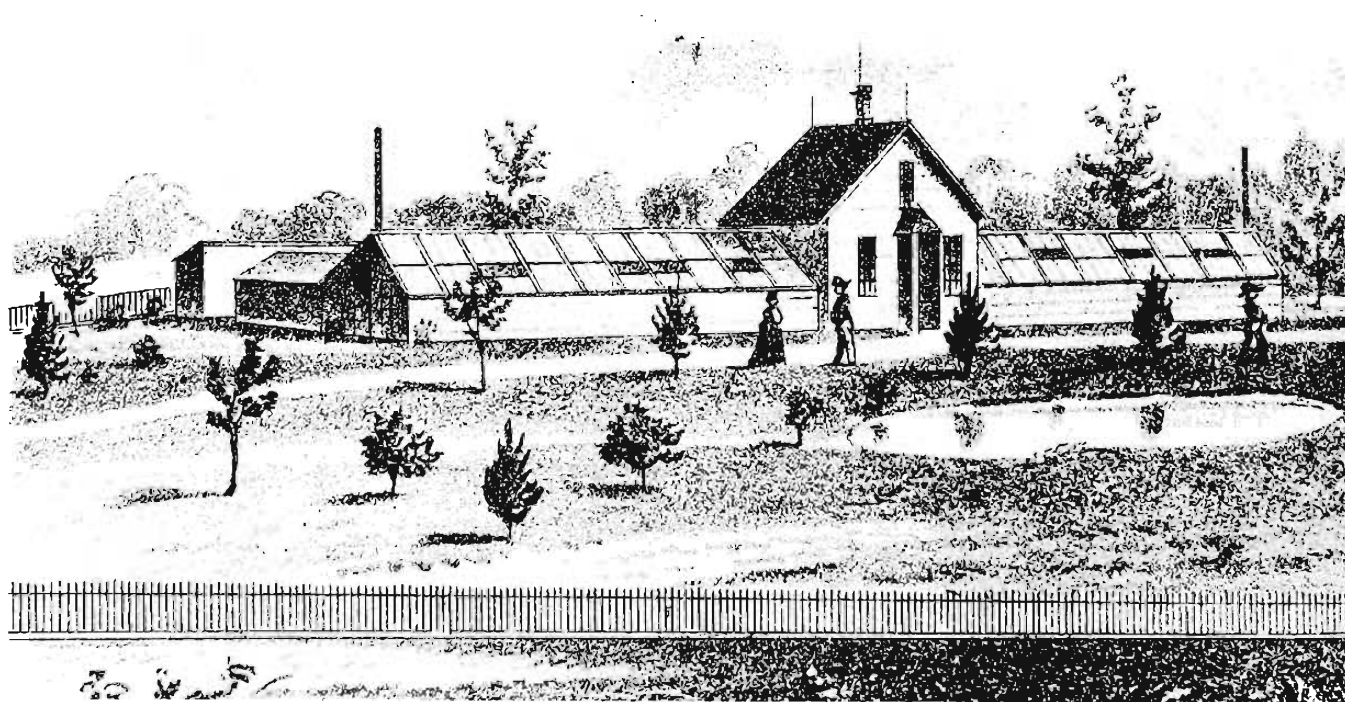
"It has become the fashion of late to use some kind of home made wine," the editor acknowledged, noting that in St. Anthony there was a "good deal in the way of wine making." The small fruits, either wild or cultivated, "make excellent wine." Success of some enterprising wine makers who fermented rhubarb juices

²⁷ *F and G*, 1:145, 243 (May, August, 1861).

²⁸ *F and G*, 1:213, 273, 368 (July, September, December, 1861).

²⁹ *F and G*, 1:48, 82, 276, 277 (December, 1860, January, September, 1861).

FORD'S GREENHOUSE and nursery in section 32 of Rose Township, as it appeared in 1874



convinced the editor to prepare several gallons: the result was so satisfying he suggested that readers "fond of pure wine will do well to make use of their rhubarb." Noting the production in Minneapolis of several thousand gallons of wine from Minnesota fruit, Ford considered it the beginning of another local industry. "If people will drink wine why not produce it at home instead of sending to France for it? especially as most of the imported article is made of drugs and poison."³⁰

To encourage fruit growing, Ford published recipes for rhubarb lemonade, ground-cherry pie, apple or gooseberry soufflé, and an unusual wine prepared with tomatoes. Another incentive was the reminder that "canning fruits is getting quite common" since the introduction of glass jars. "Every well regulated household in the land should have some of these cheap luxuries," Ford warned, "Do not in any case use tin cans, if you can possibly get the glass jars that are made for the purpose, and they will last forever if not broken."

Canning and preserving were traditionally women's tasks; breaking the sod and threshing, men's. Ford was openly sympathetic when he wrote "how the women folks dread" threshing time with a "host of mouths to feed." He was proud of the state's newcomers to farming who had "learned to earn their bread and eat it in the manner prescribed in the book of Genesis." Men who "despised hard work are glad to use the shovel or the hoe. Ladies have changed again to women.

Dainty hands, so soft and white in other days, are now often coming in contact with dough and dishes. Minnesotans are beginning to learn the truth of the old Roman motto—'quisque suae fortunae faber'—which, freely translated, means that every one must paddle his own canoe."³¹

At season's end Ford implored farmers to put away tools and implements in "proper places," to keep them in good repair. "A little time and money laid out in this way will save many a hard earned dime." In the absence of an adequate shelter, "cheap sheds" last for years and protect large implements or small tools from the ravages of weather. As late as November the editor continued to

remind farmers, "Implements will need gathering up before the snow, which may cover them before the month is out. In short, we urge all to be up and doing, and to keep doing until everything about the premises is ready for a long, cold winter."³²

IN a Thanksgiving tribute in 1861, Ford praised the harvest of a wheat crop claimed to be the "greatest ever produced in the Union by the same number of hands." "Our soil produces an abundance for man and beast, while the pure water of our fountains, streams and lakes, bring health and happiness in their train. Who indeed can boast of a better inheritance?" He went on to identify seven reasons why "farmers are generally healthier than professional men": they work more, developing "all the leading muscles of the body"; they exercise and breathe more oxygen; their food and drinks are purer and simpler; they "do not over-work their brain as much as professional men"; they sleep during hours of darkness, and "do not try to turn day into night"; they are not ambitious and consequently not worn out by rivalry; and their "pleasures are simple and less exhausting."³³

The attraction of Minnesota's "fine soil and delightful climate" made farmers of editors, doctors, and lawyers. Ford mentioned three physician-farmers, one in Dakota County, another in Cottage Grove, and a third who worked a large farm near the Stillwater Road six or seven miles from St. Paul. He tried to persuade a St. Paul lawyer, Henry F. Masterson, who claimed to have the "best show" of Isabella grapes in the state, to count the clusters that grew in his yard at 266 Summit Avenue. And Thomas M. Newson, former editor of the *St. Paul Daily Times*, who cultivated six acres on the shore of Lake Como, produced "nearly all the necessities for his family, besides many luxuries in the way of fruits and flowers." This convinced Ford that editors who farm "write quite as well and live a great deal better."³⁴

WHEN WINTER CLOSED IN, Ford announced the addition of a column on "educational matters" conducted by the superintendent of public instruction, the Reverend Benjamin F. Crary. "Minnesota is not yet able to have a strictly educational journal, nor is anything of the kind really needed," he explained. While he anticipated an increase in subscribers as a result, the editor assured his present readers that the journal would continue to report on "great and important interests of the *Farm*, the *Garden*, *Home Manufactures*, and whatever pertains to the development of our material resources."³⁵

In his first column, Superintendent Crary maintained that "Every intelligent farmer desires to understand the school laws and know the progress of education." At the same time, he said, teachers should study

³⁰ Here and below, see *F and G*, 1:219, 252, 265, 276, 283, 316, 345, 2:59, 60 (July, September, October, November, 1861, February, 1862).

³¹ *F and G*, 1:5, 53 (November, December, 1860). The proverb, *faber est quisque fortunae suae*, translates: "Every man is the maker of his own fortune." William Smith, ed., *Latin-English Dictionary*, 409 (London, 1872).

³² *F and G*, 1:54, 65, 97, 321, 2:33 (December, 1860, January, February, November, 1861, February, 1862).

³³ *F and G*, 1:52, 53 (December, 1860).

³⁴ *F and G*, 1:237, 238, 277 (August, September, 1861); Ernest R. Sandeen, *St. Paul's Historic Summit Avenue*, 99 (St. Paul, 1978).

³⁵ Here and below, see *F and G*, 1:371, 2:19, 20 (December, 1861, January, 1862).

agriculture and horticulture and the related sciences of botany and chemistry. Crary was cautious when he responded to a reader's question: "Can a District composed entirely of Norwegians, Swedes, Germans, French, or Hollanders, have public schools in their own language, and receive public school money for their support?" The state's policy, he wrote, is to "mould its inhabitants into one homogeneous and united people." As "rapidly as possible," he continued, "we should become one people, fulfilling in the highest sense our national motto 'E PLURIBUS UNUM.'"

In February Ford changed the paper's name to *The Minnesota Farmer and Gardener and Educational Journal*. Crary's column addressed the controversy in the legislature and the imminent threat to the continuation of the superintendent's office. The threat became reality by March when Crary's position was abolished; he called this a "flagrant public outrage—an offense which no man can justify who has not the instincts of a villain [*sic*], or the stupidity of a donkey." The column appeared again in April, still under Crary's by-line. His anger dissipated, he wrote about the pleasures of farming and likened education to vine culture and "successful teaching" to "successful husbandry."³⁶

There was no clue in the educational column nor anywhere else in the April, 1862, edition of the journal that the publication would not continue. In fact Ford offered a year's free subscription to anyone who bought seeds or "things from the [Groveland] nursery to the amount of \$5." He urged the county agricultural societies to "commence early to make preparations for the fairs" and promised to include the premium list for the Ramsey County fair in "our next number."³⁷

It did not matter that the editor of the *Minnesota Conserver* in Hastings wrote: "Ford gets up a decidedly better journal, adapted to our wants" than agricultural papers published in other states. It did not matter that many state newspapers copied *Farmer and Gardener* articles of special interest to their readers and took "considerable pains" to give proper credit to the journal and report on its value. It did not matter that a former territorial legislator, William H. Nobles, wrote Ford to congratulate him on a publication so "suitable to the real wants and interests of the citizens."³⁸

Failure of the journal was accelerated by such residents as a Stearns County man who said the *Farmer and Gardener* was "just the thing for a Minnesota farmer." He ordered the paper in March, 1862, counted on getting the free seeds, but allowed he would pay after the fall harvest. Ford had to "decline all such offers" because he had received a "number of similar letters," and had in good faith sent the paper. Instead he found nearly everyone to whom he sent it "forgot to pay—as agreed." Subscribers who defaulted and farmers and others unwilling to spend a dollar for the journal "es-



DIANA.

tablished expressly to suit our wants as a State" led to the inauspicious end of the *Farmer and Gardener*. Later Ford wrote "Things looked so dark ahead that we were compelled to give up its publication after some over a year's trial."³⁹

L. M. Ford did not attempt to start another agricultural paper, but he returned to journalism in the 1870s when Joseph A. Wheelock, editor of the *St. Paul Daily Press*, asked him to conduct a "Farm and Garden" column. Ford gave advice, commented on readers' letters, and included his personal observations on agricultural and horticultural subjects. He wrote about well-informed florists who "hardly know a Dutch bulb from an onion" and fail to understand the value of a "good cellar in plant culture." He considered John S. Pillsbury a "grasshopper governor" who should act like the "rebel raiders" to carry the locust war to the "gates of Washington, and even to the halls of congress." He warned a dry goods merchant who gave up his business to try farming that the work is not all "poetry and prosperity." Hard work, "pluck and perseverance are needed espe-

³⁶ *F and G*, 2:33, 50, 85, 86, 115 (February, March, April, 1862). For more on Crary and his position, see David L. Kiehle, "History of Education in Minnesota," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 10:302 (St. Paul, 1905); Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Annual Reports*, 1862, 1863, p. 7-14, 643-645.

³⁷ *F and G*, 2:124, 125 (April, 1862).

³⁸ *F and G*, 1:163, 188, 207 (June, July, 1861).

³⁹ *F and G*, 2:2, 3, 119 (January, April, 1862); Ford, in *Minnesota Horticulturist*, 26:282.

cially" to avoid failure. Ford complained about poor management of the 1876 State Fair and saluted a plan for a museum at the University of Minnesota to display geological specimens and agricultural and horticultural plants. He endorsed the development of an arboretum or "botanical garden" to be sponsored by the university, as "suggested some years ago in the *Press* by our friend J. W. Taylor, if we mistake not."⁴⁰

Throughout the period of Ford's editorial activity he and his wife continued to operate the Groveland Nursery until November, 1885. At that time Ford wrote, "My health being very poor, we concluded to try the climate of California. We rented our greenhouses and nursery, bade adieu to old friends, started our long journey and in due time landed in Southern California." After a year in Los Angeles, where Ford regained his health, they moved to San Diego and started a nursery "quite different from the pioneer establishment of Minnesota." He raised cactus and grew seeds for eastern nurserymen, but he also grew the begonias and ferns

that had become his wife's favorites. The first orchids to be seen in San Diego bloomed in their home.⁴¹

Abbie and Lyman Ford spent the remainder of their lives in the land of "perpetual summer and tropical surroundings." They never returned to the "upper country," but their abiding interest in the state and in their Minnesota friends was perpetuated through a frequent exchange of letters with leaders of the Minnesota Horticultural Society, which Ford had joined in 1868. He was named honorary life member in 1884 in recognition of his faithful service and contributions to the society's counsels.

When Ford's wife died in 1896 at age 72, he wrote a tribute to her in a poignant memorial poem that was published in the *Horticulturist* along with the condolences to an "old friend" from the secretary and members of the society. The secretary commented on Ford's letters that reflected the "happiness of himself and his wife and the pleasures of life." A year later Ford sent the *Horticulturist* a biography of his wife. "I could write a thousand things pertaining to her and our journey of more than forty years among the flowers," he wrote. "but the 'Horticulturist' has only room for a few items that ought to be recorded permanently, for as the years go by," he wrote prophetically, "information about the pioneers will increase in value."⁴²

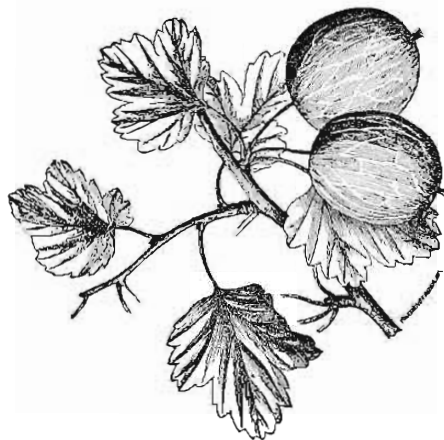
Lyman Ford died in 1904. His legacy to the state, *The Minnesota Farmer and Gardener*, endures.

THE PORTRAITS of the Fords, p. 192 and 194, are from *Minnesota Horticulturist*, 25:40, 26:281 (January, 1897, August, 1898); the plat on p. 193 is from L. G. Bennett, *Map of Ramsey County, Minnesota* (n.p., 1867); and the illustration on p. 198 is from the 1874 *Andreas Atlas*, p. 37. All other illustrations are from *Farmer and Gardener*, p. 78, 97, 112, 143, 274.

⁴⁰ *St. Paul Daily Press*, June 27, 1875, March 24, April 15, November 10, 18, 1876. The arboretum did not become a reality until September 6, 1958; *Landscape Arboretum*, April, 1960, p. 3 (University of Minnesota, Agricultural Experiment Station, *Miscellaneous Report* 38).

⁴¹ Here and below, see Ford, in *Minnesota Horticulturist*, 24:385 (September, 1896), 25:41, 26:282, 32:240 (June, 1904). The Minnesota Horticulture Society evolved in 1868 from the loosely organized Fruit Growers Society. Its stated purpose was "to improve the condition of horticulture, rural adornment and landscape gardening." *History of the Minnesota Horticulture Society*, 1, 2, 10, 38, 40 (St. Paul, 1873).

⁴² Here and below, see *Minnesota Horticulturist*, 24:385, 25:42, 32:240.





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