

Albemarle Pippin

Originated as early as 1666 in New York & may be even older. Its long & colorful history includes such characters as Benjamin Franklin & Queen Victoria. This variety became closely associated with Albemarle County Virginia where it was grown by Thomas Jefferson. "Pippin" means "seedling," a common term among heritage varieties that refers to a variety's beginning as a chance seedling, as opposed to being intentionally cultivated at first.

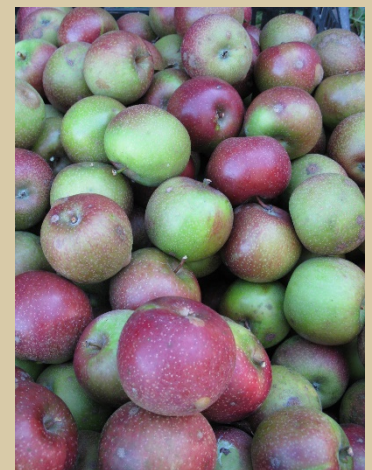
Ben Davis

In the late 1800s, Ben Davis was as popular as Red Delicious is today. It was the premier commercial apple of the time, being shipped & sold everywhere, and familiar to everyone. In the first decade of the 1800s, Kentucky resident Ben Davis planted a few apple trees that originated in either Virginia or North Carolina. Mr. Davis faded into obscurity, but his name became attached to the apple variety from his orchard. It gained enormous popularity and was planted throughout Kentucky and surrounding states. For about 40 years following the Civil War, Ben Davis was unrivaled as a market apple due to its hardiness in transport and its long shelf-life.



Brushy Mountain Limbertwig

Limbertwig is a family of apples consisting of at least 16 varieties. Pendant branches, as the name implies, is obviously a distinguishing characteristic, but some Limbertwig varieties don't fit this pattern. Many claim that there is a distinctive Limbertwig taste common to all these varieties. The specific origin of Limbertwigs is lost. The earliest record dates to the late 1700s in Virginia. The Brushy Mountains, located in the North Carolina foothills of the Blue Ridge, has been a significant commercial apple region for many years. The combination of high peaks & relatively level topography of the Piedmont results in a thermal belt where spring frosts are rare, meaning that apple crops are annually dependable & consistent.



BUCKINGHAM

The history of the Buckingham apple can be traced to Virginia where it was growing in 1777 under the name Byer's Red. This variety has the habit of producing numerous root sprouts, which can be easily dug and transplanted elsewhere. This characteristic made it popular among pioneers, who obtained many root sprouts in Buckingham County Virginia- hence the name. Another version identifies its origin with the Cherokee, who called it Equinetelee. Most likely it has a dual origin as separate but very similar varieties whose individual identities became mixed and thus lost. Apple historian Lee Calhoun calls it "the quintessential southern apple" for its long history in the region, its geographic range, and its many uses.

Buff

This apple originated among the Cherokee Indians in western North Carolina, but was named after a German settler who had this variety on his farm. Buff dates to at least the early 1800s. The Cherokee Indians readily adopted the European apple, and are responsible for cultivating many new varieties that survive to this day.



Carolina Greening

References to this apple of North Carolina origin can be found as early as 1763, but the specific circumstances of its beginning are unknown. It was widely popular in the South and became even more common as settlers migrated west of the Appalachians and took the variety with them. These fruits come from the offspring of an old tree in Ashe County that was among the last remaining in the area.

Clarke's Pearmain

Many apple varieties include "pearmain" in the name. Some sources say the term originated from the French "parmanus" meaning "from Parma" in northern Italy. Other varieties developed with similar characteristics as the original, & thus picked-up the same name. A more likely explanation is that "pearmain" comes from the same root word as "permanent," meaning an apple that keeps for a long time before rotting. Clarke's Pearmain originated in North Carolina & dates as far back as the late 1700s. Nothing is known about Clarke (presumably the person who first grew it). Thomas Jefferson grew this variety at Monticello.

Coffey Seedling (a.k.a. Dula Beauty)

Coffey Seedling, a local favorite in northwestern North Carolina, originated in the mid to late 1800s from the seed of the famous Red Limbertwig apple. It is the same as the Dula Beauty apple, though some sources list them separate. Mr. J.A. Dula in Caldwell County is responsible for growing the initial tree. Its popularity eventually spread throughout the Piedmont and mountains. The apple is a true beauty with its colorful skin and frosted appearance.



GRAGG



The Gragg apple originated around the time of the Civil War on the farm of James Gragg in Caldwell County, North Carolina. A local apple never grown far from its birthplace, Gragg nevertheless has been remarkably popular in northwestern North Carolina. Unlike many local varieties that became extinct or very rare, Gragg has remained in cultivation in the area to this day. An apple worthy of regional or national fame, Gragg is one of northwestern North Carolina's undiscovered apples.

HORSE

Horse is a standard heritage variety in the South, being widely distributed and well-known. It was the most popular apple variety before 1930. The origin of the name is unknown, but it could have sprouted in a pasture where it appealed to resident horses. Or, its vigor, ample productivity, and reliability could have resulted in its reputation as a “work horse” of apple varieties. Regardless, evidence suggests that the variety came from North Carolina in the 1700s.



Hunge



Hunge (the name comes from the word “hunger”) originated among North Carolina Moravians in the 1700s, & was widely grown during the 19th century. The variety was thought extinct until a single tree was found in North Carolina about 25 years ago and propagated. The apple can be used for cooking, as well as fresh-eating (flavor improves as fruit ripens in storage & becomes highly aromatic). The mottled fruit usually is covered by a russet net, although the extent of the russetting can vary greatly from apple to apple. This rough texture, a natural feature of the skin, is common among heritage varieties.

Lady

This diminutive apple originated in France over 400 years ago and was one of the earliest varieties grown in the American South. It is often used in Christmas wreaths due to its red and green color and tiny size; but it is good for eating as well. Much of the flavor is in the skin of the apple. Lady was wildly popular in the 19th century; commanding the highest prices.

Lewis Green

Lewis Green originated in Watauga County, North Carolina as early as the Civil War period, though an earlier date is possible. The story behind the name is unknown as well as other details regarding its beginning. Lewis Green came to the attention of the American Pomological Society in 1877, but it never gained widespread national attention, remaining a regional mountain variety to this day.

AMERICAN MOTHER

This northern apple from Massachusetts dates to the early 1800s and was popular in central North Carolina in the early 20th century. The origin of the name is unknown, but it obviously implies an individual family variety that gained fame and became widely recognized. Unlike most heritage cooking varieties, Mother also has an excellent, juicy taste for eating raw. Perhaps its most distinguishing characteristic is its aroma when fully ripe.



MOUNTAIN PIPPIN

Mountain Pippin, also known as Fallawater, originated in Pennsylvania prior to 1842. The variety was widely grown in several states, and old trees are still common in the mountains of North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. "Pippin" means "seedling," a common term among heritage varieties that refers to a variety's beginning as a chance seedling, as opposed to being intentionally cultivated at first.

Raven Egg

Also known as Black Gilliflower, the unusual shape of the apple has resulted in several synonyms including Crow's Egg and Sheepnose. This dry apple dates to at least the early 1700s in Connecticut, and could possibly be even older.



Smith's Cider apple

During the Revolutionary War, a group of Loyalists were arrested and imprisoned in Winchester, Virginia, an area well-known for its numerous apple orchards. Three prisoners were paroled to a farm in the area, and put to work planting seedling apple trees. One of the trees eventually produced exceptional fruit. Named "Smith's Cider" after one of the prisoners, the tree was extensively propagated. Primarily a southern apple, Smith's Cider was once widely grown across the South and into the Ohio Valley. The name is somewhat misleading because Smith's Cider is valuable for many uses other than its juice. A fine cooking apple, the fruit tends to hold its shape in various dishes. After the flavor deepens as it ripens off the tree, Smith's Cider is also a tasty apple for fresh-eating.

Smokehouse

Unlike modern varieties that are often the product of a governmental research station, heritage varieties usually have more humble origins. The Smokehouse apple originated in the early 1800s from a tree that sprouted near the smokehouse on the farm of William Gibbons near Lancaster, Pennsylvania. This apple became widely known by about 1836 and grew well throughout the South.

SNOW

Southerners call this apple "Snow" because of its vivid white flesh, but northerners know it by its French name "Fameuse" (famous) or more oddly "Chimney." Both names offer clues to its origin. During the French & Indian War, an area in Vermont was ravaged by combat and resulting fires, leaving only the chimneys of houses standing and numerous Snow apple trees planted there earlier. The locality was known thereafter as Chimney Point. The Snow apple became associated with this area, though its precise history is somewhat vague. Some say it originated at Chimney Point or nearby very early in the 1700s, while others claim that it was brought directly to the colonies from France about the same time. The Snow apple is a horticultural oddity because it is one of the very few apple varieties that reproduces itself true from seed.

SUMMER RAMBO

Summer Rambo is an old French apple that originated in Rembures (hence the name) France in the early 1600s. Colonists brought it to America early on, where it was popular in Virginia and Maryland.



Watauga

Also known as “Hoover,” the apple originated in Edisto, South Carolina with a Mr. Hoover. Despite its Low Country beginnings, it became very popular in the North Carolina mountains where it apparently picked up the name Watauga. Other synonyms include Thunderbolt and Black Coal, which hints at its deep red color. Watauga dates to at least the early 1800s, as it was first mentioned in an 1856 catalog.