As most Chapmans know, Johnny Appleseed was a nickname for one of the many John Chapmans. The son of Nathaniel and Elizabeth (Simons) Chapman, he was born September 26 1774 in Leominster, Worcester County, Massachusetts. He died, unmarried, in Fort Wayne, Allen County, Indiana March 18 1845.

Probably the most reliable account of the ancestry of Johnny Appleseed is that compiled by Miss Florence E. Wheeler and published in *OHIO ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL QUARTERLY*. Most of the genealogical account below came from her article. According to her research Johnny Appleseed or John Chapman was a descendant of Edward Chapman, a settler in Massachusetts, being there in 1642 and dying there April 18 1678. Edward married (1) Mary Symonds who died June 10 1658 and (2) Dorothy Swan who as Edward's widow married again. Children of Edward and Mary Symonds Chapman were: Simon, Mary, Nathaniel, Samuel and John.

Edward's son John Chapman married Rebecca Smith September 30 1675 and before his death November 19 1677 they had one child, a son, John Chapman born July 7 1676.

John Chapman, born 1676; died October 7 1739 in Tewksbury, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. He married Elizabeth Davis October 28 1702, and she died September 26 1736. Their children were: Martha, Elizabeth, Rebecca, John, and Davis.

John and Elizabeth's fourth child and first son, John Chapman, was baptized December 2 1714 and died December 7 1760 (January 23 1761) of smallpox in Tewksbury, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. He married (1) Martha Perley Boardman March 1 1739. She was the daughter of John and Jean Perley and the widow of Nathaniel Boardman. She died February 22 1753 (1752) at age 48. Their children were: Perley, Elizabeth, Martha, and Nathaniel. John married (2) Mrs Martha Hunt July 5 1756 and she died April 27 1786. Their children were Patty and Mary.

The fourth child of John and Martha Perley Boardman Chapman was Nathaniel Chapman born September 13 1746. Because of the early death of his parents he and an older sister, Elizabeth, were raised by his uncle Davis Chapman. He married (1) Elizabeth (Elisabeth) Simons. The marriage intention was recorded in the church record August 9 1769 and the recorded date of the marriage is February 8 1770. Early military records show that Nathaniel was in service as a private as early as 1775 so he would have been away from his young family. Elizabeth, the daughter of James and Anna (Lawrence) Simons died July 18 1776. Their first child Elizabeth was born November 18 1770 then a son John (Johnny Appleseed) was born September 26 1774. Nathaniel was born June 26 1776, while his father was away in service and just about three weeks before the death of his mother. Johnny Appleseed and his sister Elizabeth were baptized June 25 1775. Nathaniel re-enlisted for three years in 1777 after the death of
his first wife and he became a Captain of wheelwrights until honorably discharged in August 1780. He was stationed at the arsenal at Springfield, Hampden County, Massachusetts where he met Lucy Cooley who he married July 24 1780, at Longmeadow, and by whom he had ten children: Nathaniel, Abner, Pierly, Lucy, Patty, Persis, Mary, Jonathan Cooley, Davis, and Sally. Nathaniel moved to Longmeadow, Hampden County, Massachusetts before he married the second time. In 1805 he and his family moved from Longmeadow to the western country. Nathaniel died February 18 1807 at Salem, Washington County, Ohio.

A very good account of the life of Johnny Appleseed was published in DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION MAGAZINE "JOHNNY APPLESEED, A Living Force in the Life of America" by Elvah McGuire Clayton. Much of the following came from this article. Another account was published in TALLON LIGHT Vol 6 #3. It was written and presented by Frank O. Chapman for the Brooke County Historical Association, April 20 1967. Some of the following comes from this account. Undoubtedly the best source of documented facts pertaining to Johnny Appleseed is JOHNNY APPLESEED SOURCE BOOK, Robert C. Harris 1949.

Nathaniel, father of John Chapman (Johnny Appleseed), was supposed to have been a minute man at the battle of Concord, served with Israel Putnam at Bunker Hill and was with George Washington at Valley Forge.

It is probable that Johnny Appleseed lived with the family of his father and stepmother in Longmeadow where he studied enough to read and write his name. He must have been a good student and received above average opportunity for formal education for this period. Some say he graduated from Harvard University, but Harvard has no such records. It was known that he read extensively and that his speech was that of a man of letters. He was familiar with the Bible from cover to cover and every description of him includes his Bible.

Situated near the busy Connecticut River between Springfield Massachusetts and Hartford Connecticut, Longmeadow probably influenced Johnny and his later desire to travel and move along the waterways. He was eight when the Revolution was over and the next year England ceded all the territory south of the Great Lakes and east of the Mississippi River to the United States. At the time of the first U.S census in 1790 Johnny was sixteen and was living in a house full of younger brothers and sisters and in 1792 he was eighteen.

Young John, even in childhood, loved nature and spent much time along the streams and in the woods. Stories are told of pet squirrels, rabbits and birds who fearlessly came to him at his whistle or call. He aggravated many a trapper of the area by freeing the game and caring for their injuries.
As a small boy he worked on Mr. Crawford's farm near his home, on which there was a large apple orchard. Mr. Crawford is credited with giving John his first training in the care of trees and fruit.

In 1794 Johnny and his half-brother Nathaniel, headed west on foot. By the mid 1790's he was working as an orchardist as far west as the Susquehanna region of Pennsylvania and as the Indian Wars were over he moved westward. Johnny had a religious upbringing and it is said his mother's farewell words were: "I go that I might glorify God." Even before he had begun to plant orchards Johnny had taken up his new faith.

Johnny belonged to a small group known as the Swedborgians, a faith (later called Church of New Jerusalem) based upon the doctrines of Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish baron, scientist and inventor, who, while searching for an explanation of the universe, came upon God. He believed himself to be divinely appointed to unfold the spiritual sense of the Holy Scriptures and devoted himself to writing many books on the subject. His followers founded the church of New Jerusalem, and young John could not have been lacking in intelligence to have interested himself in the doctrines of this new creed. While he may not have understood the whole, he made use of the heart of it; love—love of God for man and of man for God—love of all creation in a universe wherein the spiritual world is as real as that lesser one in which we move. With his Bible, his religious tracts, and his seeds, Johnny Appleseed went ahead of the great immigrant flood ever sweeping westward.

With his earnings, John purchased a fertile piece of land overlooking the river and the main trail, built a cabin near a spring, and became a well-known resident. General Harris who was in command of the fort at Pittsburg owned a large farm on which there was an apple orchard. This orchard especially interested Johnny, and because of his previous experience with trees, General Harris hired him to care for the orchard. With seeds from the Harris orchard, he soon had an orchard started on his own land.

He was almost possessed with the idea that every pioneer going west should have an apple tree. He began feverishly to collect seeds from the cider mills, and after cleaning, sorting, drying them thoroughly, packaged them in little buckskin bags to give to every family moving west.

He practiced the Van Mons theory of improving fruit by seedling rather than by grafting or budding. He was not unique in that he planted seedling nurseries, for many early nurseriesmen planted seeds, but they did not move from place to place as he did. He planted with an eye to future markets, and seldom did he make a poor choice. It is uncanny how many towns have arisen on or near his nursery sites.

General Harris trusted Johnny and sent him on a business errand to Greensburg, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania bearing
an introduction to Judge John Young. Judge Young was an ardent disciple of Swedenborg and upon learning of Johnny's interest in religion, the judge supplied him with books and tracts. It was here that he learned how he could procure church tracts for distribution among the settlers. Now as he traveled he carried his healing herbs such as snakeroot, dogfennel, mint and flowerseeds along with his Swedenborgian tracts, Bible and appleseeds. He was always welcomed when he knocked on the frontiersman's door.

In 1798 Congress donated public lands for some refugees who fought the British in the Revolutionary War. Grants of land ranging from 160 to 2,240 acres were awarded. Johnny went ahead and planted his nurseries before the refugees arrived, and when the first settlers came in 1809 his trees were ready for the market. In 1800, when he was 26 years old, John Chapman appeared on Licking Creek in what is now Licking County, Ohio.

Many stories are told of his service to early settlers and how he warned of the approach of Indians who, for some reason never molested him. Settlers were able to reach the safety of the blockhouse because they had been warned in time.

In about 1802 he had collected bushels of appleseeds and the call to plant them overcame him. He had befriended a widow and her four children left stranded in Pittsburg when her husband was killed. He gave her his cabin, his orchard and his cow and soon thereafter was seen floating down the Ohio River with two canoes tied together and loaded with appleseeds which he had replenished from the cider mills at Pittsburg. Usually he took up his two-year-old saplings, packing them in wet moss or earth, leaving them at some trustworthy station, tavern, trading post or cabin. Many were exchanged for food and clothing while others were outright gifts to the deserving.

Upon landing at Steubenville he announced that he had come to plant his seeds. This was a logical place for a nursery, for under the Harrison Land Law of 1800 Steubenville was one of the four Ohio land offices where a settler could buy land at two dollars an acre, making a down-payment of only fifty cents. The first nursery he planted in Steubenville was on the farm of Jess Thomas at the mouth of Georges Run, south of Steubenville. On his way back to Pittsburg in 1806 Johnny stopped to see his nursery and found Jess Thomas had moved west. Another farmer was living in the cabin, tending the nursery, and his wife and two children had died. He had sold hundreds of trees from the nursery to settlers for from three to five cents each and had saved the money for Johnny. Johnny cared for the man until he was well and strong again, and then as he was ready to leave, returned the money from the sale of the trees to the settlers telling them their need was much greater than his.

Tradition tells us that Johnny, in 1802, planted the seed on the Thomas Grimes farm in Washington Pike, east of Wellsburg, from which grew the apple tree later named Grimes Golden. This
tree was located in the state park on the south side of the highway and a memorial watering trough marked the location. The memorial was provided by the Franklin County Woman's club and was dedicated in 1922. It was Johnny's habit to plant nurseries, not one or even a few trees, and it is probable that Thomas Grimes either secured this seedling from the nursery at Georges Run, or planted it from seed from one of the little buckskin bags given to passing settlers at Pittsburg.

From Georges Run, there is no record of activity until Johnny reached Marietta, Ohio. Here he quickly became a fast friend of Dr. True who had the only apple tree growing in the village. Commander Whipple of the U. S. Navy stationed at Marietta, gave Johnny a small plot of land and asked that he plant a nursery. The Commander even released prisoners to assist Johnny with the planting. A story is told, probably true, of an epidemic of fever plaguing Marietta and how John Chapman and Dr. True worked tirelessly caring for the sick. Johnny was familiar with the common medicines of the time, and under Dr. True's guidance, was able to save many lives.

In the late summer or fall of 1805, Johnny's father and family arrived in Marietta. With Johnny as guide, father and half brother set out up Duck Creek leaving mother (Johnny's stepmother) and girls with friends in the village. Johnny led them to a fertile creek bottom about 25 miles up Duck Creek where they blazed a claim and built a large cabin. Johnny only stayed long enough to help raise the cabin and then he was off up the Muskingum river to plant more nurseries.

After the excitement of the War of 1812 died down, Johnny Appleseed worked his way over into the Maumee Valley. A treaty was made at the foot of the Maumee rapids in 1817 by which a large tract of land in the Maumee Valley was ceded to the United States. The "new purchase" was slow to attract settlers, but Johnny went ahead to plant for the market that would surely develop. He started a nursery about one mile from Defiance, Ohio, about 1828, the construction of the Miami Canal was recommended in 1824, and it was a natural procedure for Johnny to plant nurseries along the proposed route to Toledo.

In 1830 Fort Wayne, Indiana had recently become an incorporated town. The population was not more than four hundred--the forest crowded up to the very doors. The newcomers who arrived by river or trail were of a substantial type. They had real money in their pockets and they were land hungry. Surveying was being done for the building of the Wabash and Erie Canal and there was a scramble for lands along its route. By that time Johnny Appleseed's saplings could be ready to sell and to be transplanted to newly cleared farms.

In personal appearance he is described as small and wiry, of average height, quick in speed and restless in motion. His cheeks were hollow and his body spare because he walked so much and ate so little. His face and neck were bronzed and lined with
wind and sun. His eyes were dark and piercing. He is pictured as wearing a buttonless shirt, bloused over to form a pocket for his Bible. His trousers were short and frizzled at the bottom. As to the tow-linen coat with a hole cut for his head, that was not unusual. Many a circuit-riding minister cut a hole in a blanket and pulled it over his head wearing it for a coat.

For the next 15 years, Johnny was to know this area well. He may already have become acquainted with Fort Wayne. He knew Indiana before it became a state in 1816, for he had visited his half-sister, Persis, whose family had located prior to 1830 on a farm in Indiana's Jay County. So in the autumn of his 56th year he was buying and leasing acreage at Fort Wayne's land office.

For months Johnny went about his business, planting in Indiana and lower Michigan localities which were attracting settlers. But whenever he returned to Fort Wayne he saw changes, and to match its growth, he started additional nurseries on the St. Marys and St. Joseph Rivers.

Johnny Appleseed took leave of Fort Wayne frequently. He was still the zealous orchardist. True, he made his way down into the Wabash River country, and later on to the great Mississippi. It is said that he planted in eastern Iowa where Indian lands had been released and offered for sale. In 1843 he paid his last visit to Ohio. In 1836, when he was 62 he began expanding his real estate enterprises in Indiana.

One authority on Johnny Appleseed reported that he was not just a promiscuous scatterer of seeds. There are records showing that in the course of his long wanderings, he owned either by deed or long-time lease, no less than 22 properties, nearly 1200 acres in several counties in Ohio and Allen and Jay counties in Indiana. When he died, on one holding 15,000 seedlings were found. His lands were carefully chosen on sights where land values would increase. He cultivated his large plantings of seedlings, carefully re-setting the little trees in rows. He built brush fences around the tracts of land to keep deer and other wild animals from eating the seedlings.

In the spring of 1845 when Johnny was in his 72nd year word came that cattle had broken into a certain nursery in a northern Indiana county and he felt he must go to his trees. He returned sick and weary and sought the home of his old friend William Worth on the St. Joseph River. He had contracted pneumonia known then as the winter plague. A few days later William Worth reported "The old man died last night" and it was March 18 1845.

At the sawmill of Richard Parker, a plain walnut coffin was made for Johnny, and he was buried by his friends in a burial plot in David Archer's graveyard, two and a half miles north of the city of Fort Wayne. (The estate papers show that Samuel Fletter was paid $6.00 expense for a coffin.)

The following was contained in an article in the Fort Wayne
"Dies in this city on Tuesday last, Mr. Thomas McJanet, a stone-cutter, aged 34 years, a native of Ayrshire, Scotland, and on the same day in this neighborhood, at an advanced age, Mr. John Chapman (better known as Johnny Appleseed)."

"The deceased was well known through this region by his eccentricity, and the strange garb he usually wore. He followed the occupation of a nurseryman, and has been a regular visitor here upwards of 20 years. He was a native of Pennsylvania, we understand, but his home - if home he had - for some years past was in the neighborhood of Cleveland, O., where he has relatives living. He is supposed to have considerable property, yet denied himself almost the common necessities of life - not so much perhaps for avarice as from his peculiar notions on religious subjects. He was a follower of Swedenborg and devoutly believed that the more he endured in this world, the less he would have to suffer and the greater would be his happiness hereafter - he submitted to every privation with cheerfulness and content, believing that in so doing he was securing snug quarters hereafter."

"In the most inclement weather he might be seen barefooted and almost naked except when he chanced to pick up articles of old clothing. Notwithstanding the privations and exposure he endured he lived to an extreme old age, not less that 80 years at the time of his death - though no person would have judged from his appearance that he was 60."

"He always carried with him some work on the doctrines of Swedenbourgh with which he was perfectly familiar, and would readily converse and argue on his tenents, using much shrewdness and penetration."

"His death was quite sudden. He was seen on our streets a day or two previous."

James H. Gordon sent us an excerpt from a typewritten copy of a letter dated July 14 1907 written by Lusina L. Sargent to Frederick A. Carpenter: "I have visited with a Mrs. Harper, seventy four years old, who in her youth lived near Mansfield, Ohio. She knew John Sherman and her grandfather had apple trees grown from seed furnished by "Johnny Appleseed" whose real name was John Chapman. He carried seeds from the cider mills of Pennsylvania all through Ohio and Indiana and is made to play an important part in a novel called "Lazarre"."

The following is from a Monument, Dexter City, Ohio:

Without a hope of recompense,
Without a thought of pride,
John Chapman planted apple trees,
Preached and lived and died.

It is said that when news of Johnny's death reached Washington, D. C., General Sam Houston, hero and one of the first two United States Senators from Texas, stood in Congress and said, "This old man was one of the most useful citizens of the world in his humble way. He has made a greater contribution to
our civilization than we realize. He has left a place that never can be filled. Farewell, dear old eccentric heart, your labor has been a labor of love and generations, yet unborn, will rise up and call you blessed."

When General William Tecumseh Sherman, one of the famous generals of the Civil War, heard of Appleseed's death at Fort Wayne, he was deeply affected, according to accounts in old publications. The general had lived in Mansfield and Ashland, Ohio during the years of Johnny's wanderings and work there. General Sherman said, "Johnny Appleseed's name will never be forgotten in Ohio. His work has given a degree of prominence and stability to many a frontier village. As wealth increases and the country becomes more settled, we shall realize more and more the value of the work he has done. We will keep his memory green, and future generations of boys and girls will love him, as we who know him in the Ohio Valley have learned to love him."

Long after his death a group of 42 papers were found as part of Johnny Appleseed's estate. Few estates filed in that time comprised so many different documents. They showed that he was hard hit by the depression of 1837 and from then on until the time of his death he found it difficult to pay the taxes on his many holdings, and in his estate several items appear attesting to parcels of property being sold for taxes. One parcel of Allen County, Indiana land was sold at tax sale to Frances Aveline for only $4.50. Two other parcels were sold for taxes at $2.84 and $5.83.

At the time of his death John Chapman was indebted to his brother-in-law, William Broom, of Wabash Township, Jay County, Indiana, for $155 for making improvements on "Appleseed's" Jay County land.

Litigation connected with the estate ate up considerable of its assets, the estate papers indicated. Expenses of the administrators to appear in the courts of Ohio and Indiana seeking to push suits in behalf of the estate for moneys or property owing John Chapman, consumed considerable sums of the estate's funds and it appears that but relatively small returns were realized from these efforts after all the many incident expenses were taken care of.

Although a copy is not available the estate papers show that according to law a notice of the sale of property from the estate of Johnny Appleseed appeared in the Fort Wayne Sentinel of September 30 1848.

INTERESTING EVENTS RELATED TO JOHNNY APPLESEED

The first known monument erected to John Chapman was in 1882 on the site of the Copus Massacre in Ashland County, Ohio near Mifflin.

The next came in 1890 when a tall marble monument was
erected at Mansfield, Ohio in the Sherman-Heineman Park as a gift in memory of Appleseed, designated as "Pioneer Nurseryman of Richland County from 1810 to 1830".

John Chapmans burial site was neglected until 1912 when the Indiana Horticultural Society, with appropriate ceremonies, erected an ornamental iron fence around the plat and installing a bronze tablet with his name and dates of birth and death.

In 1915 another monument was erected to the orchardist's memory at Ashland, Ohio, by the children of the public schools. The marker is formed of boulders collected in Ashland County and its inscription follows: "In memory of Ashland County pioneers, including Johnny Appleseed, John Chapman, an Ohio hero, patron saint of American orchards and soldier of peace. He went about doing good. ..."

On May 5 1916 a monument was erected in Swinney Park, Fort Wayne, Indiana and considerable ceremony was involved with the dedication of the huge granite boulder.

In 1935 a Granite marker was dedicated at Johnny Appleseed's gravesite. The marker was a boulder taken from a farm where a century before Johnny had a nursery with 15,000 trees. Inscribed on the marker are the outlines of an apple and the Holy Bible and the words, "Johnny Appleseed - John Chapman - He live for others - 1774 to 1845"

1949 The Johnny Appleseed Memorial Bridge across St. Joseph River was dedicated by Mayor Henry B. Branning, Jr.

1949 The Johnny Appleseed Memorial Park at the gravesite in the old Archer graveyard was dedicated by Governor Henry F. Schricker. A 220 acre tract which included 62 acreage on both sides of the St. Joseph River.

Vachel Lindsay, a noted poet from years ago in speaking of his poem "In Praise of Johnny Appleseed", said, "I would rather be identified with my poem about Johnny Appleseed than with anything that I have written."

OTHER REFERENCES SEEN MENTIONED, BUT NOT AVAILABLE

JOHNNY APPLESEED AND HIS TIMES, Henry A. Pershing 1930
JOHN CHAPMAN, A BIBLIOGRAPHY, Dr. Robert Price (before 1949)
JOHNNY APPLESEED, A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS ditto
JOHNNY APPLESEED, MAN OR MYTH, Robert Price