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HUDSON IN 1800

Hudson June 2nd, 1862

Eds Beacon: It is with pleasure that I occasionally notice in the Beacon, sketches of the early settlement of the Reserve. I take the liberty of sending you some extracts from a letter received from my brother in law, Dr. Wm. N. Hudson, now a resident of Middleport, O, in reply to some inquiries that I had made of him relative to this subject. He writes from recollection and not from record. Yours, Harvey Baldwin

He commences with the first settlement of Hudson and says, I have first taken up the families, five in all, that were on the ground the 5th day of June 1800, and who I believe, all sat at a table made of elm bark on the 4th of July, 1800, of that year, in the shade of the forest on what is now a part of the green, a few rods north of the actual center of the township, and a very little west of the north and south road. I recollect that the number who sat together at the dinner was 42 being all the inhabitants then in the township old and young. Their names are as follows, Viz: David Hudson, his wife Anna Hudson, their children Samuel, Ira, Wm N, Milo L and Abigail L. Hudson, 8. Thaddeus Lacy, his wife Rosannah Lacy, their children Isaac H., Ann and Susan Lacy, 5. David Kellogg, his wife Mrs. Kellogg, their children Eleanor, Hiram and infant, 5. Samuel Bishop, his wife Mrs. Bishop, their children Ruth, David Luman, Reuben, Joseph G. Bishop and a maiden sister of Mrs. Bishop, Ruth Gaylord, 9. Elijah Noble, his wife Anna Noble, and child Ira Noble, 3.

Those not having families at the time, or whose families were still at the east were Joel Gaylord, Heman Oviatt, Dr. Moses Thompson, Stephen Perkins, Wm. Leach, Reuben Parker, George Darrow, Joseph Darrow, Gordon Crandall, Richard H. Blinn, Allen Gaylord, and John Wood, 12; Total 42. If any others I do not now recollect them. If you wish to be more accurate, apply to some who are living that were on the ground at the time. Their number is now few. I will name a few I do not know are dead: Allen Gaylord of Newburgh, Stephen Perkins of Solon, Phebe Hollenbeck, formerly Phebe Bishop, and our brother, Timothy Hudson. All the others I suppose are deceased. If you know of any others who are living, please state it in your next. (David Bishop still lives), or if any of those just above named are deceased, please inform me. I asked Dr. Hudson if he could inform me when the first grist mill was erected on the Western Reserve, in reply he says, I am not able to tell you certainly when the first mill was erected on the Reserve, but I will give you the dates of some that I know, and nearly the date of some others in the eastern part of the Reserve. In the summer of 1800, Wm. W. Williams, put mills in what is now Newburgh in Cuyahoga County, where we got the flour and meal made for us in the north western territory. Previous to that all our ground flour and meal was brought from Steele and Norton mills in Bloomfield, Ontario County, New York. But you know, I suppose, that we made in those days meal from corn, some in wooden mortars and more on what we called Blood Mills, those being a tin grater made by punching many holes through a piece of tin, then giving it a curve, and nailing to a piece of wood. In 1801 Ezra Wyatt, and Aaron Norton, commenced building mills

on Tinkers Creek in the northeast part of Hudson, they had the saw mill running late in the fall of the year 1801; and the grist mill so it grind, but not bolt, in the spring of 1802 not far from the first of April. David Abbott, built mills on the Chagrin near Willoughby, I think in 1803 or 1804, and to which we sent frequently for grinding when the water was low in Tinkers Creek and at Williams Mill, for by the way of this last mill, we had to go to reach Abbotts Mill and the journey through the then existing roads occupied more than a weeks time. (Dr. Hudson is incorrect about the date of Abbotts Mills being in operation they commenced running in 1800, a short time after Williams Mills were in operation (C.C.B.) The first mills put in operation on the Western Reserve, was those built by Williams in Newburgh, the second Mills that was put in operation was Abbotts in Willoughby, this fact is settled (C.C.B.) Austins Mills at the bend of Grand River, in Austinburg, were put in operation in 1801 (C.C.B) About the same time (ie) 1803 or 1804, Mills were erected on the Cuyahoga Rapids, on the extreme Northern line of what is now Portage County (the rapids are in the town of Hiram C.C.B.) And also Jedediah Beard built mills on the west branch of the Cuyahogs in the west part of Burton township (now) Geauga County. I think it must have been in 1806, that Allexander Walker, put up a cheap grist mill in Revenna, where we obtained some flour and meal. Aaron Norton, erected both a grist and saw mill at the falls of Mud Creek in Northampton in 1806, changed his location and did the like in what is now middlebury in 1808. Deacon Septimus Witter put up the first mills in Aurora, near where is a rail road station in 1810. Probably the next year, Lemuel Punder-son built a cheap grist mill in the eastern part of Newbury, Geauga County (In the life of Judge Eleazer Hickox of Burton, he says the mill was built in 1810, C.C.B.) There were mills quite early in this century, in a number of places in the eastern part of the Reserve, Viz: at Austinburg, Kinsman, Poland, Warren, and probably some other places. Your old barn was put up in 1802, of the first lumber made at the Hudson saw mill, I know not but it was the very first framed barn erected on the Reserve. The next season (1803) Ebenezer Sheldon Esq. had one erected in Aurora. I believe the house you now occupy was the first two story frame house that was built west of the longitude of Warren. It was erected in the summer of 1806. Well may we all ask, where are the actors of the early settlement of this Western Reserve? If in your opinion, this will interest your readers; I will assume the responsibility of its publicity, although it is taken from a letter to me, and not designed for publication. Should you think it not best to publish it, you will please hand it to Mr. Bierce, as I believe he is yet to collecting facts relative to the early settlement of the Reserve.

With sincere respect, I am truly yours;

Harvey Baldwin

STEPHEN PERKINS

Mr. Perkins was a resident of Tallmadge from 1821 to 1820 and as Mr. Perkins was a neighbor and ready and willing to relate the stories of pioneer life, which he endured and as I was a listener, I will write from memory the incidents of pioneer life as he used to relate them. The meager sketch of his life I obtained from Mrs. Judith, the widow of Mr. Elisha Perkins of Northampton, a short time before she died. C.C.B.

Stephen Perkins was a native of Vermont, and was born in 1774. He was by trade a tanner, currier and shoemaker, learning his trade in Conn, if I am not mistaken. When his apprenticeship was closed by his becoming 21, which brings us to 1795, he went forth to seek his fortune. How he labored and where, in the five years intervening from 1795 to 1800, is unknown to the writer. But he seems to have been carried west by the tide of emmigration for we find him in Bloomfield Ontario County, N. Y. in the spring of 1800. When David Hudson and his colony arrived in Canandagua from Goshen, Conn on their way to settle Town No. 4, Range 10 of the Connecticut Western Reserve, now called Hudson, in the county of Summit Ohio. Mr. Perkins being young and full of adventure, he was ready to go with this little band on their long and toilsome journey; and Esq. Hudson, was ready to receive him into their colony. They had come from Conn by land to Ontario County N Y Boats were to be put in readiness for the remainder of their long journey. The point from which the colony were to embark in the boats was a place known in early days as Ferundagut Bay, but at this day is called Irondequoit, on Lake Ontario. These boats were flat open boats being provided with sails and oars. They left for and arrived safe at Queenston in Upper Canada, they hired teams to draw their boats around Niagara Falls.

At Fort Erie, they embarked on Lake Erie, bound for the mouth of the Cuyahoga River, in the territory north west of the Ohio River. Mr. Perkins said that navigating Lake Erie with open boats was a dangerous as well as a laborious business. When the wind was favorable they could use a sail; and when the wind was unfavorable they would make use of their oars. This was a very slow way of propelling watercraft; then again there was the absolute necessity of a constant watch for those sudden storms of wind and rain, and being prepared for every emergency that might arise, by keeping the boats near the shore. Then at the approach of night, there was the necessity of looking for a convenient harbor for their boats, and also to get on shore for a good place to make their camp for the night. In this slow way they finally arrived safe in their destined port the mouth of the Cuyahoga River, which ended their lake navigation; just in time to escape one of those sudden and violent storms, which Lake Erie is subject to. Mr. Perkins, made the remark that as they approached the mouth of Cuyahoga, they perceived the storm approaching, and with the aid of oars and sails, they succeeded in running into the mouth of the river, just as the storm began and they all safe.

And in a very short time they could see the waves lashing the beach with great fury. Having thus escaped the perils of lake navigation, and time being precious; they at once made preparation for proceeding up the river with their boats. This was to be done by rowing, poling and warping (using boatmens language); poleing was performed with a pole 20 or 25 feet long, which was used by boatmen to push their boat against the current of the stream. Warping was done in the following manner; a long rope was provided, and one end was taken on shore and made fast to a tree; then those on the boat would pull at the rope, and in this laborious manner they propelled their boats up the river into Town 4 in Range 11, (now Boston) In answer to the question how they could know where to stop on the river, I think he said Esq. Hudson counted township lines. These township lines had been run 3 years previous. And let it be understood that at this time the west side of the Cuyahoga River was Indian Territory. Having arrived at a point on the river most elligible for them to get their effects through the trackless wilderness to where they designed to make their future home. They immediately commenced cutting a path through the woods to what is now Hudson, the town they desired to settle. And on the 5th day of June 1800, they had succeeded in transporting their goods, and at last had sat down on what is now the public square of the township of Hudson. The 59th draft Town 4 Range 10 Samuel Fowler, Daniel Goodwin, Timothy Allen, Ephrm. Starr, Joseph Lyman, Julian Hubbard, Enoch W. Thayer, David Hudson, Elihu Lewis, Birdseye Norton, Stephen W. Jones, Roger Newbury, Justin Ely, Elijah White, Jonathan Brace, Enoch Perkins, annexed Lot No. 3 in Town No. 8 in the 9th Range (now Chester Geauga Co.) the township had been surveyed the year previous 1799, for the proprietors into 100 lots or subdivisions, beginning at the south west corner lot of the township to number and Lot 100 was at the N.E. corner. Mr. Perkins used to relate the celebration of the 4th of July 1800, as a day of enjoyment. Esq. Hudson gave to each owner of a rifle or musket a half pound of powder, with which to celebrate the day. The grand old woods of Hudson that day resounded with the roar of musketry. There was a large shag bark hickory standing near covered with its loose bark and they amused themselves among other things in standing at the root of the tree and shooting off the loose bark. And thus passed away the first celebration in Summit Co. After the little colony was sheltered from storms the men all went in common into the south west part of the town and on Lot No 11 found 40 acres free from timber which they cleared and sowed with wheat in the fall of 1800. This was the first land cultivated in Summit County. Perkins was the first tanner in the county, his tanning was done in great troughs that were dug out from portions of the great whitewood trees which were common at that day, his tannery was on the brook the north side of the road west of the public square. He went from Hudson to Northampton, then back to Hudson, thence to Stow, then to Tallmadge, from there to Solon, Cuyahoga County, where he lived several years, then went west where he died in 1859. Mr. Perkins was twice married, his first wife was Miss Ruth, daughter of Samuel Bishop. They were married Nov. 5th, 1801, by David Hudson, J.P. being the second marriage in Hudson, and in the present county of Summit. His first wife died in Hudson leaving

a large family. His 2nd wife was Miss Lydia Harrington, they were married in Stow Feb. 11th, 1818 by Stephen Butler, J.P. Mr. Perkins was a well disposed man and a good neighbor; was not a man to accumulate much property, but was a good citizen.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE BRONSON FAMILY

By the most authentic information it appears that all of the name of Bronson are decended from John Bronson, who came to Hartford Conn with Rev Thomas Hooker, and his colony from Dorchester and Watertown, Mass in 1635. The native place, the date of birth, the date of his arrival in Mass, the date of his marriage and to whom, seems to be among the things not yet brought to light. He seems to have been living in Hartford, and when Capt John Mason, with his small but trepid band of soldiers went forth to the celebrated attack of the Pequot Fort on the 12th of 1637, in what is now the town of Groton, in New London Co Conn. The ancient records of Hartford, his name is mentioned in 1639, who by the "towns courtesie" had liberty "to fetch woode and keep swine or coves on the common". His house lot was in "Soldiers field", so called, in the north part of the old village of Hartford, on the "Neck Road", (supposed to have been given for service in the Pequot War) where he lived in 1640. Nov. 9th, 1640, he (John Bronson) and Andrew Warner were fined five shillings for their hogs over the Great River, and five shillings for every day they left them there". There is a tradition that John Bronson was a native of Wales. Bennet Bronson Esq., a native of Waterbury, and a lawyer, and also was appointed in 1824, Chief Judge of the County Court of New Haven County, an office he held with honor for six years. He spent much time in searching the ancient records of Hartford the Ancient Records of Farmington, and the papers in the state paper office at Hartford, and also the records of Waterbury, the result of his research was a valuable collection of papers known as the Bronson Manuscripts; he was frequently applied too, to have them published but he declined. Mr. Barber in his Historical Collections of Conn, published in 1837, had permission to draw from them, and his article on Waterbury was drawn almost if not entirely from those manuscripts. After Judge Bronsons death in 1850, his son Dr. Henry Bronson, professor in the medical department of Yale College, he undertook the task of preparing them for the press in connection with a general history of the ancient town of Waterbury. In 1641 the little colony at Hartford seems to have been in straitened circumstances for land. There had been a discovery made of beautiful interval land on the Tunxis River, 10 miles west of Hartford, among those who want to make the new settlement was the Bronson Family, John Bronson it appears had 7 children, 4 sons and 3 daughters, he appears to have been somewhat prominent in Farmington, not only in the church but in the town. He died Nov. 28th, 1680. His estate L312. Isaac the third son was born in Nov 1645 and was baptized Dec. 7th, 1645 in Hartford, by Mr. Hooker. He married Mary Root of Farmington about 1669, they having joined the Farmington Church May 15th, 1681, and was active in establishing a church in Waterbury. He was a petitioner with Mr. Peck to the General Court for liberty "to

gather" a church and was one of its seven pillars at its final organization in 1691. When the train band was reorganized, after the town was incorporated in 1689, he was appointed corporal. About 1695, he became seargeant, and ever afterwards was known as Sergeant Bronson. He was deputy in May, 1697 and Oct. 1701, and other offices in the town. He seems to have been one of the most respected of the early settlers.

Serg Isaac Bronson died about 1719, and his widow soon after. His estate L.386. There seems to be a propriety in giving an Historical Explanation, the General Court which is mentioned was about the same as our legislature but had much more jurisdiction, if they wished to organize a church they must petition the General Court, and if they had found an eligible site for a new settlement, those interested must petition the court for a committee to explore and report at the next session of the court. Thus we find for an example; That in 1673, a number of inhabitants of Farmington petitioned the General Court for a committee to view Mattatuck. The committee appointed were Lieut Thomas Bull, Lieut Robert Webster, and Nicholas Olmsted. The committee viewed and reported to the court at its April Session in 1674, they close their report, "and our apprehensions are that it may accommodate thirty families. By a deed bearing date Aug 21st 1674 to a tract of land lying on both sides of the Naugatuck River, ten miles in breadth from East to West, butting east on Farmington bounds, south on Pegasset (now Derby) west on Pegasset, and Pomperaug, (Woodbury) and Potatuck, (now Southbury) and north on the wilderness. The considerations was thirty eight pounds in hand and divers good causes. This tract of country now is divided into the following towns and parts of towns Viz; Plymouth and Water-town in Litchfield County. Naugatuck, Wolcott, one half of Prospect, two thirds of Middlebury the City and Town of Waterbury.

Isaac Bronson the eldest son of Sergeant Isaac was born in Farmington in 1670, He owned land at Breakneck Hill at an early date. Bronson in his history of Waterbury speaks of him as being one of the most respectable and influential men of the town for many years. Cottrens History of Ancient Woodbury says that the first settlement of that town commenced in the spring of 1673. We may very reasonably infer that the inhabitants of these infant settlements being only about 8 miles apart would have intercourse with each other. How this was done at first has not come down to us, the streams all running from the North to the South through Conn; made it quite an undertaking to travel east and west through some portions of the state, the rocks and hills between Waterbury and Woodbury, are by no means to be counted out. In all probability the communications was on horseback or on foot, and not much at that; being simply a bridle path, and like the Indian Trails, those highways of the Savage Nations. Bronson in his chapter on the ancient roads of Waterbury says, "The third road running out of Waterbury, chronologically speaking was the Woodbury Road.

Though it is mentioned incidentally as early as 1687, though it could not have been much used at that time. After Rev. Mr. Peck was disabled by illness (in 1698) the inhabitants of Waterbury, went by this road to Woodbury to obtain baptism for their children.

It passed up the west side hill, nearly where the present road runs, then across Breakneck Hill, and north of the pond in Middlebury". Thus we have at least three well established points, West Side Hill in Waterbury, and Breakneck Hill and Quassapaug Lake in Middlebury. In June 1720, Isaac Bronson, Timothy Standley and Thomas Judd, laid out a rode towards Woodbury", commencing at the "Weste bars", being twenty rods wide for a distance up the hill running by Isaac Bronsons farm at (Breakneck) and ending "at the going down of Wolf pit Hill to the Bridg Brook at Woodbury bounds". At what points this road deviated from the old one, I am unable to say. "The old path" is referred in only one instance".

This road is open and travelled at this day through the town of Middlebury, and is eleven rods wide and remains that width as it was laid 156 years ago (1876) In the days of my childhood when my parents were residents of Middlebury, I heard those speak of the first settlement of Middlebury, I suppose the fact was placed beyond a reasonable doubt, that the Bronson farm in Breakneck was the first farm surveyed and entered on the proprietors book in that portion now called Middlebury, and this farm was owned and settled by Isaac Bronson, and his oldest son Isaac was the first child born in the township. My informant first was Mrs. Azuba Munson, who was the daughter of Lieut Josiah Bronson, and was born in Breakneck April 28th, 1745 and her married life was spent within a mile of where she was born, she died in 1817. She informed me that they came out from Waterbury and work on the farm and return to their home to sleep all this was done for fear of the indians, they erected a log house and had a strong door made for it and loop holes for musketry and observation, this course was pursued for several years. The Historical reader will readily call to mind the fact that "from 1689, when William and mary ascended the throne of England, to the peace of Utrecht, in 1713, with the exception of about four years from 1697 to 1702, England and France were constantly at war. Maurauding parties of French and Indians from Canada, made frequent hostile expeditions to the infant settlements of New England, destroying the crops, driving off the cattle, firing dwellings, and massacring the inhabitants, or carrying them into captivity. During this whole period, Waterbury was a fron tier town and much exposed from the small number of its inhabitants the want of fortified places and its distance from effectual succor. This might be considered a good and sufficient reason for my ancestor Isaac Bronson, not moving his family onto the farm at Breakneck, this farm was known as the Bronson Farm for nearly a century. One incident I will relate one day they wanted to go out to the Breakneck farm, and they had a desire to remain over night and carried provisions with them sufficient to do so, at night those that remained retired into the log cabin. In the night the inmates being on the alert they were satisfied that they heard footsteps around and looking in the direction of the door they thought they perceived that the latch of the door move, one stepped to the door and put his hand on to it and perceived that someone was trying to raise it to open the door. He stepped back and took his musket, and raised the muzzle of it so as to be sure to hit an object in a vital part, he fired off

his musket, well loaded with ball, through the door, there was running from the door. They remained quiet until morning. They looking out through their loop holes, after day light of their fortress, they made no discovery of anything hostile. But the time and place demanded caution, they had to resort to strategy. They opened the door, and put a hat on the muzzle of a loaded musket and put in the door as it opened for a mark if there should be any Indians, lurking about the premises. But no bullet or arrow perforated the hat. They then ventured forth, and found blood at the door, and was able to trace blood from the door to the woods and their lost all trace and never found anything more, who it was is among the mysteries of this day. Isaac Bronson, the son of Serg Isaac, as has been before stated was born in 1670, the day of the month in which he was born, the date of his marriage and who he married has not come down to us. In what year Isaac Bronson Jr. moved his family onto the Bronson farm at Breakneck is not known, but his oldest child named Jerusha, was born Nov. 8th, 1703, leaving us to infer that somewhere between 1703 and 1707 he moved his family into what is today the town of Middlebury. On the 29th of March, 1707, his son Isaac was born. On a plain marble slab in the cemetery in Middlebury is this inscription "In memory of Isaac Bronson who departed this life Dec. 7th, 1799, aged 93 years. He was the first child born in this place". He was the father of nine children, 5 sons and 4 daughters, 3 died young, 3 of daughters married and two of them settled in New Milford, Conn. Three of the sons Isaac, Josiah and James will be mentioned hereafter. The family with one exception appears to have been born in Middlebury. My informant and her information was corroborated by my Grand Parents and others said their house was the only one between Waterbury, and Woodbury, a distance of 5 or 10 miles the house on the Bronson Farm being four miles from Waterbury, a little south of west. How many acres was comprised in the original Bronson Farm is unknown to the writer, it lay on the north side of the Woodbury Road the east line being 40 or 50 rods from the foot of the Hill on the east side. The house stood where my Uncle Leonard Bronson died in Feb. 1869. I will relate another incident after the family removed to Breakneck, there were strong indications of an addition to the population, and they living in solitude the nearest house being 4 miles distant the Sabbath came. The mother in hourly expectation of being confined, the father expressed his unwillingness to go to Waterbury to meeting, under those circumstances, but she persisted on his going and he still remained unwilling to leave. But it is said that necessity is the mother of invention, she proposed to shut up the dog, (for like his master and mistress it appears he was a dog that went regularly to meeting. Or like a horse that belonged to Dea Ebenezer Richardson of Middlebury, in the days of my childhood, if they did not want that horse to use on the Sabbath, he would break out of the pasture and go with others and stand at his accustomed post and would return from meeting with the rest; surely a good example) And if I am taken sick while you are gone, I can let out the dog, and he will follow you, on these conditions he consented to go, and mounting his horse he went to meeting. In a short time after he left, she was taken sick, and the dog was set at liberty and was on his way to Waterbury, in the time of sermon, the dog came into the Meeting House, went to the pew where

his master sat, this was sufficient notice for him to go home, he went to the pew where the doctor was sitting and they left the meeting house, and left in company with the doctor for home. And the result was an addition to the population of the township.

This might have been Isaac, the first born in the township. At another time, a large buck was caught by his horns in some grape vines south east of the house on Goat Lot Brook, and one of the daughters killed it with an axe and bore it home in triumph. On a red stone in the ancient cemetery in Waterbury is the following inscription which I copied in 1865. "Here lyeth ye body of Mr. Isaac Bronson who departed this life June ye 15th 1751 in ye eighty second year of his age". As I stood by this ancient tomb stone, more than a century had past since the mortal remains had been buiried their. I could not help pass in review before my mind, the changes which had taken place, in the century past not only in the surrounding but in the town of Middlebury, where he died and was brought here to be buiried, he being the first settler of Middlebury.

In June 1701 it appears he purchased of Thomas Warner, twelve acres on the south side of the Woodbury Road. How many acres of land he possessed is unknown to the writer, or how much his estate inventoried after his death in 1751.

Isaac Bronson Jr, had a portion set off to him on the south side of the Woodbury Road. Here he commenced for himself. He married Eunice, daughter of Thomas Richards July 3rd, 1734. Their children were as follows, Viz, 1st, Lois born Jan 26th, 1735, married Isaac Prichard of Waterbury, died in 1824, aged 89. 2nd - Isaac born Oct. 2nd, 1736; 3rd Hannah born Jan 31st, 1738-9 married Timothy Clark, died in 1815, aged 78. 4th - Lydia born June 29th, 1741, died Sept 1749, aged 7 years. 5th - Eli born June 30th, 1743. 6th - Patience born Dec. 12th, 1746, died Sept. 6th, 1749, aged 3 years. 7th - Seth born Dec. 7th, 1748. The oldest inscription of my own ancestors in the ancient cemetery of Waterbury was a gray tomb stone with this inscription, "Here lyeth the body of Mrs Eunice Bronson, ye wife of Mr. Isaac Bronson, who died Sept. 6th, 1749 in ye 34th year of her age."

He married for his 2nd wife Abigail, widow of Caleb Munson of Wallingford, and by her he had 8th - Titus, born Oct. 15th, 1751; 9th - Abigail born Aug 12th, 1753, married Ambrose Hickox of Watertown. Mr. Isaac Bronson was a successful business man kept adding to his farm so when his sons became of age, he would give a portion of his farm and help them to commence in life his land all lay south of the Woodbury Road. In 1741 he built a large frame house, it was taken down in the spring of 1820, and a new house was erected by his grand son Capt. Philo Bronson, the place is now owned by Mrs Maria B Townsend. If the writer did not live in Ohio, and could have access to the records of Waterbury it could be ascertained how many acres of land he owned and how much his estate inventoried etc, but I have been told that he was one of the wealthy men of his day; when a man was very rich who was worth \$5000. He was a man that paid great attention to fruit had a large orchard and had choice grafted fruit from

