

MADE ROCKY FORD MELON FAMOUS

Wonderful Career of Hiram Woods, the Nery King of Cantaloupes.

CREATED A GREAT INDUSTRY

Trying To Save His Gambling Business, He Became Interested In "Netted Gems"—Grew Wealthy and Disappeared.

By RICHARD SPILLANE.

Of those who enter the port of missing men few emerge. The harbors are deep and dark. They hide the living and shroud the dead. They draw in the rich and the poor, the clever and the dull. The port warden keeps no records, asks no questions, gives no information.

Wonderful stories some of those who sail into the port leave behind, tales of adventure, tales of tragedy, tales of passion and tales of disaster. Rarely has there entered the port a voyageur with a stranger story than Hiram Woods. From the Atlantic to the Pacific the man is known. From ditch digger he rose to wealth and power. With little education and burdened somewhat with a record as a gambler he promoted a small agricultural experiment into a great industry. Then, one day, he asked his wife, with whom he was attending a theatrical performance in Chicago, to excuse him a few minutes. He arose, walked out with \$500,000 in his pocket and entered the port of missing men.

On a farm near Plattsburg, Mo., Hiram Woods was born about forty years ago. He might never have been heard from outside the Plattsburg neighborhood but for the fact that his lungs were weak and he had to go to Colorado. Leadville is high and dry and someone recommended that city as a good place to live in. He had little money and could get no other work, so he took a job with pick and shovel working in the streets. It was frightfully hard for a youth who coughed a good deal and who weighed only 120 or 130 pounds, but what he lacked in strength he made up in determination. So he stuck to it, did his share of the labor and when he got his pay he held on to a portion of it.

In Leadville and Denver.

Leadville always has been free and easy. The men are reckless. They were more reckless in the days when Woods was a ditch digger than they are in these times. Occasionally they got embarrassed for money. Somehow it became known that the little "lunger" who was working in the ditch had cash. A man with a fair hole in the ground, one in sight and a reputation for honesty could borrow from Woods. The Missouri jury charged a stiff interest, but that did not matter. It was not much that he had to lend, but he was able, after a time, through the interest and through his profits in buying ore from small miners or high-graders to stop the hard and back-breaking work of pick and shovel.

He got tired of Leadville and moved on to Denver. He wanted to be out in the open as much as possible to heal his lungs, so he started a little fruit stand in Curtis street. It was very small and the stock he carried represented less than \$100, but he did a fair business. The profits of the fruit stand were not sufficient to satisfy him. He had a sporting streak through him. He liked good clothes and jewelry. He liked to drop into the gambling houses.

It was early in the '90's when Woods floated into Denver. He had only about \$600 when he arrived, but within six months, in addition to his fruit stand, he had an interest in a keno game.

Interference With Keno Games.

Woods' health improved, his two businesses prospered and life was getting to be reasonably easy for him when a most distressing thing happened. Some interfering persons started an agitation to put an end to open gambling in Colorado. Everything had been wide open, the gamblers had been in clover and, naturally, the keepers of the furo games, the stud establishments, the keno room and such were horrified. It meant a serious curtailment of their profits if a measure before the legislature happened to pass. They made a secret canvass of the legislature and found that the vote was going to be very close.

One of the doubtful members was a farmer who had a bit of land down La Junta way. Woods was in the gamblers' conference when this farmer's name was mentioned. The keno man, who is a bundle of nerves, quick of speech and quick of thought, said he thought he could handle that member.

"He's got a bug on a new kind of melon," he said. "I've been handling some of his melons. I'm the only one that has handled the stuff. If you fellows will stand the expense, I'll go down there and talk melons to him and when I've got him all worked up it won't be difficult to get him to vote right on our bill."

Swink and the "Netted Gem."

Woods went down to Rocky Ford, one of the first places extensively irrigated in Colorado. That was the place the melon man hailed from. A man named Swink had been experimenting with various cantaloupes. He had

crossed all sorts of varieties in an effort to get what he called a "Netted Gem." He had succeeded. He had sent some of his melons to Woods in Denver to dispose of. Swink was first class in experimenting, but below par in merchandising. He sent his melons in dry-goods boxes, tubs, barrels or any old thing.

Woods talked cantaloupe to the gentleman he visited and then adroitly brought in the other topic, but he went away unsuccessful if not chagrined. He was more chagrined later when the legislature put an end to open gambling in the state. His keno game withered and his rather expensive habits began to flatten his bank roll. He had to make more money or there would be trouble, so he determined to pay more attention to his fruit stand. He liked the melons he got from Rocky Ford. He was a good salesman. He went to all the hotels in Denver and to all the restaurants and urged them to try the melons. Then he got after Mr. Swink and the others in the Rocky Ford neighborhood and urged them to pay more attention to the proper shipping of the stuff. He built up a fair trade in Denver and the big idea took possession of him that if enough of these melons could be grown to supply the country there would be a great fortune in the marketing of them. He got to work on Mr. Swink and his neighbors and made a deal with them to handle all their produce. Then he started East to introduce the fruit.

Dumped in New York Bay.

It is a fine thing to have enthusiasm, to make a great fortune in your mind and to have all the joys of triumph, but the road to success is a mighty bumpy one. Mr. Woods had lots of bumps. He talked Rocky Ford melons to fruit people in Chicago, and fruit people in New York until he had them quite enthusiastic. The samples he

At the same time he did his very best to control the marketing of all the cantaloupe crop. He kept the price up and regulated supplies in a very clever way. As an organizer he demonstrated that he had rare ability.

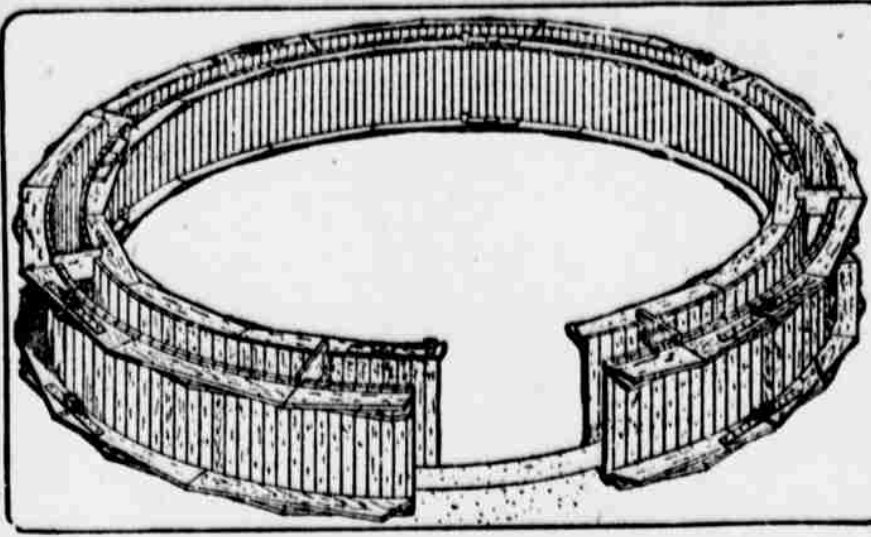
Made Money Very Fast.

When the production end was in good shape Woods went to Chicago and established himself there at No. 121 South Water street. He worked up a tremendous business and he made money hand over fist. It is doubtful if any one produce man or fruit man in this country starting from meager beginnings ever made more rapid progress or larger profits. He was a lavish spender. He had a tin-horn gambler's love for jewelry and as wealth poured in upon him he sprinkled himself with diamonds. They used to call him the "Ice Trust" in Chicago. He even rivaled "Diamond" Jim Brady. When he had all his gems aboard he was worth \$50,000 just as he stood.

But with his extravagance he had a cool head for business. His health was not any too good, but his nervous energy was great. He talked the Rocky Ford melon morning, noon and night. Although he wrote a letter like that of a schoolboy in the primary grade, he had a better grasp of essentials than most college men. Prosperity did not bring happiness to him. He had married while in the Rocky mountain country, and had several children, but in Chicago he broke loose from wife and family, and there was a divorce. Woods was lavish. He gave \$50,000 to his wife, settled \$10,000 a year on her and then he got married to another woman.

Apparently the second marriage was happy. For two or three years everything went on swimmingly. Woods still prospered, loaded himself with more jewelry, spent as freely as he desired, but suddenly he decided that he had done about as much business

SILOS ESPECIALLY ADAPTED TO DAIRIES



Wooden Form for Concrete Silo.

Silo construction has undergone a great change since the first ones were built, all the early ones being built in the ground, while the modern silos are constructed almost entirely above ground. Besides, the first silos were comparatively shallow structures, which resulted in a large amount of spoiled silage on account of the lack of sufficient pressure, says Farmers' Bulletin 589 of the United States department of agriculture.

Silos have increased rapidly in number, until now they are extensively used, especially in those regions devoted to the dairy industry. So useful have they become that many farmers consider them indispensable. The silo is adapted to all parts of the United States where corn or the sorghums can be successfully grown. Its use at present is confined principally to farms where cattle are kept, although silage is a good and cheap feed for both sheep and horses. Some danger, however, attends its use for horses, as it is essential that silage fed to horses be made from fairly mature corn, properly stored in the silo and that it be not moldy or frozen. Dairy farmers, especially, have appreciated the value of silage as a milk producer. To make the silo a profitable investment, however, the farmer should have at least ten cows, or the equivalent in other stock.

A well-constructed concrete silo will last indefinitely, and there is no danger of its blowing over or burning, rotting out, or being attacked by vermin. Its first cost is, as a rule, greater than

plumb, so that the silage will not adhere to them in settling and thus cause air spaces between the silage and the walls. Furthermore, the walls should be capable of standing considerable lateral strain without cracking or bulging. This is one reason why rectangular silos are so frequently unsuccessful.

3. The silo must be deep enough so that the pressure from above will thoroughly pack the silage and force out the air. The greater the pressure the less air is left in the silo and the less will be the loss of silage by fermentation.

4. The only form of silo to be recommended is one which is round. This form is generally the cheapest, capacity considered, and the walls are more rigid than those of the rectangular or octagonal forms. The round form results in more perfect preservation of the silage.

Location of the Silo.

The silo should be placed outside rather than inside the barn. As a silo ordinarily does not need the protection of a barn, it is not economical to use barn space for this purpose. An exception to this rule may be made in the case of the round barn. A silo in the middle of a round barn serves to support the superstructure as well as to place the silage in position for convenient feeding. A silo so placed, however, is liable to be very inconvenient to fill. The most popular location is a few feet from the barn and opening into a separate feeding-room. The door of the barn can then be closed and the silage odors kept out of the stable at milking time.

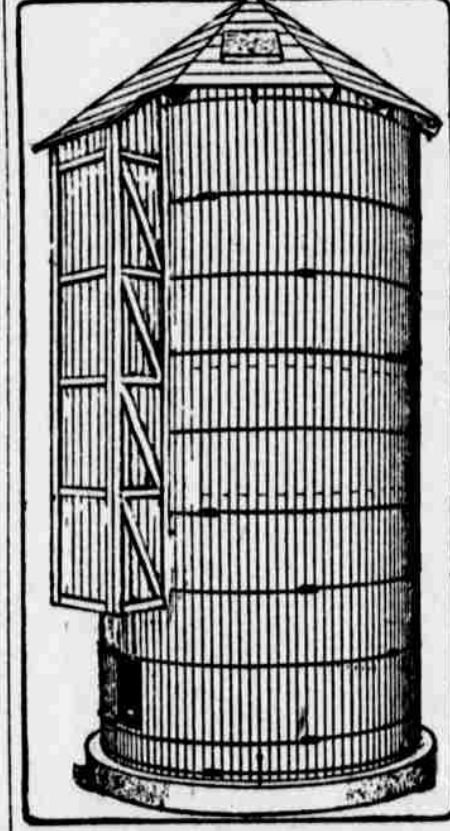
The diameter of the silo will depend upon the amount of silage to be fed daily. The silage should be removed from the top at the rate of one and one-half inches per day, depending upon climatic conditions. The warmer the weather the more silage must be removed from the surface daily in order to prevent spoiling. For the winter feeding season it is safer to figure upon removing two inches daily than upon a smaller amount. A common error in building is to make the diameter too large for the size of the herd.

The practice of using silage to supplement pastures during the summer droughts and in the early fall, instead of soiling crops, is becoming more general, and it should be encouraged. For such feeding the daily ration per cow may be as low as ten pounds, depending upon the amount and quality of pasture or other succulent feeds available. For the same herd the silo for summer feeding should be of smaller diameter than the one used for winter feeding, since three inches instead of two are to be removed daily. In order to provide for this summer feeding an additional silo of smaller diameter should be constructed.

The foundation of the silo should receive special consideration, since a large proportion of the silage as well as the weight of the walls must be supported by the foundation. It has always been assumed that the foundation supports only the walls of the silo, but recent investigations have shown this idea to be erroneous. The foundation should have its base on firm soil, and it should extend below frost line.

If the earth in the bottom of the silo is firm and comparatively dry, no provision need be made for drainage, and a floor is unnecessary. Still, a concrete floor will make the silo easier to clean and make it impossible for rats to burrow underneath the foundation wall and gain access to the silage. If, however, the earth in the bottom of the silo is inclined to be seepy, a tile drain should be laid in it and a concrete floor laid above the tile. The tiling should open into the floor in the center, and the floor should be made to drain to it. The tiling should extend beyond the silo wall and have its outlet lower than the floor. The entrance of the tile drain should be stopped with a loose wooden plug when the silo is about to be filled and should be opened when the silo is empty. The drain will carry off the water which tends to seep in as well as any rain water that may collect on the floor, in case the silo has no roof.

The doorways should be of such a size as to permit the ready entrance of a man, and they should be close enough together so that the silage will not have to be lifted any considerable height when it is being removed. The usual size is about twenty inches wide and 30 inches high, and the space between the doors two and one-half to three feet. The lowest door should not be more than five feet above the bottom of the silo; less than this is desirable.



Complete Silo With Chutes.

a home-made stave or Wisconsin type silo, but after it is once built little attention is required to keep it in good condition.

The stave or tub silo has become very popular in late years because of the cheapness, ease and quickness with which it can be built. Generally speaking, the stave silo excels in these three particulars, although there may be sections of the country where sand and gravel can be obtained at a nominal cost and where the price of lumber is prohibitive. Under such conditions the concrete silo may be cheaper. Stave silos last for from five to fifteen years, depending upon the kind of material used and the care given them. Unless well anchored or guyed, they are apt to be blown down when empty.

The average cost for a concrete silo of 100 tons capacity is \$220; from one to two hundred tons in capacity, \$348. The average cost of the modified Wisconsin silo of about one hundred tons capacity is \$186, and that of the stave type of 100 tons or less, \$118. The cost, of course, varies with the local cost of labor and material.

There are some features which are essential to the construction of all silos and without which silage cannot be kept in perfect condition. 1. The walls should be air-tight, since the successful keeping of silage depends upon the exclusion of air. Large knots in the lumber should be avoided, and the lumber should be well matched. In concrete silos a wash on the inside with cement and water or with raw coal tar thinned with gasoline is effective in making the walls impervious to air. The tar treatment is also advisable for stave silos, as it preserves the wood. Care should be taken that the doors fit closely into their frames. 2. The walls should be smooth and

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There is Hardly A Woman Who Does Not Rely Upon Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

Princeton, Ill.—"I had inflammation, hard headaches in the back of my neck and a weakness all caused by female trouble, and I took Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound with such excellent results that I am now feeling fine. I recommend the Compound and praise it to all. I shall be glad to have you publish my letter. There is scarcely a neighbor around me who does not use your medicine."



—Mrs. J. F. JOHNSON, R. No. 4, Box 30, Princeton, Illinois.

Experience of a Nurse. Poland, N.Y.—"In my experience as a nurse I certainly think Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound is a great medicine. I wish all women with female troubles would take it. I took it when passing through the Change of Life with great results and I always recommend the Compound to all my patients. I will gladly do all I can to help others to know of this great medicine." —Mrs. HORACE NEWMAN, Poland, Herkimer Co., N.Y.

If you are ill do not drag along until an operation is necessary, but at once take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

If you want special advice write Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., (confidential) Lynn, Mass.

The Wretchedness of Constipation

Can quickly be overcome by CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS.

Purely vegetable—act surely and gently on the liver. Cure Biliousness, Headache, Dizziness, and Indigestion. They do their duty. SMALL PILL, SMALL DOSE, SMALL PRICE. Genuine must bear Signature.



Brewer's Food

Pettit's Eye Salve FOR WEAK SORE EYES

The Psychology of it.

Stuyvesant Ogden, a San Francisco millionaire, said in Washington the other day:

"The present business depression—if, indeed, there be a business depression—is psychological. There is, I mean, no smallest excuse for it. It is born of the nightmare fears of men's minds. In a word, it reminds me of a music hall girl."

"The stage manager of a music hall rushed to the proprietor the other night and said: "Turn 14 refuses to go on with her trained mice. She says she's been completely unnerved ever since that young student was eaten in Chicago."

Important to Mothers

Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA, a safe and sure remedy for infants and children, and see that it bears the Signature of *Dr. J. C. Fletcher* in Use For Over 30 Years. Children Cry for Fletcher's Castoria

A critic should have a good memory. At least he should never forget that he has faults of his own.

Don't give advice that you wouldn't take yourself.

Too Dangerous to Overlook

Kidney trouble is too often overlooked and too often neglected. But the kidneys give early signals of distress that should not be mistaken. Backache, headache, dizzy spells, rheumatic pains, too frequent, scanty or painful urination are all signs of kidney weakness and should not be mistaken. When these warnings appear, use Doan's Kidney Pills, the reliable, successful, strongly recommended kidney remedy. Help the medicine by drinking water freely, hold to good habits and a serious attack of kidney disease may be avoided. Public testimony is the best proof of merit.

A Nebraska Case.

Mrs. Martha Woods, 705 Tenth St., Aurora, Neb., says: "I was a mere shadow and so weak from kidney ailments that I couldn't walk. Sharp pains ran all through my body and I had a few narrow spells and headaches. My ankles and feet swelled and my bladder was inflamed. I was laid up in bed for fourteen weeks. Doan's Kidney Pills relieved me as soon as I took them. An hour before long, they cured me. During the past five years I have had no further trouble."

Get Doan's at Any Store. 50c a Box. **DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS** FOSTER-MILBURN CO., BUFFALO, N.Y.

PARKER'S HAIR BALM A toilet preparation of merit. Helps to eradicate dandruff. For Restoring Color and Beauty to Gray or Faded Hair. 50c and \$1.00 at Druggists.

W. N. U., LINCOLN, NE. 37-1914.



He Asked Her to Excuse Him for a Few Minutes.

had to offer were real good. He arranged for a great shipment of thirty-six cars to be sent to New York. This was the first great shipment from Rocky Ford. It was the pride and the hope of Rocky Ford.

But alas, something happened on the railroad, to cause delay, and when those 36 cars arrived in New York the stuff was taken out, shipped down the bay and dumped into the Atlantic ocean. It had spoiled en route.

This experience was enough to dampen the ardor of the ordinary man, but it did not stop Woods and it did not stop the people in Rocky Ford. Woods had lots of common sense. He studied out the shipping question. It was he who designed the box now the standard one throughout America in the shipping of melons. It was he who originated the wrapping of each piece of fruit in tissue paper. A lot of other things that lent class to the shipments were of his creation.

After the Rocky Ford people had recovered from their sorrowful experience of the 36 car shipment Woods acted as their New York agent for quite a while. There are not many of the old produce men of New York who do not remember him. He used to be on the piers when the melon trains arrived from the West and he sold to the best advantage. Not only that, but he did some clever advertising around the hotels and in the newspapers. He boasted the Rocky Ford melon as no other one man did. He made money, but not enough to satisfy him. He saw way beyond Rocky Ford and he started out to take advantage of his breadth of vision.

Tried Various Localities.

There was another man, too, who had the same foresight. That was Nat. C. Wetzel, president of the Western Game and Produce company of St. Louis. The two men got Rocky Ford and began experiments with a view of raising the Rocky Ford melon in all parts of the country. Woods turned to the Imperial valley. He got farmers in that section interested and they had decided success. He stirred up agriculturists in Florida, in the Carolinas, in Georgia, in Texas,

as he should. He was only about 40. He weighed less than 130 pounds, and was a bit tired. So, he drew \$500,000 out of his business, turned the management of his affairs over to one of his employees and, thereafter, gave more time to the pleasures of life. He did not sink this \$500,000 away where he could not get hold of it readily, but put it in easily negotiable paper. He also was in the habit of carrying several thousand dollars in his pocket. He loved the theater, so did his wife. There was hardly a show that appeared in Chicago that they did not see.

Entered Port of Missing Men.

One day in 1910 he took his wife to a matinee in a Madison street playhouse. At intermission time he asked her to excuse him for a few minutes as he wished to go out to see a man. He did not come back. Next morning Mrs. Woods received from him a check for \$15,000 and a transfer to her of his entire interest in his business. From that day to this she has not heard from Hiram Woods. Neither has anyone of the thousands of melon growers and thousands of produce men throughout America to whom he was a conspicuous figure.

There never is a fruit or produce convention in which the strange case of Hiram Woods is not discussed. All sorts of stories are circulated to explain his disappearance. There have been rumors that he is living in North Africa, in a balmy land where his weak lungs will not distress him. There have been reports of a man a good deal like him who is cutting quite a dash in far-off Japan. Travelers tell of a lively little American who is the wonder of Valparaiso, Chile. And there even have been stories of a person much like Hiram Woods cutting quite a dash in "gay Pares," but nothing has been proved. Whether he is living or dead, no one seems to know. He and his diamonds and his \$500,000 in cash are gone. But he left something very tangible behind, and that is a record of achievement. (Copyright, 1914, by the McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)