

Jacob Moore's Diamond Grape

Rochester is called the "Flower City" due to the large number of nineteenth century nurseries that produced plants and trees for a growing middle class. What is generally unknown is that most of that stock was grown on land in Brighton. For example, the Ellwanger & Barry Nurseries office was in downtown Rochester, but its flower beds were in Brighton, some of them in the 1912 Home Acres neighborhood. Most Brighton farmers grew market crops, but many found the growing of nursery stock a profitable alternative.

Nurseries abounded in Brighton, in the village area near East Avenue and Winton Road, in the north part of town where Brown Brothers' Nursery flourished, and along Clover Street where Charles Hooker and Isaac Moore had nurseries.

Isaac Moore bought his Clover Street farm in 1829. He built a fine brick farmhouse in 1834 that still stands today and raised five children with his wife, Amy Kennedy Bloss Moore. Their son, Jacob, born in 1835, learned the nursery business from his father. After Isaac's death in 1857 and the sale of the family farm, Jacob moved to Brighton village to live with his aunt and uncle, Charlotte and Ezra Rosebrugh. He continued the experiments in fruit growing that he had begun on Clover Street.

In 1867 Jacob Moore wrote an article for the *American Journal of Horticulture & Florist's Companion* in which he described raising strawberries from seeds in an effort to produce the largest and sweetest variety, stating that "...I fruited a thousand new strawberry seedlings and have a collection of five hundred or more which will fruit this season...produced by crossing the best varieties in cultivation and recrossing my best seedlings with each other."

Jacob continued his fruit experiments, working with currants and pears but table grapes became his specialty (coming from a family of temperance advocates, he eschewed wine grapes). While still living at the family home on Clover Street, in 1860 Jacob Moore hybridized the existing Diana and Black Hamburg grapes, producing what he called the Brighton Grape. Other grape varieties that he created were the Clover Street Black and the Clover Street Red.

Jacob sold the products of his hybridization to Charles M. Hooker whose nursery was at the corner of Clover Street and Highland Avenue. He continued his work after moving to Attica to live with his sister, Amy, and by 1880 had produced a White Diamond grape. It is said to have been a cross between a Concord and an Iona grape. J. F. LeClare, the Brighton nurseryman who purchased the rights to Jacob Moore's new grape, announced in 1880 that he had formed a stock company for the purpose of propagating the grape and that it would be known as "The Diamond White Grape Company." Calling it a "new grape of great excellence," LeClare described it: "Its growth is strong and vigorous. Its foliage is healthy...it never drops but remains on the vines until killed by the frost...the berries are large and uniform...It is a good keeper, and consequently a good shipper."

Jacob Moore continued in viticulture, eventually moving to the east side of Canandaigua Lake near Vine Valley where he died in 1908. His grave in Brighton Cemetery was thought to have been unmarked until recently when his headstone was discovered beneath several feet of soil. His lasting marker, however, is the White Diamond Grape that is still produced and is often used for ice wine, a beverage that would have been shunned by the temperate Moores.

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