



# Hall of Fame

Class II

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## Class II 2017

The National Watermelon Association has a long history of remarkable leaders from the watermelon industry that have contributed their time, energy, and expertise to the Association and its members.

The National Watermelon Association's Hall of Fame has been created to honor the lives and contributions of these members, both past and present.

Welcome to the inauguration of the second class of inductees into the National Watermelon Association Hall of Fame!

## 2017

**Capt. E. Bell**  
Wade & Bell  
Trenton, Florida

**D.H. Gilbert**  
D.H. Gilbert  
Monticello, Florida

**Frank H. Johnson**  
Frank H. Johnson  
Hilton, New York

**David Brown**  
Shackelford & Brown  
Albany, Georgia

**Fuller Groover**  
Fuller Groover Company  
Quitman, Georgia

**E.H. Kalmon**  
Albany Produce Company  
Albany, Georgia

**Mercer Brown**  
Johnson & Brown  
Albany, Georgia

**W.A. Gullede**  
Gullede Brothers  
Verbena, Alabama

**James Leonard**  
Leonard Crosset, Riley  
Cincinnati, Ohio

**B.J. Christman**  
Georgia Fruit Exchange  
Atlanta, Georgia

**V.L. Hansen**  
B.D. Anguish  
Chicago, Illinois

**Henry Mabbett**  
Whipple & Mabbett  
Quitman, Georgia

**Ike Cohn**  
Ike Cohn  
Chicago, Illinois

**R.L. Higgs**  
R.L. Higgs  
Fitzgerald, Georgia

**J.A. Murrell**  
J.A. Murrell Company  
McIntosh, Florida

**S.G. Gay**  
S.G. Gay  
Trenton, Florida

**O.K. Jelks**  
O.K. Jelks and Sons  
Quitman, Georgia

**Robert H. Pennington**  
Pennington - Geissler Company  
Evansville, Indiana

## Capt. E. Bell

Capt. E. Bell, was the co-owner of Wade and Bell, a watermelon growing and distributing company from Trenton Florida. In 1912 it was reported that they farmed over 200 acres of watermelons in the Trenton area..

## David Brown

David Brown of Albany, Georgia was the first president of the National Melon Distributors Association. He was selected as president again in 1916. After 1916 he was on the executive council until at least 1939 as far as records show. His business, Shackelford and Brown, was known to be very prominent in the distribution of Florida, Georgia and Alabama watermelons. David Brown was a prominent member of the association and had a very reputable name in the industry.

## Mercer Brown

Mercer Brown of Johnson and Brown Company was just 20 years old when the National Melon Distributors Association was formed. In spite of his young age at the time, his company was one of the largest dealers of watermelon out of Florida and Georgia. In 1919 he became vice president of the association and held that position into 1920. After his vice- presidency,he held a position on the executive committee and was the Legislative Committee chairman in 1921 and 1922.

## B.J. Christman

B.J. Christman was the general manager of the Georgia Fruit Exchange from 1914 until his departure in 2021 when he became the vice-president and general manager of the Standard Growers' Exchange in Orlando Florida. The Georgia Fruit Exchange was a produce distributing company based out of Atlanta Georgia that handled numerous fruit and vegetable crops. Mr. Christman held previous positions with the Atchison Topeka and Sante Fe Railroad, Armour and Company, and the Fruit Growers' Express.

## Ike Cohn

Ike Cohn, a Russian immigrant, was one of the original 18 founding members of the National Melon Distributors Association. He was a well known buyer and broker from Chicago and had been in the produce industry in Chicago for a long time. Cohn purchased car-loads of produce from different growers all over the United States.

## S.G. Gay

S. G. Gay of Trenton Florida was a watermelon grower and distributor. He had many acres in the north Florida area. He was a member of the Executive Committee from 1919 to at least 1921.



## D.H. Gilbert

D. H, Gilbert, a seed grower from Monticello Florida was one of the first members of the executive committee. He prided himself in being “the only man in America who devotes his whole time to the exclusive growing of watermelon”. At the start of the association Gilbert had been in the seed business for about 16 years. Along with growing watermelon, he also shipped them.

## Fuller Groover

Mr. Fuller Groover, of the Fuller Groover Company of Quitman Georgia, was one of the original members of the executive committee. At the time the National Melon Distributors Association was formed he had been in the watermelon industry for about 27 years. He is said to be one of the pioneer melon growers of the country. “Fuller Groover has been known so long in the melon business as to need no introduction to the trade. When Mr. Groover sells you a car of melons and says “It is all right,” it is all right, and as represented.” – *Chicago Packer, June 10, 1911.*

## W.A. Gulledge

W. A. Gulledge, the owner operator of Gulledge Brothers of Verbena Alabama, was a watermelon shipper.

## V.L. Hansen

V. L. Hansen was the primary representative of the watermelon distributing company B.D. Anguish. The company was based in Chicago and owned by Dr. Anguish, the Watermelon Expert, who was quoted as saying, “ There is nothing better to keep yellow 'janders,' yellow fever and all the ails and ills of man and beast in the limelight than a good, ripe Watermelon. They are also good for swelled heads and the good and bad liver. So, keep your orders coming.”

## R.L. Higgs

R.L. Higgs of Fitzgerald Georgia was a watermelon distributor.

## O.K. Jelks

O.K. Jelks was one of the original members of the executive committee. He owned and operated his own company called O.K. Jelks and Son. In 1917 he was elected vice president of the association. “O.K. Jelks, prominent grower and broker here (Quitman, Georgia), will ship over 400 cars of melons this year. Mr. Jelks is well known to the trade, and parties who do business with him will find their car of melons like his name, O. K.” – *Chicago Packer June 10, 1911.*



## Frank H. Johnson

Frank H. Johnson of Hilton New York was a travelling buyer of watermelon. He was considered to be a prominent buyer of watermelon, moving high volumes from Florida and Georgia. In 1915, when the association was formed, Johnson had been in the business of selling watermelon for 17 years. In 1921 and 1922 he was the 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president of the association.

## E.H. Kalmon

E.H. Kalmon was the general manager of the Albany Produce Company, a distributor of watermelon out of Albany Georgia. Mr. Kalmon also served as an agent for Swift and Co.

## James Leonard

James Leonard was a pivotal member in the produce industry and to the National Melon Distributors Association. Leonard was a member of the executive committee from 1915 to 1918; he then was president of the association from 1919 to 1925. He continued serving on the executive committee from 1926 until his death in 1935, and for many of those years being executive committee chairman. At the time Leonard was a nationally known man in the produce industry. He was one of the founders of one of the largest watermelon distributing firms, Leonard, Crosset and Riley. James Leonard was the president of his firm until the year 1935. "He has done more for the watermelon industry and this association than all of the rest of us put together." *President L.E. Holloway April 20, 1934.*

## Henry Mabbett

Henry Mabbett was from Quitman Georgia. In 1915 Whipple and Mabbett was a fairly new partnership for watermelon sales. Previous to their partnership, Mabbett had worked with another founding member of the National Melon Distributors Association, O.K. Jelks, in watermelon sales.

## J.A. Murrell

J.A. Murrell was a produce distributor from McIntosh Florida.

## R.H. Pennington

R.H. Pennington was one of the most devoted members of the National Melon Distributors Association. He was secretary and treasurer from the start of the association in 1915 until his death in 1935. Pennington, a well-known distributor from Evansville Indiana, owned and operated the Pennington-Geissler Company. He was well known all around the country for being a good and decent man. He had many friends throughout the produce industry.



**PEACHES**  
500 CARS  
From GEORGIA'S Famous Peach Orchards  
UNDEAD BIRD BOTTING - EARLY BIRD MOVE ABOUT JUNE 15TH

**WATERMELONS**  
SHACKELFORD - BROWN COMPANY  
ALBANY, GEORGIA

David Brown

**Watermelons - Cantaloupes**  
NOW READY IN GEORGIA  
Why experiment, when you can buy of the old reliable. Wire for quotations.

**Johnson-Brown Company,**  
ALBANY, GEORGIA

Mercer Brown

**Georgia Fruit Exchange**  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA.  
**GEORGIA ELBERTAS**  
Will start moving by July 15th.

**SELLING AGENTS ALL LEADING MARKETS:**  
The Exchange has secured and recommended to its Members the following selling agents for Georgia Fruit by  
- 100 to 150 - representing 15 cars  
- 150 to 200 - representing 20 cars  
- 200 to 250 - representing 25 cars  
- 250 to 300 - representing 30 cars

A series of expert advice intended to cooperate with our Plan to reach you in the way of the most profitable and reliable source of Georgia Fruit.

**LOOK FOR OUR ANNOUNCEMENT NEXT WEEK.**

B.J. Christman

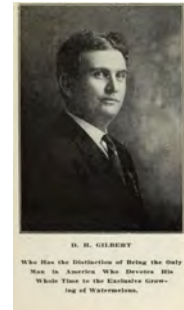
WE HAVE THEM - CARLOADS OF  
**WATERMELONS**  
Kalle Gem, Black, Tom Watson's. We can do business if you write or wire.

**J. A. Murrell & Co.,** McIntosh, Florida.

J.A. Murrell Company

**WATERMELONS**  
MOVING NOW  
**S. G. GAY**  
TRENTON, FLA.

S.G. Gay



D.H. Gilbert

**FULLER GROOVER, -- QUITMAN, GA.**  
I am in position to take care of your interests in Watermelons. If your requirements are not entirely satisfactory, give me a trial order. My aim is to fill all orders exactly. Send for the entire satisfaction of customer. Investigate now. You see, I will hold your business.

**Watermelons**  
**FULLER GROOVER, -- QUITMAN, GA.**  
I am in position to take care of your interests in Watermelons. If your requirements are not entirely satisfactory, give me a trial order. My aim is to fill all orders exactly. Send for the entire satisfaction of customer. Investigate now. You see, I will hold your business.

Fuller Groover



W.A. Gullledge

**WATERMELONS**  
Let your orders come. The old expert has more connections in producing sections than all the amateurs put together.

**B. D. ANGUISH**  
304-305 Ogden Bldg., CHICAGO.

V.L. Hansen

**GEORGIA WATERMELONS**  
O. K. JELKS, QUITMAN, GA.  
If you are not on my quotation list wire me now and get on. Policy - Best goods for least money. Satisfaction guaranteed.

O.K. Jelks



James Leonard

**Watermelons**  
I have been shipping watermelons for two weeks, and expect to do nothing else until September. Will be pleased to hear from all old friends and wish to make new ones. The experience of fifteen years is at your disposal.

**FRANK H. JOHNSON**  
Ocala, Fla. Traveling Buyer

Frank H. Johnson

**Watermelons**  
Will Have 100 Cars or More  
Watermelon Melons to ship under no reservation. Will ship June 25. Write or wire for more details.

**Albany Produce Co.**  
ALBANY, GA.

E.H. Kalmon

**WHIPPLE & MABBETT**  
Home Office: QUITMAN, GA.  
Carlot shippers Cucumbers, Florida and Georgia WATERMELONS. Correspondence solicited from F. O. B. buyers.  
**GEORGIA CUKES NOW MOVING.**  
Headquarters, Florida Melon Season, **OCALA, FLA.**

Henry Mabbett

**4500 ACRES**  
ONIONS, POTATOES, WATERMELONS, CUCUMBERS, BEANS, CANTALOUPE

LOCHPORT, LA. LEESBURG, FLA.  
PADUCAH, KY. LOUISVILLE, KY.

**WATERMELONS**  
We have largest melon production in the United States and are the largest melon shippers in the world. We have the largest melon crop in the world and are the largest melon shippers in the world. We have the largest melon crop in the world and are the largest melon shippers in the world.

**R. H. PENNINGTON & CO.**  
Evansville, Ind.

R.H. Pennington





**The National Watermelon Association has stood the test of time for 103 years. With its beginning in March of 1914, eighteen (18) people assembled in Atlanta, Georgia with an idea to come together to expand watermelon's horizons. Today, we assemble to honor the original eighteen who have led, supported and taken great care of the Association across its first century of service.**

**We all stand at this convention to thank the forefathers of our Association. They have all played a huge roll in the success of the Association, and for that commitment we place their names into the highest honor that we can bestow. The honorees will forever be honored and earned members in the National Watermelon Association Hall of Fame.**