

Johnny Appleseed

John Chapman was born September 26, 1774, in Leominster, Maine. Early in his life, he became interested in plants and trees. He was particularly intrigued by apple trees. He traveled the upper Midwest, in what are now the states of Ohio and Indiana, planting apple orchards. He sold apple seeds and small trees to pioneers heading further west so they could plant trees, too. He became known as “Johnny Appleseed.”

Legend has it that Chapman got his name from the pioneers he was helping and that he mostly traveled barefoot. Some people said that he wore a tin pot on his head. The pot served as a makeshift hat and it came in handy when he cooked meals at his campsites. Settlers also knew Johnny Appleseed as a preacher because he carried the Scriptures with him on his treks and tried to convert people to Christianity. Some people made fun of him, but American Indians revered him as a medicine man who had expansive knowledge of the curing power of herbs.

It is believed that Appleseed walked more than 100,000 miles in his lifetime. During the War of 1812, Appleseed is said to have alerted many northern Ohio settlers to the advance of British troops near Detroit. Johnny Appleseed died in 1845 after contracting pneumonia on a midwinter walk to a damaged Indiana orchard. He is buried in a park named for him in Fort Wayne, Indiana. His legacy is the many orchards he planted in this country.

- Johnny Appleseed is a legend in our culture. Describe another legend who is familiar to you.
- What do you conclude about Johnny Appleseed from reading this passage?
- What do you think sustained John Chapman in his endeavors?