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The Sunshine State's Golden Fruit: Florida And The Orange, 1930-1960

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The Sunshine State's Golden Fruit: Florida And The Orange, 1930-1960

by

Scott D. Hussey

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of Humanities and Cultural Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
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Dedication

To the people I call immediately upon hearing good news, Pops and Jessica.

Acknowledgements

An orange grove is a pastoral dream. In this bucolic setting, labor is non-existent and only sweet fragrances permeate the air. I, unfortunately, do not inhabit such a place. This project required not only my labor, but the assistance of several scholars. Dr. Robert Snyder, Dr. Daniel Belgrad, Dr. Thomas Hallock, and Dr. Gary Mormino provided the guidance, support, insights, and patience that shaped this work. I cannot thank you each enough.

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The Sunshine State's Golden Fruit:
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ABSTRACT

Neither indigenous nor exclusive to Florida, the orange has nevertheless become an international symbol for the state. This connection between product and place appears in cultural materials regarding Florida. In fact and fiction the orange has operated as metaphor and synecdoche for an Edenic Florida. This thesis analyzes how the orange came to represent a “natural” Florida through the conflation of the commercial product with the state’s history by way of political and marketing puffery. A litany of citrus advertisements, tourist ephemera, and historical associations regarding the state acknowledged and expanded the connections between the orange, improved health, and Florida. A critical thirty-year period between 1930 and 1960 solidified these connections through major shifts in the Florida citrus industry and American culture. These shifts caused the state history and the oranges’ history to become irrevocably entwined.

Chapter One

The Orange in a “Natural” Florida

In Pinellas County in 1958, real estate developer Charles Cheezem opened one of Florida’s first retirement communities, Ridgewood Groves. Selling retirement homes in the peninsular county, with its temperate winter weather and high number of sunny days, proved effortless in the postwar economy. The nearby city of St. Petersburg had long served as a haven for aging Americans. The addition of air-conditioning in postwar suburban housing allowed communities like Ridgewood Groves to flourish in the Sunshine State.¹ The growth spurt did not remain limited to seniors or to Pinellas County, as postwar Florida grew at an astonishing rate. Florida historian Gary Mormino labels the state’s postwar growth as “Florida’s Big Bang,” for “the decades following 1940 changed [Florida] more than the previous four centuries.”² Real estate development and year-round tourism now powered the state’s postwar economic engine.

Despite the physical and cultural shifts occurring in Florida, the state’s main agricultural product, the orange, remained its golden symbol. In a marketing brochure for Ridgewood Groves, images of active retirees appear alongside promises of “five producing citrus trees with every home.” The potential resident could choose from five floor plans, all named after orange varieties – the Mandarin, the Seville, the Tangelo, the

¹ Raymond Arsenault, *St. Petersburg and The Florida Dream, 1888-1950* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1988), 309; —, “The End of the Long Hot Summer: The Air Conditioning and Southern Culture,” *The Journal of Southern History* (1984): 597-628.

² Gary R. Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 2.

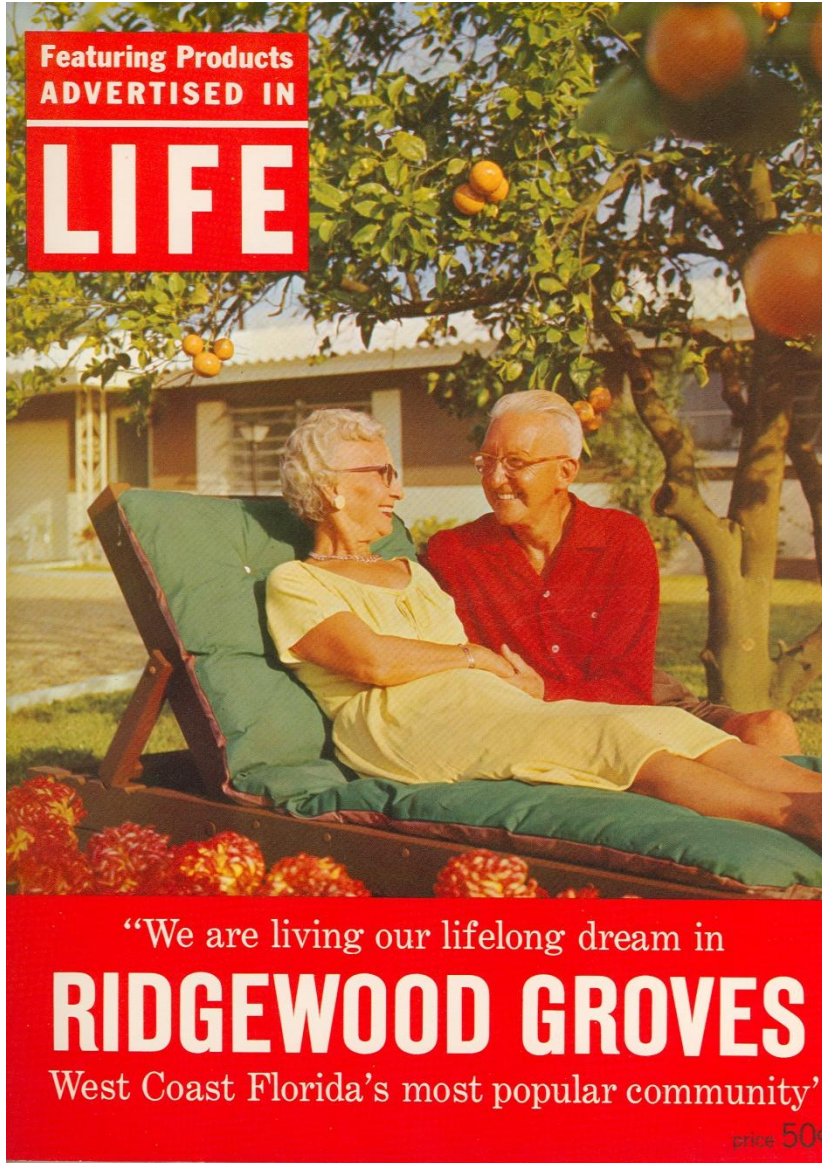
Valencia, and the Duncan. The brochure followed new residents Mr. and Mrs. Alex Boggs from Philadelphia, as they enjoyed shuffleboard, fishing in the Gulf of Mexico, sunbathing on the beach, golfing, and playing bridge on their patio. The brochure was not simply selling homes to retirees; it sold a “Florida lifestyle” and used the orange as its key signifier for this lifestyle. Ridgewood Groves employed the orange to symbolize an improved life, full of healthy activities that ensured a vital existence in retirement.

(Figure1)

To guarantee that the reader of this brochure connected the suburban neighborhood with oranges, Cheezem incorporated citrus terminology in the community’s nomenclature (Ridgewood *Groves*), promised homeowners their own produce, and included citrus trees prominently throughout the brochure. On the covers, grapefruit and orange trees frame verdant images of residents and their homes, to connect the product with the symbol. The front cover features the Boggses resting beneath their own vibrant orange tree. “We are living our lifelong dream in Ridgewood Groves,” the caption reads. “Dream” appears as an apt word choice, for the need to connect the community to oranges pervaded so strongly that the photographer hand painted unripe green oranges the color orange before capturing the cover photo.³ This manipulation of nature by man conveyed a “natural” quality inherent to Florida, symbolized by the orange.

³ Charles K. Cheezem, “We Are Living Our Lifelong Dream in Ridgewood Groves, West Coast Florida’s Most Popular Community,” Brochure (Ridgewood Groves, St. Petersburg, 1958); Interview with James Schnur, Special Collections Archivist, Nelson Poynter Library, University of South Florida, St.Petersburg, October 15, 2009.

Figure 1



Ridgewood Groves sales brochure cover, 1958.

Charles K. Cheezem, “We Are Living Our Lifelong Dream in Ridgewood Groves, West Coast Florida's Most Popular Community,” Brochure (Ridgewood Groves, St. Petersburg, 1958).

Ironically, the orange is neither indigenous nor exclusive to Florida. Citrus promoters claim that Spanish Explorer Juan Ponce de León “was trying to find the Fountain of Youth, but actually he brought it with him.” Pomologists (flowering-fruit researchers) cite Ponce de León’s Florida expeditions as the origin of citrus in the state. Hernando de Soto, the leader of a subsequent expedition, cultivated orange trees as well.⁴ The Spaniards employed oranges to combat the skin disease scurvy. Caused by a lack of ascorbic acid, scurvy plagued long-distance maritime voyages because of a ship’s inability to keep produce fresh.⁵ Without understanding how acidic fruits heeled their bleeding gums or removed the painful purple spots on their lower limbs, the sailors consumed oranges (or the local acidic plant) immediately upon landfall. Though they thanked Providence upon their recuperation, the sailors nonetheless established the orange as their medicinal plant of choice by transporting it to the New World.⁶

Four centuries later, twentieth-century citrus men, armed with scientific knowledge, cast orange juice as a modern panacea. In the early 1930s, the American Medical Association confirmed research showing the health potency of vitamin C in canned citrus products. This led larger-than-life citrus man Philip “Doc” Phillips to print on all his cans, “Drink Dr. Phillips’ orange juice because the Doc says it’s good for

⁴ John McPhee, *Oranges* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1973), 89.

⁵ Ascorbic acid is the chemical name for vitamin C. Both scurvy and ascorbic derive from the Latin root word *scorbutus*.

⁶ Kenneth J. Carpenter, *The History of Scurvy and Vitamin C* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1-29.

you.”⁷ Oceans of time separate Ponce de León from Phillips, yet both contributed to the creation of a system of signification that attached the orange to health and to Florida.

Instead of the simplified “orange in Florida” narrative presented by the twentieth century citrus industry and Florida tourism promoters, the development of the commercial, ecological, and symbolic relationships between fruit and place required crafting and maintenance. Although the orange came to “La Florida” in the Columbian exchange, it remained a small local crop until after the Civil War.⁸ Damaging freezes in the winter of 1895-1896 pushed the product from north Florida to central Florida. Successive freezes and population growths in the twentieth century have moved the commodity farther south and inland. Few locations in Florida have continuously grown oranges for more than 125 years. Florida holds no exclusivity on the sale the fruit in the United States. Texas, Arizona, and California have grown the crop commercially since the early-nineteenth century. Challenging Florida as the home to the world’s best oranges, California’s famous navel oranges have competed against Florida’s crop in sales and consumer association.

In the mid-twentieth century, the sale of the commodity shifted from the fruit to the juice with the advent of Frozen Concentrated Orange Juice (FCOJ). This shift increased Florida orange consumption while making actual Florida oranges in the

⁷ Joy Wallace Dickinson, “The Doc Says It’s Good,” *Orlando Sentinel*, December 26, 1999, G.15
Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 198.

⁸ Jerry Woods Weeks, “Florida Gold: The Emergence of the Florida Citrus Industry, 1865-1895” (PhD diss. University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 1977), 1-5.

grocer's produce section less common. With the success of FCOJ, groves became even more ubiquitous as grove acreage grew in the Sunshine State in the 1950s.

Unfortunately, citrus grower's relationship with the environment could hardly be labeled as thoughtful stewardship. The use of pesticides, fertilizers, and poor water management practices showed a disdain for anything but their crop. Grown in tight linear rows, the groves do not replicate nature's love of randomness. Economic decisions, technological advancements, and the vagaries of agriculture (weather, pests, disease, et cetera) all greatly affected orange how production interacted with the natural environment.

The state's 1950s economic growth did not remain limited to orange production. Florida experienced phenomenal postwar growth in population and tourism as well. Highway travel and the increased middle class made a Florida vacation affordable and available to many Americans. The state became a tourism empire. This caused a citriculture researcher to state, "the simultaneous view of orange juice as the territory of Florida and Florida as mostly grass, concrete, and saltwater is puzzling."⁹ Despite the many destabilizing forces, this agricultural commodity came to represent a "natural" Florida through both happenstance and economic opportunities.¹⁰

⁹ Alissa Hamilton, *Squeezed: What You Don't Know About Orange Juice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 3.

¹⁰ Christian Warren, "Natures Navels: An Overview of the Many Environmental Histories of Florida Citrus." in *Paradise Lost? The Environmental History of Florida*, eds. Raymond Arsenault and Jack E. Davis (Gainesville: The University Press of Florida, 2005), 177-200.

Yet today, the orange and orange juice still conjures images of the Sunshine State to many Americans. In fact and fiction the orange operates as metaphor and synecdoche for an Edenic Florida. “Say ‘orange juice’ and Florida comes to mind,” writes Alissa Hamilton in her analysis of orange juice production.¹¹ This connection between product and place constantly appears in cultural materials regarding Florida. From turn-of-the-century postcards featuring a crate of oranges and the words “Greetings from Florida!” to the 1998 addition to the state’s license plate of an orange superimposed on Florida’s peninsular outline, the orange signifies Florida. Chambers of commerce, agriculturalists, politicians, marketers, and authors have all appropriated orange imagery to promote their visions of the Sunshine State.

This appropriation of the orange contributed significantly to the twentieth-century sale of Florida by way of tourist attractions, real estate developments, beaches, and subtropical gardens. Collectively, we can term this sale the “Florida dream,” a myth fostered by favorable weather and colorful characters. As the northern tip of the Caribbean, the southernmost state, part vacationland, part heaven’s waiting room, Florida “imported dreamers and exported oranges.” In the early-twentieth century, for Americans “unaccustomed to exotic fruit, the orange served as a signature template to Mediterranean dreams.”¹² Representations of the orange presented a golden ball of sunshine, full of life-giving nutrients, grown in Florida’s soil. In the sale of this dream state, the orange symbolized a natural vitality intrinsic to Florida. Marketers like Ridgewood Groves

¹¹Hamilton, *Squeezed*, 3.

¹²Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 3.

offered this vitality as transferable through some purchase of the “Florida Dream.” Therefore, as the sun shone on Mr. and Mrs. Alex Boggs resting beneath their hand-painted orange tree, they were receiving replenishment not only from the state’s sunshine, but from Florida’s “Sunshine Tree.”

The orange came to represent a “natural” Florida through conflation of the commercial product with the state’s history by way of political and marketing puffery. A litany of cultural materials regarding the state acknowledged and expanded the associations made by the early Spanish sailors, that the orange meant improved health. Especially, during a critical thirty year period between 1930 and 1960, major shifts in the Florida citrus industry and American culture caused the state’s history and the oranges’ to become irrevocably entwined.

Facing economic realities, a state government agency, the Florida Citrus Commission, formed in 1935 and a uniform campaign promoting Florida citrus was begun. In 1948, FCOJ debuted and altered the American breakfast by making orange juice the morning beverage of choice. The 1950s witnessed the start of Florida’s meteoric postwar boom. Housing developments and strip malls started replacing orange groves. Hoping to transfer some inherent meaning, marketers appropriated orange nomenclature and iconography to promote their new buildings. These man-made changes in industry, technology, and place situated the orange at the center of Florida’s “natural” environment.

Nature, however, only operated unassisted in the fruit's early propagation in Florida. As the plant became a crop, man's hand played a more prominent role. The restorative oranges that came from the Spaniards' seeds were, according to pomologists, the bittersweet variety from Seville. These seeds readily took to Florida's semitropical weather and sandy soil. During the first Spanish colonial period, the orange never developed as a commercial crop; instead it grew wildly and in yards for home use. At the onset of British colonial rule in Florida (1763-1783), when surveyor and naturalist Bernard Romans set about recording the newly acquired colony, he described wild orange groves "found in the woods" that "originally sprung from the seeds of some oranges formerly dropt, by travelling Spaniards at their camps."¹³ This uncultivated origin explains the current use of "grove" instead of the more accurate "orchard" to describe a Florida citrus farm. A grove occurs naturally in wooded areas, whereas orchards are intentionally planted for cultivation. Once citrus farming began in earnest under British mercantilism, the misnomer stuck.¹⁴

It was during Florida's brief time as a British colony (1763-1783) that its citrus output grew a thousand-fold.¹⁵ Once Florida was returned to Spanish rule (1783-1821) citrus production stagnated. In Florida's territorial years, Douglas Dummett, a Seminole War veteran, planted his grove on Merritt Island in 1830. Dummett's grove initiated the

¹³ Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1962), 278.

¹⁴ Thomas B. Mack, *Citrifacts II: A Portion of Florida Citrus History* (Lakeland: Associated Publications, 1998), 2, 19-20.

¹⁵ Charles L. Mowat, *East Florida as a British Province 1763-1784* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), 78.

famed Indian River oranges, known for the sweetness of their juice. This prized taste resulted partly from the land, but mostly from Dummett's selective grafting.

The Seminoles had three names for oranges, "Yallaha," "Yallahasempa," and "Yallahoochena" for sweet, sour, and bitter, respectively.¹⁶ Dummett's grove, located in a tidal lagoon between the Indian and Banana Rivers, grew sour orange trees. Grafting the branches of sweet oranges from a grove farther north onto his sour orange root stock, Dummett created a new process in orange propagation. This process, known as budding, created an orange with a sugar balance that human taste buds prefer. Dummett's Indian River oranges commanded \$1 more per box in New York City than any other orange. The process of budding, instead of planting a seed, became an industry standard in the 1880s and exemplifies the malleability of *Citrus Sinensis* (the Linnaean form for oranges).¹⁷

Citrus Sinensis possess an uncanny ability for hybridization. Planting a seed of one variety does not assure an identical offspring. A sweet orange seed can produce a thorny, sour orange tree. Budding allowed for greater control and uniformity in orange production. Hardier plants like rough lemon or sour orange are grown from a seed for approximately two months. When deemed ready, an incision is made into the rootstock and budwood (also termed a scion) from a sweet orange tree is grafted into the incision. A trace of this process, the bud union, appears as a barely visible line on mature trees. The unpalatable citrus varieties make the best rootstock. The resulting trees are more

¹⁶ Carita Doggett Corse, "The History of Citrus in Florida," in Florida Memory, the State Archives of Florida, <http://www.floridamemory.com/collections/WPA> (accessed 17 March 2009).

¹⁷ Hamilton, *Squeezed*, 8; Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 204; McPhee, *Oranges*, 90-91.

productive, possess fewer thorns, and have a consistency and uniformity in taste that growers prefer. As McPhee notes, “a single tree can be turned into a carnival, with lemons, limes, grapefruit, tangerines, kumquats, and oranges all ripening on its branches at the same time.”¹⁸ The citrus growers’ ability to increase production through the manipulation of the orange tree suggests that a “natural” Florida is malleable itself. As a symbol for a “natural” Florida, the hybridization of the orange suggests a pliable Florida whose nature, in both senses of the word, escapes easy definition.

To explain the interdependent growth of the city of Chicago and its hinterlands, William Cronon defined “nature” as the “nonhuman world.” Setting clear parameters, Cronon differentiates between the untouched environment and land marked by human interaction as “first nature” and “second nature,” respectively. First nature demarks “original, prehuman nature” and second nature then serves as “the artificial nature that people erect atop first nature.”¹⁹ The orange grove operates as second nature. A bucolic grove and the oranges it produces signify a healthy land regardless of their actual ecological impact because humans choose to see their alterations of the land as improvements to the nonhuman world. By the late-nineteenth century, orange groves represented a critical part of Florida’s nature through their relationship with the economy.

¹⁸ McPhee, *Oranges*, 22; Hamilton, *Squeezed*, 8.

¹⁹ William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), 263-269.

Cronon explains this relationship as “the merging of first and second,” which reflects a “shift from local ecosystems to regional hinterland and global economy.”²⁰

While first nature continued to influence species selection, second nature determined how the landscape was shaped and viewed. Although Florida is a southern state, the place differs from the other states in the region because of its semi-tropical conditions. Defined “less by moonlight and magnolias than by sunshine and orange blossoms,” Florida’s economic and climate differences allowed for a separate culture to develop. The state distinguished itself from the region through its “healthy climate, clear water, and a bountiful nature exemplified by the iconic image of an orange tree replete with fruit.”²¹

The orange came to represent Florida through what Cronon described as the “economic imperatives of second nature.” While this is true in the physical marketplace, the symbolic orange and its use in representation formed because of the ways humans create their symbolic surroundings.²² French sociologists Henri Lefebvre posited, “(Social) space is a (social) product.”²³ Often this social construction of space serves as a destroyer of nature. For example, Miami’s “Orange Bowl” is a college football game played in a stadium of the same name.²⁴ As Lefebvre stated, “symbolism deriving from nature can obscure the rational lucidity which the West has inherited from its history and

²⁰ Ibid., 267.

²¹ Warren, "Natures Navels," 195-196.

²² Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, 267.

²³ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden: Blackwell, 2001), 11.

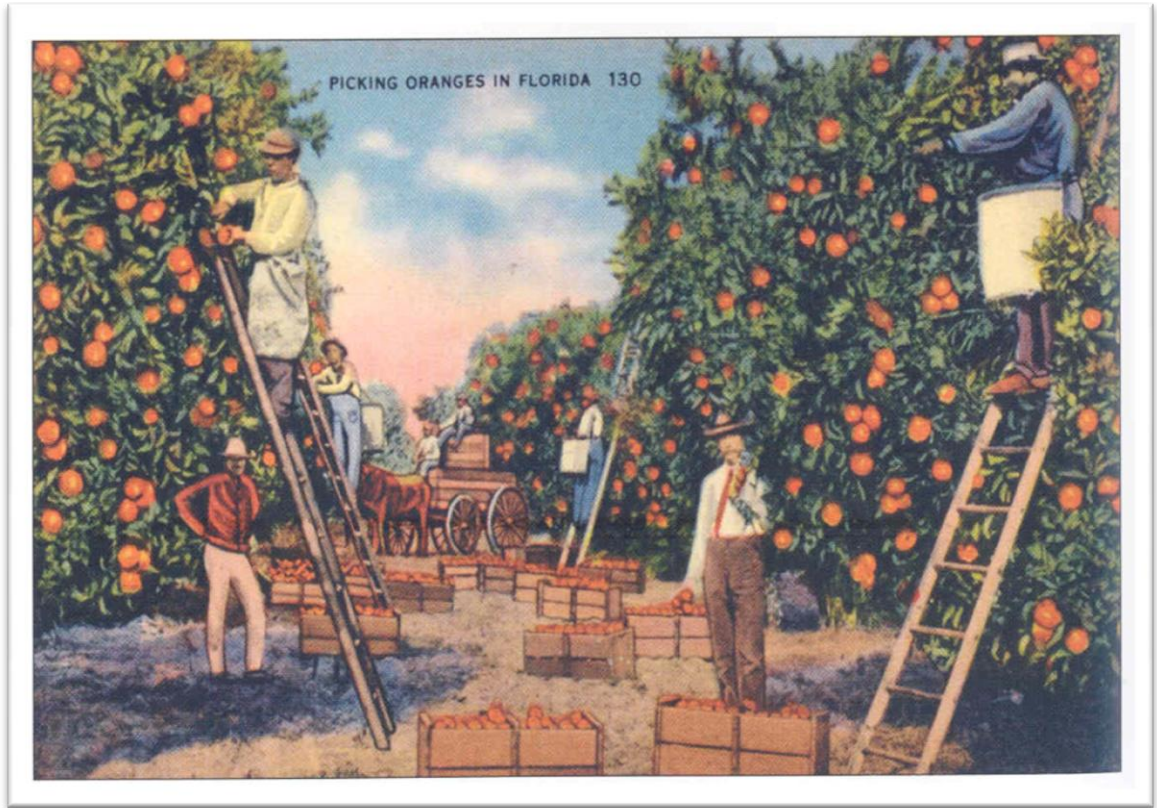
²⁴ The Orange Bowl stadium built in 1936 was destroyed in 2008. The game is still played.

from its successful domination of nature... The rational is thus naturalized, while nature cloaks itself in nostalgias which supplant rationality.” Language, a key tool for rationalization, allows the understanding of linear rows in agriculture to be viewed as a “natural” part of the land. This is symbolism obscuring rationality as chaotic “first nature” would never create an orange grove made up of “budded” trees, planted in linear rows. Postcard imagery of orange groves with circular trees in linear rows exemplified this point as the grove reflects how human hands affect the land.²⁵ (Figure 2)

In stating “nature is also becoming lost to *thought*” Lefebvre demonstrates how, through symbolic interpretation, humans have reduced nature to the pastoral. The process of creating “(social) space” turns the space of an orange grove into the “(social) product” that is the concept, Florida. Parallel to claims that Florida’s sunny weather and fecundity could be symbolized by the “image of an orange tree replete with fruit,” this conceptual space could be consumed through oranges. Thus, the orange grove came to represent a “natural” Florida, imbued with both physical and metaphoric qualities. As Florida’s environment changed, what constituted nature shifted. Each time, the orange became more abstract in its representation. This is what Lefebvre meant when stating, “nature cloaks itself in nostalgia.” As the housing developments began replacing orange groves in 1950s, the abstraction of its representation increased. The original first nature became “lost to thought,” usurped by the image of an orange.

²⁵ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 26, 30-31.

Figure 2



Hillsborough County Grove Postcard, Circa 1930.

Donald D. Spenser, *Greetings From Tampa* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2008),80.

As in Cronon's Chicago, the "economic imperatives of second nature," came to Florida with the introduction of railroads in the 1880s and the establishment of economies-of-scale in orange production. Henry Flagler and Henry Plant's pan-Florida rail systems connected once remote orange packinghouses to northern cities. The growth of the railroad in Florida allowed citrus farmers to lose their reliance on having a close proximity to a major waterway and move farther inland. The railroads offered a more expedient alternative to the previously used ox-cart and boat.²⁶ Railroad introduction marked a shift towards a more capitalistic view of orange groves by Floridians. By 1894, growers shipped over three million boxes of citrus, an increase of one million boxes in four years.²⁷ Also in 1894, Florida out produced its closest rival, California, by fifty percent.²⁸ The railroads provided year-round access to northern markets. Traditionally, oranges were considered a luxury item given on Thanksgiving and Christmas because of harvesting times and high shipping costs. Prior to rail transportation, schooners carried the expensive Florida oranges to northern markets. In order to sell year-round, some Florida orange growers harvested a variety of different oranges and grapefruits which ripened in different seasons. Grounded in North Florida, the region contributed two million dollars annually to the state's economy by 1885.²⁹

²⁶ Gregg M. Turner, *A Short History of Florida's Railroads* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2003).

²⁷ Weeks, "Florida Gold," 199.

²⁸ Howard Seftel, "Government Regulation and the Rise of the California Fruit Industry: The Entrepreneurial Attack on Fruit Pests, 1880-1920," *The Business History Review* (1985): 369-402.

²⁹ Turner, *A Short History of Florida's Railroads*, 13.

Although the railroads accommodated for an increase in orange groves farther south, the nineteenth century citrus industry remain in the northern part of the state. This changed following the harsh winter of 1894-1895. That winter's freezes killed most of these northern Florida groves and dropped statewide orange production down to 147,000 boxes. The extent of this vicissitude ended the state's first period of commercial production.

The Sunshine State's loss became the Golden State's jackpot as "Florida's orange production did not match California's again until 1946."³⁰ However, the more resilient growers, undeterred by the freezes, moved farther south towards the sandy-soiled center of the Sunshine State. The railroads and highways followed and the legendary Citrus Belt along the state's geographic spine (the Ridge) grew.

The industry immigrated from the northern part of the state farther south. Starting near Ocala and extending southwest to Bradenton and southeast to Fort Pierce, the Florida Citrus Belt attracted an increasing amount of would-be orange growers to the peninsula. Each potential grower wanted to cultivate their own golden orbs in areas like the Golden Triangle, Indian River, or the Peace River Valley. During this twentieth century, central Florida citrus boom, many Floridians planted citrus trees in their own yards, "so interwoven in the Florida dream was the orange tree that an agricultural commodity became a 'natural' component of the Florida landscape."³¹ Orange groves

³⁰ Seftel, "Government Regulation and the Rise of the California Fruit Industry: The Entrepreneurial Attack on Fruit Pests, 1880-1920," 388.

³¹ Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida, 195.*

dominated the landscape of central Florida. Green leaves, orange fruits, and white blossoms covered large tracts of land converted into ordered landscapes. Fruit stands and packinghouses dotted the roadside of highways like U.S. 27 (also known as the Orange Blossom Trail). By 1919, Florida produced nearly six million boxes annually.³² Orange groves in central Florida became so ubiquitous that they almost completely supplanted the areas' "first nature."

As the railroads altered human perceptions of the land, they likewise encouraged fostered overproduction. The birth of modern marketing arose to create demand for the superfluous product. In *Fables of Abundance*, Jackson Lears explains "nationally advertising" as "a creature of the modern corporation, a key part of a more streamlined commercial culture that sought to stabilize market relations and representations."³³ In the late nineteenth century, the California Fruit Growers Exchange (CFGE) understood the importance of marketing, for their advertising manager claimed, "Oversupplies were no longer 'the result of overproduction' but were 'due to underconsumption.'" To increase consumption, the members of the CFGE branded themselves as "Sunkist" oranges to signify that their oranges had a special bond with nature's life-giving force. Consumption of an orange "would literally be getting in touch with nature, unmediated by any signs of culture, the consumer would also be sun-kissed."³⁴ To persuade consumers to choose their

³² Warren, "Natures Navels," 185.

³³ Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 88.

³⁴ Douglas Cazaux Sackman, *Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 87-89.

product over those of their competitors (like Florida oranges), Sunkist advertised their brand on billboards, in magazines, and in grocer's windows. Consumers not only needed to eat oranges year-round, rather they were to demand Sunkist oranges. The CFGE's Sunkist branding efforts and advertising campaigns allowed California to dominate the market for fifty years.

The Citrus industry in Florida lacked a uniform campaign like California's. Smaller groups like the Florida Citrus Exchange advertised nationally, but the state mostly relied upon a variety of different methods to market oranges. Each method highlighted Florida's relationship to the orange. The Seaboard Air Lines premier passenger train, the Orange Blossom Special, began ferrying winter tourists from New York to Florida in 1925. As one former flagman recalled, "The passengers, they couldn't get over it. They'd smell the orange blossoms and they'd see the oranges hanging on the trees. The oranges were hanging so close to the track that you could almost touch them. That really excited all those tourists from up north." Riders on the Orange Blossom Special received a constant reminder as to what form of nature they should see. In 1938, Ervin T. Rouse wrote an eponymous song about the rail line. The song became known as "the world's most famous fiddle tune."³⁵ Postcards were another way that displayed Florida's citriculture to the greater world. Since the turn of the century, postcards chronicled American developments in industry, architecture, and transportation.³⁶ In

³⁵ Randy Noles, *Orange Blossom Boys: The Untold Story Ervin T. Rouse, Chubby Wise and the World's Most Famous Fiddle Tune* (Anaheim: Centerstream Publications, 2002), 22-25.

³⁶ Robert E. Snyder, "The Golden Age of Postcards and Florida," in *Journal of Regional Cultures* 4 (1984):25-29.

Florida, postcards captured orange crates, packinghouses, and scenes of families or beautiful young women in orange groves. One postcard featuring the Orange Blossom Special showcases both Florida's citriculture and the tourist industry. (Figure 3)

Mimicking Pasadena's Rose Bowl, in 1936 the greater Miami Athletic Association and the Chamber of Commerce staged the "Orange Bowl," the nation's second collegiate Football bowl game.³⁷

Prior to the 1930s, however, Florida's orange groves remained primarily the domains of individual growers and packinghouses. Few Americans could travel to Florida and to see the groves for themselves until the 1950s. Those who did visit Florida witnessed forms like the Orange Blossom Special that proposed Florida as home of the orange. Yet California's "Sunkist" brand reminded those tourists once they returned home that the "Orange Empire," was not fixed.³⁸ The ubiquitous "Sunkist" brand appeared alongside several different Florida brands. Unlike California's consolidated CFGE, Florida had no industry-wide group or consistent national advertising campaign. In the 1930s, through hardship and legal changes, Florida would consolidate also. The process though remained arduous until the end. Upon that end and with the help of several writers, Florida would become the undisputed home of the orange in the American consciousness.

³⁷ Kohen, "Perfume, Postcards, and Promises: The Orange in Art and Industry," *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 23 (1998): 32-47.

³⁸ Douglas Cazaux Sackman, *Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 25.

Figure 3



Orange Blossom Special Postcard, 1939.

“Orange Blossom Special,” in *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 23 (1998), 45.

Chapter Two:

The Industry as Fact and Symbol

In Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' autobiographical *Cross Creek*, the author recalls the actions taken in her orange grove while preparing for a freeze:

Night came and the temperature dropped steadily. The fatal 28 came at midnight and I gave word for the lighting of the fires ... The work is so cruel that it seems to me the least I can do is take care of the men properly... There is a healthy challenge and danger and a certain spiritual sustenance comes from fighting it. For all the losses they have cost me, I would not choose to have lived without knowing the nights of firing on a freeze.¹

This scene depicts a community coming together for the orange groves' survival.

Throughout the work, Rawlings details the goings-on of her adopted, back-country, Central Florida home. The grove in *Cross Creek* symbolizes this community; as it brings men together, differentiates the seasons, controls the area's economic destiny, and provides nourishment. As evoked by this scene describing the firing of the grove, the world of citrus in Florida came together for its survival in the 1930s.

“The History of Florida is measured in freezes,” notes John McPhee. Just as the 1894-1895 freeze pushed the industry from north Florida to the central Citrus Belt, the freeze of 1934-35 provided Florida's citrus industry the catalyst needed for another shift. Following three of the warmest winters in state records, the 1935 freeze has historic significance for three particular reasons. In Tampa, the freeze was responsible for “killing the large Temple orange grove in Hillsborough County near the site of the present day

¹ Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, *Cross Creek* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), 331-332.

community of Temple Terrace.” Statewide, the 1934-1935 winter is considered the last in which the old firing method (as described by Rawlings) was used to try to save the crop. Most importantly, the freeze’s damaging economic effect on citrus growers finally justified the passing of legislation that brought more controls to the industry.² By 1935, the Florida citrus industry had faced an economic depression, destructive hurricanes, crop killing freezes, and the Mediterranean fruit fly. Nonetheless, overproduction continuously plagued the industry.³ For their economic survival, the citrus farmers finally came together with the creation of the Florida Citrus Commission and the Florida Department of Citrus in 1935.⁴ In addition to regulating the sale of the commodity, this governmental intervention allowed the industry to present a coherent and consistent message; that Florida and the orange were synonymous.

Governmental involvement shaped Florida’s citrus industry throughout the 1930s. The new state agency created a hegemonic force that could control the marketing of oranges and grapefruits. Part of President Roosevelt’s New Deal, the Federal Writers’ Project (a subsection of the Workers Progress Administration) recorded Florida’s history and folklore during the same period. The published works that resulted from the Federal Writers’ Project established the “orange in Florida” discourse. Over time, the Florida

² John A. Attaway, *A History of Florida Citrus Freezes* (Lake Alfred: Florida Science Source, 1997), 67-74; The firing method was wood pits or oil filled “smudge pots” to create warm air pockets near the trees. The new method used after 1935 up to the present day involves coating the fruits with a layer of ice through a water-sprinkling system. This ice coating acts a temperature barrier and saves the fruits from freezing internally.

³ James T. Hopkins, *Fifty Years of Citrus: The Florida Citrus Exchange: 1909-1959* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press 1960).

⁴ Hopkins, *Fifty Years of Citrus*, 144-145; Florida Department of Citrus, *The First Fifty Years of the Florida Citrus Commission* (Tallahassee: Florida Department of Citrus, 1986); All literature on the FCC/FDOC use “the Commission” or “FCC” when referencing this group as a whole or any actions taken by either. Unless, specified, this text will do likewise.

Citrus Commission and others repeated the Federal Writers' Project's established narrative to situate it as the dominate historiography for the state's key agricultural commodity. The confluence of government, industry, and history in the late 1930s resulted from the grim economic circumstances of the decade's first half.

Exacerbating Florida's 1926 real estate collapse and the nation's 1929 fiscal downturn, citrus, the state's signature crop was marred by inconsistent marketing and industry infighting. Through an arduous battle in economically desperate times, the traditionally independent citrus farmers finally acceded to the need for a pan-Florida organization. Based on other agriculture collectives that were permitted by twentieth century federal law adaptations, the Florida Citrus Commission (FCC) and the Florida Department of Citrus (FDOC) formed in 1935. The two parts function as a unit. The Commission, a twelve-member Board of Directors, sets policy for the Department to enact. Governor-appointed industry leaders involved in each facet of the commodity's production comprise the Commission. Their decisions are carried out by the Department. This combination of growers, packers, shippers, processors, marketers, bureaucrats, and politicians into a state governmental department became the first of its type formed to support a single agricultural commodity.⁵

While an innovation, the Commission's formation followed similar national trends. David M. Kennedy, historian of the Great Depression, described how the growth of federal, state, and local governments, "massively enlarged and forever transformed the

⁵ David L. Barkley, "Marketeing Food Products: Examples of Six Successfull Niche Marketing Programs," *Regional Economic Development Research Report* (Clemson: Clemson University, 2004), 2.

scanty Jeffersonian government over which Hebert Hoover had been elected to preside in 1928,” in response to the Great Depression.⁶ Proving successful, Florida’s single-agricultural-commodity model spurred other states to create their own, like Washington’s Apple Commission and Wisconsin’s Milk and Marketing Board.

Through a wide variety of educational programs, scientific research, and promotional activities the Commission helped Florida maintain its billion-dollar citrus industry. The Department’s mission, “to help grow the demand for Florida citrus products, providing a direct benefit to the citrus growers,” relies on self-imposed taxes, rather than the state’s general tax funds.⁷ The Commission has played a prominent role in the state’s economy while helping Florida adapt to modernization.

Cooperative marketing arose in the late nineteenth century as response to rising shipping costs brought on by monopolistic railroad practices. Although promoters of agricultural organizations regarded the clubs as “*sine qua non* of ‘civilization,’” the marketplace restructuring brought on by railroads required these organizations to transform.⁸ Prices cannot be determined until harvest, those who purchase, package, and ship (pejoratively termed “packers and jobbers”) have an economic advantage over the growers. Therefore, individual growers joined local associations to counterbalance those economic advantages. The local associations vertically integrated with district and central

⁶ David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in the Depression and War, 1929-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 10.

⁷ Florida Department of Citrus, “Florida Department of Citrus, About Us,” Florida Department of Citrus, <http://www.floridajuice.com/fdoc.php>.

⁸ Weeks, “Florida Gold,” 106, 201.

associations. Through money collected by either membership dues or self-imposed taxes, the associations primarily concerned themselves with receiving the highest price for their harvest in distant markets. From this rudimentary sense of marketing (get products to market), cooperatives evolved into complex organizations that determined product quality standards, operated packinghouses, created national advertising campaigns (marketing in the broad sense), lobbied on the industry's behalf, sponsored university research stations, and negotiated lower prices for required materials.⁹

Prior to the Commission's formation, the most successful cooperative in Florida was the Florida Citrus Exchange (FCE). Formed in 1909, the FCE met in downtown Tampa but represented growers throughout the Citrus Belt. Agriculture organizations had existed in Florida during the first citrus boom (1865-1895), but "a lack of controls and the limited experience of most growers resulted frequently in the pooling of ignorance," rather than a collective improvement in knowledge and resources. The modern, corporate structured FCE operated under the SEALD SWEET label when marketing their products. With members across central Florida, the FCE operated until 1959. Other local and regional cooperatives in Florida included the Indian River Citrus League, the Florida Canners Association, Florida Citrus Mutual, Florida Citrus Canners Cooperative (now Citrus World), the Citrus Control Board of Trustees, and the Committee of 50.¹⁰ Attempts to establish a statewide industry group, however always failed.

⁹Sackman, *Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden*, 93 (see chap. 1, n. 39).

¹⁰Hopkins, *Fifty Years of Citrus*, v-vi.

In 1890, when the 51st Congress passed the Sherman Act, the antitrust law that broke-up corporate monopolies, farming cooperatives were given special status which excluded them from the law's reach. Nearly twenty years later, the legality of the CFGE's size and the price setting practices of the California Associated Raisin Company (CARC, branded "Sun Maid" raisins) caused many to question this special status. Also questioned was the CARC's practice of selling stock to raise capital for equipment.¹¹ Post-World War I surpluses dramatically reduced crop prices, therefore the cooperatives sought to protect their market-controlling advantages through legal maneuvering. The 1922 Capper-Volstead Act, also known as the Cooperative Marketing Act, resulted from the debate over agricultural cooperatives' legitimacy. Reaffirming the cooperatives need to "raise capital and engage in value-adding activities that prepared their products for market without violating the antitrust law," Capper-Volstead consented to cooperatives entering into stock agreements without being considered "trusts." Further, because the vagaries of agricultural markets heavily favored processors and distributors when the terms of sale were negotiated with individual farmers, Capper-Volstead recognized the legitimacy of cooperatives joining together of farmers "to bolster their economic strength," so that they may "deal on a more equal basis with processors and distributors." The Secretary of Agriculture would regulate the cooperatives to ensure they acted fairly

¹¹ United States Department of Agriculture, "Antitrust Statue of Farmer Cooperatives: The Story of the Capper-Volstead Act," (Cooperative Information Report 59., Washington D.C.: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA, 2002), 63-65.

and stayed within the Act's legal framework.¹² Capper-Volstead justified cooperatives and allowed for a strong, all encompassing group to form among Florida citrus growers. However, none would for twelve years. The Florida grower's intractable independence prevented cooperation. A fly began to break down their obstinacy.

A Mediterranean fruit fly or "medfly" larvae first appeared in an Orange County grapefruit in April 1929. Although pests are a constant bane to farmers, they rarely require the National Guard to enforce plant quarantines as the medfly did in 1929. Recognizing the medfly's threat to the industry, citrus growers reluctantly sacrificed their independence in an effort of industry preservation.

According to a November report by Stanford professor G.F. Ferris, the medfly's presence caused "a wave of hysteria," giving Florida "the ancient status of leper, compelled to ... condemn himself by the cry of 'Unclean, unclean.'"¹³ The quarantine encompassed 1,002 groves surrounding Orlando. This accounted for nearly eighty percent of the state's citrus crop.¹⁴ In eighteen months, the federal and state agencies spent nearly \$7,000,000 to eradicate this pest; their primary method was crop and tree destruction.¹⁵ Considered one of nature's most agriculturally destructive pests, the medfly wreaks havoc on a cornucopia of produce. Smaller than the housefly, the medfly reproduces with rapidity and proficiency. One female medfly can produce upwards of

¹² Ibid., 91.

¹³ G.F. Ferris, "Concerning the Mediterranean Fruit Fly," *Science*, November 1929, 451-453.

¹⁴ Michael Gannon, *Florida: A Short History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 84-85.

¹⁵ G.G. Rohwer, "The Mediterranean Fruit Fly in Florida: Past, Present, and Future." *The Florida Entomologist* 41 (1958): 23-25.

fourteen-to-twenty eggs, per day, for forty days. The female punctures holes in host fruits to lay her eggs. The list of over 250 possible host fruits includes oranges, grapefruit, apples, pears, peaches, and plums. Once hatched, the larva (maggots) feed on the host fruit until the fruit rots and falls. Then medflies burrow into the soil during their pupae phase, finally to emerge as reproducing adults. The egg-to-adult cycle takes 7-12 days and can occur in temperatures between 90 and 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Because of the medflies' adaptability and destructive ability state and federal agents had good reason for their sweeping precautions. The medfly reappeared in California and Florida several times and eradication has never truly occurred. What makes the 1929 event important is its impact on the individual farmers. Normally, Florida citrus farmers fiercely protected their individual property rights from any perceived intrusion. The Medfly brought recognition to the importance of cooperation instead of the farmers' competitive individualism.

Crop loss aside, the medflies' presence created more controls placed on grove inspection and the licensing of packinghouses, as well as reorganized distribution methods. Once the medfly's immediate threat diminished, the motivation for individual sacrifice waned, but the event steered the industry towards collectivism by "posing problems that were to be answered only by research and industrial progress."¹⁶

The Florida citrus industry had good grounds for reserved optimism as Philip "Doc" Phillips' team of scientists finally cracked the canned juice code. Many consumers

¹⁶ Hopkins, *Fifty Years of Citrus*, 105.

complained that canned juice always tasted “metallic” and “cooked.” Searching for a way to capture the fresh orange juice taste Phillips’ team developed a “‘flash’ pasteurization process that greatly improved the taste and appeal of single-strength orange juice.”¹⁷

Although overproduction remained the bane of Florida citrus farmers, the constant search for an outlet for superfluous product shows a dynamic industry aware that simply growing a quality product would never be enough.

Many in the industry hoped Phillips’ advancement in canned juice would save formerly unsellable scarred or blemished fruit, known as “eliminations.” The improvement was not significant as consumers spurned the new canned orange juice as they had previous “cooked” versions. In 1930, Americans drank 0.01 pounds per capita of canned orange juice, compared to their 18.9 pounds per capita of fresh oranges.¹⁸ Despite the lack of sales, Dr. Phillips helped in conferring the known health benefits through scientific research. In 1929 the American Medical Association confirmed the health potency of vitamin C in canned citrus products. These findings prompted Phillips’ famous advertising campaign, “Drink Dr. Phillips’ orange juice because the Doc says it’s good for you.”¹⁹

Phillips’ personal success highlights how the industry in the 1930s consisted of “disorganized individualists,” as described by Lorena Hickok. A confidante to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and personal in-the-field researcher for FDR, Hickok saw these

¹⁷ Joy Wallace Dickinson, “The Doc Says It’s Good,” G.15 (see chap. 1, n.7).

¹⁸ Alissa Hamilton, *Squeezed*, 14 (see chap. 1, n. 9).

¹⁹ Dickinson, “The Doc Says It’s Good,” G.15; Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 198 (see chap. 1, n. 2).

“disorganized individualists” as self-serving misanthropes who operated “their own way regardless of their effect on others.”²⁰ In a 1934 letter to the President, Hickok stated, “for being mean-spirited, selfish, and irresponsible, I think Florida citrus growers have got the world licked.” Hickok also details their economic situation, “this winter they’re taking a terrific beating on prices, getting as low as 50 cents a box for oranges that cost \$6 a box retail in New York. But there isn’t a thoughtful man among them, apparently, who won’t tell you it’s absolutely their own fault. They simply will not pull together. Therefore, they lay themselves open to exploitation by the jobber.”²¹ An interview with a citrus farmer expanded this description when explaining a typical industry meeting. According the grower, once an agreed marketing plan was set, individuals would quietly leave the meeting to be the first ones acting against the agreement. While this method profited the fastest to the telephone, it undercut any agreed marketing plan.²² Such disloyalty among the independent farmers and between the various cooperatives kept Florida at a disadvantage when competing against California’s “Sunkist.”

Because industry leaders could not control the statewide supply, the Florida Citrus Exchange led an aggressive campaign to influence consumer demand. Under the SEALD SWEET brand, the FCE sought consumers through ads in National magazines such as *Good Housekeeping*, *Women’s Home Companion*, *Physical Culture Magazine*, and *Life*. In the 1926-1927 season, the Exchange’s combined magazine advertising included a

²⁰ Florida Department of Citrus, *The First 50 Years of the Florida Citrus Commission*, preface.

²¹ Lorena Hickok, *One Third of a Nation: Lorena Hickok Reports on the Great Depression*, ed. Richard Lowitt and Maurine Beasley (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 164-165.

²² *Ibid.*, 164-165.

circulation of nearly 6,000,000 printings per month. The ads usually called attention to the juice content in Florida's oranges, as SEALD SWEET contained "1/3 more juice." The "more" comparison related to the differences between Florida and California's orange varieties.

Florida's high rainfall and hot summers favor the Hamlin and Valencia varieties with their thinner skins and minimal pulp. Oranges of arid California like the Washington Navel variety require a thicker skin to protect their pulpy insides from the cool summer evenings. The difference between each region's varieties has induced all sorts of hyperboles and comparisons. For eating, California's navel provided better substance. However, reliant upon the Colorado River and a series of canals for their limited water supply, California possesses less irrigable land for production. For juicing, Florida's rainfall and consistent heat proved the ideal place for growing high-production, juicing oranges. Commenting on Florida's oranges, citrus researcher Louis MacDowell stated, "We're the Fords and the Chevrolets, not the Rolls-Royces and Cadillacs."²³ SEALD SWEET capitalized on this "workhorse" difference and presented their Florida grown oranges as containing "1/3 more juice" in their advertising.

Additionally, the FCE employed 221 grocer's windows in northern markets to promote the brand. (Figure 4) Used to entice in-store purchasing, the appealing displays of abundance became a fixed part of the newer, national grocery stores then replacing the

²³ Hopkins, *Fifty Years of Citrus*, 9, 16; McPhee, *Oranges*, 9, 126 (see chap. 1, n. 4).

Figure 4



Chicago Grocery storefront showing SEALD SWEET display, 1938.

Image courtesy of the Florida Citrus Archives, McKay Archives Center, Florida Southern College.

“Mom and Pop” neighborhood grocers of the past.²⁴ That same year, the Florida Citrus Exchange embarked on its most audacious promotional tactic, a juice extractor. First conceived in 1916, then eschewed over cost concerns, 16,324 extractors were given to consumers in the 1926-1927 season. Imprinted with the SEALD SWEET label, the Exchange believed the extractors would encourage SEALD SWEET orange purchases and function as a “silent salesmen for [the] brand.” These aggressive marketing tactics taken by the FCE never seemed enough, as a 1926 internal advertising report claimed that “to do the job for the industry which advertising alone can do, far more advertising than the Exchange can now support is necessary.” The report’s author proposed statewide cooperation as the solution. According to the report’s author, this advertising increase “can be obtained at present only through cooperation of other operators. This cooperation ... is not available.”²⁵

The Florida citrus advertising did have some positive effect for the state as they sold more than produce, they sold a dream. Although discussing California, Kevin Starr explains how Sunkist evoked the very idea of elsewhere. Starr writes how “the selling of California,” together with “oranges as an image in the national imagination became even more explicit. So appealing in its color, the orange inspired graphic ambitions.”²⁶ Sunkist crate labels and magazine print advertisements from Starr’s California were successful in

²⁴ James Mayo, *The American Grocery Store: The Business Evolution of an Architectural Space* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993), 87.

²⁵ Hopkins, *Fifty Years of Citrus*, 88-94.

²⁶ Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 162.

selling the iconic “California dream” due to the continuity of Sunkist’s message. Florida never had such continuity in marketing their oranges. While the Florida Citrus Exchange could keep to one message, other Florida distributors presented an assorted range of messages.

Depicting Florida’s citrus industry in marketing existed as part of a larger statewide challenge. Descriptions of Florida, also, never kept to a prescribed framework. The land’s exotic flora and fauna coupled with an unrelenting summer made describing the place in simple language impossible. A scholar of Florida colonial literature, Thomas Hallock claims that the land possesses an “uncanny ability—from the sixteenth century to the present—to provide a container for the stories of the fantastic.”²⁷ Many Florida chroniclers found the state’s “imaginary” qualities being too enchanting and inexhaustible for writers to “see the land on its own terms.” For this reason the state’s “popular identity lay at the intersection between culture...and the natural environment.”²⁸ Due to the lack of continuity and the malleability of Florida’s image to outsiders, crate labels depicted either accurate Seminoles or, and more often, a geographically inaccurate plains Native American chief when selling Indian River oranges. (Figure 5)

²⁷ Thomas Hallock, "Between Topos and the Terrain: A Brief Survey of Florida Environmental Writing, 1513-1821," in *Paradise Lost? The Environmental History of Florida*, ed. Raymond Arsenault and Jack E. Davis (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 25.

²⁸ Jack E. Davis, "Alligators and Plume Birds: The Despoilation of Florida's Living Aesthetic," in *Paradise Lost? The Environmental History of Florida* ed. Raymond Arsenault and Jack E. Davis (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 236; Anne E. Rowe, *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992).

Figure 5



Citrus Crate Label, Native American, Circa 1930s

Jerry Jr. Chicone and Brenda Eubanks Burnette, *Florida Citrus Crate Labels: An Illustrated History* (West Palm Beach: Burnette & Associates, 1996), 60.

This disorganization in symbolic representations of Florida's chief commodity, up through the 1920s, stemmed from Florida's collection of "disorganized individualists." Just as few agreed on a selling price, few citrus farmers understood the importance of selecting a uniform way to represent their product to consumers. Selling Florida *and* oranges as intrinsically linked required a unified voice and brand.

By late 1933, many within the industry clamored for more cohesion, especially concerning advertising. As New Deal policies began regulating the agriculture industry, the call for a concerted advertising campaign came. C. W. Lyons, a leader in the movement addressed the industry statewide via radio.²⁹ Originating from Tampa's WDAE, Lyons urged listeners to create demand for Florida grapefruits and oranges through "national educational advertising." Lyons explained how a "national educational advertising" was not limited to simply increasing consumer demand. A campaign, according to Lyons, would combat California citrus, other commodities, and internal over-production.³⁰ I. A. Yarnell, chairman of the Citrus Control Board of Trustees seconded Lyons stating, "No one abreast of the times, can doubt for a moment that the judicious expenditure of an advertising fund... will provide a larger and more profitable market for our fruit."³¹ Echoing these pleads for unity but less optimistic of it coming about internally, John A. Snively, president of the Florida Citrus Exchange, in 1932

²⁹ C.W. Lyons, "Advertising Citrus Industry's Big Need, Lyon Asserts," *The Citrus Industry*, January 1934, 5, 8, 20, 25-26.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 8,20.

³¹ Anonymous, "State Citrus Men Are Urged to Advertise," *St. Petersburg Times*, January 30, 1934.

predicted that only legislative action could graft together the various groups of “disorganized individualists.”³²

The first legislative piece came the following year with the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA). Responding to nationwide farm failure, Congress decided that if the majority of producers of an agricultural commodity agreed, the producers could combine to regulate the volume of product flow to the national marketplace and determine a minimum quality of standards. This act sought price parity and market stability through forced cooperation from which agriculture cartels could emerge. Whereas the 1922 Capper-Volstead allowed voluntary associations antitrust protection, the AAA provided the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture the power to issue a marketing agreement if 50 percent of shippers and 75 percents of growers in a state agreed to the provisions. After key provisions of the 1933 act were declared unconstitutional, Congress redefined the questioned controls and in 1937 the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act (AMAA) cemented the law. With the California Fruit Growers Exchange firmly controlling California and Arizona’s production, the AMAA allowed a cartelization to form in that region which lasted until 1981. Attempts to issue a similar “pro-rationing” agreement in Florida as the one reached California proved more than arduous among Florida’s “disorganized individualists.” Florida growers and shippers eventually reached an agreement in 1939, one that did not include pro-rationing, but shipping holidays

³² Florida Department of Citrus, *The First Fifty Years*, i-ii.

instead.³³ The contentious relationships between the nation's citrus growing regions and within the state prevented a national cartelization.

Prompted into action by the 1934-1935 winter, through an arduous battle in economically desperate times, the traditionally independent citrus farmers finally ceded the need for a pan-Florida organization. From February to April of 1935, following multiple meetings held in Tampa and Lakeland, the industry leaders, farmers, packers, shippers, and government officials agreed to a series of bills for the state legislature to consider. After years of “rollicking, daredevil, up-and-down acrobatics of an industry in complete conflict with itself,” the State Legislature passed the first citrus laws.³⁴ The laws or “Citrus Codes” created the Florida Citrus Commission (headquartered in Lakeland), regulated fruit standards for shipping, called for state-industry advertising (separated into orange, grapefruit, and tangerine categories), initialed licensing and bond procedures, controlled color-adding applications (the process of using machines that altered green rinds orange), and instituted emergency price guarantees. According to FCE historian John Hopkins, the Citrus Codes “rang down the curtain on” the citrus industry’s “formative years.”³⁵

On September 10, 1935, in Governor David Sholtz’s office, Secretary of State Robert Gray swore in the eleven appointees and the first Commission meeting began.

³³ Elizabeth Hoffman and Gary D. Libecap, "Political Bargaining and Cartelization in the New Deal: Orange Marketing Orders," in *The Regulated Economy: A Historical Approach to Political Economy*, ed. Claudia Goldin and Gary D. Libecap (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 189-221; Lawrence Shepard, "Cartelization of the California-Arizona Orange Industry, 1934-1981," *Journal of Law and Economics* 29 (1986): 83-123.

³⁴ Florida Department of Citrus, *The First Fifty Years*, 146.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 149.

Adopting seventeen prepared regulations, the Florida Citrus Commission recognized its prime function by establishing Advertising as its first standing committee.³⁶ As the Exchange had called for in 1926, the Florida Citrus Commission was to levy an excise tax on all citrus products to pay for all advertising and promotions designed to increase consumption and “promote the prosperity and welfare of the industry.”³⁷ While the Commission worked to improve the state’s citrus industry in several arenas, increasing consumer demand through advertising and promotion received the lion’s share of their attention.

As the Florida Citrus Exchange had realized years before, controlling production output on a commodity with a finite storage time required the kind of cooperation the acrimonious Florida growers could never reach. Creating taxes for industry advertising proved a much easier consensus. National advertising then offered itself as a means towards creating consumers who could alleviate the problems of overproduction.³⁸

In this vein, Governor Sholtz conflated the orange’s identity with the state’s own when broadcasting nationwide from the 1936 Florida Orange Festival. Sholtz explained the commission’s importance to his audience in terms of product quality guarantees. Later, when describing to NBC’s January audience his surrounding as “wonderful sunshine, beautiful girls, and luscious Florida fruit,” Sholtz tapped familiar tourism discourses of an improved life provided by sun and sand to help increase orange

³⁶ Ibid., 1.

³⁷ Ibid., 147; *State of FL v. Lee* or “Florida Citrus Commission regulation 15. Sections 1-6,” August 1, 1959.

³⁸ Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 29-33.

consumption.³⁹ The citrus industry had found its message. Like the CFGE's "Sunkist," Florida could sell this agricultural commodity as a means to vitality through a supposedly unadulterated source of nature.

Entrenching a long established cultural link between consuming citrus and good health, the Commission's 1936-1937 inaugural season began with a "flu campaign" designed to fight an epidemic then striking many parts of the nation.⁴⁰ The orange's real success in this medical-health association would come later, however, when WWII research sought a better vitamin C source for K rations. Nevertheless, in June 1938, the Commission retained Arthur Kudner, Inc. as its advertising agency. With advertising expenditures around \$750,000, the agency debuted its recommended strategy in an autumn meeting that same year.⁴¹ Using lantern slides, agency representative H. F. Douglas presented to an Orlando crowd mock-ups of print advertisements and the other various proposals. The first proposal suggested utilizing a "home campaign." This "home campaign" would encourage Florida hotels and restaurants "to promote citrus fruit consumption in the state," through the sale of readily available and inexpensive orange juice. The plan intended "to convert tourists into salesmen." Burton H. Schoepf, president of Tamiami Trail Tours, also championed this idea. Schoepf thought a "large glass of orange juice or grapefruit juice anywhere in Florida for 5 cents" would incite a great

³⁹ Bill Abbot, "Sholtz Sells Florida In Festival Broadcast: Cites Fruit Prosperity," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, January 30, 1936; Tim Hollis, *Selling the Sunshine State: A Celebration of Florida Tourism Advertising* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), 1-6.

⁴⁰ Florida Department of Citrus, *The First Fifty Years*, 4.

⁴¹ Anonymous, "Florida Citrus' Account Goes to Kudner Agency," *New York Times*, June 5, 1938.

word-of-mouth campaign by tourists once they returned to their homes. Other proposals included switching the name of “Marsh Seedless” grapefruits to “Florida Seedless” and stressing the juice content of Florida oranges in all advertising materials.⁴² Douglas ended the meeting by imploring the Commission to create a single trade name, similar to the “Sunkist” used by the CFGE. No immediate brand name came.

Instead of focusing on a brand name, the FCC looked towards national radio advertising and one of its established names. A unified Florida citrus message entered national advertising later than its rival and at a time of decreased wages. In a time of scarcity, the Commission chose to sell consumers on the health benefits of citrus along with Florida sunshine.

The Commission presented Americans with the opportunity for respite through a vicarious trip to the Sunshine State by way of a grapefruit or orange purchase. To present this vicarious trip, the Commission hired Mary Margaret McBride as its spokesperson in 1940. With McBride, the Commission entered the radio foray hoping to establish these ideas into one coherent message. A radio star (and Eleanor Roosevelt favorite) from 1934 into the early 1950s, McBride’s folksy, daytime interview show reached a middlebrow national audience of women and farm families when radio removed the isolation of rural life.⁴³ Radio removed the isolation by vicariously transporting its listeners out of their home and into large cities like Chicago or New York.

⁴² Anonymous, “Citrus Men Hear Plans of Industry,” *The St. Petersburg Independent*, November 2, 1938;

Anonymous, “Movement For Large 5-cent Glass of Citrus Juice Urged,” *Miami Herald*, October 2, 1938.

⁴³ Ware, *It’s One O’clock and Here is Mary Margaret McBride*, 1-49; Anonymous, “Goo,” *Time*, November 25, 1940.

McBride's Commission-sponsored show operated as a radio version of the First Lady's syndicated "My Day" column. Five days a week, McBride filled living rooms with talk of current affairs, literary trends, entertainment news, and discussions about food. A 1940 *Time* review of her show displays both McBride's folksy charm and method of promotion, "to offset such commercial gaucheries, Miss McBride made a point of eating products while discussing them on air ... Sponsored now by the Florida Citrus Commission, she serves grapefruit in the studio, spoons some herself whenever the spirit moves her."⁴⁴

To host the fifteen minute, nationally-syndicated Commission-sponsored show, McBride retired her popular regional forty-five minute program. The new, shorter show failed to meet everybody's expectations and only aired from the autumn of 1940 until July 4, 1941. The show never found its rhythm as McBride "felt constrained" by the show's tighter schedule and format. Likewise, many of the growers thought her program was a waste of advertising expenditures. Both parties agreed to cancel the contract thirteen-weeks short. Equally disturbing to the radio host was that "after years of cordial relationships with her sponsors" she became "unhinged by the displeasure of the citrus growers." According to McBride, the growers "did not know much about radio and could not understand why she did not spend more of the program talking about citrus products and the beauty of Florida." Simply, "the commission expected more grapefruit and less

⁴⁴ Ware, *It's One O'clock and Here is Mary Margaret McBride*, 167.

Mary Margaret.”⁴⁵ Through their limited experience with radio, the collection of citrus men failed to understand how radio listeners connected to a show’s sponsors through the host, not constant repetition of the sponsor by the show’s host.

Attempts to make the show work lasted throughout its short run. In January, at the request of Governor Fred Cone, the Commission invited McBride to Florida so that she could familiarize herself with Florida citriculture. After attending a FCC meeting she even conducted a cooking class for the meetings’ participants.⁴⁶ McBride, for her part, broadcasted several shows from Lakeland. Surrounding herself with the typically rancorous citrus growers proved disastrous as she was publicly chastised on several occasions. When walking through her hotel’s lobby, McBride heard a grower disparagingly comment, “There goes two million dollars of our money.”⁴⁷ McBride became increasingly uncomfortable with the show’s format and sponsors, while the growers’ wanted immediate and tangible results. It comes as no surprise that by the summer of 1941 both parties unequivocally agreed to the early contract termination.

While unsuccessful due to a limited understanding in radio’s ability to create an intimate connection between the host and listeners, the Commission’s choice in radio advertising attested to sound judgment. President Roosevelt’s “Fireside Chats” exemplified usage of radio as tool. Entering homes and creating a false sense of intimacy, these “Fireside Chats” let the President explain his administration’s policies and

⁴⁵ Ibid., 168.

⁴⁶ Florida Department of Citrus, *The First Fifty Years*, 17.

⁴⁷ Ware, *It’s One O’clock and Here is Mary Margaret McBride*, 169.

increased governmental programs. According to media historian Jackson Lears, Roosevelt “would become a master advertiser of government, using Blue Eagles to symbolize the National Recovery Administration and Fireside Chats to win support for all his programs.”⁴⁸

The increased governmental involvement in American’s daily lives which fostered the Florida Citrus Commission also spurred social programs. One such program, the Worker Progress Administration (WPA) and its subsection the Federal Writers’ Project (FWP), solidified Florida citrus’ creation myths. The WPA embodied the President’s media savvy by employing out-of-work writers, editors, historians, researchers, and archeologists to record local and oral histories, ethnographies, children stories, and other various works. The FWP’s primary goal was the compilation and publication of the *American Guide Series*, a collection of travel guides modeled on the well-known and popular *Baedeker* series of guidebooks.⁴⁹ Directed by Carita Doggett Corse, the project in Florida produced one of the crowning achievements of all FWP works with *Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State*. Including contributions from Stetson Kennedy and Zora Neale Hurston, *Florida: A Guide* blended, “history, legend, myth, gossip, and nature lore,” to provide the Florida traveler with “a portrait of Florida that was simultaneously educational, insightful, revealing, and entertaining.”⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Lears, *Fables of Abundance*, 243.

⁴⁹ James A. Findlay and Margaret Bing, “Touring Florida Through the Federal Writers’ Project,” *Journal of Decorative and Propoganda Arts* 23 (1998): 288- 305.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 294.

Because of its thoroughness and massive scope, the writings in *Florida: A Guide* created a new standard for describing this southernmost state. Since its 1939 publication many novelists, journalists, and scholars reference this index to all things Florida. When conducting research for a new work set in southwest Florida, writer Richard P. Powell found the FWP's guide as "far and away the best of all the reference sources I could locate."⁵¹ *Florida: A Guide* created a new historiography for the state in which citrus played a prominent role in shaping the peninsula.

Listing sixty-nine different references to citrus, oranges, or grapefruit, the work displays the various correlations of citrus in Florida's culture. In *Florida: A Guide* the authors explain cities' and counties' citrus origins or nomenclature, linking the commodity to local and state economies, or serving in its role as a travelogue.⁵² Describing U.S. Highway 1 in "the heart of the East Coast citrus country, celebrated for its Indian River Oranges," the authors depict the area as having a "fishing and tourist motif." Nevertheless, "orange and grapefruit groves, dark green masses along the highway, appear more and more frequently, sometimes within towns and cities." Setting a romantic citrus scene, the authors go on to describe spring when, "the blossoms perfume the countryside. Later, heavy trucks loaded with fruit rumble along ... Some advertise 'All the fruit juice you can drink for a dime.'⁵³ Throughout the text, descriptions

⁵¹ Jerre Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal: The Federal Writers' Project, 1935-1943* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 148.

⁵² Federal Writers' Project, *Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State*, ed. Carita Doggett Corse (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), xiv-551.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 303.

similar to this one weave a pastoral Florida of bucolic groves and colorful farmers. Introductory chapters separately discuss citrus as part of the history, agriculture, and commerce. Citrus' importance shines through by the frequent references in the work.

The quality of *Florida: A Guide* were a result of its much heralded editor, Carita Doggett Corse, and her tireless work. A Jacksonville native, Corse's academic association with Florida history included her 1916 master's thesis from Columbia University titled, *Dr. Andrew Turnbull and the New Smyrna Colony of Florida*. The only female editor in the 48 state series, Corse's involvement with the FWP included personally interviewing every writer and researcher for every project as well as finding sponsors to offset each title's publication costs. One of the most fruitful relationships Corse developed was with Nathan Mayo, Florida's Commissioner of Agriculture, and early advocate of increased citrus farming cooperation.⁵⁴ Together Corse and Mayo published *Birds in Florida* and *Tropical Fruits in Florida with Commercial Possibilities*. Both works showcase an interest in Florida's flora and fauna.

Corse's familiarity with the state's fruits extended to the history of citrus.⁵⁵ Titled *The History of Citrus in Florida*, Corse wrote the piece for the public school system as part of a 1938-1939 FWP series. This brief pamphlet cites key colonial Florida texts, including Jonathan Dickenson's *God's Protecting Providence*, John Bartram's Journal, William Bartram's *Travels*, and Bernard Roman's *Natural History of Florida*, as well as

⁵⁴ Findlay and Bing, "Touring Florida Through the Federal Writers' Project," 291; Hopkins, *Fifty Years of Citrus*, 98.
⁵⁵ Findlay and Bing, "Touring Florida Through the Federal Writers' Project," 291; Carita Doggett Corse, *Birds in Florida* (Tallahassee: State of Florida, Department of Agriculture, c. 1941); —, *Tropical Fruits in Florida with Commercial Possibilities* (Tallahassee: State of Florida, Department of Agriculture, c. 1941).

tracts on the origins of commonly grown orange varieties.⁵⁶ Through an inclusion of the Seminoles' orange usage and the names of their three known varieties, Corse interlaced citrus lore with Amerindian history at a time of renewed interest in the Seminoles.⁵⁷

This short paper on Florida's citriculture reappears in subsequent works as either cited material or as an influential work. Writing an introductory study for the U.S. National Youth Administration, Joe Youngblood used Corse's history in *The Citrus Industry and Occupations in Florida*.⁵⁸ The history in McPhee's not cited *Oranges* shares strikingly similar details to Corse's *The History of Citrus in Florida*. The features on citrus' route to Florida, the history of the Dummett orange grove along the Indian River, and the history of the Temple orange variety bear a particular resemblance.⁵⁹

Many contemporary histories of the Sunshine State and the orange in Florida have employed *Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State* and/or *Oranges*, thereby cementing Corse and McPhee's journalistic narratives into historical facts. Thus, Corse and her team of writers established an "orange in Florida" narrative that combined "history, legend, myth, gossip, and nature lore," of the state. In the late 1930s, the FWP and the Commission strengthened the relationships between the government, citrus industry, and state history.

⁵⁶ Corse, "The History of Citrus in Florida" (see chap. 1, n. 16).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ U.S. National Youth Administration Florida, *The Citrus Industry and Occupations in Florida*, ed. Joe A. Youngblood and Arthur R. Meade (Tallahassee: U.S. National Youth Administration, 1940?), 1-6.

⁵⁹ McPhee, *Oranges*, 90-92; Corse, *The History of Citrus in Florida*.

In 1937, during the annual Orange Festival at Silver Springs, the Florida State Horticultural Society celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. A performance titled *Golden Harvest: The Romance of Florida Citrus* marked the occasion. Based on a sentimental history of the orange in Florida, the play captured the positive mood many in the audience felt towards the industry's new direction. The play's end exemplifies this mood with "the Spirit of Florida" crowning the 1937 Orange Festival Queen:

To you my daughter, I give this crown. Its brightness is for the glowing color of your cheeks under the Florida Sun; Its gold is for the vast treasure of the world's wealth that has come to me because of you; its shining is for the lustre that your name has brought me. I have been happy tonight looking backward to the time when you were first brought to me, Spanish gold in the hold of a Spanish ship. I am happier still as I look into your future, our future as your fate and mine are so closely twined together. For your past, which is glamorous with romance, for your present, which is rich with fulfillment, and for your future which is glorious with promise, I crown you —Orange Queen!"⁶⁰

This maudlin play captures the importance of citrus to Florida. In 1935 Citrus Codes brought together a cacophony of various mumblings to create a unified voice. The Commission's structure and governmental backing allowed it to represent the sunshine state's key commodity uniformly. Tightening both the historic and economic bonds with Florida, the Commission's story formed as others recorded citrus' past. Carita Doggett Corse and the Federal Writers' Project ensured that future generations kept Florida's story entwined with the orange

⁶⁰ Nina Oliver Dean, *Golden Harvest: The Romance of Florida Citrus*, The Florida State Horticultural Society on the Occasion of its Semi-Centennial Celebration, Ocala, April 14, 1937.

Chapter Three

Add Three Cans of Water and Mix

The December 1941 declarations of war created new challenges for the Florida citrus industry. The industry leaders anticipated “governmental purchases of products ... material shortages which would cause substitutions, and price controls.”¹ During the war, the Commission decided to keep the name of Florida citrus products before the public. Rather than just whet the public's appetite, the new, patriotic advertisements showed “the great importance of these products in feeding and maintaining the health and vigor of the armed forces.” The new campaign featured “Victory Vitamin C” as its slogan and portrayed images of American soldiers in battle next to jingoistic body copy.² (Figure 6) The effort to make sure those that fighting actually received their vitamin C funded research that produced Frozen Orange Juice Concentrate (FCOJ), a discovery made in the Lake Alfred citrus experiment station. By WWII's end the Florida Citrus Commission's role in the state's citrus industry had permanence and its creation, FCOJ, would greatly alter all the previous problems of overproduction.³

Getting soldiers to consume “Victory Vitamin C” proved more difficult than depicting them courageously in battle. Despite years of research, canned citrus products never captured the taste of fresh juice. Consumers constantly complained of canned orange juice as having a “cooked” or “metallic” taste. Frozen orange juice, without being

¹ Florida Department of Citrus, *The First Fifty Years*, 20 (see chap.1, n. 4).

² *Ibid.*, 23.

³ Alissa Hamilton, *Squeezed*, 11-27 (see chap. 1, n.9); ShaneHamilton, “Cold Capitalism: The Political Ecology of Frozen Concentrated Orange Juice,” *Agricultural History* 77 (2003): 557-639.

Figure 6

Just ask a Jap

what it feels like to be up against men who are fortified with

"Victory Vitamin C"

You belittled it forth to the world, Mr. Tojo — a year or so ago, "Americans Are grown soft." Tell that to your Zanz pilots today. Tell 'em if you dare! Or find a survivor from Guadalcanal — and ask him what it feels like to meet a U. S. Marine! How well every Jap knows the truth today... for he's up against men with iron wills and nerves of steel — and bodies hard as nails.

And now that we know the remarkable way that "Victory Vitamin C" helps keep those body leaders in perfect fighting trim, we're making no effort to give them all the vitamin C they need. Because Florida citrus fruits are such gold mines of this vitamin, countless cans of grapefruit juice are shipped to our fighting forces. If you can't always get your canned grapefruit juice, at any rate you'll be glad to know it is reaching those boys who are teaching the Japs to "Remember Pearl Harbor" . . . in a way they'll never forget!

FLORIDA CITRUS COMMISSION • Lakeland, Florida

In rich orange and grapefruit in vitamin C, that Uncle Sam has set aside the entire supply of canned grapefruit sections, natural orange juice, blended juice and concentrates for the armed forces. Fortunately one of the juice-grapefruit juice — it is plentiful that a moderate amount is available for civilian use.

Canned Florida Grapefruit Juice

RICH IN "VICTORY VITAMIN C"

Grapefruit Juice, TQ45

Florida Grapefruit Juice Advertisement, 1943

Jim Heimann, ed., *All American Ads: 1940s* (Koln: Taschen, 2001), 441.

concentrated, had been available since the 1930s. Processed, frozen, and packaged in Lake Worth, Donald Duck Orange Juice (made by the Florida Citrus Cannery Cooperative) rarely resembled orange juice in taste by the time it reached its final destination. Canned juice, either in liquid, frozen, or some in-between form, lost essential oils needed for taste. Due to poor refrigeration the juice constantly degraded in quality during transport. Somehow, exposure to air and inadequate refrigeration altered the product. Canned juice tasted so terrible that Americans preferred canned tomato juice to canned grapefruit or orange juice. For the war effort, the poor taste, lack of refrigerated transportation, and the products' weight and bulk made canned citrus products an impractical form of vitamin C for the soldiers. Without an efficient means to transport orange juice, the Quartermaster Corps discovered just how difficult getting soldiers to consume an unpalatable substitute product could be regardless of its benefit.⁴

Finding a way to meet the soldiers' nutritional needs meant the Subsistence Research Lab (SRL) branch of the Quartermaster Corps searched for the most efficient and effective means of delivery. Soldiers rejected pills, capsules, and tablets. By 1943, the "Parachute and Mobile Troop Ration," colloquially known as the "K ration," supplied the soldiers with three pocket-sized meals containing vitamin A in its eggs and cheese, whole wheat and soy flour in its biscuits, wheat germ and dried milk for vitamins B and E plus folic acid, meat for protein, and for vitamin C the soldiers received packets of lemon crystals to be mixed with water. The K ration met the soldiers' nutritional needs

⁴ Shane Hamilton, "Cold Capitalism," 557- 563.

extremely well. The only problem with the K rations remained its taste. Instead of providing an appetizing meal, the K rations, “paved the roads to the front lines and filled the gutters along the detours.” The soldiers particularly detested the lemon crystals.⁵

The University of Florida’s citrus experimental research station in Lake Alfred received federal funding to create a decent-tasting, cheap, and transportable concentrated orange juice. Prior attempts at concentrating orange juice by evaporating the water from heated juice created a product universally despised. Citrus historian Thomas Mack labeled the product “battery acid.”⁶ John McPhee described the product as tasting like “a glass of water with two teaspoons of sugar and one aspirin dissolved in it.”⁷ In 1943, three scientists working at the research station began a quest to untie “the Gordian knot in preservation.”⁸

With additional backing from the Florida Citrus Commission, citrus researchers Louis MacDowell, Edwin Moore, and Cedric Atkins discovered that by adding a squirt of fresh orange juice to concentrate as it came out of the evaporator, the lost fresh flavor returned. This process, known as the “cut-back,” (because the added juice decreased the concentration of evaporated juices, thereby cutting-back the concentrated amount) standardized orange juice through controlling the type of juice added. The added juice provided the essential oils and returned the “fresh juice” flavor. The concentrated

⁵ Alissa Hamilton, *Squeezed*, 16-18.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁷ McPhee, *Oranges*, 125 (see chap. 1, n.4).

⁸ Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 197-199 (see chap. 1, n. 2).

material could come from a variety of oranges. As long as the added juice remained the same all, of the resulting concentrate containers would taste identical.

The resulting slush would be frozen and packaged, removing much of the liquid bulk. Technological improvements in refrigeration made transportation feasible. Once the product reached its destination the consumer merely had to reconstitute the concentrated product by adding water. The ratio of three parts water to one part concentrate made directions simple “Add three cans of water and mix.” By the 1960s, this sentence became as common to every American home as “It’s Howdy Dowdy Time!”

MacDowell, Moore, and Atkins patented their discovery in 1948. Although too late for use in the war, the researchers gave patent number 2,453,109 to the USDA. Its creators received only acknowledgement, gratitude, and their normal state salaries for their discovery. Private companies immediately implemented the processing technology because the researchers opened their patent to the public.⁹ Labeled a “Cinderella product” for the way it metaphorically transformed the industry from common worker to “belle of the ball,” FCOJ purportedly solved Florida citrus’ constant surplus problems by creating a means for long-term storage.¹⁰

Frozen Concentrated Orange Juice hit American grocers’ shelf at a time of increased standardization in American culture. The 1950s witnessed the rise of America’s postwar “consumer culture.” Through technological advances, a strengthening of corporate culture, and an increasing middle class, production and consumption steadily

⁹ Ibid.: Alissa Hamilton, *Squeezed*, 20; Shane Hamilton, “Cold Capitalism,” 562.

¹⁰ Warren, “Nature’s Navels,” 191 (see chap. 1, n. 10).

rose in tandem as Americans spread out into the sprawling suburbs.¹¹ The popularity of Betty Cocker, SPAM, McDonald's, Velveeta cheese, and other instant products allowed FCOJ to easily find its place in the modern kitchen. Postwar refrigerated trucking and home refrigeration changed how Americans ate.¹² The American Can Company estimated that between 1951 and 1952, FCOJ had saved housewives "the equivalent of fourteen thousand hours" of labor now that they no longer hand squeezed fresh oranges, but simply mixed three cans of water to one part orange concentrated.¹³

If this "Cinderella product" eliminated grueling house work, it proved nothing short of a miracle for the Florida citrus industry. Florida's thin-skinned Valencia, pineapple, and Hamlin oranges contained a high juice and sugar content, making them perfect for processing. The old Californian knock against Florida's thin-skinned oranges, "that if you want to eat Florida orange you have to get into the bathtub first," proved a blessing. In 1942, Florida out produced its old rival and never looked back. California became a fading orange empire.¹⁴

In 1950, Florida produced fifty-five percent of the country's oranges and a record one-hundred million boxes.¹⁵ By 1953, seven out of ten groves were used in FCOJ production.¹⁶ Throughout the decade, orange production increased. Growers continued to plant trees and whereas overproduction once nearly destroyed the industry, surpluses

¹¹ Lears, *Fables of Abundance*, 247 (see, chap. 1, n34).

¹² Shane Hamilton, "Cold Capitalism," 564.

¹³ Alissa Hamilton, *Squeezed*, 23.

¹⁴ McPhee, *Oranges*, 9; Sackman, *Orange Empire*, 295-300 (see chap. 1, n. 35).

¹⁵ Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 196.

¹⁶ Shane Hamilton, "Cold Capitalism," 565.

could now be banked. The industry came close to achieving the stability that the controversial New Deal policies, the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) and Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act (AMAA), had sought. FCOJ brought growers high profits despite constant bumper crops. A 1962 USDA report showed that FCOJ returned forty-nine percent of the consumer's purchase prices to the grower, compared to thirty percent for fresh oranges.¹⁷ Many believed that FCOJ allowed that an agricultural product to achieve the same rationalization as industrial manufacturing had.¹⁸ Later freezes and market manipulation would prove this rationalization inaccurate, but FCOJ allowed for the closest approximation to production stability that agriculture could achieve.

The postwar rise in technologies and (government-influenced) "free" markets favored large corporations. Following FCOJ's advent, the independent growers began selling their groves to an ever shrinking group of corporate entities. The Florida citrus industry soon became a virtual oligopoly of four companies: Minute Maid, Snow Crop, Pasco Packing Company, and Birds Eye. Each agribusiness purchased vast tracts of grove land in the 1950s to guarantee a supply for their concentration plants. Minute Maid proved especially apt in this new market. Starting as Boston's National Research Company (NRC), the company began to use its evaporation technology to create a powdered citrus product as part of the Quartermasters' challenge. Once FCOJ proved to be the better product, NRC opened a plant in Plymouth, Florida and began marketing

¹⁷ Alissa Hamilton, *Squeezed*, 22.

¹⁸ Shane Hamilton, "Cold Capitalism," 560-561.

under the “Minute Maid” brand. The name alluded to the simple reconstitution process. In 1949, Minute Maid purchased 4,700 acres of citrus lands for \$5 million, purportedly the largest transaction in Florida citrus history.¹⁹

The growth of Minute Maid coincided with their business relationship to crooner and radio personality Bing Crosby. Unlike the Citrus Commission’s sponsorship of Mary Margaret McBride, the Minute Maid-Crosby deal was mutually beneficial. At first, Minute Maid could not afford to pay Crosby, so he received 20,000 shares (at 10 cents a share) in the company and the title “Manager of Bing Crosby Minute Maid Corporation” (a marketing subsidiary). Between 1949 and 1954, Crosby’s “Minute Maid Fresh Squeezed Orange Juice” show started weekday mornings at 10:15 with Crosby asking his sidekick, “Ken, what’s the shopping hint for today?” To which Ken Carpenter responded, “Well, it’s Minute Maid Fresh Frozen Orange Juice, ladies. And your frozen food store has it.” Crosby would mellifluously tell his national audience that, “There’s no doubt about it. Minute Maid is the best there is for a fresh squeezed taste.” That “fresh squeezed” taste was available year-round in the “frozen food store,” regardless of the crop’s season.²⁰

To further this association of year-round quality, the show’s weather report featured Crosby asking, “And what’s the weather like today, Ken?” Ken replied, “Oh, it’s just fine here in the studio.” The implied message was that technologically controlled

¹⁹ Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 201.

²⁰ Ibid.; McPhee, *Orange*, 138-139; Alissa Hamilton, *Squeezed*, 26; Shane Hamilton, “Cold Capitalism,” 558; Warren, “Nature’s Navels,” 190.

FCOJ, like the temperature-controlled weather in the studio, is consistently “fine.” With more Americans purchasing home refrigerators throughout the 1950s, Minute Maid grew and eventually acquired its chief competitor, Snow Cap. By 1960, when Coca-Cola bought the company, Minute Maid owned thirty thousand acres of groves, operated three concentration plants, and had a large corporate headquarters in Orlando.²¹

The ubiquity of FCOJ in American homes allowed Florida to become synonymous with orange juice. Maintaining its part in this connection of product to place, the Florida Citrus Commission increased its advertising budget with new found wealth from FCOJ. The Commission began requiring the word “Florida” to appear conspicuously on more citrus products in the 1950s. Continuing its “Flu” campaigns from the previous decades, the Commission developed new ways to remind consumers of the health potency of Florida’s citrus.

Despite the initial failure with Mary Margaret McBride, the Commission continued to sponsor radio programs including Dave Garroway’s and Tom Moore’s. With an improved understanding of show sponsorship, the Commission asked each host to stress the health benefits from consuming Florida citrus.²² When the affable Garroway demonstrated his ability to host NBC’s *Today* show, the Commission sponsored his 1954 “Dave Garroway Show,” a Friday night variety television program.²³ Garroway’s connection to Florida citrus did not remain limited to the sponsorship. In an unforeseen

²¹ Ibid.; McPhee, *Orange*, 138-139; Alissa Hamilton, *Squeezed*, 26; Shane Hamilton, “Cold Capitalism,” 558; Warren, “Nature’s Navels,” 190.

²² Florida Department of Citrus, *The First Fifty Years*, 37-39.

²³ Ibid.; Anonymous, “Comebacks: Peace, Old Tiger,” *Time*, July 18, 1969.

citrus-related twist, Garroway's co-host on *Today*, the lovable, orange juice drinking J. Fred Muggs, a chimpanzee credited with saving the show from early cancellation, retired to a compound in of all places, Citrus Park, Hillsborough County, Florida.²⁴

Trusted male spokesmen like Crosby and Garroway did not completely represent the physical representation of the orange's health benefits. In the 1950s, the Commission initiated a relationship with the Miss America beauty pageant winner. The 1953 winner, Miss Neva Jane Langley from Lakeland, became the first to serve as the Commission's agent. Through television commercials and appearances on Garroway's show, the beautiful Miss Langley's youth and figure implicitly conveyed that Florida oranges and grapefruit produced "naturally" healthy results. This use of curvaceous, but innocuous young women embraced many of the era's cultural ideas. The 1950s witnessed a re-gendering in the American aesthetic. Christian Dior's postwar "New Look" instituted and influenced a re-emphasis on women's secondary sexual characteristics in fashion. Meanwhile, Marilyn Moore's combination of childlike wonder, hourglass-shaped figure, and dangerous sexuality exemplified a "natural woman" ideal in films and advertisements. Hiring the Miss America winner as the Florida citrus representative tapped into this cultural shift to validate its steady claims of health and "natural" goodness. The fact that Langley came from the Citrus belt further solidified this connection.

²⁴ Josh Zimmer, "Trainer of Famed Chimp J. Fred Muggs Dies at 80," *The St. Petersburg Times*, March 14, 2002; As a child, I personally heard Muggs bellow. Muggs' Citrus Park retirement compound shared a property line with the Citrus Park Little League Baseball fields where I played as a child.

Two years later, Miss America's 1955 winner, Lee Ann Meriwether, also hailed from a citrus growing region. The Commission debated employing Miss Meriwether because she was a native Californian. Realizing that any citrus connection served their goals better than none (and that they owed Meriwether \$7,500 either way), the Commission continued their use of Miss Americas in marketing. Meriwether suppressed any feelings for her home state and served as the 1955 Florida citrus representative. Following her year as Miss America and Florida citrus representative, Meriwether worked with Garroway on the *Today* show.²⁵

FCOJ finally brought Florida citrus the recognition and distinction the industry craved. No longer competing with California or precariously dependent on favorable weather, Florida's citrus industry matured. Like budding, FCOJ also further separated the unadulterated product of nature from the consumer. Advertisements continued their invocation of nature when presenting Florida oranges, only FCOJ mediated their vicarious enjoyment of Florida's nature.

The integration of government agencies like the Florida Citrus Commission, the Florida Department of Citrus, and the University of Florida's research station with private entities like Minute Maid created a citrus "boom" unlike the previous ones. FCOJ marketing expert William Grierson labeled the concentrate boom as "the boomiest boom since the Brazilian rubber boom," but this was not the only boom to hit Florida following

²⁵ Anonymous, "New Ad Plans Announced By Citrus Group," *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, June 18, 1953, 8; Associated Press, "California Gal in Tough Spot," *The Spokesman Review*, September 15, 1954, 14; Miss America, "1955, Lee Meriwether," Miss America, <http://www.missamerica.org/our-miss-americas/1950/1955.aspx>.

the war.²⁶ Florida's reputation as America's vacationland gained new importance in the era of interstate highways, air-conditioning, and middle-class wealth. To sell Florida's exotic qualities and semi-tropical weather, marketers employed the orange as a sacred symbol related to the sun, fun, and health available in the Sunshine State.

If "social space" is a "social product" as Henri Lefebvre claimed, then alongside oranges, Florida's tourism was the other social product in the 1950s. Prior to World War II, Florida had served as the wintering home for the wealthy as well as the parsimonious "tin can tourists."²⁷ The postwar economy and technological advancements allowed the Sunshine State to become America's place for year-round sun-and-fun. In November 1949, on U.S.17 near the Georgia border, Florida opened the first state-owned "Welcome Station." Here tourists received a free glass of orange juice.²⁸ The next year, 4.5 million tourists crossed the border and crowded Florida's beaches, hotels, and roadside attractions. Places like Silver Springs and Miami's Parrot Jungle played upon Florida's semi-tropical weather and distinct flora and fauna. Modern air-conditioning opened the hot, humid summer months to travel as hotels, restaurants, and automobiles even transformed into havens rather than hot-boxes during the dog days of summer. Like Bing Crosby's studio, the weather in Florida was always, "fine." Where an earlier generation marveled at the scenery from the windows of the Orange Blossom Special, tourists could now travel independent of predetermined stops in their air-conditioned cars. The land

²⁶ Shane Hamilton, "Cold Capitalism," 565.

²⁷ William W. Rogers, "Fortune and Misfortune: The Paradoxical Twenties," in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 287-304.

²⁸ Tim Hollis, *Dixie Before Disney: 100 Years of Roadside Fun* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1999), 13.

altered in tandem to the change in transportation. In the postwar landscape, tourists travel along Florida's highways, like U.S. 27, nicknamed the "Orange Blossom Trail." This greater autonomy in travel fertilized a greater variety in destinations.

Sociologist David M. Hummon considered tourism as a form of secular ritual and "like other rituals produces an iconography of sacred symbols and objects."²⁹ A 1950s map for the Gulf Coast Scenic Highway (U.S. highways 19 and 41) from the American Automobile Association (AAA) featured two Florida icons demonstrates the use of sacred symbols. Using a tri-color design dominated by orange, the map features a paternalistic orange-hued sun worshiped by a shorts-wearing young woman standing on the beach. Heliotropic palm trees on the left side frame the image. (Figure 7) While the orange does not appear in the map, an orange could easily be substituted for the orange-hued sun. Further, the association of Florida to the fruit makes the mental jump from color to fruit easy. Whereas this map indirectly acknowledges the orange, most tourist advertisements and marketing materials prominently included the iconic symbol, whether directly referring to the orange's status in Florida or using the agricultural commodity as a design element.

An advertisement from the Florida State News-Bureau exemplified this direct relationship between tourism and the oranges. (Figure 7) Placed in national magazines, the advertisement encouraged the potential visitor to come because, "Yes, it's *Orange Blossom Time* again in *Florida*." Part of the state's "FABULOUS FLORIDA – COOL in

²⁹ David M. Hummon, "Tourist Worlds: Tourist Advertising, Ritual, and American Culture," *The Sociological Quarterly* 29 (1988): 179-202.

Figure 7



American Automobile Association Map, circa 1950s.

Tim Hollis, *Selling the Sunshine State: A Celebration of Florida Tourism Advertising* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), 24.

Summer ... WARM in Winter!” campaign, the ad features a young couple smiling, dancing, fishing, and sunbathing amid the fruit and flower. (Figure 8) To guarantee the reader made the connection between Florida’s sun, fun, and the orange, images signifying each idea appear identical in shape and color. The sun graphic only lacks the leaves and blossoms. On the far right side, a bathing suit-clad woman holds a beach ball that mimics the sun and orange in shape and color, thereby unifying a Florida vacation’s themes and sacred symbols through one design element.

Those heading to Florida had more than just the beach as a desired destination. Roadside attractions summoned the traveler in all parts of the state. According to Ken Breslauer’s *Roadside Paradise* these attractions “utilized some aspect of the state’s flora and fauna as a central theme.”³⁰ In this manner, the attractions collectively differentiated Florida from everywhere “else.” Whereas places like Cypress Gardens and Miami’s Monkey Jungle built up these qualities, the ever-present Florida orange groves fostered orange juice stands as one of the most common roadside attractions in the state.³¹ While large corporations might have controlled FCOJ production and the marketplace, a few family run groves along major highways continued their operations as purveyors of fresh oranges and juice for those traveling through. (Figure 9)

³⁰ Ken Breslauer, *Roadside Paradise: The Golden Age of Florida's Tourist Attractions: 1929-1971* (St. Petersburg: RetroFlorida, 2000), 9-10.

³¹ Cory H. Gittner *Miami's Parrot Jungle and Gardens: The Colorful History of an Uncommon Attraction* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000).

Figure 8

Happiest Holiday Under the Sun

This is the year for the winter vacation you've been promising yourself a long, long time. This is the winter for Florida...for sunshine that stays bright and clear all winter long...for water as blue and brilliant as a star-sapphire...for the thrills of the world's finest fishing, golf, and any one of a thousand other pleasures. You'll agree, no other place under the sun is so richly endowed for heavenly winter living. And you'll discover none offers such an overflowing abundance of exciting events and spectacular attractions as are to be found in all parts of the Sunshine State. But don't put it off any longer than you must. Now is just the right time to begin your unforgettable Winter in Florida -- the sunniest, happiest holiday of them all.

Florida

STATE OF FLORIDA, 603 A COMMISSION BUILDING, TALLAHASSEE.
Please send me at once the free "Florida Information Package"

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ Zone _____ State _____

Photo Illustrations by Florida State News Bureau

Yes, it's Orange Blossom Time again in Florida

Beauty! Fragrance! Romance!

Yes, it's Orange Blossom Time again in Florida

The sheer breath-taking beauty, loveliness, and fragrance of Florida's fabulous groves at Orange Blossom Time will make a visit in early spring one of the most entrancing experiences of your entire lifetime. Leave rain, misty weather behind for sparkling days and balmy, moon-bathed nights. Sharpen up your golf game for the coming season. Angle for Florida's best varieties of fresh and salt water fish. Take in Florida's spectacular attractions and scenic wonders. You'll find a cordial welcome awaiting you everywhere in Florida...now, or any time during the year.

FREE! New 36-Page Booklet in Full-Color Mail This Coupon Today!

STATE OF FLORIDA, 1101-E COMMISSION BLDG., TALLAHASSEE, FLA.
Please send me, at once, colorful booklet: "Florida, All-Year Vacation Land."

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ Zone _____ State _____

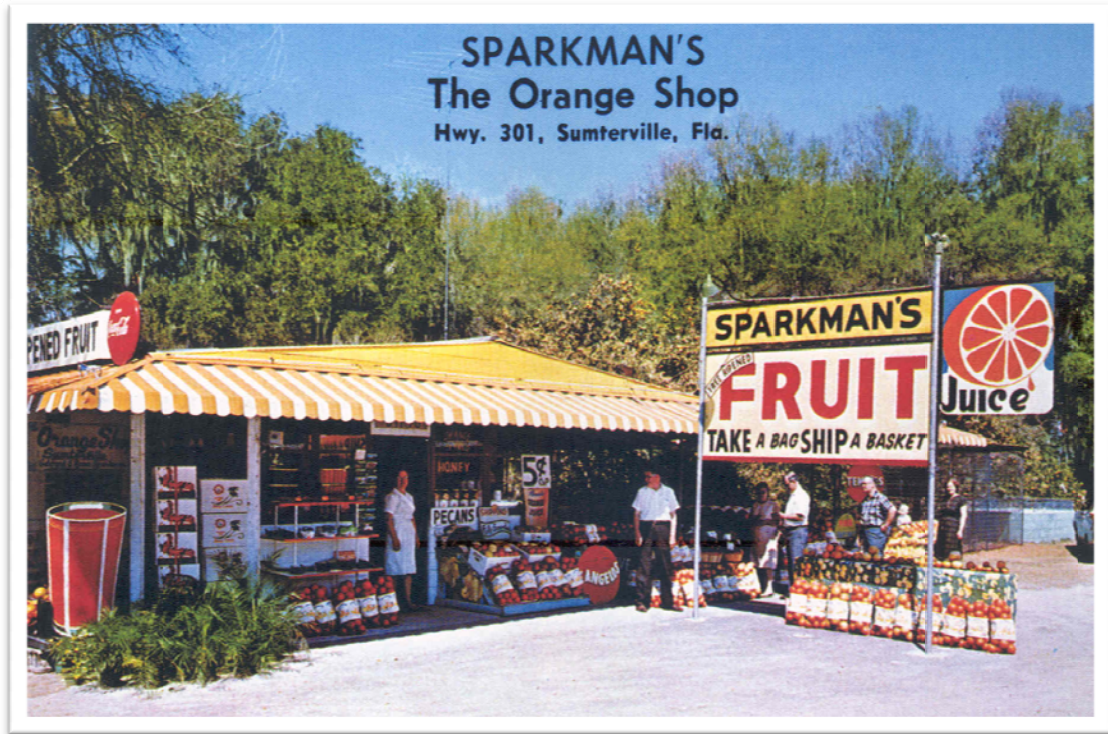
FABULOUS FLORIDA
COOL in Summer! ... WARM in Winter!

Photo Illustrations by Florida State News Bureau

Tourism Advertisement, 1950s.

Tim Hollis, *Selling the Sunshine State: A Celebration of Florida Tourism Advertising* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), 11.

Figure 9



Roadside Orange Juice Stand, 1950s.

Tim Hollis, *Selling the Sunshine State: A Celebration of Florida Tourism Advertising* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), 255.

In 1956, several Florida businessmen wanting to take part of Florida's tourism boom built the 226-foot Citrus Tower. (Figures 10 and 11) Nestled amid 17 million citrus trees and sitting atop of a nearly-300 foot hill, the tower offered the visitor an endless vista of orange groves and lakes in along Florida's ridge. The Citrus Tower presented an endless view of orange trees in linear rows as the "natural" landscape. Coupled with nearly 100 years of orange marketing and FCOJ's phenomenal success, this presentation made the orange groves as part of the landscape instead of a usurper of the land.

Fifty years earlier, Henry James, in his 1904 travelogue *The American Scene*, described a dream-like Florida. A place possessing a "vagueness," that remained, "sweet, being scented and flower and fruited." James especially enjoyed Florida's subtropical climate, cool oceanic breezes, and the "oranges' and grapefruits' ... velvet air."³² During the 1950s, tourism and citrus promoted the Sunshine State's virtues of youth, health, and happiness so well that many of the people who first came as visitors return to become residents seeking their part of the "Florida Dream."

³² Henry James, *The American Scene* (Boston: Harper & Brothers, 1907), 396, 443.

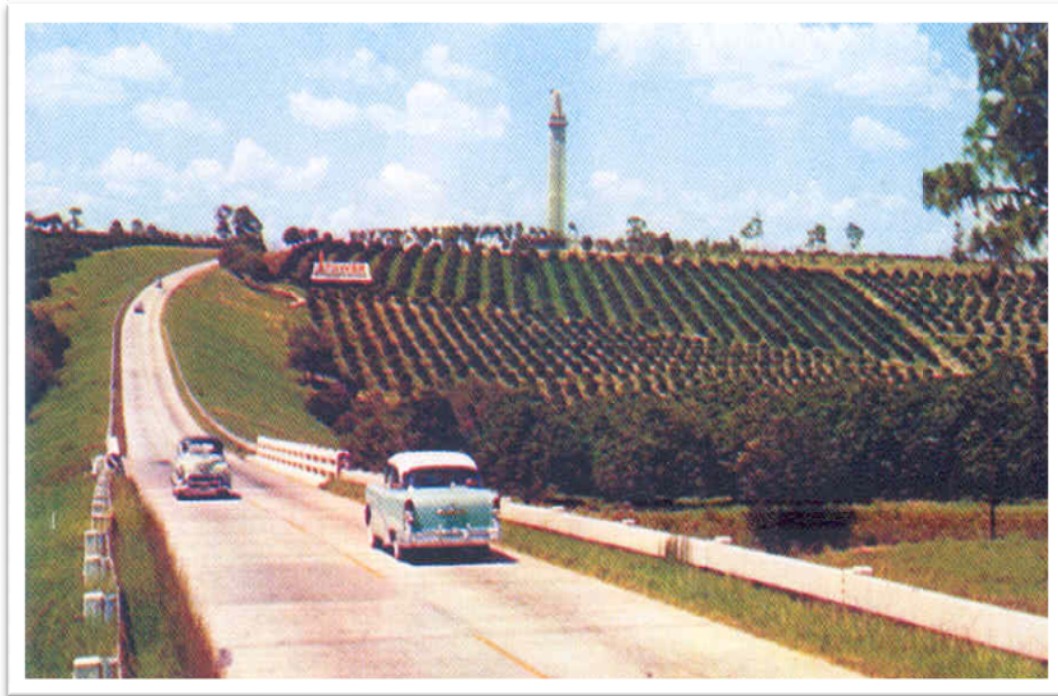
Figure 10



The Citrus Tower, 1956.

Tim Hollis, *Selling the Sunshine State: A Celebration of Florida Tourism Advertising* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), 196.

Figure 11



The Citrus Tower and Orange Blossom Trial, circa 1956.

Tim Hollis, *Selling the Sunshine State: A Celebration of Florida Tourism Advertising* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), 197.

Conclusion

There was no shortage of hucksters selling the “Florida dream” in the 1950s. Promoters, developers, salesmen, and advertising copywriters “played indispensable roles in defining, packaging, and redeeming the Florida dream.”³³ By choosing the orange as Ridgewood Groves’ thematic element in 1958, the community’s developer and chief salesman, Charles Cheezem, packaged the neighborhood with the key symbol of Florida’s vivacity. As the state’s phenomenal population and urban growth continued in the latter half of the twentieth century, more developers latched on to orange symbolism in order to sell their projects. The linkage between the orange and Florida had become so entrenched through years of industry advertising and state promotion that allusions to the orange became commonplace. Evoking Florida’s “natural” qualities in the minds of consumers, these symbolic “groves” of houses and strip malls ironically replaced the “second nature” groves that preceded them in the coming decades. As one Orange County agriculture extension agent stated, “Our No. 1 crop is Yankees.”³⁴

Yet, the story of the orange in Florida has always been one of migration. After Juan Ponce de León’s expeditions introduced the orange to Florida, each period of intense citrus production attracted new citizens to the land. Following the Civil War, the increased commercial possibilities enticed northerners with the lure of “Florida gold.”³⁵ However, due to the vagaries of agriculture, technological advancements in

³³ Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams*, 47.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 205.

³⁵ Weeks, “Florida Gold,” 13-55 (see chap. 1, n. 8); Warren, “Nature’s Navels,” 180.

transportation, and the farmers' fierce individuality, the industry remained disorganized until the twentieth century.

Events that began in the late 1920s forced the citrus industry in Florida to change. Overproduction constantly beleaguered orange growers. Infighting amongst the growers and the lack of a strong central organization kept the Florida citrus industry divided. The 1935 creation of the Florida Citrus Commission and the Florida Department of Citrus finally allowed for the enactment of statewide controls. One of the Commission's main functions was to increase consumption with effective marketing. Through the Commission's direction, Florida orange growers presented a uniform message to American consumers. Concurrent to this change in marketing, politicians and state boosters used the orange to symbolize the state's sunshine and semi-tropical weather in an effort to attract tourists and businesses to Florida. During the late 1930s, the Federal Writers' Program, a New Deal project, recorded a history of the orange in Florida. Journalists and historians have subsequently repeated this history, thereby making it the accepted narrative for the "orange in Florida."

The federal government was also fundamental in funding research that sought a better method for delivering vitamin C to World War II soldiers. This research ultimately led to the creation of Frozen Concentrated Orange Juice in 1948. Dubbed a "Cinderella product" for its ability to change an entire industry overnight, FCOJ propelled Florida orange production to new heights. Because FCOJ made Florida orange juice a breakfast staple in American homes, the connection between place and product strengthened.

Drawing on this increased market presence, Florida's postwar tourism industry appropriated the symbolic orange to attract customers in their sale of the "Florida dream."

Ten years after the advent of FCOJ, the orange represented not only Florida as an agricultural commodity, an aspect of its landscape, or tourist icon. Rather, the orange unified these elements and operated as a metaphor for Florida in its entirety. Through marketing, the orange became a tangible manifestation of the sun for the "Sunshine State."

In 1955, *Time* magazine featured an article depicting Governor LeRoy Collins' role in the state's phenomenal growth. Citing population increases and industry growth as "mere figures" that could not "convey an adequate idea of the seismic social, political, economic, and geographical changes" which Florida had dealt with since the war, the magazine portrayed a rapidly modernizing Florida. When asked if the state was becoming over-dependent on tourism, Gov. Collins replied, "Not so long as we keep the rest of our house in order." The magazine's cover displayed what Collins' "rest of the house" meant. In an outlined drawing of the state, a factory, a young woman, and cow sit atop a background of oranges and leaves. (Figure 13) If "Tourism. Industry. Agriculture.," represented the numerators of Florida, then the orange operated as the denominator.³⁶

³⁶ Anonymous, "Florida: A Place in the Sun," *Time*, December 19, 1955, 18-21.

Figure 12



Time Magazine December 19, 1955

Anonymous, "Florida: A Place in the Sun," *Time*, December 19, 1955, 18-21.

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