

HFC 2AB  
Sub: Sydney O. Chase, Jr.  
Int: Paul Weaver  
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Tape A Side 1

W:

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~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ This is Paul Weaver. I'm talking with Mr. Sydney O. Chase, Jr., who is chairman of the board of Chase and Company which has been one of Florida's largest and oldest distributors of citrus and vegetables. Chase and Company is a family-owned business which has grown and sold citrus in Florida for nearly 100 years. Mr. Chase's father is Sydney Chase, Sr., and his uncle is Joshua Chase. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ These men were two of the earliest pioneers of Florida citrus. I'm talking with Mr. Chase at the offices of Chase and Company, at 200 Oak Street, Sanford, Florida, June 8, 1977, and the time is 2:30. Mr. Chase, I'd like to begin by asking you how and when you became involved in the Florida citrus industry.

C: I might start by saying that I became involved with citrus not too long after I was born. But my first real employment in the citrus industry was when I went to work for Chase and Company in October, 1922.

W: And what were you doing when you first became involved with Chase and Company?

C: I was located at Winter Haven, Florida, and was a trouble-shooter for the three packing houses in Polk County that the company owned at that time, Frostproof, Winter Haven, and Auburndale, with a private packing house owned by Mr. S. M. Stephens <sup>out</sup> of Lakeland at Sparling. Chase and Company sold Mr. Stephens' fruit that was put up at the Sparling packing house.

W: ~~What~~ What were some of your activities? You said you were a trouble-shooter. What exactly did you do in that position?

C: I visited the three packing houses every week and, with the local district manager, called on many of the growers to express our appreciation for their business and to find out how well they were satisfied.

W: Let's go back a little bit in time. ~~What~~ <sup>you</sup> Would describe for me how and when your father, Sydney Chase, Sr., became involved in the citrus business?

C: My father ~~is~~ he is from Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, born in 1860, and when he was a young boy worked in the strawberry fields in New Jersey. He acquired some interest in agriculture, and because they used to have an orange in his stocking every Christmas he thought how fine it would be if somebody could raise enough oranges for all children to be able have an orange in their stocking. The interest increased from year to year, and in 1878 he secured a letter of introduction from a Mr. Shelton in Philadelphia who had a friend Mr. James E. Ingram in Sanford.

W: Would you explain who Mr. Ingram

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ was?

C: Mr. Ingram was the resident agent for General Henry Shelton Stanford, the founder of the town. And in this way Mr. Ingram placed my father at the disposal of General Sanford and he went to work on the <sup>[Belair]</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ groves.

W: Was there any specific event other than the fact that your father received oranges in his stocking that led him to come to Florida?

C: He was particularly interested in agriculture and realized that more could be done in agriculture than what was being done at the time. His interest increased and that was what brought him to Florida to learn how to grow oranges.

W: And what were some of his early jobs when he first came to Sanford and began working for the General?

C: His first job was whatever the superintendent on the groves, a Mr. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ <sup>Houston</sup> a Scotchman, graduate of the Botanical Gardens in Scotland, asked him to do, from washing the trunks of trees with <sup>h</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ <sup>h</sup> wale-oil soap to anything else that any of the other laborers had to do.

W: ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Would you describe for me what Sanford and the surrounding area was like when your father first arrived?

C: In 1878, when my father arrived by boat, there were probably not more than twenty-five or thirty buildings in the town. And the buildings that were here started at what is now Sanford Avenue and

came west to Oak Avenue with not more than two blocks south, as the Lake Monroe was north of Sanford. And this was developed later.

W: You said your father came to Sanford on a boat, right? How did he come, down the St. Johns River?

C: Right. He came down the St. Johns on what was known as the Old Starlight Steamer. They, at that time, had about five or six boats a day arriving from Jacksonville to Sanford because it was a distribution point for much of the southern part of the state in supplies and what have you that the people might need.

W: And what were the reasons why Sanford was chosen as a distribution point?

C: There were no railroads, really, south of Jacksonville. A short time after, in the early '80s, a short piece of railroad was put together from Jacksonville to Palatka, and that constituted all of the railroads. Therefore the boats, river boats, brought in the supplies to Sanford, and the people south would come in by mule or ox cart to transport what they needed south.

W: Alright. We've talked a little bit about steam boats, but what were some of the other transportation facilities like during your father's first ten or fifteen years here? Soon after the he came here railroad development occurred, right? Would you be able to describe what that was like, and how that started?

C: The first railroad was started in Sanford in 1880. And a small narrow-gauged locomotive was unloaded off of a barge that had been brought from Jacksonville to Sanford on the St. Johns River. This

narrow-gauged locomotive constituted all the steam power for possibly several months. And the railroad did not go any further than Longwood. The next year the railroad was continued from Longwood to Orlando.

W: Who were some of the men who were involved in the development of railroad transportation in the Sanford area? Of course, General Sanford was a major factor in this, wasn't he?

C: In addition to General Sanford, Mr. J. E. Ingram, General Sanford's local agent and representative, realized the full value of rail transportation coming to Florida, and did a great deal towards the development of the early south Florida railroad and later became the first president of the Blant system.

W: Would you describe how your father and Mr. Ingram were involved in the development of railroads in south Florida? I'm particularly thinking about the exploratory trip they took to the Everglades and to other areas of south Florida. Could you provide some details about that trip and how it related to railroad development?

C: The trip across the Everglades by the first party of white men was financed by Blant of the Blant system, ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Mr.

[Henry] Blant.

He wanted to know if it were possible to have a railroad across the southern part of the state to get to the east coast. This expedition consisted of approximately twelve or

fourteen men, <sup>he</sup> And is better described in the writing of Alonzo Church, a local young man in Sanford. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ <sup>The</sup> details of the hardships they went through in crossing the Glades can only be given by reading the Alonzo Church description of the trip. The Indians finally led them out of the Everglades to the east coast.

W: Did your father ever relate to you any of the conditions and the hardships that he and Mr. Ingram and the others went through when they were taking this trip <sup>across</sup> ~~the~~ the Everglades?

C: About the last week of the trip across the Glades it's my understanding that all they had to eat was grits and a lot of that had to be eaten cold because of the lack of firewood and a dry place to build a fire. There were also a few instances that helped to take away the hardships with comical accidents ~~Things~~ Things that took place ~~can~~ can better be described by reading the Alonzo Church description of the trip.

W: Yright. And ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ when exactly did this trip begin?

C: I can't give it to you.

W: Yright. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ <sup>of</sup> What was their final destination and really ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ their point <sup>of</sup> embarkation and where they finally ended up?

C: They went <sup>to</sup> ~~at~~ Ft. Myers and at <sup>or</sup> ~~at~~ Ft. Myers they took ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ oxcarts and went. I can't quite describe that; I'm not up on it enough,

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ <sup>he</sup> But it's all contained, a day by day description, in Alonzo Church's ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
write-up of the trip.

W: ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Didn't they eventually end up in Miami and ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ meet with Mrs. Julia Tuggle over there.

C: Well what is now Miami, yes. I forget the name of the town at the time at....

W: ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Ft. Dallas.

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
C: That was a real pleasure, and they recovered somewhat from their hardships in the first day or two at Ft. Dallas. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

W: Would you tell me about some of Mr. Ingram's activities after he left the employ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ of Mr. Plant? Didn't he then go to work for Henry Flagler, and wasn't he involved in the ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ beginnings of the Florida East Coast Railroad and the development of some of the lower east coast of Florida?

C: Mr. Ingram was in charge of the land company which I believe consisted mostly of the land that Flagler received in the building of his railroad south to Miami. It is my understanding that when a railroad was built in the early days, the state donated land through every other section, which ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ quite often amounted to a good many acres in addition to their right of way. This provided a real incentive for the people developing the railroad to get the job done and be able to have many acres of land to help pay for some of the expense in the development of the railroad.

W: Let's go back to transportation, another form of transportation.

I'm interested in what transportation facilities were like other than railroads and other than steam boats. How was citrus transported from inland areas that weren't connected either with railroads or the river? You mentioned ox carts before and mules, do you recall any descriptions that your father might have given you of during the early days?

Even I guess during some periods of your youth you might be familiar with....

C: The transportation for citrus before the rails necessarily had to depend on finding some water transportation to Jacksonville where they could be reshipped by rail to the eastern and midwestern states.

W: What about oxen and some of these other forms of land transportation that

dated before the automobile.

C: The overland transportation from groves to wherever the fruit was shipped was handled by mule team or ox cart.

W: Do you recall anything specific about how fast or how slow or what the roads were like before there were any paved roads, or before there were automobiles?

C: There were no paved roads; there were trails. And being in Florida, most of them were sandy trails. So that the progress made in going from point to point was slow at the best. And a lot of it by individuals was done by walking. In the early two



or three [redacted] year<sup>s</sup> that my father was in Florida, he made a trip to Tampa on foot, securing [redacted] the help of a local native as a guide that had a two-wheeled ox cart. Before starting on the trip, the native told my father that they had to go through a lot of bad snake country, and that they would need snake medicine. My father was not particularly interested, but before the man would agree to go he had to know that the snake medicine was on hand. The second night out, somewhere below Orlando, my father asked the native if the snake medicine was available. He said, "Oh no." He said, "We went through the snake [redacted] country the first night," he says, "I took it all." How do you like that!

W: Who is this native guide?

C: Don't recall the name at all.

W: But was was it an Indian or was it...?

C: No, local white man native, you might say, at the time my father first came to Florida.

W: Uh huh. And do you recall approximately how long the trip from [redacted] Sanford to Tampa took?

C: The best that I can recall is that the trip took about five days from Sanford to [redacted] Tampa, or what was known then as Six Mouth Creek, where they found a man living on the north side of the creek, but [redacted] he only had food in the way of eggs. [redacted] My father and the native guide ate six dozen eggs before they got through.

W: [redacted] What was the effect of these eggs on them?

C: That was the only real food that they had had after the first two or three days out of Sanford. Any other food was more like white bacon, and maybe a little grits.

W: Well, let's leave transportation and talk a little bit about when Chase and Company was organized, when and how, really.

C: My father was joined by his brother, Joshua C. Chase, in 1884. And before the year was out, they organized the company known as Chase and Company. Arrangements had been made with a fertilizer manufacturer in Philadelphia to secure basic fertilizers for use in agriculture. Their best product was raw bone and steamed bone. This was sold to anyone who had enough cash to buy it, and I believe in 200 pound crocus sacks.

W: ~~Other~~ Other than the fertilizer aspect of citrus and the citrus industry, how did they become directly involved in the growing and shipping of citrus?

C: Within a few years after my father came and a short <sup>time</sup> before my uncle arrived in 1884, the interest in citrus, of course, was increased with my father's knowledge of the work that he had done on the Sanford grove at <sup>Belair</sup> ~~Belair~~, that is General Sanford's grove. And under the guidance and direction of the Scotchman, Mr. <sup>Houston</sup> ~~Houston~~, he was an excellent teacher. I don't suppose any better knowledge could have been acquired because of his graduating from the botanical gardens in, I think it was Edinburgh, I'm not positive.

W: -- But he was a Scotchman?

C: Yeah.

[REDACTED]

W: Where were some of the early groves that Chase and Company owned [REDACTED] located?

C: The earliest groves that the company owned or had an interest in were located about four miles from the Sanford <sup>[grove]</sup>. And I believe it was really the property of my father and uncle. It was known as Swamp Chase, as it was across the road from a swamp and the road was the main route between Sanford and Orlando. There were other groves acquired from time to time which came mostly in later years after the freeze of 1894 and '95.

W: Well as long as we're on the subject, <sup>you</sup> would describe where some of the other locations of Chase groves are, and approximately what time they were acquired. Of course now the largest grove is Isleworth, right?

C: Right. There were groves that were acquired in the Crescent City area. There were also groves acquired on Merritt Island, and the Indian River area. We also had a Wabasso grove at Wabasso.

W: What about the Winter Haven area?

C: The company did not own any groves in that area early enough to really be reckoned with. There was one between Lake Wales and

Winter Haven, known as the Miller grove, that they operated for about ten or twelve years before selling it. They did not own groves in the Winter Haven area close to the city.

W: [REDACTED] On your father's trip with Mr. Ingram through south Florida, didn't he purchase some land around Winter Haven?

C: The trip to south Florida, Sanford to Tampa, that my father made was not with Mr. Ingram, but he liked the lay of land so well that he made a purchase but of [REDACTED]

C: About forty acres lying a little to the south of the main business area of Winter Haven, between Lake Howard and Lake Elbert. There was also a purchase made at Davenport or what is also known<sup>n</sup> as Holly Hill. These purchases were partially financed by a brother in the insurance business in Philadelphia. This helped in a great many ways, because it provided some revenue that otherwise might not have been available. Many times people ask my father why he sold the property both at Winter Haven and Davenport. His reply was that he had a good profit and was willing to sell it for the price offered. If everyone bought and did not sell, things could get pretty stagnant.

W: Alright, now we've talked about citrus and we've talked about fertilizer. Would you describe some of the other business activities in which Chase and Company were active during the [REDACTED] early years?

C: Citrus, of course, up through the '94-'95 freeze was the main business of the company. Fertilizer was also acquired and sold as described previously. After the freeze of 1894 and '95 the company went into the insurance business and sold insurance pretty well over the state where any railroads might have had their tracks. The biggest business I believe was on the Florida east coast, where considerable insurance was acquired covering the Flagler hotels. The first <sup>one</sup> was a big wooden building at Ormond Beach. Another one was even the old Breakers at Palm Beach when the road went that far. This helped to tide things over while citrus ~~was~~ being regrown. It was a real task when you consider that it was about 1904 before as much as a carload of oranges could be assembled in Sanford for shipment north. After the '94-'95 freeze, ~~there~~ <sup>there</sup> were repeated smaller freezes occurring between '95 and 1900 and then again in 1903 or '4~~0~~ 6 E practically all of the fruit in this area was lost. The insurance business certainly was a stabilizing <sup>e</sup> affect on the being able to continue in the citrus business with the money provided from insurance premiums' commissions.

W: Now your ~~dad~~ dad's company was selling fire insurance, right?

~~Were~~ Were they selling any other types of insurance, were they selling insurance to citrus growers, for example?

C: If a citrus grower had a home or a barn and wanted fire protection he could buy insurance from them. They sold general insurance including casualty insurance. And this business continued until

shortly after World War I, when it was sold to a local man that continued in the insurance business for a number of years.

W: And who was that?

C: Mr. V. W. Herndon. He was a local man and brother of a number of younger people, and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he was from one of the older families in this area.

W: Was there ever an attempt or <sup>was</sup> there ever any sales of insurance on citrus crops?

C: None of the citrus companies, and I don't believe many of the people selling it, ever thought about insurance against freeze or hurricane <sup>damage</sup> being written in an insurance. [REDACTED]

That really did not develop until about 1926 and '7.

W: And why was it it didn't develop earlier? Was it just they didn't think about it or [REDACTED] it was such a high risk endeavour?

C: None of the insurance companies seemed to be interested in writing insurance risk insurance covering citrus crops or vegetable <sup>crops</sup>.

W: What about insecticides? How were Chase and Company involved in the sale of insecticides and what were some of the insecticides they sold during the early days?

C: The insecticide in the earlier days on the citrus consisted mostly of lime sulfur sprays, whale-oil soap spray [REDACTED] later other oils were used as they were perfected and made safe to use on citrus. Other things in the chemical line was blue stone, copper sulfate. That became heavily used by the vegetable farmers pretty

well over the state, particularly celery. And it was not discovered until much later when soil analyses<sup>e</sup> were made that so much of the blue stone had been used in sprays on the celery to prevent funguses of one kind or another that the ground had absorbed entirely too much copper. ~~to~~ to a certain extent this was true of citrus, although not as much as in the celery farming. Some groves contained a high amount of copper, but we're glad to say that this copper in the soil is gradually finding its way deeper and deeper until we believe that the condition is bettering as the years go on. There was some other insecticides or poisons such as Paris Green that was used particularly in the vegetable business. It was not until possibly after World War I that the insecticide business began to make a lot of progress, and still greater progress ~~in~~ in the late '30s and after World War II.

W: Would you describe how Chase and Company became sales agents for growers who wished to market their products, and also how the the agent system worked?

C: I believe that I would say that at one time the company had around twenty to twenty-two packing houses scattered over the state, beginning down in Miami and extending north of Crescent City. These packing houses were small, but they washed the fruit, it was graded and sized, and packed in pine boxes ~~vener~~ veneer with labels on the end b and the lid was nailed on the box after it was packed originally with birch hoops around each end and the middle. The birch hoops were later replaced by galvanized

strapping around the center, but <sup>the</sup> with improvement of the nails and the head sticks and the boxes, it was not necessary to bind the ends and ~~only~~ only this was done when the boxes were shipped by express. All of the loading of citrus in these boxes until the mid to late '30s was done on the end in order to provide better ventilation, whether ice refrigerator cars or box cars. The row of boxes could be three or four across the car. And if a real wide car was secured you could even go five rows. Each row across the car was held securely by what was known as car-strip, and nailed to the head sticks of the boxes. The car-strips, the first one would be placed, ~~the~~ the end of it would be placed against one side of the car; the other stick would <sup>be</sup> placed against the other side of the car and nailed to the boxes. This gave a better load and a better chance of having it arrive in good condition <sup>a</sup> than any other way they could develop at the time. About 300 boxes was the limit on the very early refrigerator cars.

W: Do you recall when the  railroad first began to use these refrigerated cars?

C:  The best that I can recall, the  first refrigerator cars used in the Sanford area were few and far between, even in 1905, and it might have been even 1906. The first refrigerator car  for shipping perishables was developed <sup>the</sup> by a Mr. Earl of  Earl Food Company in California  my uncle worked for from about  1897 to 1903 or '4. Mr. Earl tried to get the railroads on the west coast of the country interested



in furnishing ice refrigerator cars for shipment of perishables, but they would have nothing to do with it. On account of that, Mr. Earl, with five or six others, raised enough money to build, I think, four refrigerator cars with  bunkers for ice. When these cars were ready for use, Mr. Earl accompanied a shipment of three across the continent to the New York,  <sup>and</sup> one car to Philadelphia. Grapes, I believe, were the <sup>m</sup>comodity. They sold so well and Mr. Earl was so enthusiastic that he went back to California, organized a company, and put together  a refrigerator car manufacturing business. Then the railroads wanted to get in, but, realizing then that they had made a mistake, they held back. As the refrigerator car was developed and more were built, the railroads were almost panicky to get possession of the refrigerator car business. Finally, Mr. Earl and his associates sold the business to the railroads. Following the sale to the railroad of the refrigerator car business, Mr. Earl bought a newspaper in Los Angeles and went to work on what he considered the inefficiency of the railroads.

W: It was very appropriate I think.

C:  That's what happened.

W: And you said the the refrigerator car was not introduced to Florida until about 1904 or '5?

C: About 1905 or '6, I believe, just roughly as  far as I can remember from what I've been told and my experience in always hanging around the packing <sup>house</sup> when there was any packing being done.

W:  What was the <sup>e</sup>ffect on the  introduction of

the refrigerated car to Florida citrus?

C: The refrigerated car brought a new phase of transportation for citrus and vegetables from Florida to the eastern market. The [redacted] cars that were available were few and far between, <sup>le</sup> ~~Not~~ enough to supply the demand for refrigerator cars even up to and including 1925. It became a practice of Chase and Company, when they put in a written request for refrigerator cars at one of their packing houses and only a box car was placed, they would protest in writing the loading of the box car as being inefficient for the transportation of perishables. In this way they hoped to protect themselves against claims because of not good arrival of the fruit or vegetables.

W: And did the refrigerated car enable a grower [redacted] of fruits and vegetables in Florida to reach new markets? Is that a major change?

C: Yes, the refrigerator car did help a great deal in broadening the distribution of [redacted] agricultural perishables from Florida. It would be difficult to say if there'd been enough refrigerator cars to satisfy the needs of Florida fruit and vegetables that the citrus business would have developed even a great deal faster than it did. This was something that [redacted] always seemed to be troublesome in the transportation for fruits. From <sup>[the]</sup> Crescent City area, a lot of fruit was shipped by river steamer to Jacksonville and then [redacted] coast <sup>wise</sup> ~~line~~ shipping under forced draft ventilation to New York. Later on in the '30s, <sup>9</sup> refrigerated space was made available on some

of the coast <sup>wise</sup> steamers. ~~The~~ The United Fruit Company organized the refrigerated steam ship line, and during the winter season, when Florida had a quantity of perishables to ship to the East, they transported from Jacksonville, Ft. Pierce, Tampa, many loads of excellently refrigerated and handled fruits and vegetables. Citrus was the primary commodity that they handled. Of course the railroads did not care for this.

W: Let's move to a different aspect of the industry. Could you describe ~~the~~, to the best of your recollection, what packing houses were like in the early days as contrasted with the way they are now?

C: It would be most difficult to compare the packing houses of today with the early houses. That is, most of the sizing was done between two boards with the small end elevated. ~~The~~ The small size fruit would drop through, and as ~~the~~ the fruit rolled down between the two boards the larger fruit came to the end where it was caught in boxes and packed according to size. The early ~~sizes~~ were not the most accurate, but they did help a lot. Washes also were developed that helped to wash the fruit well before being packed. And when the washes came in it was necessary to develop a dryer. All of this equipment originally was run by gasoline engines and drive shafts under the packing house. It was a great improvement over the all-handled crate and packing.

W: What about the division of labor? ~~Were~~ Were there a greater number of

workers in those days <sup>a</sup> then are required in ~~the~~ the packing  
of  
house /today?

C: Of course the volume of fruit years <sup>ago</sup> was not so great, but ~~was~~  
a moderate number of labor employees could handle what was  
necessary. Transportation from wherever it was packed to  
where it was ~~be~~ <sup>going to</sup> be shipped <sup>in</sup> in the case of the early days  
~~by~~ boats furnishing most of the transportation <sup>was</sup> was not fast.  
Therefore it would not do to try to pack a lot of fruit that  
could not be transported immediately.

W: What about some of the tasks? I'm thinking now about things  
that were done then that aren't done today <sup>about</sup> about the nailers  
and other ~~jobs~~ jobs such as that that have been made obsolete  
by machines. Would you describe some of those, the processes?

C: Well, what was known as the nail box ~~was~~ was finally adopted  
at a one and three-fifths-bushel measure after a number of  
years <sup>of</sup> using kegs, barrels, and whatever they might  
have handy. It had to be made by hand; however, the slats,  
two ends, and a center head were put together prior to packing,  
and the lid nailed on after it was packed. This continued  
until the early '30s, when the wire-bound bushel box showed  
up on the scene. It was first a two bushel box, but this did  
not go over well except with the buyer on the market end for  
a short time. The two bushel, quite often was sold by  
inexperienced people for no more than the one and three-fifths  
bushel box. And this created difficulty in pricing. After  
two or three years of the two bushel wire-bound box, they reduced

the size to one and three-fifths bushels, and this provided the main shipping container from then until sometime after World War II.

W: Alright, Mr. Chase, let's move to another area and go back in time a little bit. What effect did the freeze of 1895 have on the citrus industry in Sanford and perhaps, to your recollection, generally in the state? Let's talk specifically about what it did in Sanford first.

C: The freeze of December, between December 1894, Christmas, and New Years, ruined what fruit had not been picked to ship, pretty much over the state. Following this freeze, the trees were nearly defoliated, but immediately started to put out new growth from the Indian summer weather that was experienced until the first few days of February, when the '95 freeze hit in the form of a blizzard and continued for three days. This finished off not only any fruit that may have been left, but also took out the trees to the ground. It was reported that that big seedling trees that had sap up in the top, the trunks would explode the bark that is like pistol shots. There was nothing left unless somebody had some means of continuing and being financed. There was more than one case when somebody had put all of their money into their citrus grove of maybe five to ten acres. And following the February freeze there was no money left, no prospects of getting any money. Several families offered a deed to the railroad if they would furnish some transportation back to their home either in the East or Midwest.

Those that were able to finance themselves in some way and find work gradually brought back what citrus trees had not been entirely killed. This made for real hard times for about fifteen years. The vegetable business in the Sanford area was developed following the '94-'95 freeze, <sup>fe</sup> And I believe everybody would say that it was largely responsible for the rapid development of the celery and vegetable business in the Sanford area.

W: Did citrus remain an important aspect of the Sanford economy after the freeze? Because I've read studies that say that citrus production was largely abandoned in this area, and I wonder if you could clarify that for me.

C: I don't know how well it can be clarified, but a lot of groves were abandoned. There were some groves that were abandoned out on M. ~~Street~~ Avenue where we drove a couple of weeks ago. However, gradually the trees that had any kind of care, that is cut off at the ground with the spouts coming up from the roots, came back. And here and there people acquired some of these old groves and began to take care of them.

End of tape a side 1

TAPE A SIDE 2

~~There's one, two, three, passing one~~  
Interest in citrus in the Sanford area following the freeze made a slow comeback <sup>of</sup> for the next six years or a little more there was not too much interest. But those that could and did survive were rewarded. This vegetable and celery business was developed immediately following the '94-'95 freeze. And ~~the~~ the removal of citrus is largely responsible for the rapid development of the celery and vegetable business in the area.

W: Would you maybe give us a personal insight into <sup>how</sup> your family was involved in citrus, how they became ~~involved~~ involved in citrus after the freeze?

C: The company became insurance agents, which I think I've already described, <sup>for</sup> And this business helped to tide over what was needed in the way of money to bring back ~~much~~ much of the citrus business. My father and uncle had just bought, the year before the freeze, the beginning of the Isleworth grove, located near Windermere, Florida. Following their purchase in '95, ~~before~~ before the freeze, they had to go down and cut the trees off at the ground. They did this themselves.

W: Alright. Let's move on forward a little bit in time. ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> Let me ask you, when you first became involved in citrus business, what were the principal forms of transportation, and how were they

different from the <sup>d</sup>ays when your father first began in the business?

C: Rail transportation provided practically the only transportation for citrus where volume was concerned. Some boat shipments were made by river boats from Crescent City to Jacksonville, then transferred to the Clyde Mallory Line for New York or the Merchants and Miners for Philadelphia and Baltimore.

W: So shipping by boat had largely declined and had <sup>been</sup> replaced by the railroads.

C: That's right.

W: How about citrus marketing. Would you describe how citrus was marketed, again keeping in mind maybe in contrast with the way it was done when you father first began in business?

C: My uncle Josh's experience with the Earl Fruit Company in California until he returned to Florida in 1904, also his experience with the United Fruit Company or fruit dispatch office that he opened in St. Louis in 1903 provided some real excellent information for him to use in the establishing of the excellent sales agency that the company started in Jacksonville in 1904. The packing houses were rapidly acquired and set up in different parts of the state, beginning in the south at Miami and working north along the east coast, some in the central areas all the way to Crescent City, including the Sanford area and of course Orlando. There was a great deal



of work to be done, because roads were not of such a nature that fruit could be transported easily. Mule team was the transportation from the grove to wherever the fruit was packed. And if the packing house did not have a side track, the mule teams again had to provide transportation from the packing house to wherever the car was loaded, possibly as much a mile from the packing house. This slowed the operation tremendously as compared to what they do today.

W: Would you describe for me the process by which your company acquired the fruit from the grower and delivered it to the market?

C: Most of the fruit during my time, well beginning about 1914 on, was acquired by the company acting as agents for the grower. In most cases no money was required. In some cases fruit was bought. ~~It~~<sup>In</sup> still a third, some growers wanted an advance on the fruit that we would handle. After the fruit was handled, ~~it~~ packed, and loaded for transportation by rail, information was given to the central office, main office in Jacksonville, and they wired different markets in the country what they had to offer and a price attached to it. Practically all of the fruit was sold FOB shipping point. When the fruit arrived and the buyer accepted, the money was deposited in a bank where we could draft on the bank for the money that the fruit had brought in the market. This provided a rapid way of returning to the grower money for his fruit or produce. It was not until after 1914 that this ~~it~~ became something unusual in

the case of most agents and shippers of fruit. For instance, the Florida Citrus Exchange had pools usually that the fruit money was held for at least thirty days, and the local board of directors of the packing association would decide on the length of time that the pool was to cover. Whether it would cover all of the early and mid-season oranges, or whether it would only cover thirty<sup>days</sup> of shipments, or whether it would last for ninety days. And in this way the grower had to call on the association for money based on the amount of fruit that he would have in the pool and<sup>what</sup> they thought<sup>it</sup> might return to the grower. Many growers, even in the '20s, had told me ~~they~~ they liked to have Chase and Company handle their fruit because they could get their money so quickly; they didn't have to wait thirty days or longer to get their returns. In the case of bad arrival, claims were filled with the transportation company, affidavits were given, inspections were given from the ~~shipping agent~~ ~~market~~ market end of the business, and this formed the basis for claims that were in most cases hard for any transportation company to deny. This became a very vital point as years went by in the handling of perishables out of Florida. And Chase and Company inaugurated some of the early claim handling for growers as their agents. The local packing house did nothing but bill the shipment of fruit or produce to a diverging point such as Waycross, Savannah, or Jesup, where the sales office would divert it to where

they wanted it to go for final estimation.

W: You mentioned that it was around 1914 when some of these cooperatives began, and I guess you could say to replace the sales agents in the marketing of citrus fruit. Could you tell me why this occurred?

C: I believe it was about 1908 or '9 when the Florida Citrus Exchange was organized after a number of growers went to California to find out what the California Fruit Growers Exchange was doing. Unfortunately, <sup>were followed</sup> not all of the same patterns that California had followed here when the exchange was first put together. There was a great deal of rivalry between the independent shippers and the exchange. This was not a bad sort of thing because it kept everybody on their toes. But it was seldom that the independent shipper was not able to do as well or better on their returns <sup>than</sup> the exchange. The volume of business, percentage wise of the total citrus in the state that the exchange handled for a long time did not run over 18 to 22 percent. But it is my understanding that they ship a larger percentage of the citrus crop today

**R** than they did in the early days. In speaking of machinery, I'd like to go back just a little bit. Some of the earliest citrus packing house machinery was developed by the Skinner Machinery Company of Dunedin, Florida. Mr. L. B. Skinner owned extensive citrus groves in that area, had his own packing house, and Chase and Company acted as his sales agent. As time went on, the Chases and Skinner's **S** invested in citrus groves



Sly and Company.

W: What about the Florida Fruit Growers?

C: The American Fruit Growers came into the picture, I believe, in Florida about 1908 or '9. They had a vegetable office in Sanford for a number of years. "Blue Goose" as the American Fruit Growers were known, was a organization handling fruits and vegetables pretty much all over the country in different areas. They had very substantial holdings in California. Their main office was in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. From that point the Florida deal probably did not receive the attention that could be given with an office right on the ground where the operations were taking place. They recognized this and established local offices around the state that reported to Pittsburgh.

W: What about the Growers and Shippers League of Florida?

Could you describe the evolution and development of that organization?

C: Yes, that is an important organization. And was originally organized not for handling transportation matters, but to get some immediate action in fighting the citrus <sup>canker</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~, which threatened all of the citrus in Florida. I believe that the original organization was called Florida Growers and Shippers League, and was organized either in 1914 or '15 for the purpose of combating the citrus <sup>t</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ <sup>canker</sup> from donations from growers and shippers. This was done to get speedy action and prior to the slower way of getting at <sup>it</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ through politics, <sup>3</sup> state wide or <sup>5</sup> federal wide. In 1923 the Growers and Shippers League of Florida -

the present organization<sup>^</sup> was organized after several meetings composed of mostly shippers and some growers in Winter Haven, Orlando, and it was on the same day that Warren Harding, our president, passed away that the league held their last meeting in Orlando before complete

**I** organization.) The first person to become the manager of the Growers and Shippers League of Florida was J. Curtis Robinson, who was a strong individualist and was acquired from the west coast of the country. He had had considerable experience in transportation matters and proved to be an excellent man to be put in charge of such an organization in Florida. He served well for many years. Other managers came but none stayed as long as J. Curtis Robinson, although the present-day manager of the league, Mr. Gordon C. Stedman, has been there for about as long or

**I** longer than J. Curtis Robinson.) The league has handled many cases in court, and before the ICC in contesting what they felt and the Florida citrus growers and vegetable growers felt were too high rates for the transportation of their produce and citrus to the markets over the country.

**I** In the early '30s, or rather the right soon after the mid '30s, the Growers and Shippers League of Florida became agent for the Florida Citrus Commission, which had just been organized I believe in 1935. It was arranged with the commission to earmark a certain amount of money each year for the use and financing [of] the needs of the Growers and Shippers League and handling transportation

matters for the entire citrus industry. Prior to that time the league was dependent entirely on either so much a crate of citrus or vegetables or so much a car for their financial needs. When the citrus market or vegetable market wasn't good it was difficult to make collections, and this brought about the arrangement with the citrus commission which continues

IP today. The league budgets [redacted] each year their needs as far as can be foreseen. However, you can not tell when you may have to go before the ICC and make trips to Washington, Chicago, and even California where the hearings are held. It also requires the best legal advice in such matters as can be obtained.

The earliest attorney for the league, as I recall, was Maxwell W. Wells, Sr., of Orlando, with the firm of McGuire

Vorhees and Wells. Mr. Wells continued until about two years ago as the attorney for the league and was most capable in his appearances before the Interstate Commerce Commission and in court, in convincing the need for lower freight rates or less advance in the rate asked for. This covered not only the actual transportation rate but the refrigeration rates. That, in the '50s, turned into a long case before the Interstate Commerce Commission. And it is estimated that the rates that finally became or put in use for even one year saved the citrus growers in the state many millions of dollars. I'm glad to say that since Mr. Wells, Sr. retired, his son Maxwell Wells, Jr., has proved to be just about as capable as his father in handling matters for the Growers and Shippers League. They will hold their annual meeting

June 16 of this year.

W: ~~On~~ <sup>A</sup> ~~another~~ I don't know how you would describe this association, perhaps as an information agency <sup>was</sup> the Florida Horticultural Association, I believe. Would you describe ~~its~~ <sup>its</sup> relationship with the citrus industry?

C: If I recall properly, I believe the greatest interest in the Florida Horticultural Society ~~was~~ was shown by the citrus growers and shippers in the state. Mr. L. B. Skinner of Dunedin was one of the earliest ~~presidents~~ presidents of the organization. This very valuable organization has broadened out where they not only take citrus into consideration, but also the vegetable business ~~and~~ and other agricultural interests, <sup>ornamentals</sup> and such as that. They're doing an excellent piece of work.

W: What exactly do their activities <sup>i</sup> involve, and what ~~have~~ have they <sup>in</sup> evolved <sup>over</sup> ~~through~~ your lifetime?

C: At their annual meeting, papers were read by those that were knowledgeable on the lines where the most interest had been shown, because of a need to combat some particular ~~trouble~~ trouble that was being experienced and to improve on any part of the growing and other horticultural ~~matters~~ matters in connection with the crops under consideration.

W: Would you describe how your father and his brother Joshua Chase were involved in the organization and the administration of some of these organizations you just described.

C: Both my father and uncle were always ready to ~~cooperate~~ cooperate and help establish any organization for the benefit of the citrus and



vegetable growers. This was in evidence as my uncle had a lot to do with the establishment of the Florida Growers and Citrus League in 1914 or '15, <sup>Jan</sup> and later the Growers and Shippers League of Florida in 1923. There was further interest and cooperation in the meeting in the organization of the American Fruit and Vegetable Association. This was a combination of more than one organization. Many of ~~several~~ organizational meetings were held in New Orleans. The last one was held in Chicago, where the office was in the hands and manage~~ment~~ of Mr. Ed Grace. This organization not only had producers, growers, but members from the different organizations in the market or businesses in the market. They could all get together and chew each other out but come away with some better understanding, which is always a good thing.

II

In 1937 the American Fruit and Vegetable Association merged with the Western Fruit Jobbers and their office was moved to Washington D. C., where it remains today. Later on the National League of Wholesale Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Merchants also joined in the new organization, the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

They work on a national basis with not only growers and shippers but with the merchants in the market. It is a strong organization for the benefit of agricultural perishables.

W: [REDACTED] Would you describe your uncle Joshua Chase and his relationship first with the Florida Citrus Exchange and second with the Florida [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Association and Society? Wasn't he the president of both of those organizations at one point?

C: He was the president of the Florida Citrus Exchange after we joined the exchange. And I believe this came in 1930. He served from the annual meeting, 1930, until either '31 or '32, when he resigned. He did a lot of good work in the exchange while he was president. I think he strengthened their sales organization because he had the knowledge, facts of a long experience in the selling of perishables.

W: Why did Chase and Company decide to join the exchange, would you explain that?

C: The exchange came to Chase and Company, and it was not the first approach that had been made. We were willing to [REDACTED] sit down as usual and talk about something that would be for the good of the citrus industry, and something particularly where we thought we could be of some real help to the industry. There were a number of packing houses that the exchange took over from us in the fall of 1929. The <sup>GT</sup> Isleworth packing house remained independent as well as the Sanford packing house. However, the fruit was sold through the Florida Citrus Exchange, passing first through the Chase <sup>Je</sup> Sub-exchange. 1933, the Chase <sup>Je</sup> Sub-exchange sold all of the fruit that was loaned by Chase and Company or the Chase family, but in cooperation with the Florida Citrus Exchange. The sales manager for the Florida Citrus Exchange had previously been the assistant <sup>sales manager</sup> of Chase and Company.

W: And who was that?

C: Mr. E. E. Patterson from Kansas City, Missouri. He had been with C. H. Robinson and Company before he came to Chase and Company. He was a born salesman, aggressive, and not to be ~~denied~~ denied.

W: What services did the exchange provide that perhaps Chase and Company were interested in and were a reason why they joined the citrus exchange?

C: There was not any service exactly that the exchange provided that what Chase and Company already had, but we were urged by many growers who <sup>so</sup> fruit we handled to seriously consider joining the exchange to start a better volume of fruit through the exchange and a better cooperation in the industry as a whole.

W: What I'm thinking of ~~weren't~~ weren't the exchange members eligible for low-interest loans, and wasn't the the industry in general suffering through a period of hard times, and wasn't this a motivation for Chase and Company and for others to join the exchange?

C: I'm not sure that they had any lower rate of interest on loans. The Growers Loan and Guarantee Company, controlled by the exchange and handled from their office in Tampa, did lend shipping organizations such as the local Citrus Growers Association money to start operating on, and money to acquire new equipment for the packing house, or if a new one was organized, to help build it and furnish the necessary money for modern equipment for the

handling crew. That composed, really, the greater part of the Growers Loan and Guarantee Company part of the exchange.

W: And why did Chase and Company eventually leave the Florida Citrus Exchange?

C: After our experience and making and being able to compare what we could do ourselves with what was being done through the exchange, we felt that we could do a better job of selling. We also had, in Sanford, large quantities of celery and vegetables to be sold and this was part of the needed broadening in the market, as many vegetable growers handled citrus and vice versa. We could furnish their needs for both citrus and vegetables.

W: This is a general question. I'd like to know how receptive early growers were to cooperative marketing, and how has the growers' attitude towards cooperative marketing changed during your lifetime?

C: Like a lot of things, progress has been made. Some growers were very ardent for the exchange to be established, but it seems that many of these large growers felt that they could benefit themselves more but the smaller grower was not always remembered by the local association, which proved to be a thorny thing to handle, by the local as well as the Florida Citrus Exchange with offices in Tampa. Since 1929, when we joined the exchange and following the five years that we were in the exchange, I believe there was quite a change in the general grower attitude with regard to cooperatives. And I would like to point out three former exchange associations that withdrew from the exchange.

Waverly Packing Association, Lake Wales Packing Association, and the Haines City Growers Association. (I used the name packing it should be Citrus Growers Association and not a packing association). These three packing houses in Polk County all handle large volumes of fruit. They do not depend necessarily on pools. But the most of them, I believe, have pools where a grower's [REDACTED] early and mid-season fruit is <sup>in</sup> one pool, valencias or late oranges in another pool, grapefruit in another pool, and in many cases the association will advance to the grower, if need be, money so that he can fertilize, take care of his groves as need be. Of course this may cost some additional expense to all of the growers, but not necessarily each individual grower.

W: Why were growers attracted to the cooperative movement initially?

G: They looked at what [REDACTED] the California exchange had done there on the citrus. However, they had, almost from the beginning, a large majority of the fruit in the state, and many things can be accomplished when you have full control if they're kept out of politics.

W: Would you explain that?

G: Have you seen any organization of any kind that is a non-profit cooperative that, unless it is strongly managed, can get involved in either local politics with favored members or still further in state politics that could affect it very definitely? Look at the legislature today. What's happened? All of the citrus bills were passed, but it didn't always occur this way. Somebody

in years gone by would have an ax to grind that they thought was particularly suitable for themselves, whereas maybe it wasn't for everybody.

W: Would you tell me some of the services that the cooperatives provided for the growers? You mentioned loans. What were some of the others?

C: Since the early days of the citrus growers associations, in different areas grove care organizations have been set up by them to take care of first, growers living out of the state of Florida. Then, more growers, even local, found out that a well-run grove service by their cooperative organization could save them money over what they could do, particularly the smaller growers. The larger growers, of course, can afford to buy equipment if it's necessary and to finance themselves and the care of the grove year to year. But this is not the case with the smaller growers. It used to be in the '20s that a ten-acre grove would make returns sufficient for somebody to retire on, particularly when they did some of the work themselves. Today I doubt seriously whether 100 acres would provide income sufficient for a family unless it was done on the basis of an organization that had many acres to take care of and could therefore reduce the cost per acre and per box.

W: So the increased capital costs of citrus production has been a major <sup>reason</sup> why growers have turned towards cooperative organizations?

C: Yes. <sup>fe</sup> Not the cooperative, though, that was known back in 1910 to '20 or '20 to '30. But I would like to give the three organizations

that I mentioned, Waverly Growers Co-op, Lake Wales Citrus Growers Co-op, and the Haines City Citrus Growers Co-op, real credit for an organization that serves the citrus growers in their group to the best advantage. Some other citrus growers' organizations' cooperative may have good service from their organizations, but I'm not acquainted with it. But those three I've seen grow from the time they left the exchange <sup>and</sup> up to the present day.

W: Let's change the subject for just one moment. I'd like to know how citrus was grown and cultivated, as far back as when your father first entered the business, if you can tell me that, or at least when you <sup>first</sup> entered the business, and how that has changed over your lifetime.

C: The usual disks, harrow, ploughs, and so forth used in the early days had mule power. Later the spray machines were pulled by mules with a gasoline engine to run the pump and work up the pressure. The spray was applied by usually two men with guns or rods to apply this spray to the tree, not just outside but inside. Of course later tractors became gradually in use.

W: About what time?

C: Just a little just prior to World War I. Then, after World War I, faster progress was made. Most of the early tractors did not have the large low-pressure tires, but had cleats on iron wheels, and if you weren't careful you could dig a hole and bury the whole machine. It wasn't long before the large tires became

known, what they could do, and began to be used. And today it is the thing that produces the most work of any piece of equipment with one laborer, the tractor driver. He may pull behind him a plow, a harrow of some kind, or a spray machine. Some tractors are used in connection with the harvesting of fruit and pulling a string of four or five carts that the fruit is put in and then those carts are pulled by tractor to a packing house. Or the handling of baskets that the fruit is placed in after being picked, which would be going to a processing plant.

W: How did the use of tractors and other mechanical implements affect the size of citrus land?

C: Tractors and other equipment, as they were developed particularly for use in citrus, reduced the amount of labor and made it possible for fewer people to take care of more acres. The same tractors in vegetable and celery growing are not always suitable for citrus and vice versa.

W: ~~Did~~ Didn't the use of tractors necessarily compel the grower to expand his acreage in order to justify or pay for the use of this machine?

C: I don't know whether it could be termed as compelling the grower to do it, but I think he saw what was possible in the way of development and handling of more acreage. And that is, I believe, the main reason why growers today have much larger acreages. There's one fallacy that no tractor or truck can overcome, and that is to have groves scattered too far apart, because the

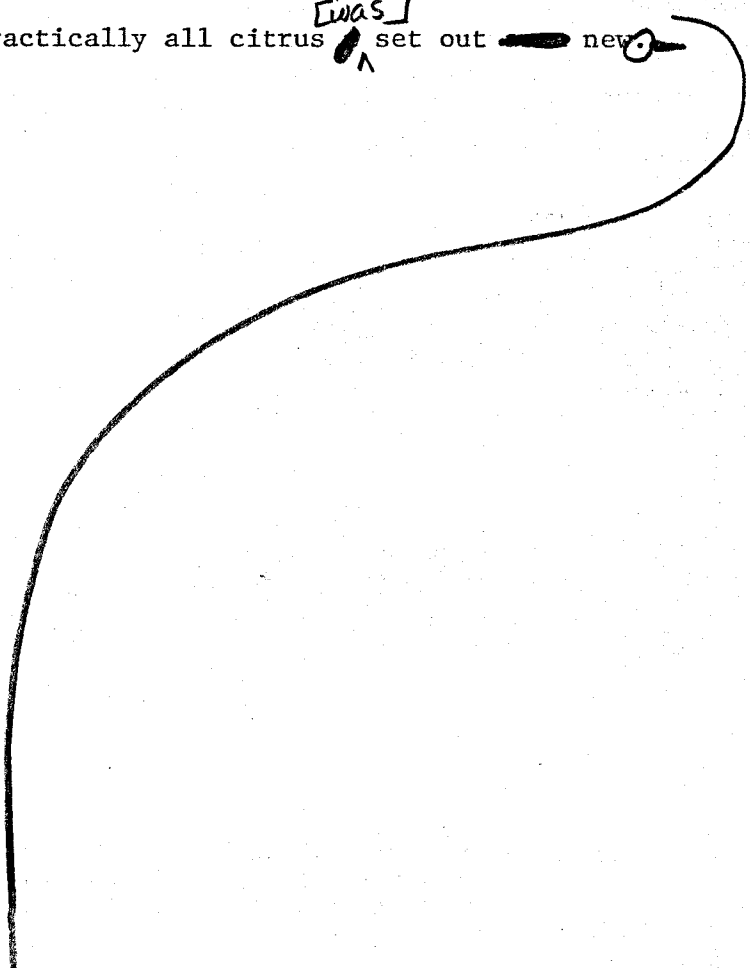


cost of transporting equipment and men over the highway is expensive. The larger acreages in vegetable raising on the muck in the Everglades area brought this out probably <sup>more</sup> than any other thing that I can think of. Most of the small farms around Sanford, a tractor was a piece of equipment that would go from one end of the farm to the other in less than five minutes, whereas the length of rows on the muck in the Everglades <sup>area</sup> it might take him twenty to thirty minutes. Therefore there was less time wasted in tur<sup>n</sup>ing around and you accomplished <sup>more</sup> without wasting time. [REDACTED]

W: Mr. Chase, would you describe the actual growing process of citrus from your earliest recollect<sup>ions</sup> and how that has changed during your lifetime.

C: Beginning soon after the freeze in '94 and '95, getting up into the 1900s a little way, practically all citrus <sup>[was]</sup> set out ~~new~~ new.

[REDACTED]



TAPE B SIDE 1

Continuing with the planting of groves following the big freeze, most of them were not seedling groves, but were trees that had been raised in a nursery. The root stock first used extensively was sour orange. There was also rough lemon. After these root stock trees grew to half or three quarter of an inch, they were budded with the variety of citrus that was desired. Ordinarily, a seedling tree can take anywhere from ten to fifteen years to really get into bearing, whereas five to six years will usually provide a considerable fruit from a tree that is budded on root stock. The rough lemon has a extensive root system and probably will grow easier and more rapidly on very <sup>high,</sup> sandy soils. However, the sour orange root stock will produce fruit with higher fruit solids, which is wanted by the processor as it is fruit that will process with less time and energy in producing the frozen concentrate. The higher the fruit solids the better they like it. And of course more solids per box, the higher the return you will get for your fruit. There are also a Cleopatra Mandarin root stock that is used, and Citrang root stock. All of these are being used in varying degrees depending on where the new grove is set out or tree replacements made. I believe that most of the root stock used in the Indian

River area is either sour orange or Cleopatra Mandarin root stock.

W: Let's switch to a different area for a few moments and let's talk about the land boom. Would you tell me what affect the land boom of the 1920s had on the Florida citrus industry?

C: I assume that the land boom you refer to was the one in the mid-'20s, '24 to '26. This was a inflationary, crazy sort of a boom. In many cases, property that was sold in '24 might have as many as five or six mortgages by the end of '25 or early '26. The boom otherwise spent itself and wound up with a lot of people that were broke. The citrus <sup>groves</sup> fared better.

Some citrus groves sold for high prices per acre at that time or they were high prices as compared with today's prices. This did not continue for very long. Before the end of the '20s, Florida had experienced a freeze in 1927 that was particularly hard on the south Florida Polk County and the Highlands area. No two freezes in Florida are just alike. What you experience one time can not be set down as a rule of thumb for the next one that may come along. Following this freeze in 1927, things picked up rapidly until the general economics and economy in the country went into a decline like we in this country had never seen before. Citrus prices, on account of shortage of money in the market and everywhere, were low. And I can remember even in the mid-'30s and a little later that a one and three-fifths bushel wire-bound box of good pineapple oranges sold for a \$1.65 to .75 FOB the packing house,

and you were lucky to get it. Less attractive oranges maybe

~~\$1.50~~

W: Would you ~~contrast~~ contrast that with the prices before the Depression (approximately of course)?

C: Prices ~~in~~ in the '20s were more like ~~\$2.50~~ \$2.50, ~~\$2.75~~ \$2.75 a box. However, grapefruit, on account of over-production, was a drag, <sup>je</sup> and in 1925 and '26 insurance companies did offer a guarantee on grapefruit of seventy-five cents a box. This was not repeated after 1927, and it was only possible then to get freeze insurance. I know of several crops of seedlings in Polk County ~~12,000~~ 12[000], ~~15,000~~ 15,000 boxes <sup>^</sup> that was insured for approximately fifty to seventy-five cents per box depending on quality, location, and these crops that I have reference to were completely wiped <sup>out</sup> in the '27 freeze. However, the insurance company paid up. There was also one crop of grapefruit in Polk County in 1927 that not only the fruit was lost but the trees. If I remember correctly, it was in the Altura's <sup>a</sup> area ~~It~~ <sup>old</sup> was a shame to see such a beautiful nine to ten year <sup>old</sup> grapefruit grove completely wiped out with its <sup>^</sup> crop of fruit.

W: Let's ~~go~~ go back and talk about the boom again for a few minutes. Could you give me <sup>some</sup> specific examples of the change in the price of citrus land before and then after the boom from personal experiences?

C: The price ~~per~~ per acre of citrus, prior to the mid '20s land boom, which was concentrated mostly on the development of land for building, the citrus groves went from a possible \$500 ~~an~~ an

acre or a little less to better than <sup>\$</sup>1,000 ~~an acre~~ an acre.

And this was most unusual for citrus. However, as the economy declined, this went back under <sup>\$</sup>500 <sup>an acre</sup> ~~an acre~~ for most groves.

W: Was this for developed groves now you're

C: Yes.

speaking of?

Full grown groves, very.

W: What about undeveloped citrus land, but land still quite suitable for citrus production, how was this affected by the boom?

W: That was also, you might say, at a much lower price <sup>a</sup> than it had been during the mid-'20s. In the mid-'20s it could have been used for housing development or citrus development. And the price per acre, in many cases, went down to <sup>\$</sup>250 ~~per acre~~ per acre or less. ~~You~~ You could clear land and plant it out in citrus for around <sup>\$</sup>500 ~~or \$600~~ ~~an acre~~ an acre, and be able to charge off the expense of doing most of that for <sup>four</sup> ~~or~~ or five years until they came into bearing. That is not the case now <sup>of</sup> the law has been changed.

W: When ~~was~~ was the time period that you could do that beginning approximately when?

C: Beginning? Way back anywhere. <sup>There wasn't any</sup> ~~Now when does that end~~ specific thing on it. <sup>Now</sup> Now I forget the actual year that ~~that~~ that was changed, <sup>but</sup> but I believe that it was sometime ~~between '62 and '65~~ between '62 and '65, ~~somewhere in there.~~ somewhere in there.

W: What about the expanse of citrus acreage during the boom, was there a significant amount of expansion then?

C: During the boom of the mid-'20s most of my time was spent in Polk County. Citrus was neglected in that area because of the rapid development for the land close to towns or cities that would be suitable for housing development, golf courses, and so forth. There was not too much taken out of acreage during that boom, that came with the next one.

W: What about the expansion of citrus into areas perhaps not at one point thought not suitable for citrus production, say in areas other than near lakes and in lower lying regions?

C: The best example that I can think of in the land that was planted in citrus where it does not exist now was east of Lake Wales and east of Mountain Lake groves. There was approximately 1,800 acres of citrus planted, and it was known as the Mammoth Grove. Various freezes have taken it off. It was low and the cold from the higher elevations rolled off into the low elevations where this Mammoth had been planted. I think most of the Mammoth Grove was planted and sold to speculators and probably the person doing the planting profited.

W: Do you know who was involved in the Mammoth Grove deal?

C: No, I don't.

W: How were other citrus growers involved in land speculation such as you've just mentioned?

C: There's been a certain amount of speculation in citrus plantings on land that is not entirely suitable for citrus because it will be too cold. There's several areas around Sanford that I'm sure had citrus to some extent before the 1894-95 freeze and didn't have

citrus planted on it until the late '40s, when quite a few acres were planted out, and I believe sold to whoever might want to buy it. But this acreage does not exist anymore.

W: How about during the '20s, who were some of the more important growers who were involved in [redacted] land speculation? I guess the classic example is William Howey. Did you know anything about Howey and his operation [redacted] or other growers who are involved in land speculation?

C: Well for citrus growers I think ~~the~~ some of the Mammoth Grove classification that I just spoke about would come under that heading. W. J. Howey developed in Lake County extensive grove plantings. A lot of them remain today.

However, there was some that suffered very severely from the '27 freeze and again in '34. It's sort of like the rise and fall of water. Lines are established in which citrus can be raised, as the cord acts a lot like water, it seeks the lowest level. Highland will come by, whereas low will suffer from the cold. There are probably many different people that have speculated in planting out citrus groves; however, I never could feel quite right in following that kind of course in the citrus industry. There was plenty of other things that were far more valuable to do in connection with the citrus industry.

W: Would you relate to me the story, this is not strictly concerning citrus but it has to do with the land speculation of that period about the banana plantations that were developed in [redacted] Polk County?

C: Well that came during the land boom, if you want to call it that, in the mid '20s, <sup>he</sup> somebody that had enough money to buy considerable acreage in the Peace <sup>[River]</sup> Valley area between Dundee and Winter Haven. A lot of it was muck. It would grow anything very fast. Who thought of planting bananas, I do not know. But the venture went out completely in <sup>the</sup> 1927 freeze that occurred <sup>r</sup> in January. Those kind of things do not help Florida, do not help the citrus industry where citrus is planted on land that is too cold. And I suppose that in time people may learn. However I can't help but think of the old quotation of Barnum, I'll let somebody else say it.

W: Would you [REDACTED] explain some of the specifics of this banana deal, exactly how the men who owned it were promoting it and what the results of this deal was?

C: Well, it was all handled from an office in Winter Haven. The primary mover in it had plenty of money and he wanted to make some more. I do not know who really thought of planting bananas in such a cold place. I do not think that many people in the Polk County area invested, even though they were offered certain inducements for the use of their name in a small purchase of five acres or ten acres. I think most people knew what they could expect from the location and the low ground. However, that did not stop the promoters from bringing in train loads of people and busing them from Winter Haven to the area where the bananas looked very appealing. That is about the all that I can



say with regard to that promotion except that, unfortunately, the sales person handling most of the sales got into trouble with the postal people, whereas the man that put up the money and promoted a lot of it did not get into any trouble.

W: [redacted] Would you be willing to say who these individuals were?

C: No.

W: Was there ever a similar incident within the citrus industry that would parallel the banana deal, [redacted] where individuals

[redacted]  
Mammoth Grove.

W: [redacted] were brought in from outside the state and encouraged to invest their money in less than reputable endeavours?

C: I think, in some cases in the developments of this time, people actually had convinced themselves that what they were doing was alright, that nothing could happen. And in some cases, there were people that knew what they were doing and knew how to appeal to somebody that would put money out for a thing of that kind. There was a place west of Winter Haven where a number of Hungarians were offered land at the prices way under higher surrounding land was selling for, but were told that the farming would be good there. Some of them may still be around in that area, but I think they're doing something else beside farming, on account of the cold. They couldn't make crops with any degree of certainty. [what]

W: Alright. Let's move to another area. Would you describe some of

the most important scientific innovations which have improved citrus production?

C: Well, the citrus production has been improved by a number of different things with regard to chemicals. I wish we had, though, some of the good fertilizer materials that we used to be able to buy years ago. They are being used for other things than fertilizer and are completely priced out of the reach of any agricultural production.

W: What are some of those?

C: The analysis of soils for different amounts of nutrients — some good some harmful like copper can be used too extensively and hurt the production, whereas, there are other chemicals and insecticides innumerable I couldn't begin to name half of them that have helped a great deal in the production of citrus, particularly in reducing the costs of labor as compared to what it used to be when less dangerous or effective material and insecticides were used.

Parathion is dangerous and has to be handled very carefully. We've used very little of it and it's been many years since we've used any. There are other chemicals and insecticides which can be dangerous, but if the instructions on the label and the warnings given on the label are followed there should be

no real danger in handling it. Fertilizer materials are mostly chemical. They used to be more organic. You used to be able to buy a ton of good citrus fertilizer for around \$28.00 a ton. You can't obtain the materials now, <sup>same</sup> \$24.00

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therefore it would be difficult to make comparisons. However, a good chemical fertilizer now will cost <sup>\$</sup>125 ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ a ton. There are other combinations of fertilizer materials that can be used, but they're not considered ~~the~~ the best for use. Anything in the way of cover crops that can be produced, or any kind of organic material of any kind <sup>[that]</sup> can be spread on a grove will help to balance out ~~the~~ the highly chemical fertilizers in use today. I've been reliably informed that a lot of the grain crops grown in the ~~mid~~ mid west have suffered greatly from the use of chemical fertilizers over many years. What used to be a little dry weather has become a drought. Much of the organic material in the soil has gone because of the use of the chemical fertilizers, <sup>fe</sup> and I can not understand why our agricultural colleges have not seen this coming and tried to work out something that would help to make the use of chemical fertilizers <sup>the</sup> the only thing we can get now <sup>less</sup> less harmful.

W: ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Besides fertilizers, what have been some of the really key innovations that have made citrus into ~~what~~ what I would describe as an agri-business as composed to what it once was <sup>just</sup> just a backyard industry when anyone with even a limited amount of knowledge about citrus could enter the business?

C: As I see it, the main thing is the knowledge that has been gained in the production of citrus and now in use by good grove care-taking organizations, such as the citrus services, ~~that~~ <sup>the</sup> Waverly has for their members.

[REDACTED]

W: Would you be a little bit more specific in what these services actually are.

C: It's all of the necessary work to be done in the production of citrus from beginning to end. It's something that can not be described specifically over any other, you might say, use of any production organization. I think one can do as well as another provided they will just use common sense with all of it.

W: <sup>became</sup> Alright. Would you or could you recall when trucks <sup>and at</sup> an important means of transportation for citrus products, <sup>^</sup> approximately what time?

C: In the late '20s, trucks from bordering states to the north of Florida used to arrange with some growers to get a load of bulk fruit to take up to Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, other nearby states, for sale. They could make enough on it to pay for their trip to Florida and back with a little margin over what they had paid for it when they were here, sometimes seventy-five cents a box, sometimes ~~75~~ <sup>\$1.00</sup> if you were very fortunate. This began to develop and grew to such an extent that in the early '30s it became almost a menace, and there was no control over the price that a grower would take for his fruit. The fruit was not washed. Then the packing houses began to call for washed fruit in bulk to truckers. <sup>OT</sup> The price was not controlled, the grade was not controlled. Years before, packing houses would load bulk fruit into a box car, for some southeastern market usually.

However, the fruit was washed and graded and was called grove or field run. Only the worst fruit was removed or fruit that had been injured and would become culis in transit. This business of bulk fruit soon showed the grower that he could not sell his fruit and make money in that fashion. He'd find out that a neighbor grower knocked a dime off of the price that he had been asking and then filled the truck. Packing houses worked, in some cases, very much the same way, ~~and~~ continuing of this type of business was really what brought on the citrus commission where they could have a state-wide control of all the citrus and see that it was properly washed, graded, and sized before shipment. It also would provide a way for advertising that could not be done to any great extent by individual packers. The citrus commission brought forth advertising for the state commodity of citrus, and ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> proved a very valuable thing for the industry as a whole. There is some advertising done I believe by Seald's sweet

W: The Florida Citrus Exchange?

C: The same as the Florida Citrus Exchange, only the name was changed to Seald's sweet <sup>to</sup> ~~the~~ capitalize on their brand, just as Sunkist did on theirs in California. There's some advertising done like that and there maybe a few packers that will advertise in some specific market for a short time where they ~~have~~ have a brand or stamped their fruit according.

W: Would you tell me, Mr. Chase, in your opinion, why trucks have largely replaced railroads as the major means of transportation for

citrus products?

C: The railroads prior to World War II appeared to be making an effort to hold the business, shipping primarily citrus and other agriculture perishable commodities. For instance, they had a special rate for boxed fruit shipped in boxcars in the southeastern area 250 boxes at a rate that the trucks could not really compete with. However, this arrangement or rate was only in effect about two years before World War II hit the world, and of course any special rates with small loads were discontinued immediately. Following the war, the Growers and Shippers League made a special request of the orange and line railroads to again establish the same rates and loads into the southeast, that if they couldn't do that the trucks would eventually take it. A meeting was held in Orlando, the orange and line representatives were there, and, when told what the Growers and Shippers League had in mind by the then manager John O. Ruke

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~~Nope, we don't have to do that, we've got the business, we don't have to make any rates.~~ The representatives as a whole just laughed. They said, "we don't have to do that, we've got the business, we don't have to make any rates." By ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_ realized they had made a mistake.~~

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

'46 and '47 they realized that they had made a serious mistake, and some improvement in rates were established. But they did not remain for more than two years. They saw that it

brought the business back to a great extent the first year. The second year still more came back. The third year the rates were raised higher than they've ever been. Naturally, the shipments declined by rail. Today, because of a continuing disintegration of good service by the railroads, schedules and other matters, they do not ship one percent of the fresh citrus fruits out of the state of Florida. I believe the same will apply to vegetables. It appears that they do not feel that they can do anything to recover the business and they're waiting for the next shoe to fall.

W: Let's talk about road improvement for a few minutes. Would you tell me when road improvement began in the areas where Chase and Company did business?

C: Following World War I, roads really began to pick up and be improved, either with state money or county bond issues. Before the war, I believe about 1915, Polk County swung a big bond issue and really put down a lot of greatly improved asphalt roads in the county. I think it was a  <sup>\$10,000,000</sup> or  <sup>\$12,000,000</sup> bond issue. And they served their purpose well for many years, even after the mid-'30s. Gradually, the roads, with gasoline tax, license tag revenue, began to be used, but first it was used in the northern part of the state, mostly, as the people in that area said they had to have connecting links from the northern states into Florida. However, this began to change, but with the economy dragging in the '30s, unfortunately, all of the license tag revenue was diverted for other use, and

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has still not come back to the highways.) It was an emergency at the time this money was diverted. It was used primarily for paying the school teachers. The counties were not collecting enough tax money to be able to continue to pay school teachers. However, after World War II, efforts were made to have the license tag revenue returned for highway use. This was the first revenue for highways in the state where you could classify it as highway use taxes. And it is most unfortunate that this money has continued to be diverted. If it had only been diverted long enough to meet the emergency highways being built in the '50s up to the present time <sup>[there]</sup> would probably be 2,000 miles or more of first-grade highways. Efforts are still being made

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to have the unpledged portion of the license tag revenue returned to highway use, the pledged portion continuing to go for the minimum school foundation building program. And I do not know anybody that would oppose this part of the license tag revenue going for the minimum school foundation building program. But it has been too easy for those in Tallahassee to keep it, as the balance goes into the general fund and it becomes something like \$100,000,000 ~~per year~~ a year now, if not more. However, those in Tallahassee turn a deaf ear when it comes to returning that portion of it to the highway use. It would have been immensely helpful, following World War II, to have been able to use the license tag revenue for maintenance on roads and <sup>new roads that were greatly</sup> building needed. It was not until 1956, with the Federal Highway Act that money began to appear in the shape of good highways all



over the state of Florida, as well as elsewhere in the United States. This business of roads is going to continue to be of great importance. This country is on wheels, whether it's your private automobile, or a bus, or what have you.

W: A moment ago you mentioned [REDACTED] Polk County, and how there was a bond issue that resulted in road improvement there. From research, I understand that a Dr. J. H. Ross, who was president of the Florida Citrus Exchange at that time, was a major force behind this bond issue. I want to know how citrus businessmen in other areas of the state were involved in county and/or state road building programs.

C: I understand that Dr. Ross was most helpful in having the county commissioners in Polk County plan this bond issue and build the roads. It not only served the citrus people, but all the rest of the people in the county, as well as those coming through or going away from. They, in 1932, the Florida <sup>Highway</sup> Users Conference was organized. My uncle, Mr. Joshua C. Chase, was its first chairman. The influence of this organization began to be felt in Tallahassee in keeping other forms of transportation from placing tremendously high taxes on trucks and automobiles, and in securing better roads and a better distribution of the money for the highways. The organization continues today with Mr. Raymond Singleton the present chairman. [REDACTED] They have been influential in Tallahassee even this year in keeping further highway use taxes from being sent somewhere else for use. The

present distribution of gasoline tax, I believe, could be improved on.

W: Can you think of any more individuals or organizations within the citrus industry who, over your lifetime, have been influential in county and state road building, other than the two that you've mentioned?

C: There are others. The motel people have been very instrumental and helpful.

~~What about other citrus growers?~~

Citrus growers, there have been many. I know Mr. R. D. Keen, who passed away only about three or four years ago, recognized the importance of good highway transportation for the state as a whole.

W: And where was Mr. Keen from?

C: Orlando. He started his work, originally, in that area and acquired large acreages not far from Windermere, also in Highlands County and in Lake County, some of which he disposed of. He was instrumental in getting the Winter Garden citrus canning started, along with other growers in the area. He drove very hard for the establishment of that canning and processing plant.

W: What about roads, how was he active in that?

C: Well, anything to benefit citrus, he would lend his voice for any time, anywhere,

~~because he recognized what was needed and he would help.~~

because he recognized what was needed and he would help.

W: So you would describe him as a major force in road building in Orange County,

or just in the state in...?

C: Well more in the state as a whole. There are plenty of people in Orlando that probably had the management of and developing of roads in the county, county commissioners, first one and another, have been very helpful and instrumental in that.

W: But can you think of another, <sup>example,</sup> similar to that of Polk County, where citrus growers, in a formal sense, were were actively lobbying or organizing road building programs.

C: Well, they first built clay roads, shell roads.

W: Road improvement in any sense.

C: But the county had a lot to do with, and lots of times individual growers would provide the necessary money to haul clay in to make a road that the buggies could go over, and the wagons, and so forth. That was true up in Sanford here for many years.

W: Can you think of specific growers who were doing this?

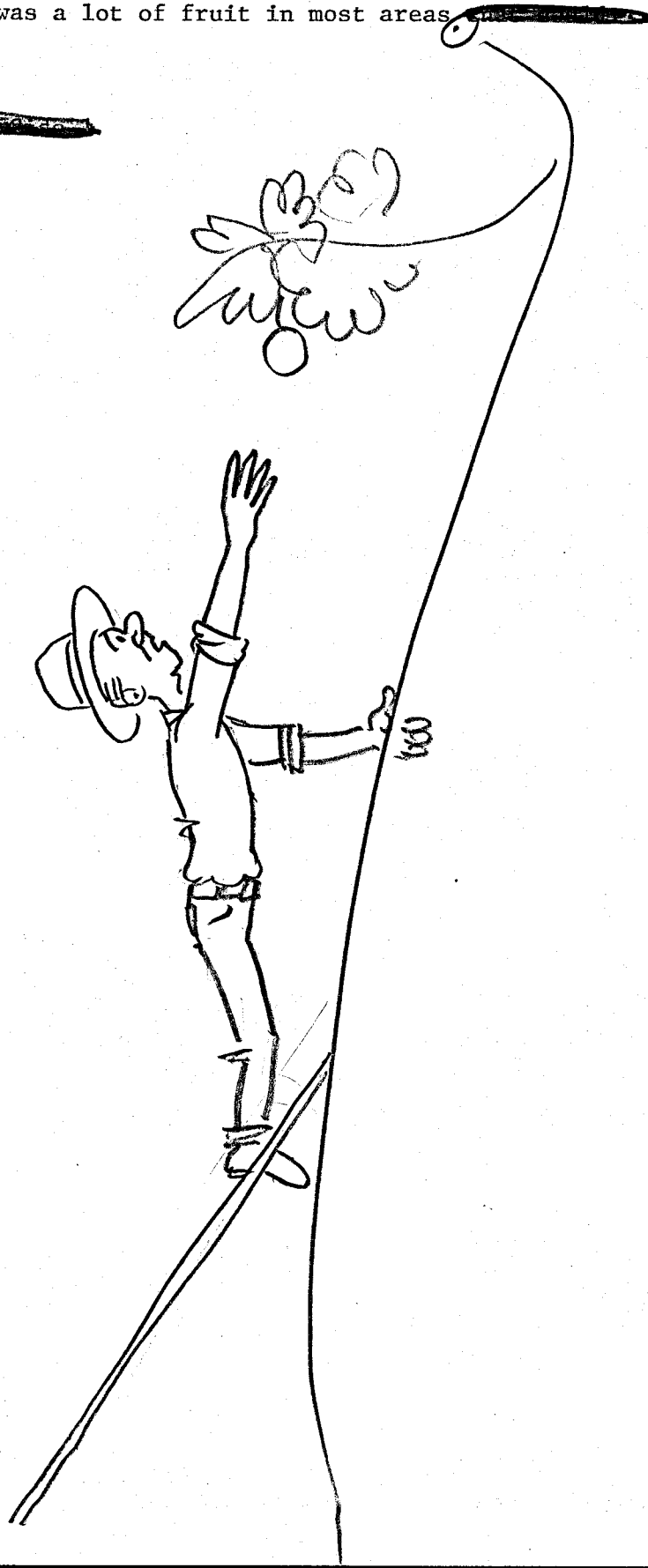
C: Well, it's hard to put your finger right on this one or that one, but I suppose most of it was done by the county commissioners in the construction of about 1912, '10, '12, along in there of quick roads. went out to the east side of Sanford, and they went from Sanford to the Orange County line, and Orange County then came up and built from the line back into Orlando. The

county commissioners, I suppose, were instrumental the most in doing that. And of course that was over the years, years ago. You can't very well remember more.

W: Um hum, I understand. Would <sup>you</sup> recall, we've briefly touched on this before, when some of the more serious freezes were and ~~what~~ what was their <sup>e</sup> effect on citrus trees and ~~actual~~ actual production of fruit? You mentioned the grove in Winter Haven, which was a particularly beautiful and well-kept grove, and ~~what~~ what happened to that.

C: The ~~first~~ first real hard freeze that I can recall, where I realized that it was hurting the citrus, was in 1917. And most of the citrus fruit on Merritt Island that year was frozen, where only a very small amount of it could be shipped. That freeze occurred <sup>r</sup> early in February. Freezes that followed that, in 1927, then again in '34, then in '37. ~~The~~ The last two I named did not ~~affect~~ affect the entire state as much as the previous ones. However, 1940 was the ~~next~~ next freeze of any great consequence, and it did a lot of damage, pretty well over the state. However, the Indian River escaped a great deal of that. ~~We~~ We had a freeze, I think, in '47 or '48 that was not extensive except in certain areas. I think some of the <sup>ridge</sup> sections in Polk County was hurt; I believe that there was some on the Indian River that never was quite clear just why it had to be that way. But, as I have stated before, ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> there are no two freezes the same. The ~~freeze~~ freeze following ~~that~~ that slight one in '47 didn't come back until '54 and '57 — December, January, February, and March. That was the first hard freeze following the 1940. The next freeze, following that, was

in 1962, in December, and that was fairly gentle, although  
there was a lot of fruit in most areas.



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~~Continuing with the freezes, there was a slight freeze in '64. However, it was not damaging, in general, over the entire state. From '64, we went to January of '77, when somebody described the last freeze as being the most democratic freeze that Florida's ever experienced, because no one was left out. It was the same pretty much all over. And I've only heard of a little fruit here and there, in extremely well protected areas, that would do for fresh fruit shipment. There was some on Merritt Island. I think the gift fruit shippers got most of that. The freezes that Florida has had can be repeated in various forms in the areas. They can not be avoided. There's nothing, so far, that will prevent fruit from freezing without such tremendous expense that it would not be worth while. Heaters in Florida, where we can be having cold with fairly high winds, are practically useless, and so are the windmills that one sees in groves now and then. A still, cold, heavy frost can be somewhat alleviated by the use of these wind machines in the grove, but to prevent fruit from freezing in a real freeze, they simply can't do it.~~

W: Would you describe the damage that can be done to trees specifically by a very harsh freeze? You related to me the story about the grove in Polk County in the freeze of 1927 which I think was a good example of this.

C: Well, freezes, depending on the intensity of it to lowest temperature and how long it stays low determines on what extent the damage may occur. This grapefruit grove, only about a fifteen acre grove, near Alturas, was one of the prettiest small groves that I've ever seen, and it was a bitter thing for the owner not to realize any money from his efforts over the years, and particularly the beautiful crop of grapefruit at that time. Fruit can be frozen, foliage can be singed to completely knocked loose, wood can be frozen to an extent where it becomes dead, limbs can be frozen to where the bark will split and then they die, and so on, right on back to the trunk of the tree. When it gets to the trunk of the tree, it is really serious.

W: Let's move to another area of what I would describe as Florida's climate and environment. What about hurricanes, how have they affected citrus production?

C: Hurricanes can blow a lot of fruit off trees, can blow citrus trees over. However the hidden damage, such as a lot of the state in this area experienced in 1944, October, is the thing that really can't be estimated at the time. You might have 5 or 10 percent of fruit from the tree on the ground, but you might lose 50 or 60 percent before you can pick it, on account of the damage to the fruit bruising, stems twisted, seedling trees, thorns' puncture in the fruit, and things of that kind. Even some of it can be picked that will not show the damage and shipped as in the fresh form and not be able to arrive in good

condition. Therefore an allowance is needed.

W: Alright, let's move to another sort of natural disaster, I would describe it. How about the Mediterranean fruit fly infestation of 1929? <sup>7/1</sup> How harmful was that to Florida citrus?

C: The fruit fly experience in the late '20s in Florida with citrus, as well as some vegetables, was a real blow below the belt. Other areas producing citrus and vegetables took every advantage they could of it. As usual, some of the media greatly exaggerated the fruit fly situation, saying they were clouds of <sup>flies</sup> that actually hid the sun from the area. This, of course, was just a plain and asinine exaggeration, somebody that wanted to make news, regardless of whether they had the facts or not. When the growers over the state found out what they were up against, I believe the best cooperation of the industry as <sup>a</sup> whole up was shown at that time, and the eradication was quite complete, although I understand that the Caribbean fly has given some trouble on the east coast and there's been some talk of the black fly such as they have in Mexico. I do not know about the black fly situation. However, the Caribbean fly, so the growers claim that I've talked with, is not as dangerous as the Mediterranean fruit fly. But unless it is eradicated now, as soon as possible, it could become a menace to the entire citrus industry. Every effort should be made and all cooperation given to eliminate the Caribbean fruit fly that has appeared on the east coast of Florida in the citrus groves. I do not think that there's been any extensive fly north of Ft. Pierce.

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W: In 1929 would you describe exactly what was done to eradicate the fly?

C: Money was put up by the state and by the federal government. Dr. A. F. <sup>[Arthur]</sup> <sup>[Forrest]</sup> Camp <sup>[Head of Horticulture Department, University of Florida Agricultural Experiment Station]</sup> from Lake Alfred was put in charge of eradication and did an excellent job. He organized and put together, by areas, different forces that put out poison bait spray, usually arsenic and molasses or syrup, some kind of sweet thing. Of course, the arsenic practically ruined the oranges. The taste was horrible. Most of this was done with crews, every two to three weeks, taking an area and covering it with knap sack sprayers and just squirting a little bit on each citrus tree. However, there were occasions where, unfortunately, too much spray was and put on the tree was damaged. There were even times when knap-sack contents were emptied under a tree and the trees were practically killed. This is something that would have to be expected in any kind of severe eradication. Regardless of whether it's fruit fly or something else, there will be some abuse in spite of the best that you can do. They had different zones for different intensity of infestation. Zones one and two practically had to ship most of their fruit to the extreme northern markets, as the cold would not permit the spread of the fly that might occur in southern markets. Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, even Tennessee, Virginia, Alabama, Louisiana. When you shipped a car of fruit, and most of it was moving by car at that time, your bill of lading was checked by an area force in the eradication. And if it appeared that you were shipping fruit

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out of a zone to a <sup>p</sup> area that you should not ship it into,  
the main office in Orlando would contact it and the railroads  
held up the car until the matter could be corrected.

W: Can you think of any financial institutions ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
which indirectly went broke because of the disaster caused by  
the fruit fly?

C: There were a bank here and there that I believe possibly  
closed about that time, <sup>be</sup> but I do not believe it was the  
fault of the fruit fly. I think that was an excuse that was  
used and a good way to get out of it.

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Some banks may have had even continuing ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ business <sup>in</sup> a difficult  
time and then closed when they had the bank holiday in the early  
'30s. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ All that closed just went down the drain real  
quick. And later on, when other banks were in trouble in other  
parts of the United States, they couldn't understand why banks weren't  
closing in Florida, but we'd already been through the wringer.

W: ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ You mentioned that two banks ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ supposedly closed because  
of the fruit fly. <sup>Do</sup> Do you remember which ones they were and where?

C: No, I don't. I tell you <sup>over</sup> ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ I think there was one down in Polk  
County somewhere, <sup>a</sup> not a terrifically large bank though, and  
I think there was one in Orange County, <sup>be</sup> but I don't just  
actually ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ remember now. First National Bank here closed in  
1928, but that was the result of the land boom, not the fruit flies.

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ I think there was <sup>[com]</sup> let me see <sup>^</sup> in 1929 the Orlando State Bank  
and Trust Company <sup>^</sup> the northeast corner of Orange Avenue and Central,

closed, but that was not fruit fly, I don't think.

W: We've touched on this subject several times, but I would like to ask you again what the condition of Florida citrus was after the fruit fly infestation, and then after the subsequent national Depression and during that time?

~~What was the condition of the citrus industry during that time?~~

~~What was the condition of the citrus industry during that time?~~

~~What was the condition of the citrus industry during that time?~~

C: Well, of course, after the embargo on citrus was lifted, it was much to the joy of the citrus growers and shippers, and beginning in 1930, in the fall, better fruit was shipped because it wasn't hurt with the base spray. However, the economy in the country certainly slowed the development of further citrus plantings to a great extent. Some money was made available through ~~the~~ a <sup>land</sup> bank, Columbia, different production loan associations in the state, and some groves were enlarged by additional plantings in that way. It is my personal opinion that if all the additional plantings of citrus in Florida had been dependent on what the individual could afford to plant out and pay for at the time, and not through loans, our over-production in the '30s would not have shown up quite as definite as it did. And the same would be true following the terrific expanse and citrus plantings following World War II.

W: Let's move on to World War II, which you just mentioned. Would you describe for me what <sup>e</sup> affects government intervention during World War II had on the citrus industry?

C: Activity and planting during World War II was very little. The citrus industry can be said to have helped the war issue, particularly in England, with the use of concentrated juice, but not ~~reconstituted~~ reconstituted the way it is today. The concentrate, then, looked bad, tasted bad, and I don't see how ~~it~~ it could be used. But they <sup>me,</sup> tell in England, that they did take it almost like a dose of medicine, but found other ways to use it in cooking and things like that, where vitamin C ~~a~~ could be said to have helped.

W: ~~What~~ What about the requisition of canned citrus products, how did that <sup>e</sup> affect the industry?

C: Of course, the canners, mostly grapefruit juice at that time, were limited as to sugar. <sup>o</sup> The government had the sugar ration, and that limited, too, the amount of grapefruit juice that they would put up, because a lot of sugar was used at that time. Not a lot in each can, but over the many millions of cans of juice, a lot of sugar was consumed that way. It did help the taste and it was well used that way.

W: ~~Didn't~~ Didn't the government requisition <sup>of</sup> canned products also offer the industry a stable and ~~...~~...?

C: Yes, they used a lot of it in all of the military camps around the United States. <sup>o</sup> They also used fresh citrus all around the United States in the different camps and locations. I don't believe too much ~~fresh~~ fresh citrus was sent across the Atlantic, <sup>le</sup> But a lot of canned stuff was, <sup>le</sup> And ~~it~~ it was highly valuable to the armed forces in that respect. I don't know whether it was so much

requisition as it was that the canners were waiting to be asked.

W: Wasn't it a great benefit, too, in contrast with the previous decade in furnishing the industry stable markets?

C: Well, the price was fixed on everything. The price of citrus, I think, was \$2.75 for one and three-fifths bushel boxes, whether it was number-one fancy or third rate, it was all the same.

That's all you could get. The can, I think, was the same thing.

There wasn't any dickering about price, it was all set. And

another agricultural thing was that tung oil. The price was set on that. And after the war, the government wanted to

reconsider the price they'd paid for tung oil.

W: Why did they want to do that?

C: They set the price, they just thought it was another way of being able to do things.

W: What about government loans to processors, how did that affect the processing industry?

C: Well, there were a lot of processors that used government loans and expanded their business over what it had been, and they still do today. Land Bank Columbia got plenty of money a lot of it.

W: And how did that relate to the development of a frozen concentrate, these government loans?

C: It permitted the processors, in some cases where they secured the loans like that, cooperative plants particularly, to buy the very expensive equipment needed in processing the orange juice. It was terrifically expensive. I don't believe even right

soon after World War II, by the early '50s, that anybody could have built anything for less than <sup>\$1,000,000</sup> 2, or <sup>\$3,000,000</sup> 3,000,000 ~~for~~ for a concentrate plant or just a canning plant; that's what it would require. And if hadn't been for government loans there, they wouldn't have had it. But if <sup>there</sup> hadn't been the development of those plants, there wouldn't be near as much citrus planted. It would have been an automatic slow <sup>balance out</sup> down until things began to ~~to~~

W: That sort of leads into my next question. What major changes have occurred with in the industry because of the development of frozen concentrate processing? One is obviously the increase in production. What have been some of the others?

C: Yes, the frozen concentrate has helped to increase the production, <sup>and</sup> the change in the ruling of the Internal Revue and the law on not being able to expense <sup>the</sup> cost of planting new groves has held ~~held~~ down the planting more than anything else. It was fortunate that the concentrate developed when it did, following the war, so that ~~the~~ off-grade from the packing houses would have a market. You could realize <sup>something</sup> for the fruit. Before then, it was hard to dispose of inferior-looking fruit, even though it was good inside. And the concentrators, it didn't make any difference to them, they could use it. Well, that was a tremendous help to the grower. However, there were periods following World War II when the citrus market looked mighty dull; prices were not where they were paying enough to ~~let~~ let the grower really come out with ~~a~~ a living, if you want to call it that.

W:

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~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ What effects has the presence of large corporations such as Tropicana and Coca Cola, which have grown out of the ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ frozen concentrate boom, ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ been on the role of the individual grower, packer, and shipper?

C:

Well Tropicana is chilled fruit, primarily of they, I think, do some concentrating, which they later handled as chilled fruit, but they have certainly expanded the chilled fruit business and into a part of the market that I don't believe has hurt frozen concentrate or made any change there. Coca Cola ventured out to buy Minute Maid and they have used a lot of Florida concentrate, orange concentrate, and other products, but they also buy large quantities of concentrate, wherever they can get the best price, for use in their bottling of orange-flavored drinks. The price determines where they buy it, whether it's South Africa, the Middle East, Spain, or wherever it may be, That's where they buy it. So, in that degree, they are funning their business on making <sup>a</sup> profit, but have been able to make a profit on their frozen orange concentrate.

W:

How has the presence ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ of these large corporations ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ really affected ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ the growers, the packers, and the shippers? Haven't a number of these, especially the smaller growers, been absorbed by ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ the large corporations and their investment?

C:

Well you can you could say this, something that ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ appears to be somewhat of a parallel. Fifty years ago there were dozens of

different makes of automobiles, and even before then there were another dozen that came out. But as far as this country's ~~manufacturing~~ automobiles is concerned, there're only three or four that are really doing business. But why? The stronger, larger manufacturers have remained in business usually. The smaller grower couldn't meet the cost situations and still make a living. Therefore he sold out. Well, General Motors was put together by a number of different automobile manufacturing firms. They've maintained, to a certain degree, some individuality and independence, but it made it possible for them to go on. It almost fell down, though, when one person bought them and then went to the wall, the first one.

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C: It's progress, it's a change that has come with practically anything that you want to take a good hard look at. What happened to apple growers? There used to be a lot of small individual apple growers; there're not anymore. Same thing with the lemon growers in California. And look at the wheat farming, the grain farming in general. I don't know how many thousands less there are of farmers in the country today over what there was even thirty years ago.

W: So this is just part of a national trend.

C: It's ~~part~~ part of a change that comes about with things of this kind.

W: What has been the attitude of fresh fruit shippers towards the processing



industry since the beginning of frozen concentrate processing?

C: Well, I believe some of the fresh fruit shippers didn't like the concentrator at all, until they found out that they could serve them their off-grade cull-outs, or what ever you want to call it, in the packing house; they had a market where they could dispose of them. And in that way, now the attitude seems to be that they don't want them to run the business, but they need them.

W: Would you describe ~~what the effect~~ what has been the effect of the rapid urbanization for Orlando and other cities in citrus producing areas and how it has affected the grower and the way he uses his land?

C: I believe that the expansion of urbanization with regard to citrus growers, can best be described by what Henry Swanson in Orlando wrote in his book Countdown for Agriculture. He put it very clearly and very concisely. Some of the developments do not bring the taxes now that they did when they were citrus growers. They've got homestead exemptions in so many cases covering a fifty or a 100-acre plot that you've taken out a great deal of what the citrus grower had to pay in taxes to stay in business. However, this is just a development that the industry's going through. It has survived others that have been bad, it will survive this. When it gets to a certain point, the development of citrus groves won't be as attractive to the land developer for housing as it has been in the past.

W: - Why do you say that?

C: Price. \_\_\_\_\_

W: How about ~~the~~ the size of citrus acreage, the amount of citrus acreage, how has that been affected by urbanization?

C: During the past three years, there's been some decline in the total citrus acreage in the state. So there again, your urbanization that's spreading out has probably helped to contribute towards ~~the~~ the reduction in citrus acreage within the state.

W: And one final question. How do you view the future of the Florida citrus industry?

C: Well, we're in it. ~~F~~ Folks intend to stay in it. It has made a living. We believe we'll continue ~~to~~ to make a living in the citrus business. I may not see the time when it will be gone, ~~but~~ <sup>it</sup> it's something that I've enjoyed and liked very much.

W: Mr. Chase, I want to thank you very much for this interview. And I'd just like to let you know that you'll receive a transcript of this interview from the University of Florida in exchange for allowing ~~me~~ <sup>me</sup> me to come down and talk with you. ~~and~~ <sup>have</sup> that you'll <sup>have</sup> the right to check this transcript for any possible errors or anything else and ~~you~~ you do have the right to close off this transcript for any reason for any period of time left to you discretion. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

C: ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ I hope it will serve ~~to~~ to help explain at least some of the

things that I've been so interested in for many years. I  
couldn't stay away from it now if I had to.

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W: Well thanks again very much Mr. Chase.