

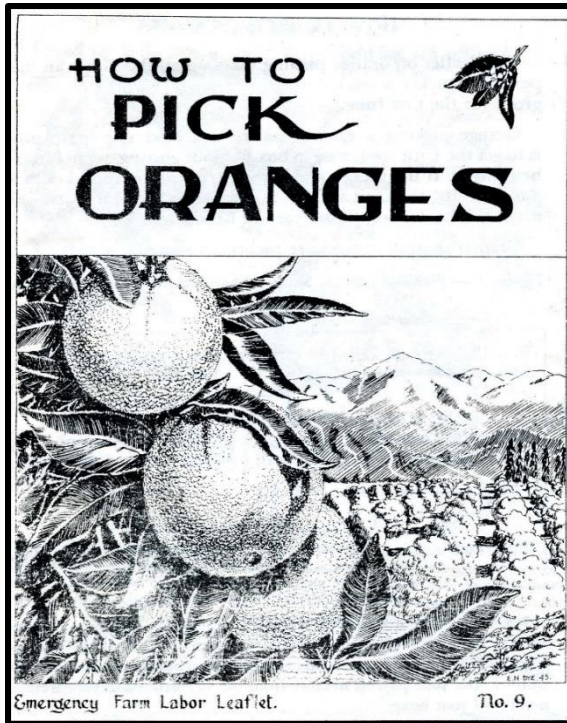


La Verne Historical Society
S.O.L.V.E.
Save Old La Verne's Environment

PO.Box 7761, La Verne, CA 91750 909-593-5014 LaVerneHistoricalSociety.org

May 2015

Bits'n'Pieces of History



It's been a long time since workers were recruited and taught the fine points of how to pick citrus fruit: the heyday of La Verne as the "Heart of the Orange Empire" was in the 1920's.

In the 1930's, the town experienced horrendous rains, cold winters requiring the need for smudging trees, and a drop in sales during the Great Depression. But sales gradually began to recover before World War II. Trees were mature, aging and smudge-related disease problems were only beginning, the water level was still high, and the labor force experienced.

Things changed with the onset of war in Europe and Asia. Hundreds of La Verne men who had worked in the groves were drafted into the military. Replacements often had little experience.

By 1943, training new workers was a struggle for the citrus industry. Needs were met by unskilled German and Italian prisoners of war sent here by train and billeted in the valley.

US troops from the East Coast were also stationed here and set to guard groves from sabotage. There seem to have been some close calls when young city draftees, armed with rifles and unfamiliar with smudging found disheveled men wandering through smoky groves at night, holding long-necked 'lighters' and setting fires!

***Area Historical Societies, Museum
Potential Focus of Meeting on May 11***

Ralph H. Thomas III, Regional Vice President of the Conference of California Historical Societies, will give details of the organization and introduce us to other historical societies in the East San Gabriel Valley. These include Azusa, Baldwin Park, Duarte, Glendora, Pomona, San Dimas, and West Covina.

A growing interest in establishing a museum in La Verne will be a major discussion item in the Historical Society's next meeting on Monday, May 11 at 7:00 p.m.

Four members - Galen and Doris Beery, Craig Walters and Bill Lemon - will report on an April 15 meeting at the University of La Verne with Dr. Jay Jones, Dr. Bob Neher, Dr. Kent Badger, Elric Boardman and others. All agreed on a need for a museum in La Verne, and the 'old bank building' on Bonita - owned by ULV has excellent potential. In addition to consolidating collections and display cases scattered here and there at the university, artifacts held by the Historical Society, the City and by individuals, it could also serve as a cultural center and classrooms, plus a small vegan coffee shop with wi-fi for students and visitors. Those at the meeting then toured museum collections now housed in science building and exhibits in the halls.

Success of the March tour of the Larimer Home on Bradford will be reviewed, and plans made for the annual 'Old-Timers' Potluck Picnic and other programs.

To get to the May 11 meeting, drive on Bonita to A Street and turn north. At the end, A curves left and north. Park along the street. Pinecrest is the 2-story building to the east. The entrance is on the north side. The meeting will be in the first floor conference room.

Emergency Farm Labor leaflets to train workers were prepared by the Agriculture and Home Economics departments of the University of California and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Copies were translated from English into German, Portuguese and other languages.

The wording was simple and precise: the text was a careful explanation of what to do and what *not* to do!

Meeting on May 11, 2015, 7:00 pm at Pinecrest Building, Hillcrest Homes, 2765 Mountain View Drive, La Verne, 91750

HOW TO PICK ORANGES

This leaflet on orange picking takes up all the things an inexperienced picker needs to know when going to work in an orange grove for the first time.

Orange picking is easy to learn. The most important point is to get the fruit from tree to box without cutting, scratching, or bruising it. If the picker handles the fruit properly, and does his job correctly, the fruit will be of good grade when it reaches the market. This leaflet stresses careful handling.

Grapefruit and oranges are picked in a similar manner.

SOME STARTING POINTERS

1. Go to the foreman to find out where to pick. He will show you your set.
2. Do not pick fruit from another worker's set.
3. If the trees are large, pick oranges next to the box row first to prevent truck from bruising fruit.
4. Get your payroll number on each of your boxes.

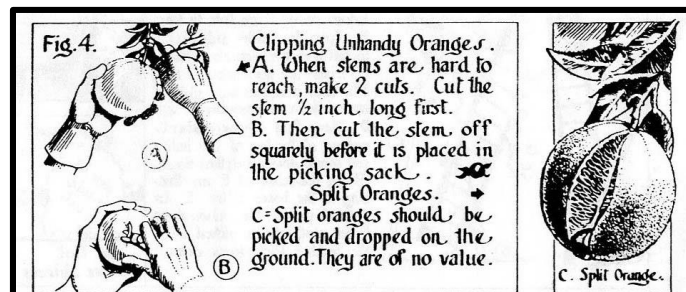
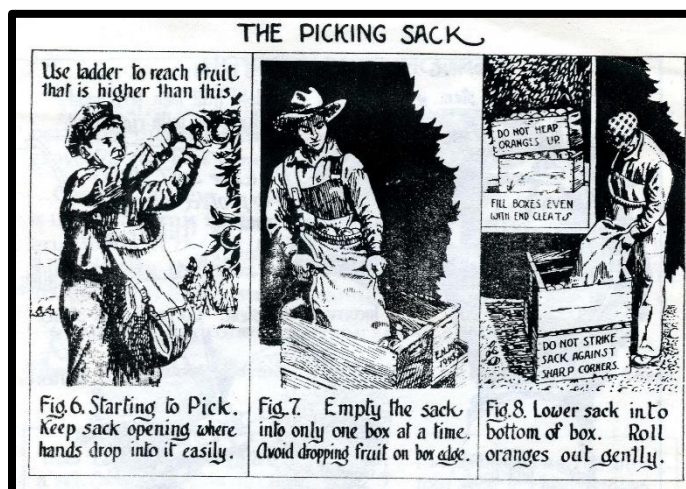
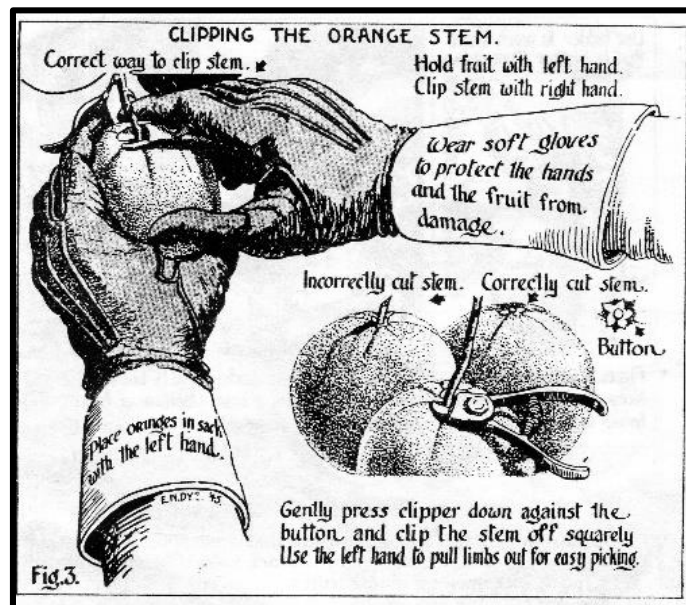
PROTECT ORANGES AGAINST INJURY

Any skin break or bruise lowers the value of an orange. Mold will enter broken skins and decay the fruit. One long, sharp stem left on one orange may puncture hundreds of oranges during the packing process. This may lead to the spoilage of dozens of boxes of oranges during shipment and storage. Therefore, avoid (1) long stems, (2) clipper cuts, (3) pulling out stems, (4) leaning against sack while you are on ladder, (5) banging sack against ladder or boxes, (6) putting twigs in sack, (7) repairing sack with wire or nails. Do not place a ladder against clusters of fruit or strike fruit while moving a ladder.

HOW TO USE THE PICKING SACK

1. Adjust the sack low enough to allow the hands to drop into it easily.
2. Most right-handed pickers carry the sack from the right shoulder.
3. Stand so sack opening is near fruit to be picked.
4. Place fruit in the sack gently.
5. Nothing is gained by trying to reach very high.
6. Try to fill sack before emptying to save trips.
7. Do not repair sack with wire or nails.
8. Empty sack by placing it gently in the bottom of a box, release snaps and draw bag up slowly.
9. Remove all trash and gravel from the boxes before filling them.
10. Empty fruit into one box at a time.

Thanks to member Richard Davis who provided this leaflet from days when La Verne was 'Heart of the Orange Empire.'



A note in Fig. 4 mentions that ‘Split oranges should be picked and dropped on the ground. They are of no value.’ But thrifty growers seem to have made a practice of picking up these “drops” and taking them to the packing houses. They received credit, and the damaged fruit was squeezed in to orange juice.

The Historical Society of La Verne is a non-profit organization founded in 1969. We're dedicated to preserving the history of Lordsburg - La Verne and protecting our environment.