Transcript of an Oral History Interview in the collection of the BREVARD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION 308 Forrest Ave., Cocoa, FL 32922

Roz Foster: It's October 5, 2004 and we're going to talk about the citrus industry, and what it is, what we mean when we say "firing a grove".

Today we're recording the history of the citrus industry in North Brevard County, and we have these gentlemen who have been involved in the citrus industry for many years to talk about it. [00:00:30] And it's a wonderful story because it's an era that has since gone by.

We'll start with this gentleman right here, what is your name sir, and tell me a little bit about yourself.

Coleman Mitchell: I'm Coleman Mitchell. I was raised up in the citrus right here in Mims. I work grove work, harvest fruit, [inaudible 00:00:54] manage the workers. We brought them in and we had camps; probably you'd seen camps [00:01:00] down there we had there. They would stay there and work for maybe six months at a time and then they'd move on.

Roz Foster: Okay

Alfonso Wilson: Wilson, born in Titusville. I worked citrus, but my primary occupation was in education. In which I labored for 36 years. When I started working [00:01:30] grove, as a young man ... as a young boy, actually. 12 - 13 years old, and I still do it.

Roz Foster: Okay. What time period are we talking about?

Alfonso Wilson: I started working in the groves in the late 40's.

Roz Foster: Okay ...

Alfonso Wilson: I'm still doing it in the year, two-oh-oh-four.

Roz Foster: Okay, great. And this gentleman?

John Moorer: Yes ma'am. I am John W. Moorer. I came here to Florida [00:02:00] from Dorchester, South Carolina. By April of 1953, went to working for a gentleman had a grove by the name of Joe Warren. I worked for him, I guess, until about 1957. But I had been working for one person and one grove to the other one, [00:02:30] maybe for about 15 years.

Roz Foster: Um hm.

John Moorer: I used to pick oranges, this is what you picked 'em in. This is the sack you picked them in, and this was the box that you dump 'em in. Hard work. Work never get no harder than picking oranges. During the time I was picking oranges, you would

get, I think this was nine cent you got for grapefruit. [00:03:00] And maybe you got, I think 12 or maybe 15 cent for picking oranges.

Roz Foster: Per box?

John Moorer: Per box.

Alfonso Wilson: Per box.

Roz Foster: Oh, wow.

Coleman Mitchell: That was a good price.

John Moorer: When I first started picking oranges; the first day, I remember, I think I picked three boxes. And ate two.

And as the days go along, I think the second day I picked seven, and then on up to 13, so I got so I could pick good, but I never was a roller. I was [00:03:30] nothing but a sack toter.

Roz Foster: Now, what's a roller?

John Moorer: That's somebody who could really pick some fruit. You know maybe pick 100 of these, maybe a 125.

Roz Foster: Okay

John Moorer: ‘Bout the best I could do was about 65.

Roz Foster: And was that a average?

John Moorer: That was a average.

Roz Foster: Okay. How many boxes did you pick?

Alfonso Wilson: The most I've ever picked was 72 boxes.

Roz Foster: 72, and how long did that take usually?

Alfonso Wilson: All [00:04:00] day, my dear. All day.

Roz Foster: All day. How about Mr. Mitchell?

Coleman Mitchell: I'd run a little over 100 a day.

Roz Foster: Oh! Wow.

Coleman Mitchell: That was taking me about six hours though.

Roz Foster: Six hours.

Coleman Mitchell: Yeah, about six hours. Now the fruit ... it depends on the trees too, you know. If it was high trees, you get to take your long arm.

But in grapefruit, I have picked 200 boxes.

Roz Foster: 200, Okay.

Coleman Mitchell: About eight hours.

Roz Foster: Good grief. Well [00:04:30] what was the competition between the pickers? Tell me about that.

Coleman Mitchell: Well, the competition between pickers. One picker didn't want the other one to outdo him. Now there was a guy they called George Able, he was what Mr. Moorer has said was a roller. And then it moves on down, when George get in the field, he didn't want nobody else to beat him. So here I am, I'm coming along with my sack, and [00:05:00] I'm going to try to beat Mr. Able in picking.

So that was the competition betwixt the pickers. That's the way that worked out.

Roz Foster: Between the pickers and the rollers?

Coleman Mitchell: Yeah.

Roz Foster: Okay. [crosstalk 00:05:09]

Coleman Mitchell: The sack toter. They just put it back there and let him take whatever he could get.

Roz Foster: Okay. Let's talk a little bit about ...

Alfonso Wilson: Before we leave that ...

Roz Foster: Okay. Go ahead.

Alfonso Wilson: Occasionally, you would find slickers in the row.

Roz Foster: Oh! What's a slicker?

Alfonso Wilson: [00:05:30] That would be an individual who would walk ahead, get ahead of you, and ground your trees. In other words he would, pick all of the oranges and grapefruit that were low and leave the tops to you. And whenever you found that, you had a incident. You told him about his parentage.

Roz Foster: I see, I see.

Coleman Mitchell: One more thing about that picking. They didn't pull oranges they clipped them.

Roz Foster: Oh.

Coleman Mitchell: The foreman was so tough [00:06:00] on us, if you was supposed to be clipping and dumping in that box; they'll come by and look in that box, and if they see one where you pull, they'll pour your whole box of fruit out on the ground.

Roz Foster: Oh my.

Coleman Mitchell: Then, you have to go around and pick it up, you know. It was real rough. It was real rough. I said "Lord." I said "I hope he don't come by my ... [inaudible 00:06:22]

But so, you'd pick a box of fruit, and then the man come by and dump it out and you going to pick it up yourself, you know, that's hard on you. But they used to [00:06:30] do all that kind of stuff.

Roz Foster: Tell me something about those sacks that you all have. How did they hook up to you? I see there's a strap that goes over the top. Okay and there's a hook on the side ... How did this work? When you filled that full, ...

Coleman Mitchell: Okay you're up the ladder. You're [00:07:00] not carrying the weight, the ladder is carrying the weight, this is sitting on the ladder, and as it fills up, you drop it down another rung. Then when you get it full, you go up to your box like this. Throw it up there, just like that, unbutton it, and shake her right out in there.

Roz Foster: I see. I see. And then go back up the ladder?

Coleman Mitchell: Back up the ladder.

Roz Foster: Were these ladders made out of wood back then?

Coleman Mitchell: Yes. It was.

Roz Foster: Okay and actually where did they lean? Did they lean up against the tree limbs?

Coleman Mitchell: [00:07:30] Right. Right.

Roz Foster: Okay. Also, let's talk a little bit about plantin' a grove. Which one would you like to talk about that? Okay. What would be entailed in planting a grove?

Alfonso Wilson: The first thing that you would do is, get the land. Once you got the land, you had to clear it, take down all of the brush, trees, the whole [00:08:00] nine yards. Major tools were a grubbing hoe, a broad ax and a cross cut saw. All of those things are men killers. Hard work. Extremely hard work.

Once you moved all of the trees off, you went through and you grubbed in the area where you were going to build a mound. In other words trees were not planted [00:08:30] flat. They were planted on a mound.

Roz Foster: I see.

Alfonso Wilson: And you had to dig the mound up, take all of the roots out, leave them to the side, and you made the mound. Once you made the mound, then basically you were ready to dig a hole, plant the tree, and water the tree.

Roz Foster: How did you water the tree?

Alfonso Wilson: You usually carried a large [00:09:00] barrel of some kind, or some kind of container that would hold 50, 100, 200 gallons of water.

And in the earlier days they pulled it along with mules, horses, this kind of thing. Later, many of the growers got tractors, and you would pull it along with the tractor.

And at that time, you had to dip it out and place it in the ring, which you had [00:09:30] placed around the tree. And you would water that tree two or three times a week depending upon, the weather, in order to keep it from wilting. Once the tree roots took, then basically you could slack up on watering it, but you always made sure that the ground had some kind of moisture in it.

Roz Foster: How about budding a tree? What did that entail? [00:10:00] Budding a tree.

Alfonso Wilson: Budding a tree, usually, if you're talking about a young tree, budding to a young tree—you would find the kind of bud wood that you wanted.

I don't have a knife.

Coleman Mitchell: Gotta have a knife ...

Roz Foster: Okay, what type of trees are these in back (talk loud)?

Alfonso Wilson: These are sour orange trees. These were used, [00:10:30] primarily, for the seeds in order to grow young trees that would be budded. Once they got the size of say, your pinkie, you would come in with the type bud wood that you wanted to bud onto it, whether it would be grapefruit, orange or tangerine, and you would bud onto that. You'd take a bud and [00:11:00] place it within that tree, tie it and hope that it would take.

Once it took you would come and you would drop the top over, and allow that bud to grow. Once that bud grew to a specific height, you would come by and pinch the top off in order to toughen the wood. You would do that over a period

of time, and low and [00:11:30] behold, in 10 years you would have a tree that would bear fruit.

Roz Foster: Do you want to demonstrate how you would do that? Mr. Mitchell is going to see if he can cut a bud ...

Coleman Mitchell: How do you make this thing stay out here?

Alfonso Wilson: Is it all the way up?

Roz Foster: It locks.

Alfonso Wilson: Is it locked, yet?

Coleman Mitchell: No.

First, we'll cut the leaves off of that. Like that. [00:12:00] Right where we clip those leaves off, we're going to cut a piece of bed wood.

You never can nick your hand, tip's underneath of that bud.

Roz Foster: Why?

Coleman Mitchell: Your hands have salt in it, and when it touches that part, it gets into the bud and it won't take.

Roz Foster: I see.

Coleman Mitchell: So, if we're going to put this bud in, we would [00:12:30] slice that, just like that. Then we would slide this bud ... I have to get it where I can't get my hand. I can put my hand under so this thing will take. That's enough.

We will slide this bud in there.

Alfonso Wilson: You need some tape. You got some tape?

Coleman Mitchell: [00:13:00] Now the bud is in there, all we need to do is tape it.

Roz Foster: I see.

Coleman Mitchell: Now that's what they call budding.

Roz Foster: Okay.

Coleman Mitchell: Now they come out later years, what they call hang budding. You just cut it a little bit, and lay that bud right on that and then wrap it.

Roz Foster: And then ...

Coleman Mitchell: This would take 21 days. Only this here one about 14.

Roz Foster: I see.

Coleman Mitchell: That's the difference in it.

Roz Foster: That's the difference in it.

Coleman Mitchell: You'll get some tape here, and we'll just put a little [00:13:30] piece of tape.

Roz Foster: Okay. Now as I understand, the budders were paid more money.

Coleman Mitchell: Well, they charged so much a tree, back in those days, they only got about 10 cents a tree to bud. But nowadays, it costs you about 50 cents a tree to bud one.

Roz Foster: I see.

Coleman Mitchell: Yeah, they made more money than the average worker, you know.

Roz Foster: Okay. Were there specific people that [00:14:00] did the budding?

Coleman Mitchell: Oh yeah. Yep. But you know, down though the years, all grove workers learned how to bud.

Roz Foster: Bud? Okay.

Coleman Mitchell: Because they were always were looking to get a little higher and a little higher. So they had to learn how to do all of it. Then they had a pretty good break with the boss man.

Roz Foster: Okay. That way you were more versatile.

Coleman Mitchell: Right, right, right.

Roz Foster: Okay. What would be the average amount of trees that [00:14:30] could be budded in one day?

Coleman Mitchell: Oh, some of those guys bud five or six hundred trees a day.

Roz Foster: Oh.

Coleman Mitchell: But now, when they bud five or six hundred trees a day, he's going along, sticking the bud in. I come along, wrapping it for him.

Roz Foster: So you had someone come in and wrap afterwards?

Coleman Mitchell: Yeah, that's right.

Roz Foster: Okay, all right.

Coleman Mitchell: A lot of times the budder would just bud and wrap, himself, you know. Of course, you've got to keep it where air can't hit it.

Roz Foster: I see.

Coleman Mitchell: If air hits it, it's no good.

Roz Foster: Okay [00:15:00] and it's very important to keep the salt from your body off of it ...

Coleman Mitchell: Right.

Roz Foster: Correct, or else it won't root?

Coleman Mitchell: Never let your hand touch where you cut that bud.

Roz Foster: Okay. Well after you bud it, then what happens to that budding?

Coleman Mitchell: All right, after you bud it, the bud takes. I done budded in this limb. I come back, just the top of that tree, I lean that tree over like that. And I let that tree stay, and I unwrap this bud. I let that stay right there, [00:15:30] when I unwrap this bud, then that bud will start growing and shoot out a limb. And it'll just start growing like that.

Roz Foster: I see.

Coleman Mitchell: And just like Mr. Wilson said, after the tree gets up so high, then you'll nip the top out of the tree then that causes the tree to spread branches and grow.

Roz Foster: So that's why they would do it. To make it produce more.

Coleman Mitchell: Yeah. Right, right.

Roz Foster: Okay. You want ... yeah?

Alfonso Wilson: I'm going in [00:16:00] and see if they have some tape, any kind of tape, you understand, simply so he can show you how to tape.

Roz Foster: Okay. Okay.

Alfonso Wilson: Okay?

Roz Foster: What kind of tape would you use to wrap that with, do you remember?

Coleman Mitchell: Budding tape.

Roz Foster: Budding tape?

Coleman Mitchell: A plastic budding tape.

Roz Foster: Okay.

Coleman Mitchell: Okay, we got the bud in, then we're going to wrap this bud in here now. You've got to be careful with the bud, you've got to wrap it tight, you want to wrap it so no air [00:16:30] can get to that bud.

All right, that bud is in there.

Roz Foster: Okay.

Coleman Mitchell: Now, on this bud here, it takes about 14 - 20 days. And on the hang budded, it takes about 21, 22, up to 27 days. [00:17:00] You have to keep watching it and see how it looks.

Roz Foster: Okay.

Coleman Mitchell: And that is the budding part of it.

Roz Foster: Okay. Let's talk to this gentleman about doing some grove work. What were the groves that you worked in, and how far did people go to work in the groves?

John Moorer: Well they didn't have to go very far, you know, because like me, I was living in the community.

Roz Foster: Okay.

John Moorer: And they probably had to [00:17:30] go about three or four miles, probably 10 miles.

Roz Foster: Okay and who did you work for, some of the people?

John Moorer: I worked for Joe Warren, I did most of my work for Indian River Packing Company. I worked for them about 10 years. Worked for Mr. Warren about three years.

Roz Foster: And where was Joe Warren's groves located?

John Moorer: Just right around in the county. In fact, barely right around here in [00:18:00] the neighborhood.

Roz Foster: Okay

John Moorer: He had quite a few groves, all of them connected to one another, most of them.

Roz Foster: Okay

John Moorer: I guess the first ones was maybe a half a mile apart.

Roz Foster: Okay. What are--who are some of the people that you remember that worked in the groves, some of the old timers and some of the stories that went on back then?

John Moorer: Well there wasn't many stories, when I come though. It wasn't nothing but get it.

Alfonso Wilson: Work.

John Moorer: [00:18:30] Yeah, work.

Roz Foster: What was a typical work day for instance?

John Moorer: A typical work day was about nine hours.

Roz Foster: And when did you start?

John Moorer: I'd start, seven o'clock and work 'til five sometimes six. Just according to the weather; now when it get real hot, we'd go out early and take a long break, two hour break, 12 to two and then we'll go back to work. And then you'd have to work a little later to make up for your lost time.

Roz Foster: [00:19:00] And what was the season? When did you work in the groves, what was the season?

John Moorer: The season starts about ... well, you work in the grove year round.

Roz Foster: I see.

John Moorer: But the picking season started about, I'd say the 15th of October, and last till about the first of June.

Roz Foster: Oh! That long?

John Moorer: Yeah, it was.

Roz Foster: Oh.

John Moorer: Because, see, you had two crops. You had your early crop, with your early fruit, and then you had your late crop, they call [00:19:30] it the Valencias, which are supposed to have been the best oranges.

Roz Foster: I see.

John Moorer: So you've got two crops to gather in that length of time.

Roz Foster: Okay. Who owned some of the groves around here? Do you remember some of the packing houses that were in the area that were really important to the employment of the community back then?

John Moorer: Yeah. [inaudible 00:19:55] The company I worked for then the Indian River Packing Company, it was down at Indian River City, which was about 10 or 12 miles from here. You've [00:20:00] got Nevins Packing Company that sits right up there on the hill, then we've got the Mims Citrus sits all, [inaudible 00:20:10]

Alfonso Wilson: Exchange ...

Roz Foster: Exchange.

John Moorer: Mims Citrus Exchange, yeah.

Roz Foster: And that was located on Route 46, near Singleton ...

John Moorer: 46, that's right.

Alfonso Wilson: And across from there, was the Blue Goose.

John Moorer: Yeah.

Roz Foster: And who owned the Blue Goose? Do you remember?

Alfonso Wilson: That was ...

Coleman Mitchell: Don Duck owned that, didn't he?

Alfonso Wilson: Yeah, that was the same individuals [00:20:30] that owned Disney World. Okay. It was actually Donald Duck Citrus Company, at that time.

Coleman Mitchell: Citrus Company.

John Moorer: Citrus Company.

Roz Foster: Oh really?

Alfonso Wilson: It was ... somehow there was a connection there, they were ... how shall I say, the individuals who owned the grove and this type thing.

Roz Foster: I see.

Alfonso Wilson: And then there were several independent packers who had small plants, this kind of thing. Particularly, you understand, persons who had road side [00:21:00] stands, they dealt in the specialty fruits.

Roz Foster: Okay. What are some of the types of fruits, the Valencias ... What were some of the other, like the grapefruits called, some of the varieties, do you remember?

Alfonso Wilson: Duncan, there was your red grapefruit, your pink grapefruit, you had some that were white, you had ruby [00:21:30] reds, several different kinds. And the reason that the season was so long, is that among the first oranges that you would pick were the Hamlins, okay? From the Hamlins you would go into the Pineapples, and from the Pineapples into Parson Browns and Florida Commons, Indian River Commons we used to call them, from [00:22:00] there you would go, the last oranges that you would probably pick, how shall I say, for juice and this kind of thing, were the Valencias, which is my favorite orange.

I'd rather have a Valencia orange than have any other kind. Okay. Although, I don't raise that many of them, but that's my favorite.

Roz Foster: Okay. Who can tell me something about the camps and who lived in the camps [00:22:30] that were up here in the place called The Quarters, what were the three camps or four camps that were there?

Coleman Mitchell: Well, Nevins had a camp out on the corner of Harry T. Moore and Wiley. Exchange had a camp, set right on Main Street, and those was the only two camps around here for migrant workers. So they would bring in, Nevins Fruit Company camp would [00:23:00] hold a little over 100 head of people. So they had cooks in there, to cook for those people, to keep and serve their food and they charged them so much a week for eating. So both camps were working about the same way, you know. But you had to work strictly for the company that you stayed in the camp, you couldn't go out and work for nobody else.

Roz Foster: About how many people lived in these camps?

Coleman Mitchell: Well, a little over 100 head would live in those camps.

Roz Foster: Oh.

Coleman Mitchell: Yeah they had a lot of room [00:23:30] in them. They was big camps. And they had laundry rooms were they could wash they clothes and keep everything clean, and that was real nice. But I have seen some camps, I wouldn't let a dog live in it, you know?

Then they got so bad with the camps, I've seen camps that you could stand here and see everything in there, you know, holes in the wall, then the state taken over. Then they had to be governed and ruled by they control, and [00:24:00] the state made sure that everything was up to par. You had to have glass windows,

they had to have screens, you had to have screen doors and they come around every Monday morning, checking. If anything, if a screen tore out, a screen door off, they write you up. And they give you a certain length of time to replace that. That week, they'll come back early, later on in the week and check again. Then if you don't have that fixed, then you're wrote up, and you got to pay a [00:24:30] fine. So that was one of the good things that the state did, when they taken over that.

Because the people that own these camps, they would just let them run down, and didn't care how people lived in them. But after the state come up, everything was up to par.

Roz Foster: What was the typical wage for a grove worker? How did that stand up to, like for instance what was the bottom wage, and up to the [00:25:00] top scale?

Coleman Mitchell: Well the bottom wage was about $25 a week.

Roz Foster: And who was that paid to?

Coleman Mitchell: That was paid to the workers. Now, if I was a man, and I had five or six boys, and they was working for the same man that I was working for, well they didn't pay the boy, they paid all of the money to your dad.

Roz Foster: I see.

Coleman Mitchell: So your dad was in fully control of everything. You was just working and he got the money.

Roz Foster: I see.

Coleman Mitchell: That's the way that went.

Roz Foster: Okay

Coleman Mitchell: And [00:25:30] then it moved on up to like $35 a week. In 1964, I went to working for Mr. P. W. Robinson [Robertson?], he give me $45 straight time a week, and I thought I was making big money then. $45 a week.

Roz Foster: Whoo.

Coleman Mitchell: I worked there for a while and then I finally told him, I said well "I can't live outta that. I got to go further." So I went back, and started doing other work, [00:26:00] construction work, where I was making couple hundred dollars a week, you know. So that was much better. They wasn't paying any money to be made in the grove. Only time you made money was when the season come for picking. Then they made money.

Roz Foster: Yeah. How about the supervisors, were there men who had, like the head of the groves who were the supervisors or foremans?

Coleman Mitchell: Well, yeah, they had foremans over there. I was a foreman. I subcontracted at least, on harvesting for Nevins Fruit Company. [00:26:30] I worked for Nevins for about 40 years. And that's all I did.

I carried a group of men sometime. Most of the time, I had 25-30 head of men here. Then when I go north, I had 50-60 head of men.

Roz Foster: Now talking about going north, where are you referring to?

Coleman Mitchell: I'd be going all the way to New York. Wesley, New York.

Roz Foster: Oh.

Coleman Mitchell: Then I was harvesting apples, cherries, grapes ...

Alfonso Wilson: Whatever they grew

Coleman Mitchell: Whatever they had to do.

Roz Foster: [00:27:00] So the orange pickers also went to harvest other crops, up and down the coast?

Alfonso Wilson: Yes.

Coleman Mitchell: Yeah, If you was a good crew leader, and they liked you, they'd follow you from one year to the other one. I didn't care if you went to Maine, they'd follow you right on to Maine.

Roz Foster: I see.

Coleman Mitchell: But you had to ... now a lot of crew leaders,...

Alfonso Wilson: Treat 'em right ...

Coleman Mitchell: ... Treat 'em bad, but if you treated them right, I had guys that would work for me for 25 years. One guy.

Then when I quit, some of the guys went to working for my son. [00:27:30] You know, If I'd have been mean to them, the first thing they'd have said ...

Alfonso Wilson: No.

Coleman Mitchell: "Well I'm not messing with you, cause your old dad wasn't no good." So I had a lot of guys worked for me 25, 26 years. Never did go nowhere else.

Roz Foster: Lets talk to you, how about some of the other people that were in the area at the time. Can you relate any stories about some of the things that went on, like the fun times that you used to have. Like after picking time, or [00:28:00] after harvest time, some of the things that the men and women used to do, or do you have any stories that you can relate about some fun times.

John Moorer: No, I told you about me. There wasn't no fun times. I came up, like I said from South Carolina. I told you I came here in '53, I don't know what I was thinking, but I came here in 1950.

Roz Foster: Okay.

John Moorer: Even when I was home, they called me a workaholic. My goal [00:28:30] was to try to have something. And Miss, I'll tell you the truth, I didn't have much fun. Because I would work day and then sometime I would work at night. I've been around a lot of fun folks, all of them about dead now. Because you know, I'm old, I'm 74 years old. I'll be 75 next month.

Well we had some place we could go at night, you know. Years ago they [00:29:00] would call them a juke but now they call them clubs.

Roz Foster: Oh, juke joints. Okay.

Alfonso Wilson: Yeah, you got it.

Roz Foster: And where was the local juke joint?

John Moorer: Well, we had about three right here in the neighborhood. Right around in the neighborhood of Mims.

Roz Foster: What was the best one?

John Moorer: Well, I would say the best one name was the Oasis.

Roz Foster: Okay. Where was that located?

John Moorer: That was located on Harry T.Moore, what that street run up from there ... Just let's say on Harry T. Moore ...

Coleman Mitchell: Main, it was on Main

John Moorer: [00:29:30] It's a little lane back there, I forgot about what it was.

Roz Foster: Okay

John Moorer: But it was located on Harry T. Moore. Back then it was called Main Street. Or Palmetto, but now it's Harry T. Moore.

Roz Foster: Okay

John Moorer: I guess that was the main one, but we had other ones, which was kind of popular, but that was the popularist one.

Roz Foster: Okay

John Moorer: The Oasis, and it's still standing there.

Roz Foster: [00:30:00] Okay. I understand that one of the favorite past times of the men was sometimes to sit under a tree and tell stories.

John Moorer: Stories, yeah.

Roz Foster: Sitting under a tree, can you relate any of the stories that were told. That are tellable on film?

John Moorer: No, no ma'am.

Alfonso Wilson: No way.

Roz Foster: Oh, they're not tellable, huh?

Alfonso Wilson: No. No.

Coleman Mitchell: Mr. Wilson, Mr. Wilson oughta could do that ...

Alfonso Wilson: No, No ...

Roz Foster: Mr. Wilson,... ?

Alfonso Wilson: I did the same things that rest of you did.

Roz Foster: Mr. Wilson, how about you?

Alfonso Wilson: On Friday and Saturday night, I went to the juke, you understand and I bowled [00:30:30] until I could grow toe. There was nothing that I wasn't big, bad and bold enough not to do.

Roz Foster: Okay. But that sort of was a good reward for working hard, long hours all [inaudible 00:30:47] Right?

Alfonso Wilson: Yes. Definitely.

John Moorer: See I came up with a family, straight.

Coleman Mitchell: Grandmother didn't play that ...

John Moorer: They didn't play. I'm 74 years old, put all the cigarettes [00:31:00] together, it wouldn't be a pack that I smoked. I didn't drink no kind of alcohol, not even beer. Put all the beer and wine together, it wouldn't be a half a gallon that I drunk. IN my whole life.

So like I said, most of my goal was work, and try to have something or other when I get old. But I failed. I still old, and got to work. But I can say, I tried.

Roz Foster: Yeah. That ...

John Moorer: I didn't have much fun. I didn't have much fun.

Roz Foster: You worked hard your whole life.

John Moorer: I worked hard.

Roz Foster: God Bless You.

John Moorer: I was really planning on having some fun. In a few more months, I'm not going to be working any more.

Roz Foster: [00:31:30] Oh, good, good. Let's talk about some of the times, that happened, in the days ... Like for instance, when a freeze came, how would you know a freeze was going to come, and what was typical about what you did, [00:32:00] when a freeze came along.

Coleman Mitchell: Well, they would always catch the news when the freeze was coming in. All right, then first, started out. Get that over there.

First started out, they was firing the groves with wood.

Roz Foster: Firing the groves, now what are we talking about, firing a grove? That's not setting a fire to the grove, right?

Coleman Mitchell: No. What they would do, they would have two pieces of wood like this, and [00:32:30] they would lay that right down here and cross it. Cross it just like that, and then put some splinters in there. And they'll light that, then they'll go right on down the middle of that grove, like that. Then, later years ...

Yeah, just like that, they would light that, and now you have to go along, every now and then and put another piece of wood up on it, to keep the fire going all night. You would work all night long.

Roz Foster: [00:33:00] All up and down, between the trees?

Alfonso Wilson: Yes.

Coleman Mitchell: Yes, ma'am. All up and down, between the trees.

Roz Foster: And how many people would do this? A whole crew?

Coleman Mitchell: The whole crew.

Roz Foster: My goodness.

Coleman Mitchell: If you were working for Nevins, and if they had 100 men working for them, but the grove they had, they had that 100 men out there.

Roz Foster: My goodness.

Coleman Mitchell: At night, firing the grove.

Roz Foster: Okay.

Coleman Mitchell: Then the next day, after firing the grove all night with wood, then the next day you have to go back

Alfonso Wilson: Put more on ...

Coleman Mitchell: That wood all over again, for the next night. [00:33:30] All right, then they got modern. They moved up to these heaters here. Now when the freeze coming in, they had big tanks, like Mr. Wilson said, hold two, three hundred gallons and they'll go, ride down the row ... people have a hose, put it in there and fill that up.

Roz Foster: And what's that contraption called?

Coleman Mitchell: Diesel fuel.

Roz Foster: Okay

Coleman Mitchell: Diesel fuel, that's what they're using.

Roz Foster: And that [00:34:00] piece of equipment there is called what?

Coleman Mitchell: A heater.

Roz Foster: A heater.

Coleman Mitchell: A grove heater.

Roz Foster: Okay. All right.

Coleman Mitchell: Okay if you want to see how, I demonstrate on lighting that, we've got this piece of paper here. So what we'd do, you light that... [00:34:30] oh come on ...

Roz Foster: Okay

Coleman Mitchell: We'll let that burn down to the diesel and then it'll light. Then we'll close this gate here.

Roz Foster: Okay, so there's diesel in there.

Coleman Mitchell: Diesel is in there.

Roz Foster: Okay.

Coleman Mitchell: Come on now.

Alfonso Wilson: [00:35:00] That's right, there's the principle.

Roz Foster: Okay. And that's what they do, is they light that and the diesel is in there.

Coleman Mitchell: I've gotta put it out.

Roz Foster: Okay. So it has a damper on it?

Coleman Mitchell: Yeah.

Roz Foster: And then that would make the smoke [00:35:30] like that?

Coleman Mitchell: Well it won't be any smoke.

Alfonso Wilson: Heat. You want the heat.

Coleman Mitchell: You wouldn't see anything but heat.

Roz Foster: Oh, so it would just be the heat coming out from it. Okay. Now will you show me that damper down there, how do you control that?

Coleman Mitchell: Okay, it's got three holes down here. Now that's low, then the next hole get a little bigger, [00:36:00] now that you got two holes you got a full hole.

Alfonso Wilson: Full stack.

Roz Foster: Full stack

Coleman Mitchell: Then this is, that's the last hole, that's a big one. It's wide open now.

Roz Foster: Okay and you would use that if it was real cold?

Coleman Mitchell: Well, you probably ...

Roz Foster: Or was it progressive?

Coleman Mitchell: What you would probably do, after it get hot, you set it on about one and just let it ... or one and a half and just let it burn down. Then that would burn all night, probably 24 hours. Then they'll [00:36:30] come back the next day, refueling these things up for the next night.

Roz Foster: I see. So that puts out quite a bit of heat.

Coleman Mitchell: Oh yeah. A lot of heat.

Roz Foster: Okay and what you would do then is set this between two trees?

Coleman Mitchell: Yeah, that's right. Just this, the middle of trees running this way, you got one sitting here, you go back to that other tree, and set another one, right on down the row. Just [00:37:00] like that.

Roz Foster: Okay. And how would you refuel these? You had a truck that would go through the groves to refuel them?

Coleman Mitchell: Yes, they had tractors. That pull in these big tanks, a man running this middle, a man on this side with a long hose, man on that side with a long hose. One filling up these tanks on this side, one filling up tanks on the other side.

Roz Foster: I see.

Coleman Mitchell: And they just go right on down until they get everything filled up.

Roz Foster: And they would [00:37:30] do this every night?

Alfonso Wilson: If it was freeze.

Coleman Mitchell: Every day.

Roz Foster: Every day? Until the freeze was ..

Coleman Mitchell: It depends on how long the cold stays in.

Roz Foster: I see, I see. That puts out quite a bit of heat doesn't it?

Coleman Mitchell: Oh yeah.

Alfonso Wilson: You only needed to raise the heat, you understand up above 27 degrees. If you get it above 27 degrees nothing will freeze. Okay? [00:38:00] But if it drops down to 22, and you don't do some fast heating or fast firing, then you're going to have you understand, a crop that would be lost. After you get down to 20, 17, 18, 20 degrees, you start to lose trees. And it is easier, better to lose a crop than it is to

lose a tree. Next year, if the tree is not [00:38:30] killed, you can raise, you can put a crop on. But if that tree is killed, then you've got to plant one, and it's going to take you ten years to recoup. Because when it's ten years old, you might get maybe a box, box and a half of oranges off it. Where you were getting ten or 12 boxes off of this other tree.

Roz Foster: I see.

Alfonso Wilson: Okay?

Roz Foster: Okay. So, it was more important to save the tree than the crop, ...?

Alfonso Wilson: Yes. [00:39:00] Yes, definitely.

Roz Foster: Okay. Okay, would the fruit then fall off the trees to the ground?

Alfonso Wilson: Much of it would split, fall off to the ground, the trees themselves, you could be in a grove and during a severe freeze, you could hear the limbs splitting. Pow! Sound like a rifle. Okay?

Roz Foster: Yeah.

Alfonso Wilson: And so basically, you understand, what you wanted to do, you would not mind saving the crop, but you definitely wanted to save the tree.

Roz Foster: I see, I see. So [00:39:30] what would happen to those oranges that fell to the ground?

Alfonso Wilson: If you got them up in a few days, if they were mature, they would take them over at most plants and they would juice 'em. First they would test them to see how badly they were hurt and all this type thing, see if you had any rotted ones in there; bad ones that had gone turned to wine.

If the juice had turned to wine or vinegar and if there were too many of them ... if [00:40:00] they had turned to wine, then you just got rid of those.

But if they were still solid, and this type thing then they would juice them. So basically, you could salvage, many times some of the oranges, if it stayed cool enough. I've seen it 22 degrees today, tomorrow down to 17, 18 and this type thing, and then [00:40:30] much of the fruit would fall to the ground.

And all of a sudden, being in Florida, you had a day in which during the middle of the day it was 80 degrees, now you got a problem, okay? Because the oranges would fall, as long as they were frozen, basically the sacks in there, you understand, would hold some of the juice. But once they thawed, you would go by a grove and could smell it a quarter mile [00:41:00] away.

Roz Foster: And then they would be all ruined.

Alfonso Wilson: All ruined, so what you would do is go in with a grove chopper, or this type thing, and just chop it into the ground. Hope that it would biodegrade and help to feed the tree.

Roz Foster: Yeah, I want to take a close up of this, and to see what this says on the manufacture. That's good it's [00:41:30] a Hylo Heater. S-C-H-E-U Produce Company, Upland, California. And about what circa is this? What year would this be?

Coleman Mitchell: It's about 1965.

Roz Foster: About a 1965. This is fueled by diesel.

Coleman Mitchell: Uh huh.

Alfonso Wilson: Yes.

Roz Foster: Okay, now the old ones, before [00:42:00] they were fueled by diesel what did you used to put in them?

Coleman Mitchell: They used the same thing.

Alfonso Wilson: Same thing.

Roz Foster: Same thing, Okay. This was used all during the 50's and 60's?

Coleman Mitchell: Uh, during the 60's ...

Alfonso Wilson: Until they outlawed them.

Coleman Mitchell: Until they outlawed them.

Roz Foster: Of course the EPA came in and said that, ... [crosstalk 00:42:20] you couldn't use them. Yeah.

Alfonso Wilson: Not only were they polluting the air, but they were polluting your pocket, because if for every night that you burned one, ... [00:42:30] Diesel today, is what? Diesel costs more than gasoline.

Coleman Mitchell: About $2 a gallon.

Alfonso Wilson: So basically, you understand, if you put $5 in this one, and you got a thousand of them. Like Nevins had, you understand, throughout the…

Coleman Mitchell: Thousands and thousands.

Alfonso Wilson: You were talking about $10,000 a night.

Roz Foster: Oh.

Alfonso Wilson: Okay? So unless you're really into the money, you say well "Lord, protect those trees. You can have the crop."

Roz Foster: Okay, [00:43:00] so is that when the water sprinklers system came in?

Alfonso Wilson: Yes.

Roz Foster: Where they use the overhead sprinklers systems.

Alfonso Wilson: Yes, yes.

Roz Foster: Okay, and then how did that work? How did the water sprinkler system work?

Alfonso Wilson: Well, basically, what they did, you understand, was that they would drill wells throughout the area and when I say the area, your fields. On your property. You could not use my water, you had to use yours, okay?

[00:43:30] So you would have wells and you would have it piped throughout your grove and the sprinkler system, you understand, if you had it from the ground up, you'd have pumps that would pump the water. Since the water was coming out of the Earth, it's say like 70-72 degrees, whatever it was, you understand, then when you sprayed it, the heat from the water would rise [00:44:00] among the trees and many times it would coat the tree, and it would keep it alive.

Roz Foster: They would actually ice over, wouldn't they?

Alfonso Wilson: It would become an insulation, right. Hopefully that would do it. The overhead sprinklers, you understand, they had to pump it up above the tree, and it sprinkled down, it was the same principle, you understand. To coat it and hope that the heat from the water, you understand, would aid the tree, keep it from freezing and once it [00:44:30] was coated over, it would be like an overcoat.

Roz Foster: So actually it was more, and again, this is the way of saving the tree and not necessarily the fruit. As long as the fruit, did not defrost, so to speak, it was usable and they made juice out of it. Correct?

Alfonso Wilson: Yes. But basically, you understand, as a politician told me, that ... and [00:45:00] I won't quote his name, because I don't want to be sued. That orange trees don't vote, and people do.

In most of the areas where you now have homes being built, condominiums and this type thing. One condominium has 500 people in it, 250 of them are voters, alright, maybe 300. There's Mr. Mitchell and his two boys, they can't outvote

those people in [00:45:30] the condominium. So you don't waste the water on the trees.

Water is the one thing in Florida that is going to stop our growth. Okay? See I don't mind, if I had to, couldn't do anything better, I might drink my sewage, but I don't want to drink yours. All right?

Roz Foster: Let's talk about one of the interesting facts and [00:46:00] the reason that we're doing this documentation, is that the citrus industry in Florida has gone by the wayside and has fallen to huge developments taking over the land. What is your thoughts on that. When did you start seeing the groves gone and what was the indicator like the freezes in the 80's. Let's talk about that, all three of you.

Alfonso Wilson: Well during the 80's we had a series of freezes. [00:46:30] And much of the citrus in Central Florida was hurt. It was hurt badly. And many of the growers, in the central part of the state begun to move south. Basically they planted acres and acres of oranges and this type thing, but [00:47:00] there is the idea that wherever you have agriculture, or you have agricultural goods in most instances you must have water.

Orange trees, then again, don't like wet feet. They like high ground, ground that is reasonably moist but not wet. As a result, in many of the areas that [00:47:30] growers went to, there came a rainy season. During the rainy season, water puddled. Once the water puddled there was no place to put it. I could not ship my water over into Mr. Mitchell's grove, and Mr. Mitchell would get angry, you understand, and we'd have confrontation, or this kind of thing, and Mr. [00:48:00] Moorer he didn't want both of us pumping out water to him, because he couldn't do anything with it and as a result, in many areas you have, ... how shall I say ... you're on the flood plain. And as a result you have to have dykes, ditches, canals, this kind of thing, to try to move the water. But once that is done, it affects [00:48:30] the supply of water for human beings.

And as a result, when the condominiums were being built down in the southern part of the state, along the coast and even in inland, you had people saying, you understand, that you're wasting the water. You're using it unnecessarily to supply these growers of citrus of all of the products that you have. And as [00:49:00] a result of the freeze, those people who went south, left us here and since land here, much of it is high and dry, it has more value or quicker value for building than it does for agricultural purposes. Basically people decided that it is more profitable to raise houses than it is to raise trees.

Roz Foster: Let [00:49:30] me ask you this, what happened, Mr. Mitchell in your estimation, what's happened to the migrant workers, when the groves went away, what other jobs did they seek employment, did they seek to make a living?

Coleman Mitchell: Well most of them, they just straight away went different places. They forgot all [00:50:00] about the citrus. It was going down, and they knew it was going down.

And I told a lot of them myself. I said, "What you guys need to do now ... you see this citrus going down, you need to go off and get you a job with benefits."

I said, "Working citrus is not a job. It's just a hustle," you know. They come out and work today, and I pay them today. They ain't got no benefits or no anything.

So then, the Mexicans they could get their work did [00:50:30] so much cheaper by transporting Mexicans in. So the Mexican is just done taking over. They taking over everywhere you go.

Now I used to care of 60, up to 100 head of men, and Mr. Moorer will tell you of working for me in New York. Now, you can't hardly find an American guy to work that up there. It's Mexican or Haitian. That's all they got. They bring them in.

So, the American guys just got [00:51:00] away from it and then the American people got so lazy. So they had to bring somebody in.

Alfonso Wilson: Don't go there ...

Coleman Mitchell: To do the work.

Roz Foster: Yeah.

Coleman Mitchell: Just like Mr. Wilson said, on this water system. We needed water, but this freeze came in, the damage does real harm.

Then, he said, they all moved south. Then the storm waters, [outfit? 00:51:25], they went to cutting dams and blocking the water off. That's when we have such [00:51:30] a drought up here, they won't let the water come through now.

I was working over 18 years ago down there, building dams. Blocking the water to keep it from coming up. So that hurts this awful bad.

Imagine the workers just faded on out. For our American workers, they've got a lot of Haitians and Mexicans because they can get them most cheaper than they can American men.

Roz Foster: Yeah.

John Moorer: One thing that helped the migrant workers in this community, when [00:52:00] the Space Center came in, I would say, 40 or 50 percent of the grove workers went over and got jobs, you know. With benefits and better pay, you know. But there were some that couldn't go over there and get a job, some of them was too old, and some of them didn't even want that kind of job because see they done did this kind of work so long, [00:52:30] and they've got addicted to it. Thought that was all they could do but, 40 percent of them, went over on the Space Center.

All of them got good jobs, and they come out and then the ones that stayed, like myself and didn't go, feel the pinch right about now.

Roz Foster: Let me ask you this, all three of you, when you all worked the groves, what were some of the hardships [00:53:00] that you endured as far as medical benefits, housing, that type of thing. How did you acquire medical benefits?

Alfonso Wilson: Basically, you understand, one of the things if you are looking at, in this area, was it many of the people who were not migratory workers had their own small plots of land, and [00:53:30] they built houses on them. It might be a shack, but it was his shack. Okay?

As long as, I owned property then I have something that I can get something on, alright? Most of the doctors and hospitals, if you have some cash, they will accept you. Many of the guys, you understand, who [00:54:00] worked for particular men over a period of time, if they needed a thousand dollars, they'd go to the man and say "Hey, I need a thousand dollars, I'll pay you back next season." Okay?

And as a result, they did not suffer as the migratory workers did. For an example, I know some people, who the family worked for a family for over 70 years. [00:54:30] It got to be more of a situation in which, if this person needed something, he'd simply go and say "Hey, Chief, I need such and such a thing."

No problem. Fella, who do you work for? Well I work for Mr. Oobladee. What do you need? They give it to you.

I built a duplex and I'm [00:55:00] sorry to say this; I built a duplex and had $50. But the way that I built it was that, the person whom I approached an individual who was on the board of directors of a bank. And I think he told me that there were seven people on that board. And he told them that "Look, this man needs such and such a [00:55:30] thing, his family has worked with my family for this number of years ... " and six of the people knew my relatives. So there was no doubt, you understand, I could get whatever I wanted.

Because I asked them for one amount of money and they told me "No, we're going to let you have double that. You draw it down as you need it." See because we don't want, [00:56:00] and I'm not an exception, okay? That has happened in this area. We don't want, you to get halfway through and then need something. You do it, and this kind of thing.

Many of the independent ... These guys were independent. They did not live in camps, they lived in their own places. And as a result, you understand, they could afford [00:56:30] many things that other people could not.

Roz Foster: Because they were established in the neighborhood.

Alfonso Wilson: That's correct.

John Moorer: And another thing I can say, see of me, see. I went to the service when I was young. First when I was younger, I didn't get sick, you know.

But I went to the service when I was young, when I came out, I had the service benefit. I would go to the VA. Because I never did have no sufficient insurance, [00:57:00] but I had the VA. Because I did my little tour in the service, and that's what helped me out a lot.

Coleman Mitchell: Many times you was working for a company and you had a position, they would give you all the benefits. And I was supposed to be one of the high men at this place, so I had all the benefits that they had.

I had the retirement, I had the insurance and everything. So it didn't hurt me and I had my own home, [00:57:30] I never rented in my life. That's what helped me. And then furthermore, the migrant workers didn't get sick like people get sick now. They'd work all the time and you'd never see one sick. If you see one get hurt, one of the guys hurt him, then you gotta carry him to the house. Me being the foreman, and the boss, I came to the house, well they're going to wait on him, wrap him up and send him on back. We come on back and work him. That's about the benefit of it.

Roz Foster: Okay.

Coleman Mitchell: That's about all I know about that.

Alfonso Wilson: What's [00:58:00] his name?

Coleman Mitchell: I don't recall his name.

Roz Foster: Okay, how about telling me about some of the old timers in the area.

Coleman Mitchell: Some of the old timers, there was a lot of peoples here that need jobs and need to work. So, if I was working for Mr. Wilson, I'll use him as an example, because he here.

Alfonso Wilson: Right.

Coleman Mitchell: And Mr. Moorer, I go to Mr. Moorer for a job, first thing Mr. Moorer asks me, says "Who you worked for?"

I say, "I been working for Mr. [00:58:30] Wilson." He said, "Well, I can't give you no job right now, let me go talk with Mr. Wilson." So if he go to Mr. Wilson today, and I goes back to him tomorrow. He say "Well, Mitchell I can't use you, if you couldn't get along with Mr. Wilson, I know you can't get along with me." So that's just the way it was, you know.

I couldn't leave Mr. Wilson and go to Mr. Moorer, they wouldn't hire you, until they go and talk with one [00:59:00] another. And that made it hard for you, you know, because some of those guys were dogging the guys and if they wanted to leave those places, you know. But they couldn't leave because then they'd have nowhere else to go. And furthermore, see there wasn't nothing in here until Cape come in, but a saw mill and out here on Turpentine Road, a turpentine still and the fruit industry. That's all you had to rely on.

Alfonso Wilson: That's all. That's all we had.

Coleman Mitchell: Later on, down to Patrick Air Force base, [00:59:30] come in the Navy.

Alfonso Wilson: Naval Air

Coleman Mitchell: Navy base.

Alfonso Wilson: Yeah.

Coleman Mitchell: And they went to work ...

Alfonso Wilson: Banana River Naval Air Station.

Coleman Mitchell: And then, from there, civil service taking over. And they went to hire. Then it just went to growing just like that, and the people got to be independent, so then Mr. Wilson would work anybody that come to him, Mr. Moorer work anybody come to him. They didn’t ask no questions then because they needed help.

That's about the biggest story I know about how they used to dog us out. Wouldn't work with none of us. Unless Mr. Moorer say [01:00:00] something.

John Moorer: Well I got a little story, I was working for a company years ago. It was about 10 or 12 of us working we was in the grove, mowing with a sling blade. We had a boss man. He would ease up to me and say, "Hey listen. I'm going to the store for a minute, and I want you to watch these other fellas, and see that they work," you know.

I'd watch him go down to the other fella, but I [01:00:30] didn't know he was telling them the same thing, he was telling me, you know. After he tells me that you know, I kind of thought I was kind of like a little above the rest of the fellas. Come to find out, he was telling the whole 10 or 12 head the same thing. So, we was just everybody watching one another.

Coleman Mitchell: I can tell you his name. He's dead. Old Herbert Hub, boy. Slick.[crosstalk 01:01:00] Mitch [01:01:00] you watch your mowers.

Roz Foster: This has been a wonderful story today and I appreciate y'all coming by and I'd like to talk to you another time about the saw mills and the turpentining, if you'd like to join me for that.

I think that would be a good documentation on that.

John Moorer: That'd be Mr. Mitchell. Turpentine and because me I don't know too much about that. In fact, I don't know nothing about that [01:01:30] turpentine but he, yeah he'd be a really ...

Roz Foster: Okay, well, Mr. Mitchell I'd like to talk about, and I believe it was Kelly's Turpentine ...

Coleman Mitchell: Yeah, it was. Kelly's Turpentine.

Roz Foster: Maybe we can sit down sometime at a later date and talk about that. I sure would appreciate...

Coleman Mitchell: Okay all right.

Roz Foster: Well thank you all for coming today, and this has been a great documentation of the citrus industry in North Brevard. Thank you.

Coleman Mitchell: Okay

Roz Foster: One of the things that I would like you to relate to me, is when you put in a grove [01:02:00] what were the dimensions and how many trees went into a typical grove?

Alfonso Wilson: In the old days, most groves that are around North Brevard, were planted either on a 25 x 25 spacing, tree to tree, center of the tree to center of the tree. 25 feet and at the rate of 25 feet [01:02:30] you would get in approximately, 76, 79 trees, depending upon, you understand, whether it was a true square that you were using. And as a result, most groves that had 10 acres of orange trees in it would have somewhere between 760 to say 800 trees.

Roz Foster: That was a lot of trees. [01:03:00] Yeah. And how long did it take for a tree from the time that you planted it to the first yield for commercial?

Alfonso Wilson: Depending upon the age of the tree when you put it in the grove. If the tree that you're planting in the grove had been, say in a nursery for three years, and you kept it healthy, and this type thing, at the end of ten years, it would [01:03:30] be big enough to bear perhaps a box of fruit. But if you had not cared for it, and this type of thing ... you're on ants ... to care for it, feed it, and keep the vines and this type thing, off it, you might go in, you might get anywhere from a dozen oranges to none, okay?

So trees [01:04:00] you have to nurse, as you would a baby. You feed them, you care for them, and then they produce. If you don't feed them and care for ‘em, they don't thrive and they might even die on you. The average tree at ten years old will start to return, some of the money that you have spent in planting it and getting it together.

Roz Foster: Okay, this is a typical fruit [01:04:30] box that they used to pick and put the oranges in. And I noticed on the front, it has a name on it that says Black Grove. Where was Black Grove?

Alfonso Wilson: It was probably located near Oviedo which is in Seminole County, just across the St. John's River, west of Mims.

Roz Foster: Okay. And this was a typical box that you would fill up and [01:05:00] be priced at, correct?

Alfonso Wilson: This is what we used originally.

Roz Foster: Okay.

Alfonso Wilson: Wooden box.

Roz Foster: And that was hand carried in the grove?

Alfonso Wilson: They would load them on a truck, and guys like Mr. Moorer who was a loader, would bring them in, they'd kick them off and each picker would go and get a number of boxes. If he wanted ten boxes, he'd get ten boxes, take them and lay them near his [01:05:30] tree or his trees, and he would work them into the row.

Roz Foster: Thank you. Let me ask you, how much would that weigh when that was full of oranges?

Alfonso Wilson: They tell me that they ... 90lbs but many of them weigh 100, 125. Okay? Dependent upon the juice content, and that kind of thing. If it was oranges. Grapefruit it would be lighter, because grapefruit are large and it wouldn't take as many to fill it up.