

RECORD OF FRANK CHASE, DICTATED December 15, 1969.

"This is Frank Chase and this is what I remember being told about Isleworth.

"Sometime after the freeze of 1886 my father and Uncle Josh were out looking for fruit. Fruit around the Sanford area being on the scarce side. I don't know if they had any kind of a lead or not but they sort of followed their nose and found the Island which is the original part of Isleworth. They noticed that there was a lemon grove of a few hundred trees that showed no sign of cold whatsoever. They were in bloom. They thought then that it would be a pretty good place to raise oranges. There was also a grove of about seven hundred large seedling trees. They didn't know who owned the place. It may have been that they had read the freeze notes of the resurvey of Orange County of 1886 in which he mentions in that location a grove of large seedling trees. The seedling trees and the lemons consisted of about forty acres, more or less. I don't know what year it was that Dad and Uncle Josh found the place but it was in 1892, after some considerable finagling around and finding out who owned it and getting the money to buy it with that it was bought. They got the crop of 1892, 1893 and part of 1894 off the place. Then the freeze not only got the balance of the crop but it killed most of the trees right to the ground and they were cut off at the ground. Dad said the crop of 1893 amounted to about 25,000 boxes, what portion of it was lemons and what portion was oranges he didn't say and I don't

remember having heard. The freeze of 1894 and '95 precluded any additions to the place. It was about 1900 or 1901, I think, that they bought what was known as the Jaudon Place which is north of the Island and adjoining the swamp the causeway runs through. An interesting story there is that while they were dickering for the place but before they had actually bought it, before a deed had been recorded, there was a small seedling grove on the Jaudon Place and rather than wait for seedlings to bear Dad wanted them to be budded to Valencias. Now the Valencia bud wood was sent to him from California by my Uncle Josh. And the time being ripe for budding, he sent his man, Mr. Hoard, and put the buds in actually before they had possession of the place. They were the first Valencias at Isleworth and became known for some years as the Isleworth strain of Valencias and are still bearing in 1969.

"After purchase of the Island, the original part in 1892, the Jaudon tract was bought in 1903. In 1912, the Mosley grove was the next major purchase. After that about a hundred and some acres was bought from Overstreet Land Company in the 1920's. And another ninety-one acres was bought from Overstreet in 1938. And the last purchase was made from Overstreet, and the last purchase made for the grove, in 1950 which consisted of about two hundred acres. Today, by tree count, there's 678.33 acres planted in trees; there are 208.67 acres unplanted but little of this is suited for planting, this makes a total of 887 acres of prime land. There are also 253.4 acres of swamp and 175.4 acres of lake. The total is 1315.8 acres, less roads. The 1968-69 crop was in excess of 289,000 boxes, which is the largest crop that

has been produced to date.

"In earlier days most of the grove was budded on rough lemon stock as this grew fast and came into production early and was a heavy producer. There is some sour stock, which was also budded. Since that time a great many stocks have been used, including ~~arixta~~ resslerange, the coresosange, and Cleopatra mandarin stock. What the proportions are I don't know. I would say close to half of the grove would be on rough lemon stock.

"After the freeze of 1894-95, which devastated most of the citrus producing area, the weather stayed cold the next four or five years. However, the Isleworth Grove suffered no damaging freezes until 1962. However, there was very little wood loss in that freeze although many trees were defoliate and the season following the freeze the grove produced one of the its largest crops. However, during the last 35 years there have been moderate cold spells which affected the fringe areas of the grove and there was quite a lot of pruning to be done in spots. However, the production has never been affected. The favored warmness of the climate is partly due to the lakes practically surrounding the grove, as well as a certain amount of elevation. The grove borders on Lake Down and Lake Butler on the north; Lake Bessie is in the middle of one block; Lake Isleworth, Lake Louise and Lake Tibet lie to the south and southwest.

"Today most of the production is in oranges, there are a few tangerines, a few temples and a few grapefruit which would comprise three or four per cent of the total production. There

are no lemons grown save for those in the yard which we use in the house. Those are of the Villa Franklin variety and it is a very good lemon, but lemons are tender and they are hard to handle and we have made no effort to get in the lemon business.

"The records show that in 1920 a degreening room was being operated in the Isleworth Packing House. This was one, if not the first, degreening room in the State and a man came in from California named Ross to operate it. They used ethylene gas and heat to degreen the oranges, that is bleach out the chlorophyll in the skin because up to that time oranges were shipped when they were still green in color. They generated the ethylene gas by putting a kerosene stove in the room and almost smothering it. This created a great deal of smoke, ~~more xjazzard~~ ^{fire hazzard} and awful smell. The next step was to build a house out away from the packing house and put the stoves in the packing house and blow the fumes in to the culling room. There was no control whatever of how much ethylene got on the fruit. Nowadays it is all controlled automatically out of a sorter, under pressure.

"In the early 1930's the pale color of fruit coming from the degreening room did not satisfy the packing house managers and they began using a coal tar die in which the fruit was submerged and then washed off. This left an Easter egg looking piece of fruit. It was very unrealistic. Since that time the FDA has eliminated the coal tar die and they are using a vegetable die now on early fruit which has been previously degreened in the culling room which gives a much better appearance than the old coal tar die. Today the practice is to bring in the green color fruit, or fruit that is not completely colored, keep it in the degreening rooms until the chlorophyll is completely bleached out,

or ~~xxxx~~ almost bleached out, and then run it through the colored added bath. As the Florida citrus crops began to increase rapidly in size and began to be more difficult to market, the condition of arrival of the fruit in market became more apparent and more important than previously. In 1928, a pre-cooling system was installed in the Isleworth Packing House. This consisted of compressors totaling about fifty tons of ice per day which used amonia as a refrigerant in coils in a brine tank. Cold air was blown over the brine tank and into insulated rooms in which the fruit was stored. It took about twenty-four hours to bring the fruit down from room temperature, whatever it might have been, and it was used mainly in the warmer seasons, to thirty-two degrees. It was then loaded into refrigerator cars and shipped to market. This helped to eliminate some decay problems that had existed before that. This is one of the early pre-coolers in the state but not the first.

"I believe that the first man that looked after the grove on the island was Tom Eubanks; he was followed shortly afterwards by J. D. Hoard, who stayed with until 1910 when he ran away to Cuba supposedly to get ~~any~~ away from his wife; he was followed by A. Q. Lancaster, who remained with us until about 1920; then C. E. Brown was here until '24,'25 or '26; and he was followed by S. M. Crowle, who C. E. Brown brought in; after Mr. Crowle died, Bruce Jones managed the place and, on his death, the present manager, Dan McCradey.

Spraying

"In the early days there was not a lot of spraying done. Some of course had to be done but the problems of insects and

disease were not known/^{or known} how to be remedied in those days. They had spray carts on wheels that were drawn by mules and consisted of barrels where a pump was operated by man. I don't know how long it took them to spray a tree but it must have been quite an operation. This was followed by gasoline powered pumps and tanks of about a hundred or two hundred gallons still on mule carts and two men could operate long spray poles. They had so little pressure that they had to use long rods to get the nozzels up the tree. This was followed by stronger heavier pumps, more pressure up to five hundred pounds that were operated by bigger gasoline motors or by power take off on tractors and pumped from five hundred gallon tanks. This increased the rate the spray could be put out. Four men could spray from one outfit and had enough pressure to get the spray to the top of the tree. I don't know much about the insecticides of the early days except that lime-sulfur was used, sulfur dust was used and bardoe spray was used as fungicide. There was also some oil used scalicide. These sprays while not as effective as some new chemical compounds were not dangerous ecologically. At present there are dozens of chemical pesticides and both fungicides and insecticides being used, some of them quite dangerous to man and some of them non-degradable, such as DDT which never decays but builds up. Others are powerful and poisoness but after a few days they degrade, they change their chemical composition and no longer are dangerous. The principle of cooper or bardoe spray is still as good as any fungicide to be used and sulfur is still used as a good insecticide for rust blight. Oil is still one of the best scalicides. Howadays most spraying is done with a so-called

speed sprayer which are wind blast sprayers and which one man can spray as much in a day as twenty odd men could spray in a week before."

End of interview.