

Citrus Roots

Preserving Citrus Heritage Foundation

WE NEED YOUR HELP

in Finding Photos of Citrus Packers in...

Delano	Fillmore/Piru	Orosi	Santa Paula
Dinuba	Hamilton City	Oroville	Seville
Dixon	Ivanhoe	Oxnard	Strathmore
Edison	Lemon Cove	Palermo	Terra Bella
Exeter	Lindsay	Porterville	Visalia
Fairoaks	Orange Cove	Rocklin	Woodlake

The photos we are asking for are from 1906 to present.

Your Foundation, through the work of Tom Pulley, is compiling a list of citrus brands of each packer... A FIRST! We want to match a packerhouse photo to the majority of the packers on this list, and that is where you enter!

Check out our website...
www.citrusroots.com

Our "Mission" is to elevate the awareness of California citrus heritage through publications, education, and artistic work.

We are proud of our accomplishments as a volunteer organization, which means each donated dollar works for you at 100% [for we have no salaries, wages, rent, etc.]. All donations are tax deductible for income tax purposes to the full extent allowed by law.

**Citrus Roots – Preserving Citrus
Heritage Foundation**

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The views of the writer may not be the same as this foundation.

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Artists of the Era

Tom Spellman

During the last quarter of the 19th century, the California citrus industry exploded from a few fledgling horticulturalists to a giant industry employing thousands of people. At one time the citrus industry was so massive it spurred the development of many supporting industries like irrigation, railroad, lumber, and nursery. In fact, many of today's leading agribusiness companies were, in part, founded to support and supply the early citrus industry.

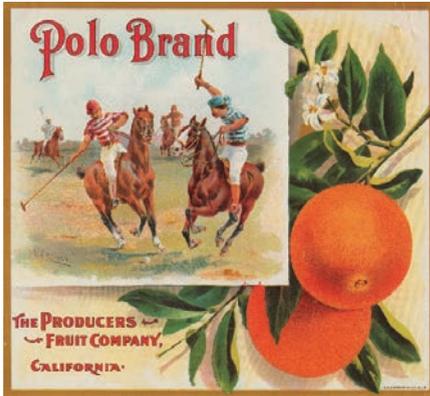
One of the industries that flourished along with citrus industry was lithographic printing. In California between the years of 1887 and 1955, literally millions of crates of fresh oranges, lemons and grapefruit were shipped east. Each box was adorned with a colorful label designed to market the sweet, healthy fruit. As many as three dozen individual litho companies were in business simultaneously to produce and supply these mini-poster style labels.

The labels were bold and beautiful, depicting all aspects of western landscape, lifestyle, and promise. They were true works of art that inspired California's Second Great Gold Rush.

During the era of the labeled wooden citrus crate, hundreds of staff and commissioned artists were employed by the lithographers. Of the more than 10,000 different label images produced for the California citrus industry, there are only three artists who were ever able to put their signature to their label images: Herman W. Hanson, J. Duncan Gleason and James G. Swinnerton. In fact, the lithographers didn't want artists to sign their work. Attribution of artists to particular works would have promoted favoritism and, in turn, allowed popular artists to command premium prices for their work.

Many of the artists were specialized and worked only on specific portions of a label. Some produced only pictorial illustration while others would produce the lettering and border images. The concept of two artists working on the same label was a very popular way to produce high-quality work by taking advantage of each artist's individual talent. Some of the more prominent artists were:

Herman W. Hanson – (1854-1924) Well known for his realistic images of Western scenery, cowboys, Indians, horses and buffalo. Hanson was on the western frontier by the 1870's and was fascinated by the landscape, inhabitants and lifestyle. The subjects of his work were witnessed first-hand,



and he painted them as he saw them. Hanson was one of a handful of successful Western artists including Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell who realistically captured the American West as it was unfolding.

Hanson's oil and watercolor paintings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century have recently sold in the \$20,000.00 to \$70,000.00 range. He was a staff artist for the H.S. Crocker Lithograph Co. in San Francisco from the mid-1880's until the late-1890's. *Advance* and *Polo* are examples of some of his work.

James G. Swinnerton – (1875-1974) Arguably history's first newspaper comic strip illustrator. His career began in 1892 and reached a pinnacle in 1904 with the comic strip "Little Jimmy" which he illustrated for more than 50 years until his retirement in 1958.

Shortly after he began work on the Little Jimmy strip, Swinnerton was diagnosed with tuberculosis and was told he had little time to live. He moved to the dry desert climate of Arizona and proceeded to out-live his diagnosing physician by 30 years. The *Sombrero* brand dated and signed July 1905 may be his only contribution to citrus labels.

J. Duncan Gleason – (1881-1959) Gleason was a talented and well-trained artist who gained national notability by producing illustrations for magazines such as *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Motor Boating*. Gleason also produced studio art for Warner Bros. and MGM Studios.

Gleason created a very successful set of labels featuring attractive young women: *Doria*, *Favorita*, *Meritoria*, *Sonia*, and *Gloriana*. Although the women appear different, all were painted from the same model – Gleason's future wife.



In fact, they used the money from this commission to get married and take a honeymoon trip.

Bill Law – As a young man, Law studied art in Canada. About 1940, he emigrated to the United States and settled in Los Angeles, where he went right to work for the Western Lithographic Co. Law’s specialty was producing vignettes of fruit and full figure illustrations. His images were bold and prominent. The Native American image depicted on the *Pala Brave* label is an example of Law’s work. Law was employed as a staff artist for Western Litho until the mid-1950s.

Dario De Julio – (1916-present) Born and raised in the vineyard area near Ontario, California. De Julio attended art school in the 1930s and became a successful freelance artist. His career was interrupted by World War II, during which he served in the U.S. Air Force as a pilot. Before and after the war, he was employed as a staff artist by the Western

Lithograph Co. in Los Angeles, where he became art director in 1958.

De Julio was a master of the airbrush and specialized in bold lettering and colorful graphics. *Red, Blue* and *Green* circle are examples of his work as well as the lettering for *Pala Brave*. His career spanned the last 25 years of the label era, and his contributions are easy to spot on many of Western’s late-era labels. After his retirement from Western Litho, De Julio operated a successful freelance art studio in Los Angeles for many years. He is now retired and resides in La Mirada, California



Frank Tenney Johnson – (1874-1939) Johnson’s career began in New York, where he was a well-known freelance illustrator producing images for magazines such as *Field & Stream*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Harpers*. In 1920, he moved west and settled in Alhambra, California, where he became known as a fine art painter of the American West.