

The Cover Story

Do You Need Diversity In Your Life? – Part II

by Stephen L. Strobel

The Florida Department of Citrus and the Florida Citrus Commission

In 1935, with the legislative passing of the Florida Citrus Code, the Florida Citrus Commission and the Florida Department of Citrus were established as an agency of the state government to provide marketing, research and regulatory support to the entire industry.

The various state programs all attempted to aid farmers during the Depression years. There were several federal programs that intended to do the same. All of the stamps related to the Agricultural Adjustment Act and attempts at propping up prices by controlling supply for agricultural commodities were meant to stimulate the industry

After the Florida Citrus Control stamps were declared unconstitutional, the state legislature created the Florida Citrus Commission and established separate advertising funds for oranges, grapefruit and tangerines. Later in 1941, limes were added to the advertising program. This was all separate and distinct from the fruit inspection program that was initiated in the 1920's. All of these funds used stamps till about 1945 and in some cases into the early 1950's. Some of the earliest stamps featured the signature of Nathan Mayo, the Florida Commissioner of Agriculture from November 1, 1923 through April 18, 1960; he died in office very shortly before his scheduled retirement. His long tenure witnessed and weathered the challenges of the boom years, the Great Depression, World War II and the severe freezes of 1940 and 1957.

The Florida Department of Citrus (FDOC) is an executive agency of the Florida government charged with the marketing, research and regulation of the Florida citrus industry. Its mission is to maximize demand for Florida citrus products in order to ensure the sustainability and economic well-being of the Florida citrus grower, the citrus industry and the State of Florida. The FDOC executes marketing initiatives for Florida citrus products in the United States, Canada, Europe and Asia to reach consumers, key influencers and health professionals. The FDOC also has extensive regulatory responsibilities, covering every aspect of the industry, including research, production, fertilizing, maturity standards, harvesting, licensing, transportation, labeling, packing and processing.

The Florida Citrus Commission serves in the capacity of a board of directors for the Department of Citrus. The Commission consists of 9 members appointed by the governor, and confirmed by the state senate for 3-year terms. Its members represent all aspects of the citrus industry, including growers, processors, shippers and packers. The Department of Citrus carries out Commission policy and acts as the Commission's staff.

Marketing activities make up the bulk of the Department's workload. About 80 percent of the annual operating budget is allocated to the development and execution of advertising and public relations activities that drive consumer demand for Florida citrus in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Asia. The remainder of the budget is used to fund scientific research, market and economic research, and to provide regulatory support to the industry.

Although it's a state agency, the FDOC is unique in that its operations are not funded through the state's general tax revenue fund. Florida's citrus industry pays its own way in the form of an excise tax placed on each box of citrus that moves through commercial channels. The Commission is responsible for setting the annual tax rate.

My Beginnings

Collectors tend to collect the revenue stamps one of two ways. The first way is by individual state. The other way to collect is by commodity. After seeing the newspaper picture of the stamps, I chose to collect the local Florida Citrus State Revenue stamps. Of course, the best way is to have some sort of list or catalog of stamps. Since they are not covered by standard catalogs, I had to do some research and determined that I needed to contact the American Philatelic Society and talk to a librarian. Although I could have had a reference copy of one of the special catalogs sent to me for my use, I asked the librarian to make copies of what I wanted and he sent them to me via e-mail where upon I printed them and crafted a rudimentary listing (with color pictures of the individual stamps from vendor's web sites) into an ordinary ring binder with the following categories:

Citrus Fruit Inspection 1925 – ca1945 [Figure 1, on front cover, CF2]

This group consists of about 38 stamps, CF1 – CF31, with a few separate variations beginning with required usage in 1925 and being made optional in 1945. They range in face value from 1-1/2 cent to \$9.00.

Citrus Fruit Prorating Control Committee 1933-1935 [Figure 2, on front cover, CFC4]

The Committee was formed under the authority of the 1933 Federal Agricultural Adjustment Act. The Committee administered citrus Marketing agreements between USDA and Florida growers and shippers. There are 5 stamps known CP1 – CP4 (one variation) in denominations from 1 cent to \$3.00.

Grapefruit Advertising 1935 – 1943 [Figure 3, on front cover, GR5]

This group consists of about 19 stamps, GR1- GR18, with one variation. They range in face value from 3 cents to \$12.

Orange Advertising 1935 - 1943 [Figure 4, on front cover, OR12]

This group consists of about 18 stamps, OR1 - OR18. They range in face value from 1 cent to \$4.00.

Tangerine Advertising 1935 – 1943 [Figure 5, on front cover, TA12]

This group consists of about 20 stamps, TA1 – TA 18, with two variations. They range in face value from 5 cents to \$20.00

Limes (Fruit) Advertising 1941-1943 [Figure 6, on front cover, LE4]

This group consists of about 4 stamps, LE1 – LE4, ranging in face value 4 cents to \$4.00.

Citrus Advertising 1943 – ca1945 [Figure 7, on front cover, CF44]

These stamps were issued by the State Comptroller and fed an advertising fund. They replaced individual fruit advertising stamps in 1943 and were made optional in 1945.

This group consists of about 17 stamps, CF32 – CF48, ranging in face value from 1 cent to \$100.00.

My New Collection

I have been diligently scouring various stamp sources for these exciting new stamps, at times elusive, that have brought a new fervor to my interest in citrus. I really don't expect to complete the entire numbered sequence; however, I am going to have fun putting these little pieces of history into my life.

[Editor's Note: Part I appeared in the June 2013 edition of the CFSC Newsletter.]