

**Title**

Placentia Packinghouse Oral History Project  
“Packed Up, Squeezed Out”

**Date(s)**

2004-2005

**Extent**

19 Interviews  
23 Narrators

**Repository**

Center for Oral and Public History  
California State University, Fullerton

**Project Abstract**

The Placentia Packinghouse Oral History Project is part of the collections of California State University, Fullerton’s (CSUF) Center for Oral and Public History. It documents, through oral histories, the impact citrus industry had on the life, labor, and business of Placentia, California. Interviews capture stories from all levels of the industry, from the growers, the pickers and the packers. Most recollections focus specifically on pre-World War II and how the city readjusted after the war. Both men and women tell their stories and recall the early history of the city and their involvement in the packinghouse. World War II defense industry and aerospace are also mentioned as viable occupations available after the war and as the citrus groves declined. School segregation, labor camps, the *Bracero* program, and migration due to the Mexican Revolution are retold by the Mexican-American population, a vital part of Placentia.

**History**

As the city of Placentia was planning to renovate its downtown area, many social issues came to the surface as well. The major issue being that residents have remained socially and racially divided since its early days at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Placentia Packinghouse Oral History Project was created in an effort to reduce these tensions, as well as to create a museum, encapsulating the history of the citrus industry. While an exhibition was not the end result, the grant money, provided by the California Council for the Humanities, allowed the members of the research team to create a Readers Theater. The nineteen interviews collected during the course of the project led to the creation of a script, “Packed Up, Squeezed Out”, written by former resident of Placentia and award-winning playwright, Joey Aucoin.

The interviews were collected over the course of 2004 and 2005, by a variety of volunteers. Among them include members of the Placentia Historical Committee as well as an independent study student from California State University, Fullerton. Thirteen readers volunteered their time to retell the story of the early residents of Placentia using this script. Aucoin donated much of his time to see the script come to fruition. At the last

minute, the decision was made to videotape the presentation of the Readers Theater, thereby saving a copy of the presentation for preservation.

At its debut showing, on April 6, 2005, "Packed Up, Squeezed Out", attracted an audience of 137. Of those who attended, 43 percent now reside outside of Placentia, while 25 percent were relatives or neighbors of those interviewed for the project. The overall reaction to the production was amazing; many were unaware of their city's past. Attention was received by the *Orange County Register* which provided unsolicited advertisement. Beyond its initial debut, the project has been used in numerous ways as a part of curriculum for the local school children.

### **Scope and Content**

The Placentia Packinghouse Project is available in the Center for Oral and Public History at California State University, Fullerton. The collection consists of 19 interviews with 23 individuals who all lived in Placentia between 1920 and 1960. The collection holds the original recorded interviews on tape and transcripts. Collateral material within the collection includes: ephemera, "Packed Up, Squeezed Out" script, as well as the DVD.

The majority of the interviews were taped and then transferred to a disk for preservation purposes. All interviews have been transcribed and abstracts have been created. However, one interview, OH3536, was conducted in Spanish; while it was transcribed it has not yet been translated into English. The collection is not yet at the completed stage, it is however available for research.

Complimentary material can also be found, and is available for research at the CSUF Center for Oral and Public History. Specifically, oral histories conducted with Cecil Rospaw, OH2015, and Chester Whitten, OH2147, both of whom are mentioned in the interviews conducted for the Placentia Packinghouse Oral History Project, are available.

### **Restrictions**

The Oral history with A.S. "Bud" Bradford OH3519 is restricted until further notice.

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### **Series Outline**

#### **Series I: Oral Histories**

#### **Series II: Newspaper Clippings**

Box 1: Folder 2

#### **Series III: “Packed Up, Squeezed Out” script**

Box 1: Folder 3

#### **Series IV: DVD of “Packed Up, Squeezed Out”, Readers Theater**

Box 1: Folder 4

#### **Series V: Correspondence**

Box 1: Folder 5

#### **Series VI: California Council for the Humanities**

Box 1: Folder 6

### **Series I: Oral Histories**

#### **Narrators**

|        |                                    |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| OH3518 | Julia Aguirre                      |
| OH3519 | A.S. “Bud” Bradford                |
| OH3520 | Eddie and Vera Castro              |
| OH3521 | Jeanne Christensen                 |
| OH3522 | Mary Castner                       |
| OH3523 | Jose Felipe                        |
| OH3524 | Luis Garcia                        |
| OH3525 | Clyde Hodges                       |
| OH3526 | Rosalio Gonzales with Fred Aguirre |
| OH3527 | William Holmes                     |
| OH3528 | George and Josephine Jones         |
| OH3529 | Ruby Lopez                         |
| OH3530 | Thomas “Tommie” Martinez           |
| OH3531 | Apolinar and Frances Ramirez       |
| OH3532 | Ted Russell                        |
| OH3533 | Edna Sandoval\                     |
| OH3534 | Ramon “Fito” Torres                |
| OH3535 | Clairee Tynes                      |
| OH3536 | Jose Zavala                        |
| OH3537 | Mary Castner                       |

#### **Interviewers**

Lynda Baker  
Angela Barrientos

Donna Bass  
Kathy Frazee  
Jeanette Gardner  
Bill Zavala