Prior to orange juice concentrate, Florida citrus was already an industrialized agricultural sector. This thesis explores the early-20th-century Florida citrus industry and demonstrates that contemporary farming practices were influential in advancing how citrus was produced, processed, worked, marketed, and regulated in early-20th-century Florida. Restarted after devastating freezes in 1894-1895, resolute Florida growers rebuilt their groves into marvels of large-scale citrus fruit production. Continuing a legacy in experimental crossbreeding, improved varieties of citrus were developed to lengthen the season and markets. Advocated by nurserymen and university educators, biological innovation helped the citrus thrive in the 1910s and 1920s from adverse weather effects, pests, and diseases. Scientists were agents of modernization whose research influenced its industrialization. With the inclusion of machines in the processing of citrus, technological innovation materialized significantly in Florida's packinghouses by the 1930s. These changes affected the lives of agricultural workers and small growers. Whether by prejudice or by resisting collective efforts, big growers gained power and influence in the industry, Their power concentrated into the Florida Citrus Codes and Florida Citrus Commission in 1935, which effectively allowed large-scale growers to direct the industry's development into the rest of the 20th century. In all, this reexamination into Florida citrus exemplifies the remaking of this industry into a modern agricultural system as well as the gradualism of southern agricultural modernization in early-20th-century America.

Major: Modeling and Simulation

Educational Career:
Bachelor's of History, BA, 2012, Florida State University

Committee in Charge:
Connie Lester, Chair, History
Yovanna Pineda, Department of History
Scot French, Department of History

Approved for distribution by Connie Lester, Committee Chair, on November 2, 2018.

The public is welcome to attend.