
Athletics as Depicted in California Citrus Crate Art

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The entire California business of shipping citrus to the East was started by a man named William Wolfskill, a pioneer citrus grower who shipped a boxcar full of his oranges to St. Louis in 1877. The fruit was carefully packed in wooden crates that were branded WOLFSKILL California Oranges on the box end. The magic words “oranges” and “California” caused St. Louis burghers to take all the oranges they could get.

This paper encompasses a history of the development of the citrus shipping business, the consequent development of the lithography process used for the crate labels, and the evolution of the crate labels which depicted athletics in the first half of the twentieth century. Actual labels and slides of rare labels will be shown as part of the presentation.