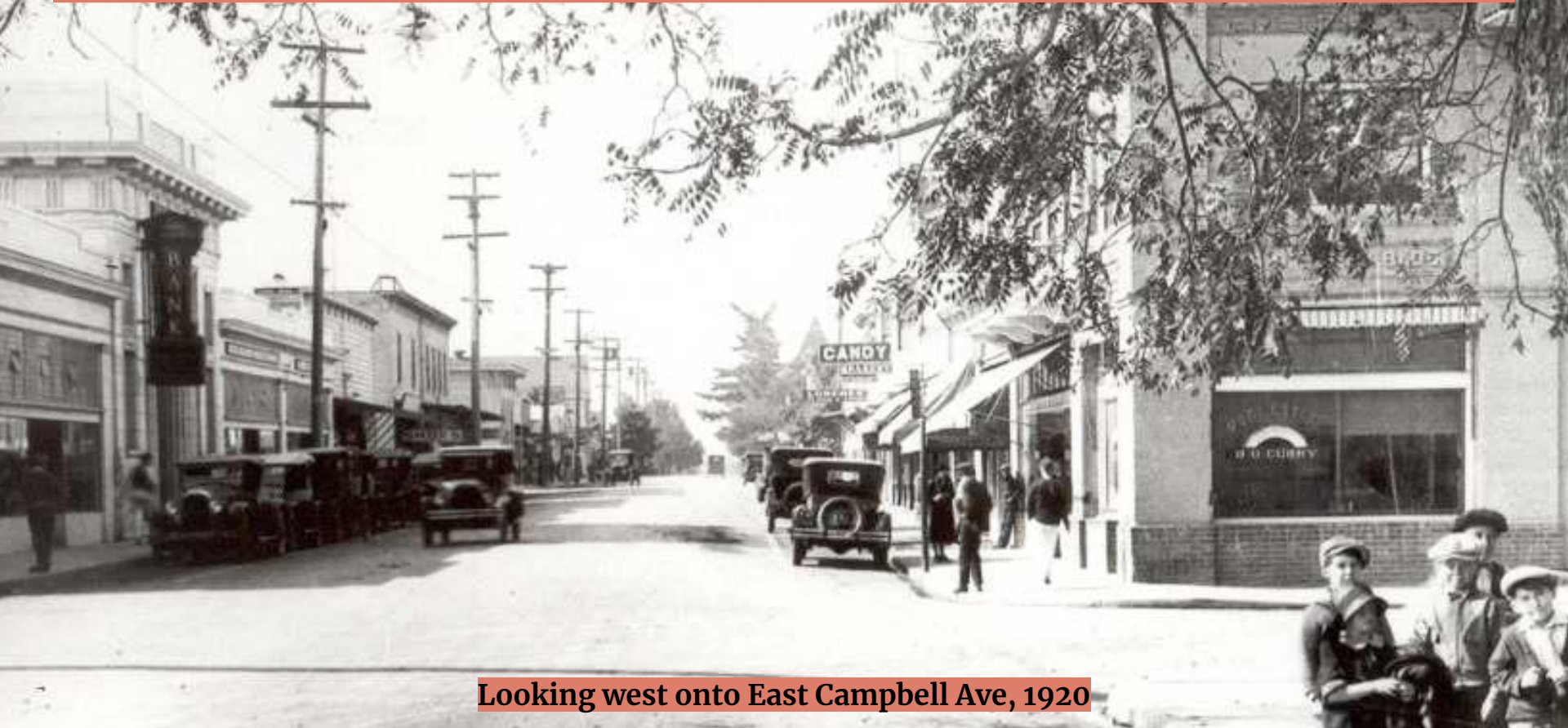


# A Self-Guided Tour of the Canneries of Campbell



Looking west onto East Campbell Ave, 1920

The Campbell Museums would like to acknowledge that the city of Campbell is on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Muwekma Ohlone, a local tribe of Ohlone peoples of the Bay Area.

Muwekma Ohlone families lived in the Santa Clara valley long before California was part of Spain, Mexico, or the United States.

As a reminder, the process of colonization is ongoing and continues to adversely affect the indigenous people from the Bay Area. The Muwekma Ohlone still have a presence throughout the Bay Area.

We encourage you to keep this in mind throughout the tour.

# Table of Contents

- **Stop One: Ainsley Cannery**
- **Stop Two: The Railroad Depot**
- **Stop Three: Co-op, Canneries, and Dry Yard**
  - George A. Fleming Company
  - Frank Buston's Dryer
  - The Fruit Grower's Union
  - George E. Hyde & Company
- **Stop Four: The Water Tower**
- **Stop Five: The Cooperatives**
  - Campbell Prune and Apricot Growers Association/Sunsweet
  - The Campbell Cooperative Dryer

# Origins of the Valley of Heart's Delight



Santa Clara County's canning industry began in 1871 with Dr. James Dawson and his wife Eloise. From observation of the superior quality of fruits then grown in the valley, James and Eloise Dawson foresaw the marvelous possibilities of its climate and soils for fruit production. The Dawsons packed 350 cases of fruit, in their first season that same year.

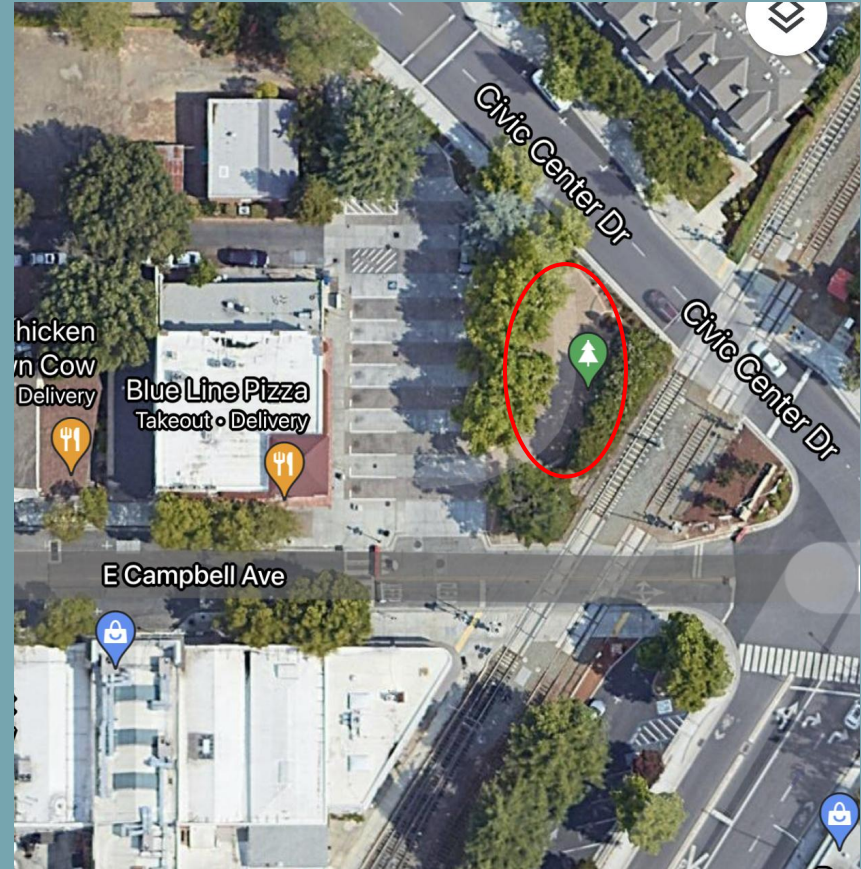
Soon, more canneries would develop in the Valley including in Campbell. The Santa Clara Valley produced so much fresh fruit that some entrepreneurs experimented with preserving fruit by canning it instead of the easier form of drying it. These orchards would give rise to ways of preserving fruit through dry yards and industrial canning, putting Santa Clara Valley on the map and on the menu.



# Stop 1: Ainsley Cannery

Begin your tour in Ainsley Park.

The J.C. Ainsley Packing Company started near the southern tip of Ainsley Park, and expanded to the north.



# The J.C. Ainsley Packing Company

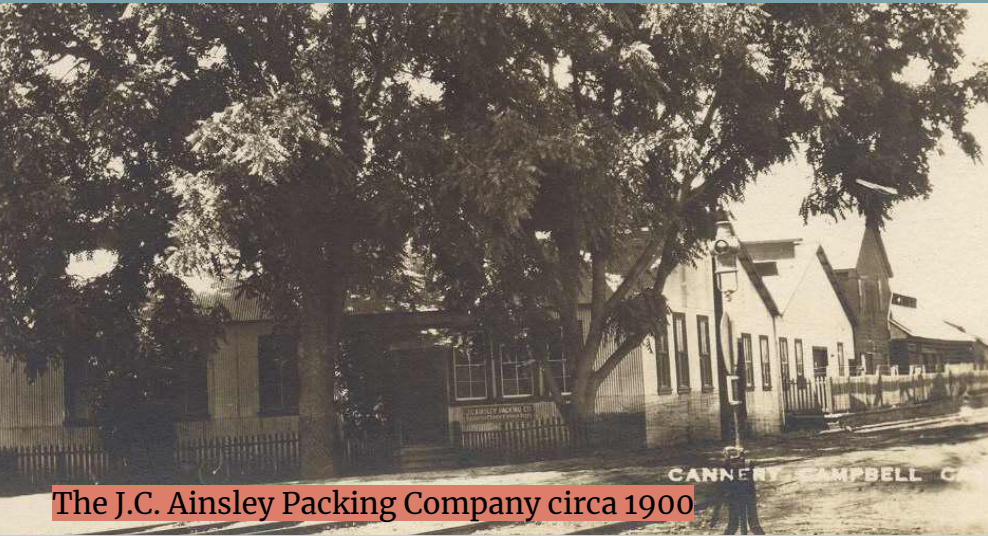


John C. Ainsley in 1891

John Colpitts Ainsley was an English immigrant that made his way to Campbell in 1886. Upon arrival he boarded with Benjamin and Mary Campbell's son-in-law, William Swope, and quickly found work picking peaches. For years Ainsley worked in the established orchards, canneries, and fruit drying yards of Campbell.

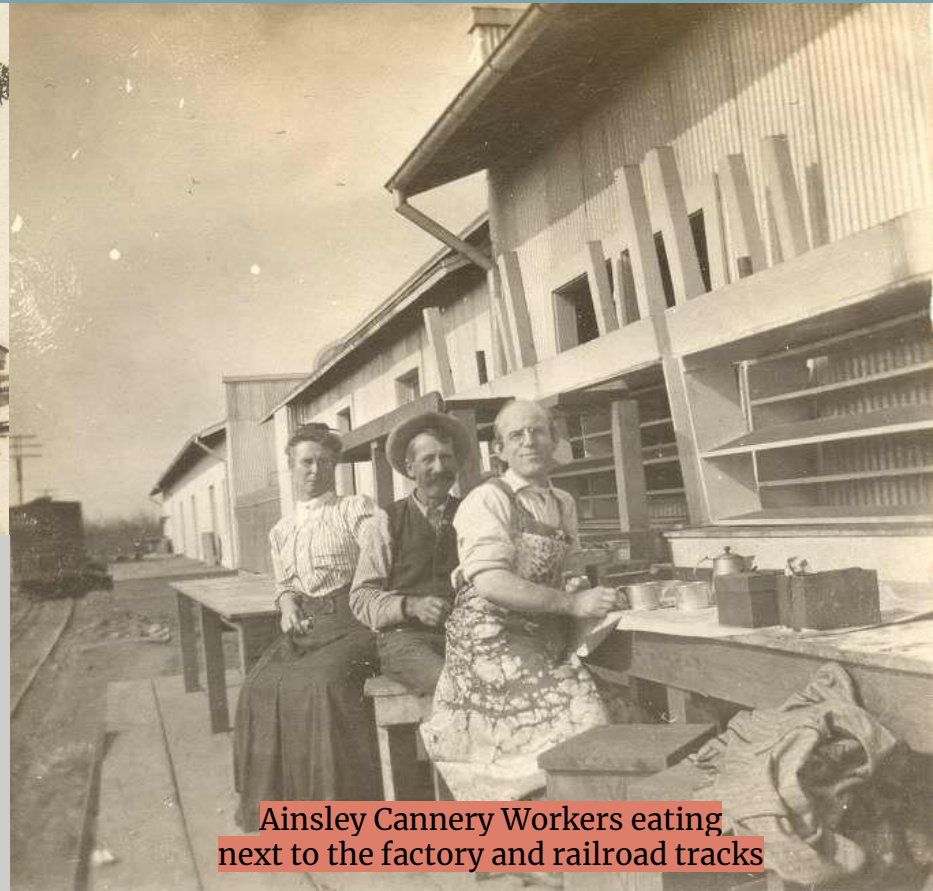
During this time, Ainsley began experimenting with canning practices, and spent much of his free time developing new ways to effectively dry and can fruit. He envisioned a profitable fruit market exporting items to his native England, and would send his experiments to his brother, Tom, to test the English market.

While the dried fruit did not prove as popular as he had imagined, his brother was beginning to make headway with the canned fruit Ainsley was sending. By 1893, John and his brother formalized their partnership, and created the J.C. Ainsley Packing Company.



The J.C. Ainsley Packing Company circa 1900

Ainsley realized he could save money if he bought property next to the railroad tracks, dramatically cutting costs on hauling fruit, sugar, and cans to and from the railroad station.



Ainsley Cannery Workers eating next to the factory and railroad tracks

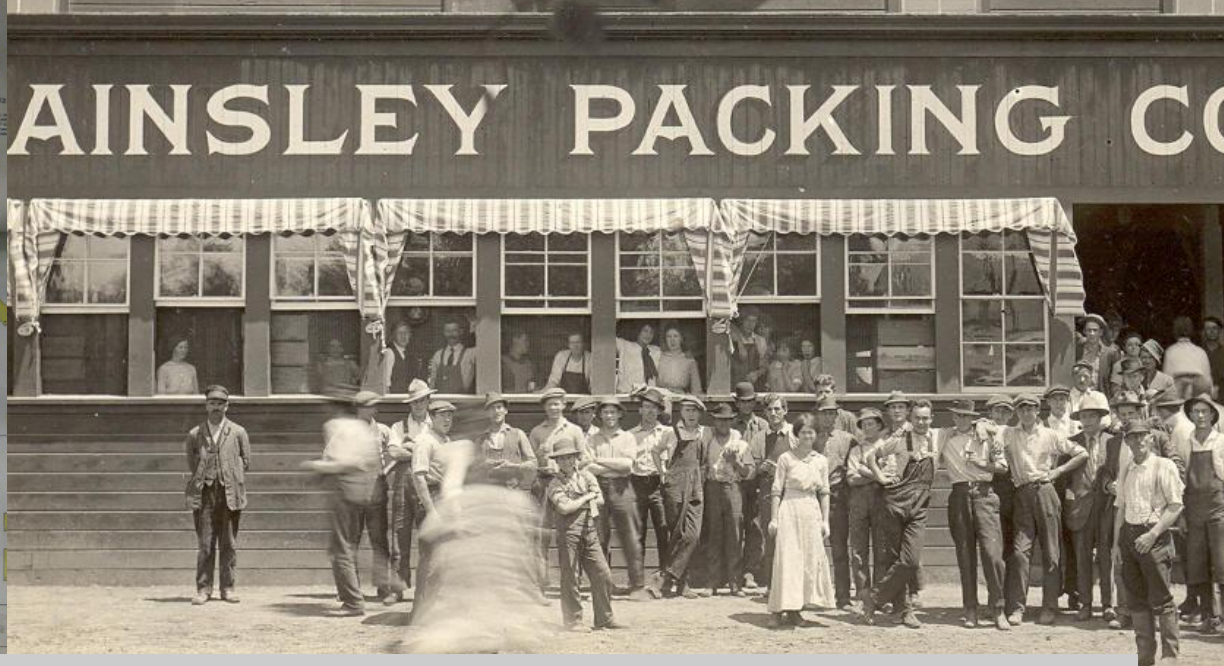
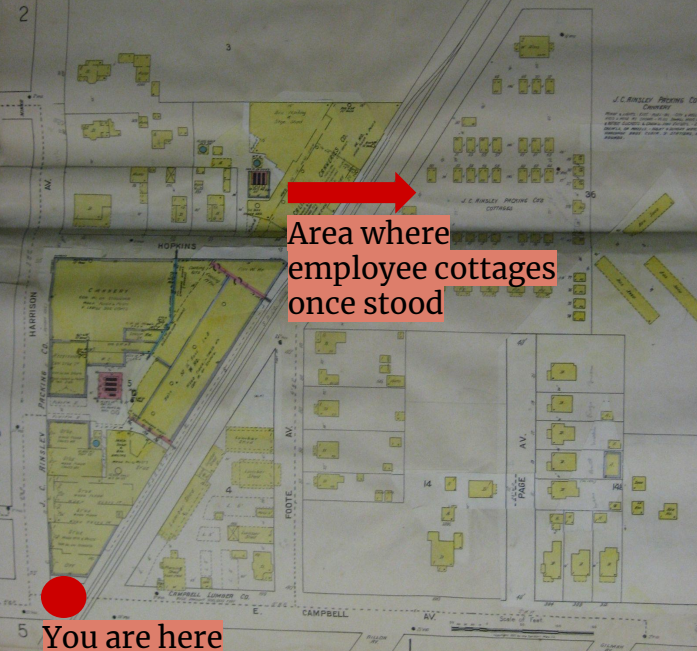




The caption on photo reads "PACKING PEACHES IN GLASS  
AT J.C. AINSLEY'S CO'S PACKING HOUSE. CAMPBELL, CA"

By 1901, the cannery was a busy place! In 1902, it had 500 employees. Come 1904, Ainsley began canning some exported fruit in glass jars, on his brother's advice, after concerns arose around the salty, sea air rusting the tin cans which were carrying their precious cargo. Nearly all the cannery's fruit was exported to England.





In 1912, Ainsley bought land just northeast of the railroad tracks, from where you stand now, and built cottages for a number of his employees.

The cottages included stoves, tables, chairs, beds, and electric lights. Those in the cottages were the lucky ones. Due to a housing shortage in Campbell, during the picking and canning season, many seasonal workers lived in tents, and some made temporary shelters built from wooden fruit trays.

# Cannery Workers Strike!

In 1917, cannery workers throughout the valley went on strike. Unions demanded better wages and working conditions, so in order to prevent losing money during the busy summer season, Ainsley compromised with the workers. In order to avoid the unionization of his own employees, Ainsley agreed to provide an eating house, a break-room with chairs, an on-staff nurse (due the many injuries that occurred while working), a low-cost hot lunch, and a kindergarten for the employees' children.



The J.C. Ainsley  
Packing Co. daycare



The J.C. Ainsley Packing Co. nurses

# Labels and Brand Names

Selecting names and patents for various fruits proved an interesting task for John Ainsley. He preferred “Crown” but his brother informed him that any name connected with royalty could not be used in England. Over the years, Ainsley chose various names that he patented for his popular canned fruits.

Fruit labels became a big industry in the 1870’s when the railroads began shipping California produce to the east coast. Thousands of different labels were created, with a variety of themes, including animals, scenic landscapes and patriotic icons.

The introduction of factory canning influenced printing technology as printing labels for cans could be done by a label machine at the factory. After fruit was sealed in the can, the cans were run through a conveyor system where they were covered with glue and then labels were wrapped around the cans. The labels on canned food continued the tradition of highly decorative designs.

The Campbell Museums cares for many of these labels! To browse the Museum’s collection and see more labels, check out our database – [link on main tour page](#).

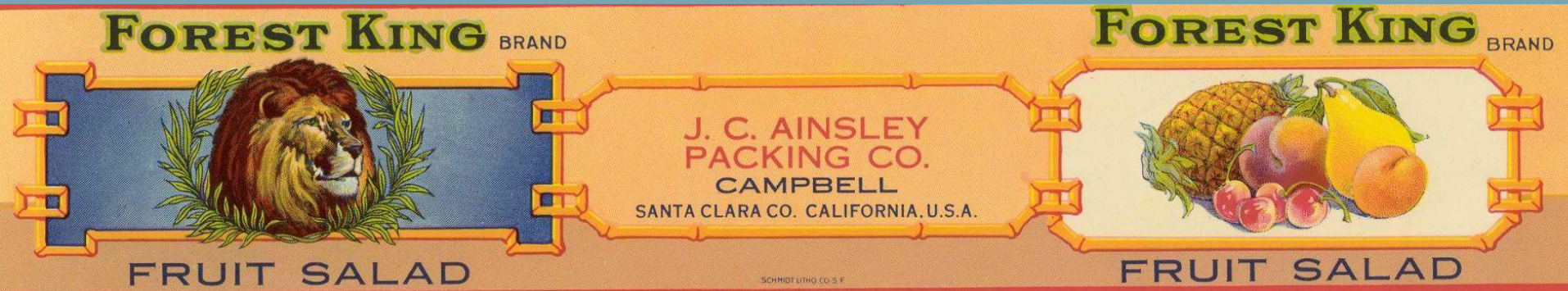


“Mikado” was his first patented brand in 1891





“Forest King” was patented in 1915



Ainsley was the first to market fruit salad, and it became an accepted part of an English dinner.

During World War One, while stationed in Belgium, Corporal Nelson G. Welburn of Campbell wrote a letter to Mr. Ainsley on the back of this Ainsley fruit can label.



October 19, 1918: "Perched high upon the end of a demolished British tank which had ended its career in a gigantic German shell hole. I rapaciously consumed the contents of this can of California peaches. For a brief moment I forgot Huns and battles as I licked the can clean. It sure was a rare and most palatable dish to one who had not tasted such a delicacy for months. Accept my profound thanks for the concern or individual who can grow and can such a luxury. Amid this scene of desolation, death and destruction it came like a gift from heaven."



In 1933, after forty-two years of success, John C. Ainsley sold the cannery to the Drew Canning Company, and in 1946 they sold to Hunt Foods which closed its canning operations in Campbell, in 1960.

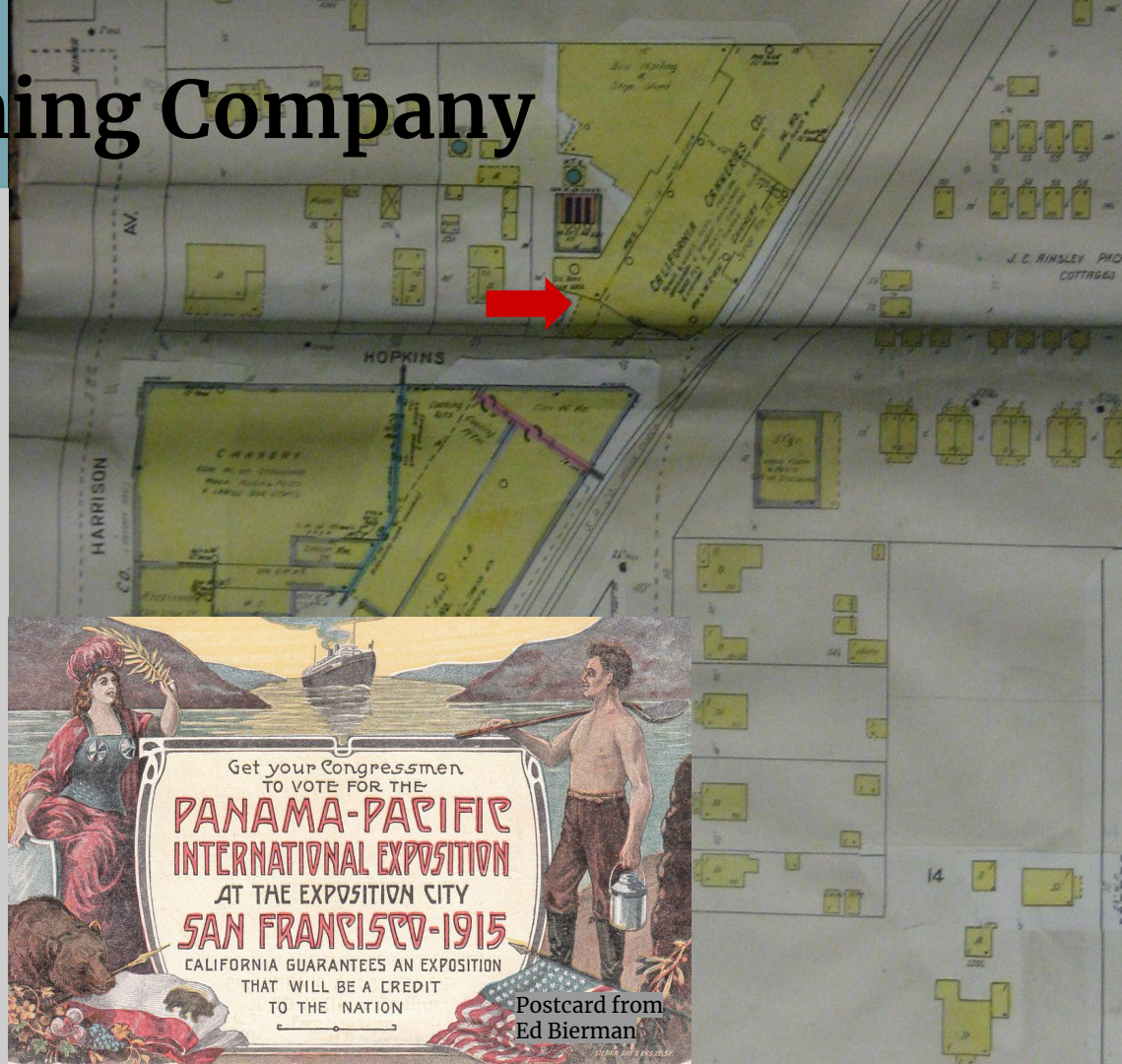


# Orchard City Canning Company

Just north of the Ainsley Cannery was Orchard City Canning Company, located on Hopkins Street between the railroad tracks and Harrison Ave.

The cannery, run by Pearly Payne Sr., was started in 1910. In 1915, the cannery won a bronze medal for their fruit at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco.

However, WWI curtailed shipments of fruit to Germany, severely impacting the cannery. Payne leased it to California Cannery Company during the war. By 1919, it had closed.

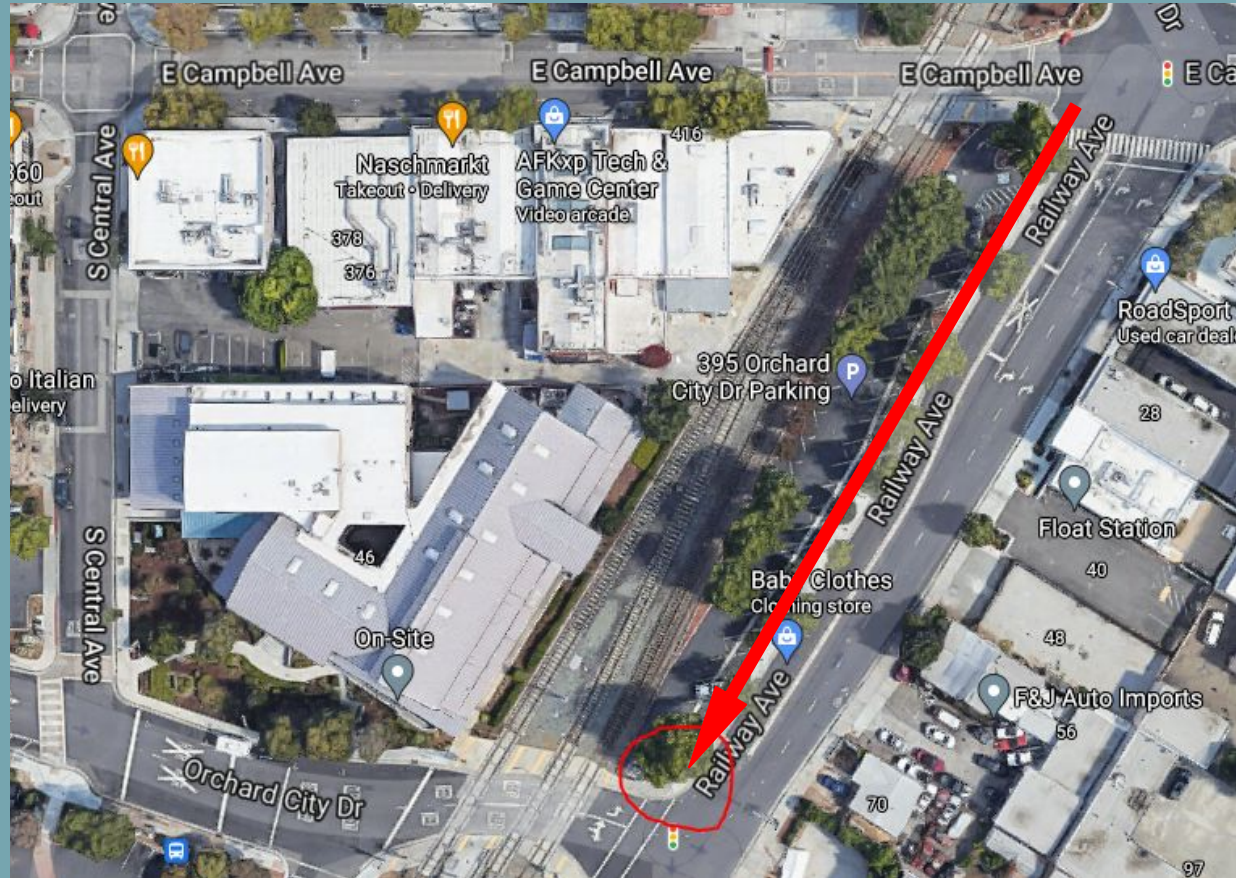




# Stop 2: The Railroad Depot

Walk south along Railway Ave. Stop at Orchard City Drive.

Campbell Station, the original train depot, stood on what is now Railway Ave., approximately where it intersects with Orchard City Drive.



# Campbell Station



In 1877, town founder, Benjamin Campbell, was approached by “Silver King” and railroad tycoon, John Graham Fair, to sell some of his family’s land in order to expand the South Pacific Railroad. Benjamin Campbell was looking to increase his farming profits (especially after a terrifying robbery on his way home from selling wheat in San Francisco) and the railroad was an investment in the sale of produce and the safety of those selling and transporting it. Ben Campbell soon convinced the railroad to build a depot in Campbell. The railroad built a 6’x 18’ depot in 1886, and called it Campbell Station.

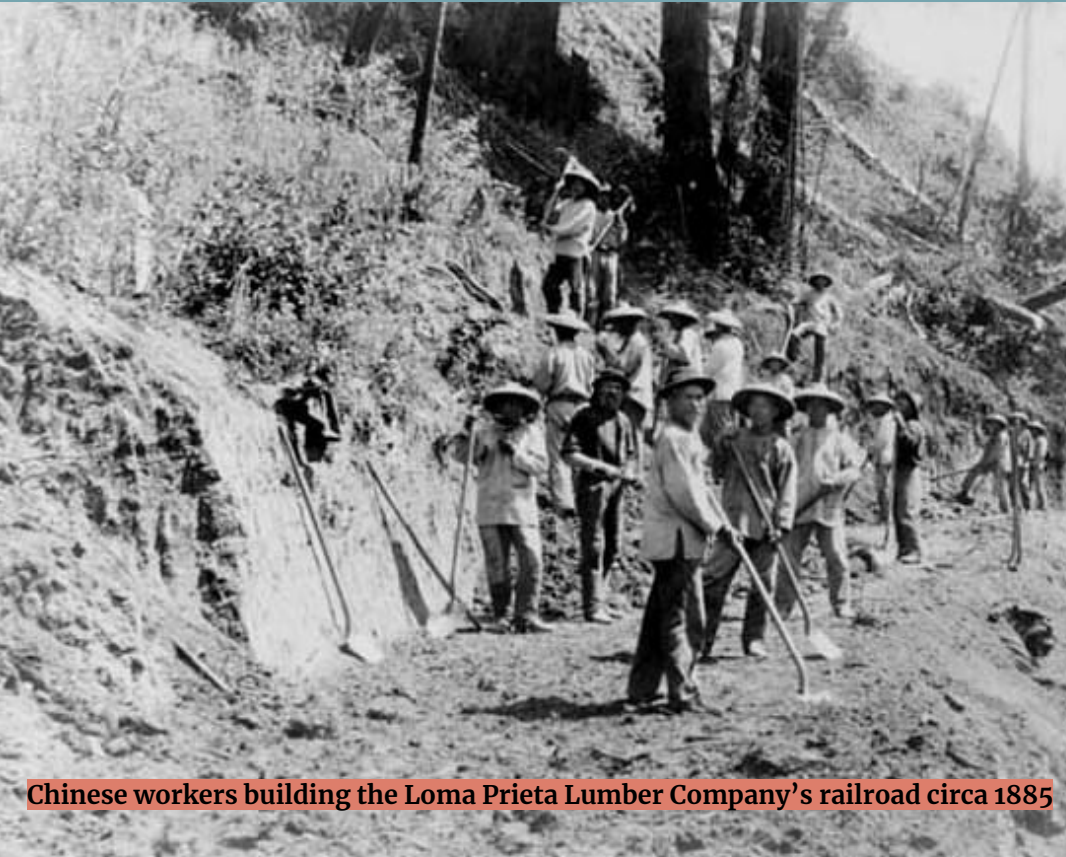
The station was located here not because of the canneries, but the canneries were located here because of the railroad.

The present day light rail station is about 30 yards to the south of its original location.

The original Campbell Depot in 1886



# Chinese Railroad Workers in Campbell



Chinese workers building the Loma Prieta Lumber Company's railroad circa 1885

Chinese workers were an essential part of building the Central Pacific Railroad (the western section of the first transcontinental railroad across the United States), and composed as much as 90 percent of the workforce for most of the construction.

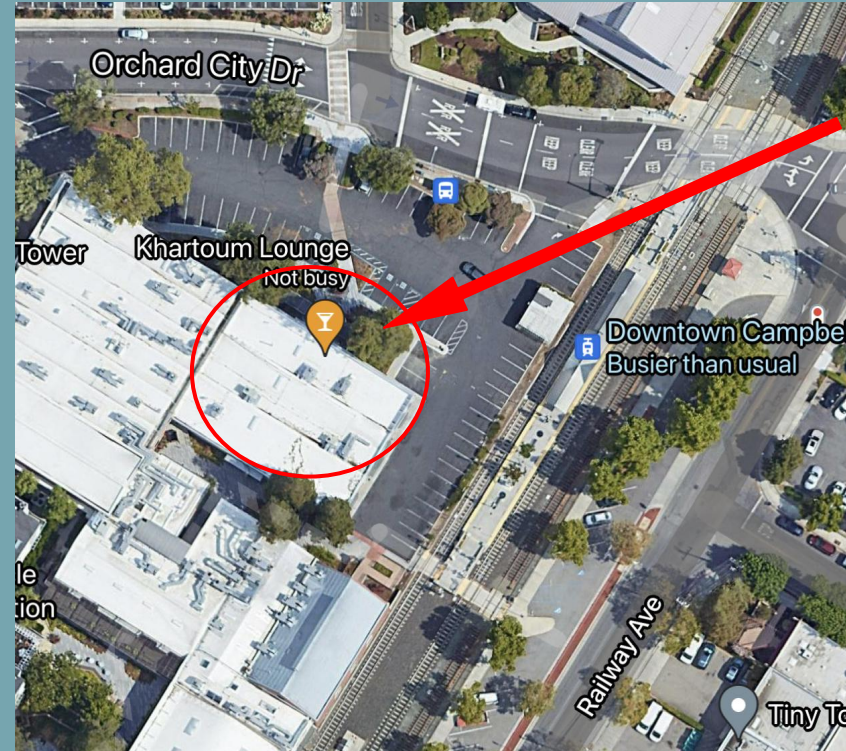
In Campbell, Chinese construction crews graded the roadbed that had been selected for the railroad, and by 1877 tracks had been laid. There was a Chinese worker camp across from the former Hyde Cannery, which is our fourth stop.

# Stop 3: Co-op, Canneries, and Dry Yards, oh my!

Be safe and keep an eye out for the light rail trains!

Cross Orchard City Drive and walk towards the brick building (AKA Water Tower Plaza) in the parking lot.

Find a safe space to stand in the parking lot and face the brick building just south of you.







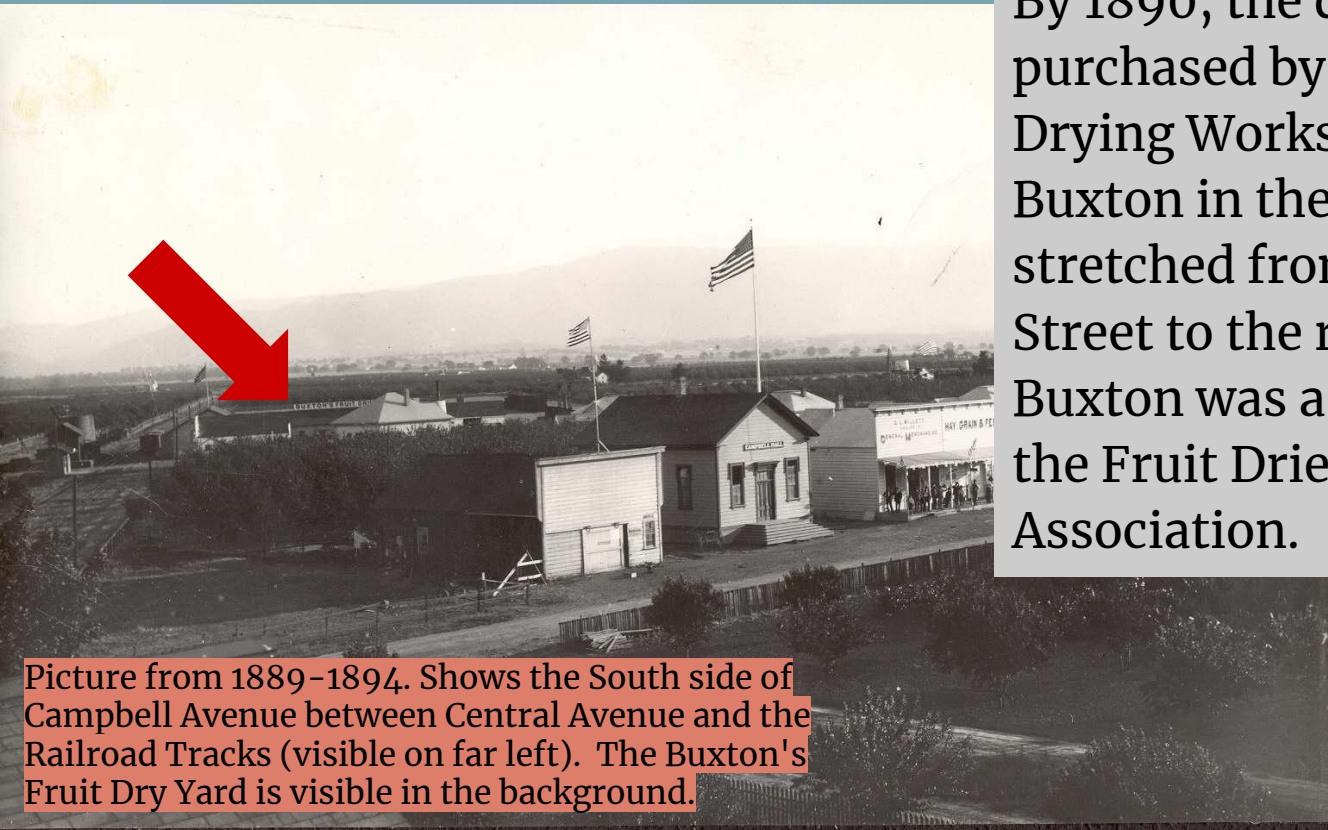
# George A. Fleming Company



This large brick building was where the Fleming Brothers packing plant stood, in 1887. George A. Fleming, the founder of Fleming Brothers, began drying fruit in the Willow Glen neighborhood of San Jose in 1877. When he decided that California dried fruit could compete against foreign products, he started a company with his brother Charles. The brothers were also inventors, designing a fruit grader that used a set of rollers spaced at increasing distances. With G. T. McLaughlin, they also designed a fruit pitting machine. A family history suggests Charles was the inventor and George the businessman. By 1920, Charles was managing Del Monte's drying plants in San Jose. Some of Charles's patents had been assigned to the California Packing Corporation by 1925.

# Frank Buxton's Dryer

By 1890, the dry yard was purchased by Frank Buxton's Fruit Drying Works. When owned by Buxton in the 1890s, the dry yard stretched from current N. First Street to the railroad tracks. Buxton was a founding member of the Fruit Driers and Packers' Association.



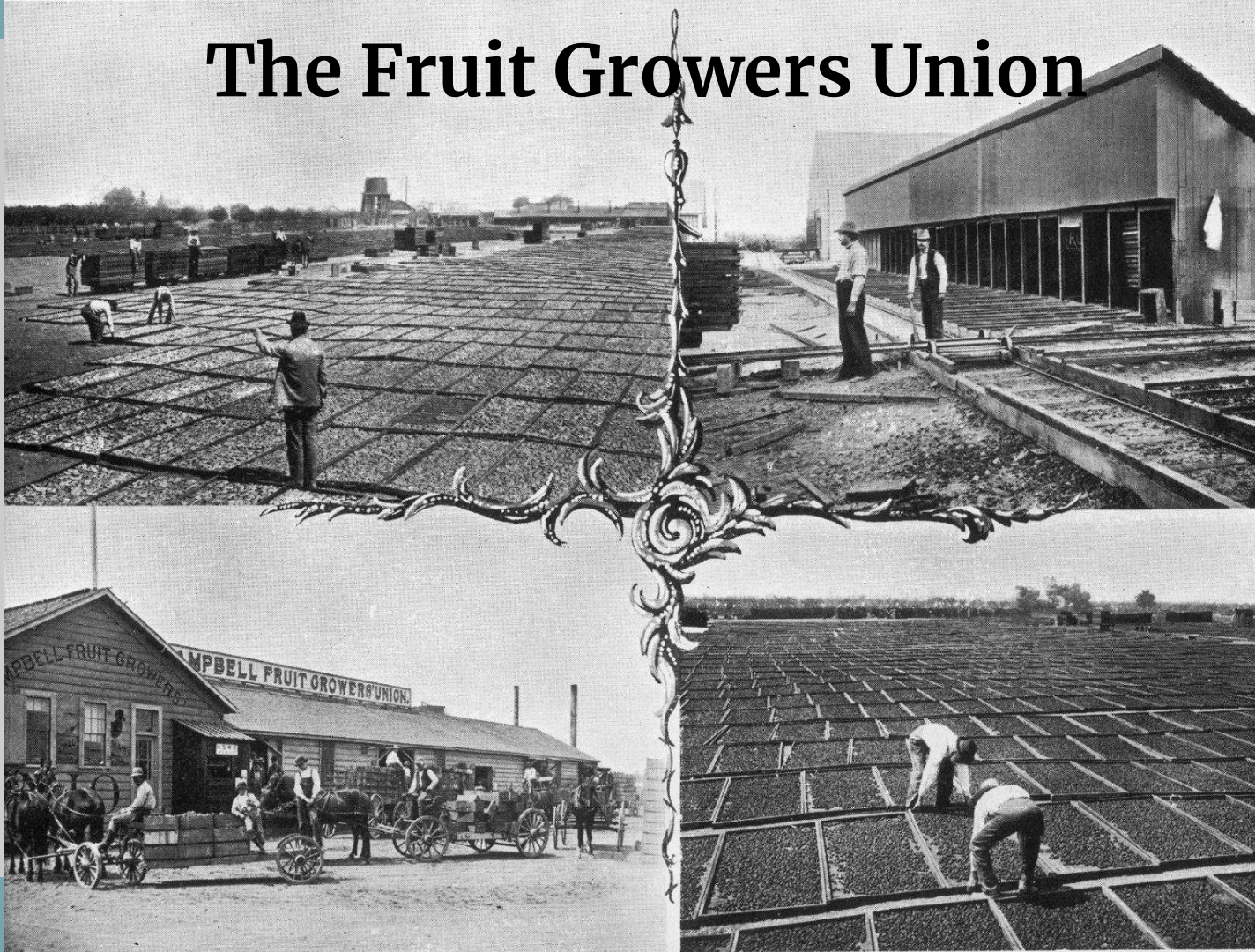
Picture from 1889-1894. Shows the South side of Campbell Avenue between Central Avenue and the Railroad Tracks (visible on far left). The Buxton's Fruit Dry Yard is visible in the background.



# The Fruit Growers Union

In 1892, the Campbell Fruit Growers Union was founded by a Campbell based growers cooperative. They bought the existing Frank Buxton's Dryer.

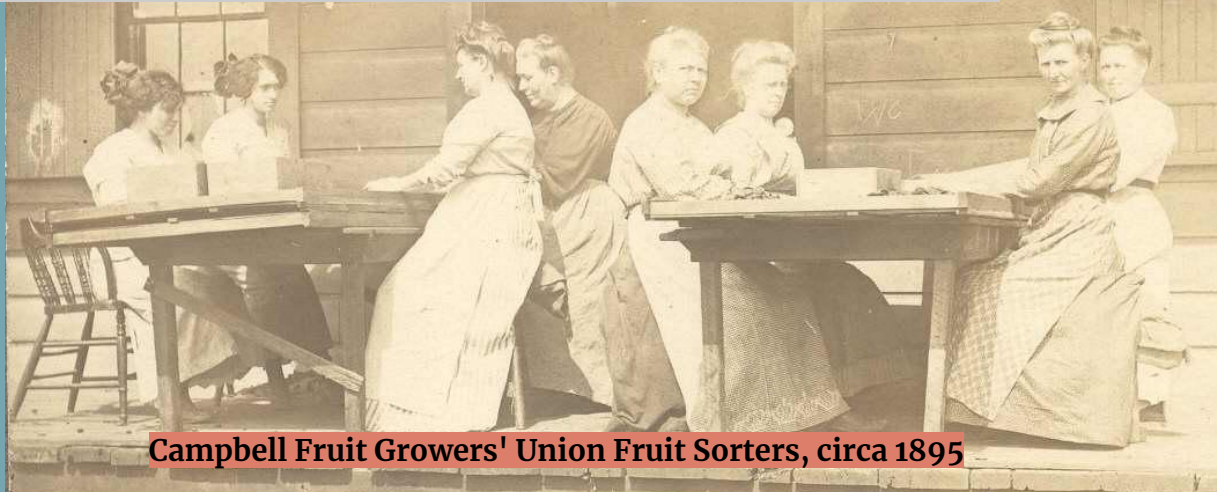
In 1894, they built a brick building to store fruit near Central Ave, facing the railroad. This building still stands today.





In 1895, the *San Francisco Call* noted that a hundred tons of prunes was arriving each day at the dryer. The Fruit Growers' Union was just as busy in 1906. The San Jose Herald wrote of the Union on August 29 "The Fruit Growers' Union is a very busy place just now. About 75 tons of prunes are being handled daily, besides the peaches and pears, which require about 40 pitters to prepare for drying. A big shipping business has been done this year. Fifteen hundred tons of peaches were shipped green by the Union, as well as 350 tons of apricots and a quantity of pears. A few days ago three cars of pears were shipped in by outside canneries, necessitating an increased force of women and girls."

## Women and Girls Played an Integral Role in Cannery Work



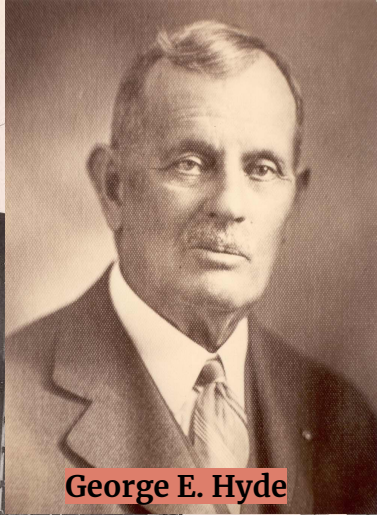
Campbell Fruit Growers' Union Fruit Sorters, circa 1895

During the mid-1890s, the Campbell district became known as the richest orchard district in the county. Orchards were priced at \$1,000 an acre (approximately \$32,5000 today). East coast buyers were encouraged to come by train. Those who purchased acreage were reimbursed their train fares. All went well until the price of fruit dropped. Many buyers lost their orchards because land prices dropped to \$300 per acre.

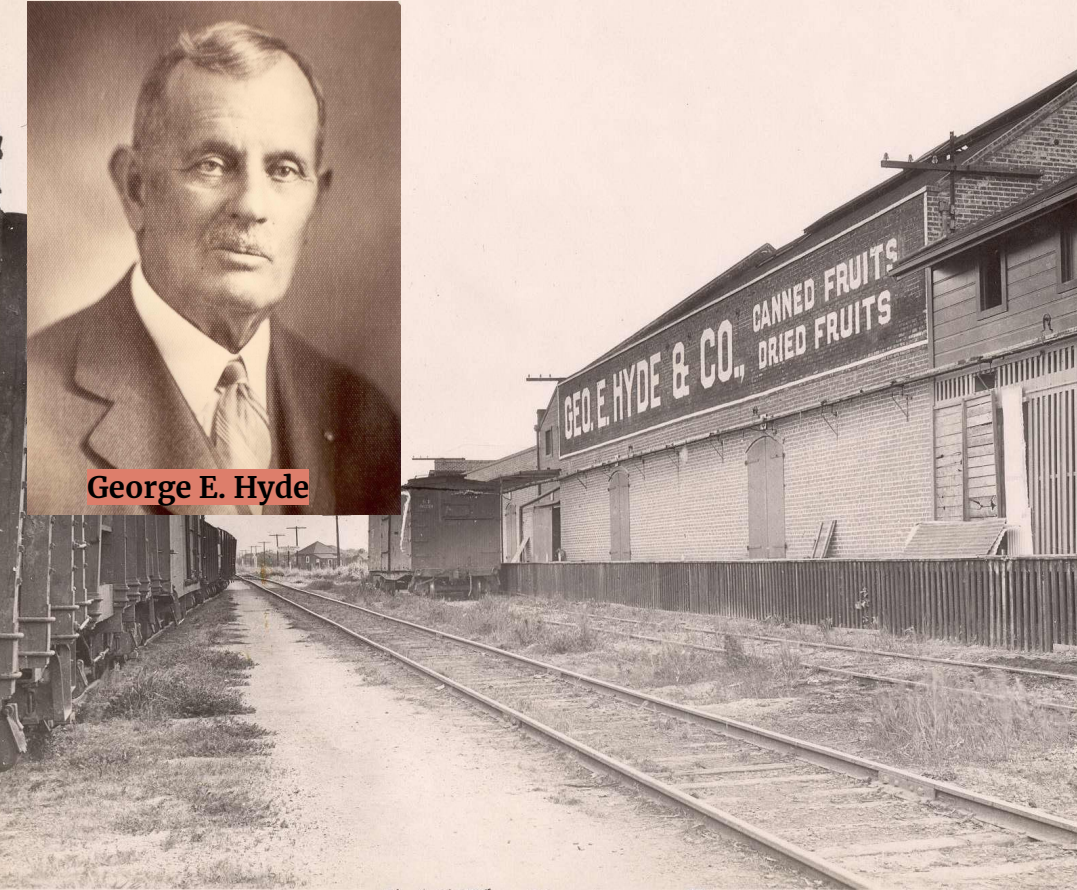
Over time, the Campbell Fruit Growers' Union slowly lost the support of its growers; growers were willing to deliver their crops to the Union when prices were low, but went looking for the best deal when prices were higher. The "nondelivery penalties" in the contracts started chasing growers away from the co-op. The Union eventually leased its plant, and subsequently sold out to George E. Hyde & Company in 1913.



# George E. Hyde & Company



George E. Hyde



EAST SIDE OF PLANT.

George E. Hyde was the primary stockholder of the Campbell Fruit Growers' Union. In 1913, Hyde and his partner, Ruel K. Thomas turned the former Fruit Growers' Union plant into George E. Hyde & Company. Hyde soon bought out Thomas, and wholly owned the plant and drying yard.

The dry-yards roughly stretched from present-day Railway Ave to Winchester Blvd, and from Alice Ave to Orchard City Drive.

*\*Fun Fact: Alice Ave is named after Alice Hyde, George E. Hyde's wife.*

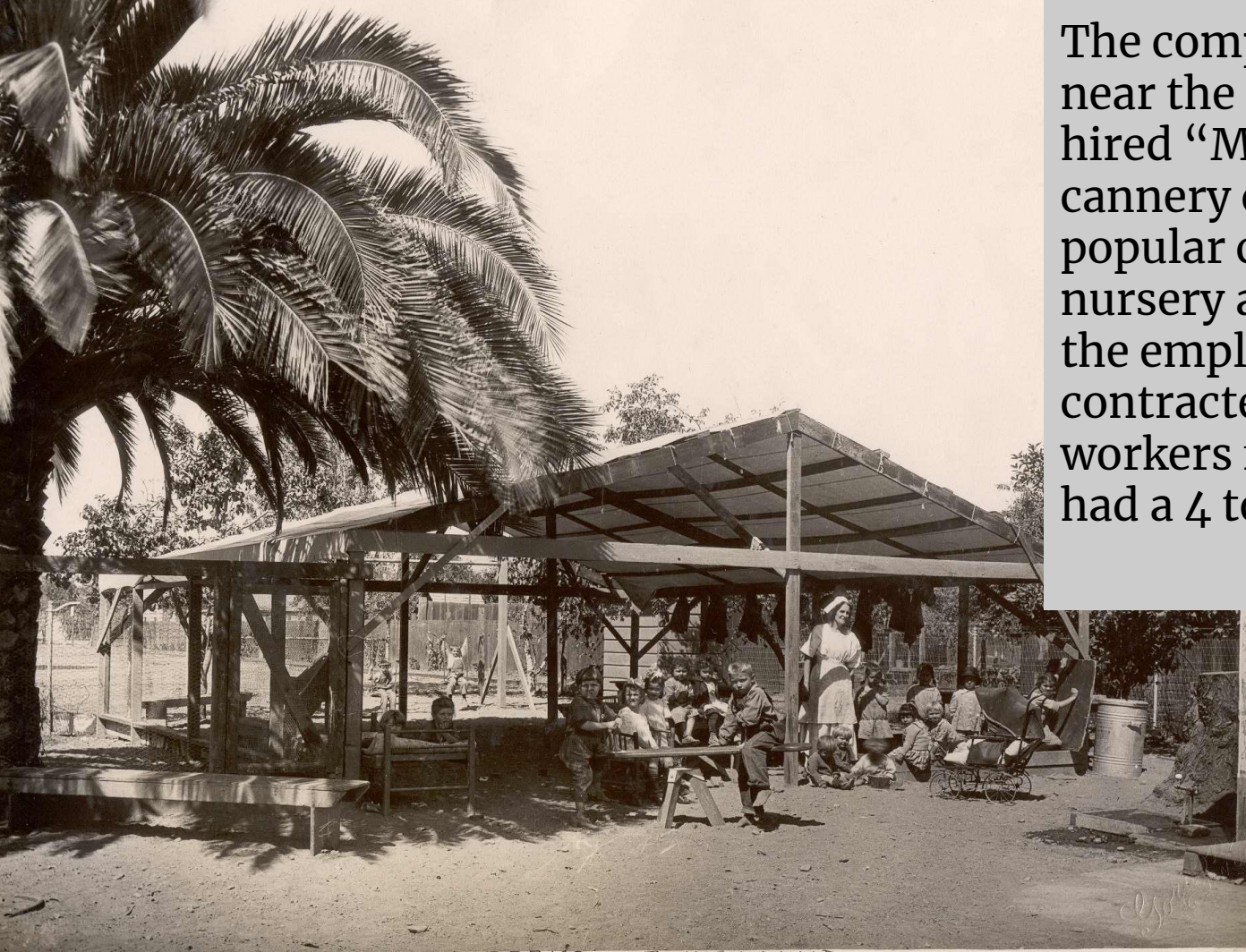


In addition to fruit drying, Hyde became interested in canning. In 1914, the new company packed 1,000 tons of fruit from June through December. In 1917, the company doubled its output, and shipped 100 cars of dried prunes and several of dried apricots. In August, 1921, a *Canning Age* article wrote of the highlights the cannery and the modern conveniences Hyde installed. The new warehouse could hold 80,000 cases of canned fruit, with electric conveyors used to move the cases around. In October, 1922 *Western Canner and Packer* quoted Hyde as saying that business in September was the greatest ever for the company, and 90% of the "actual and prospective pack" for the year had already been sold. The article also noted that "The export business had been particularly gratifying to the company."



SYRUPERS IN OPERATION.

The company erected 20 tents near the cafeteria for workers, hired “Ma Kimmel” as the cannery cook (a reportedly popular chef), built a day nursery and playground for the employee’s children, contracted two buses to bring workers from San Jose, and had a 4 ton truck for hauling.



CHILDRENS PLAYGROUND



# Geo. E Hyde & Co. Brands

Featured here are “Hyde’s Quality” brand apricots





## Hyde's "Sunni-Brite" brand Yellow Cling peaches



To browse the Museum's collection, and see more labels, check out our online database – [Link on main tour page.](#)

The Geo. E. Hyde & Co. cannery closed down after the 1928 season, with occasional restarts. There are theories that all of the modern conveniences were too costly for the cannery to bear.

The cannery finally shut down for good, amidst the Great Depression, in 1930 when the banks refused to issue credit for opening that year. The banks finally forced a judgement on the bankrupt company in 1931, with the sheriff selling the cannery on the steps of the courthouse on May 25, 1932 on behalf of the American Trust company.

By 1933, Sunsweet used the empty, cavernous cannery for storage.



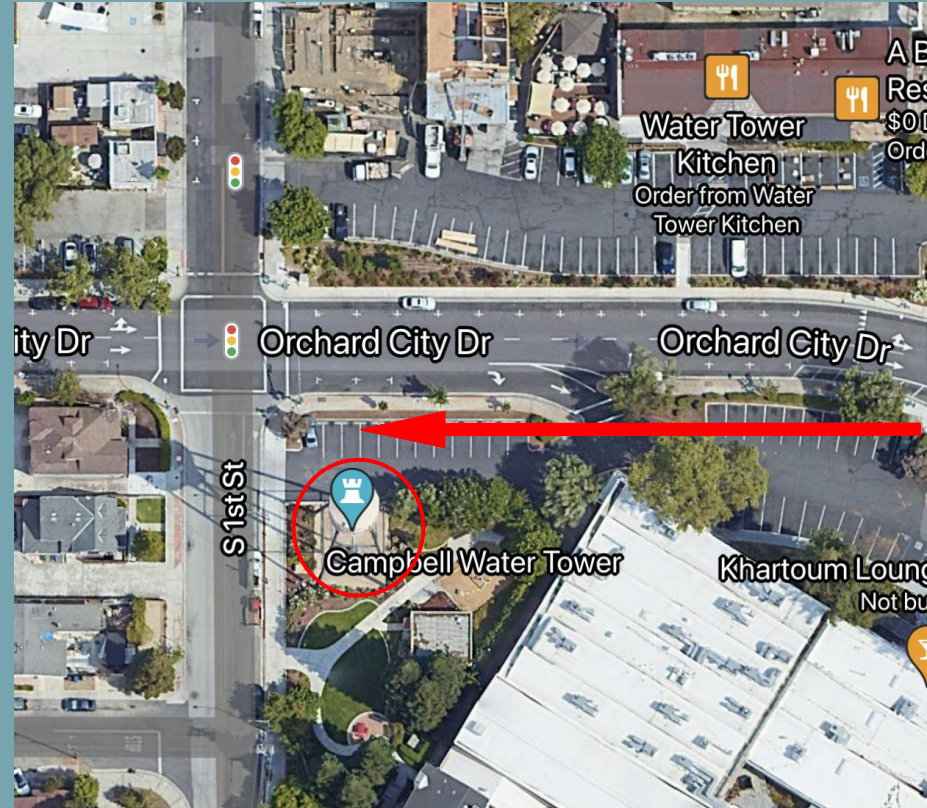
Geo E. Hyde Cannery Interior



# Stop 4: The Water Tower

Look out for cars, and walk west along Orchard City Drive until you reach the corner where it intersects with S 1st Street.

At this corner (it's hard to miss!) you will see a 100 foot water tower, Campbell's signature landmark.





The Campbell Water Company was established by Benjamin Campbell in 1892 as the city's first utility. The original tower was a much smaller, single tank, later replaced by a pair of wooden tanks. The 1906 earthquake destroyed those two tanks, but within a matter of months, four 20,000 gallon tanks went up in their place. A massive flood in 1911 damaged the four newest tanks. They were repaired and used until 1928, when the Company invested in the current 75,000 gallon steel tank made by the Pittsburgh-Des Moines Steel Company.



The Hyde Family owned and operated the Campbell Water Company beginning in 1918, until it merged with the San Jose Water Company in the late 1970s. The San Jose Water Company transferred ownership of the tower property back to the city in 1994, at which point Campbell turned it into a park named for the Hyde family.

\*Fun fact: Former City Council member Mike Kotowski remembers passing by the tower during the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, he looked up at the tower, it was swaying quite a bit, and he thought, "If there's anything going down, it's that thing."

But, as you can see, it stood up against the force of the earthquake.



Photo by Jason Brickman



# Stop 5 (final stop): The Cooperatives

Cross Orchard City Drive to get to the northern side of the street. Then walk east, back towards Central Ave.

Stop at the corner of Orchard City Drive and Central Ave (the corner circled in red) and face the large wooden building to the north of where you are standing.





# Campbell Farmers Union Packing Company



As the Campbell Fruit Growers' Union was diminishing in grower support, another organization was coming into existence. Organized in 1909, the Campbell Farmers Union Packing Company, Farmers Union for short, was composed of a group of growers who felt they could make a cooperative packing and marketing company work.

Similar cooperatives were set up in Morgan Hill, Gilroy, Napa, and there was a central marketing agency in San Francisco under the name of California Farmers Union Inc.

The organization did well, and in 1912 members voted to build a three-story packing house, which still remains as part of the building in front of you. The building was the first three-story building in Campbell.

# California Prune and Apricot Growers Association

When California farmers recognized the need for a cooperative to insure a market for their fruit at realistic prices, they endorsed a statewide cooperative group. The group came into being as the California Prune and Apricot Growers Association, in 1917. One of its first transactions was to affiliate with existing packing firms, including the Farmers Union and Geo. E. Hyde & Company in Campbell.

you have a tendency toward  
ipation, eat a generous dish of  
erly cooked Association Brand  
es every morning, for several  
s. You'll be surprised at the  
ence it makes and how much  
r you will feel.

## PRUNES IN CARTONS

prunes in this package are  
ted from over eleven thousand  
Orchards and are sold by  
ardists themselves through  
perative organization.

on Brand Cartons are  
n three sizes, 1 lb., 2 lb.  
b. and the size of fruit  
l is plainly marked in the  
the face of the carton in  
colors.

rown and Packed  
In the U. S. A.

CONTENTS 1 LB.



## CALIFORNIA PRUNE AND APRICOT GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Main Offices: SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

A Non-profit Co-operative Selling Organization  
of over 11,375 Grower Members

Growers and Packers of the Famous Sunsweet  
Red Label Cans and Cartons

Carton Made in U. S. A.

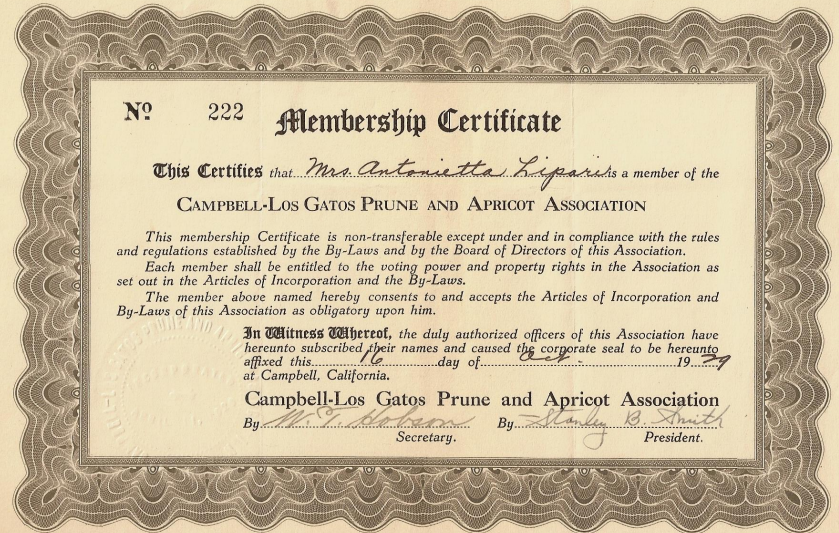
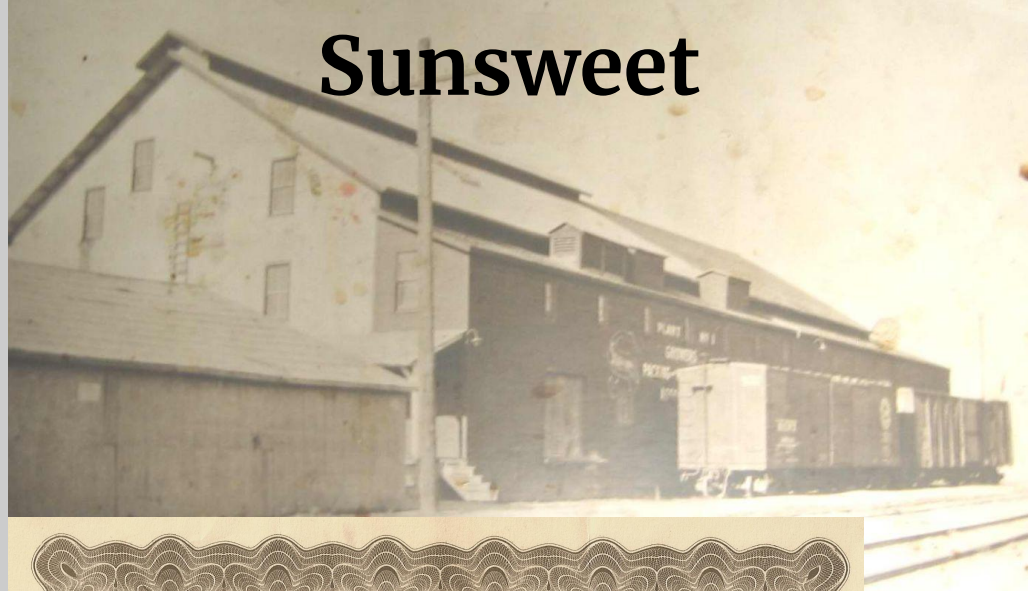


In 1919, the California Prune and Apricot Growers purchased the Campbell Farmers Union Packing Company, and the building in front of you became known as SUNSWEET Plant 1.

Eventually, the California Prune and Apricot Growers Association was decentralized, and local groups of growers established units throughout the state. The Campbell-Los Gatos Prune and Apricot Association was officially approved by the State Corporation Dept of California in 1920.

The Association's stated purpose was to enable prune and apricot growers in Campbell and Los Gatos to cooperatively market their products. They marketed under the brand SUNSWEET.

# Sunsweet





Due to the popularity of the brand name, people often referred to the Prune and Apricot Growers Association as “Sunsweet.”

Growers did not mind because they wanted consumers to become familiar with their brand and buy it!





Old Settlers' Day Parade 1957

Sunsweet employed many of Campbell's residents, and played an integral role in the annual Settlers' Day Parade.

In 1950 and 1957 the Sunsweet floats won the Grand Award.

In 1952, under the direction of Myrrl Block, women met after work at her home and made 18,000 paper roses for the yellow Sunsweet sunburst on that year's float.



Old Settlers' Day Parade 1950

## A beautifully crafted Sunsweet label



To browse the Museum's collection, and see more labels, check out our online database - [Link on main tour page.](#)



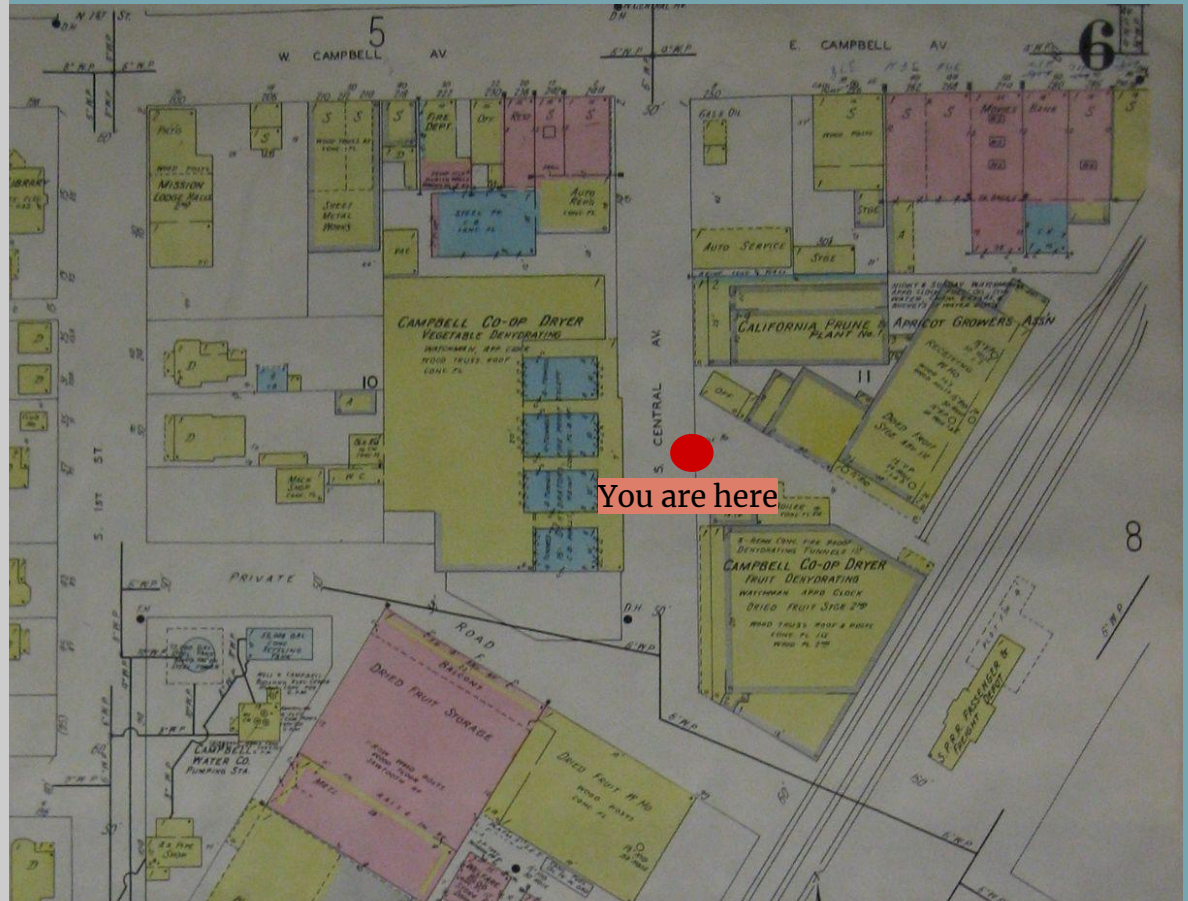
# The Campbell Cooperative Dryer



In 1937, a group of about fifty growers, that belonged to the Association, joined together to form the Campbell Cooperative Dryer. These growers purchased the land just south of Sunsweet Plant 1.

The dehydrator was located roughly in the area around this intersection (which was also the former site of the Hyde Cannery's cafeteria.) They set to work building a plant that included four tunnels, a green fruit platform with a self-spreading dipper, and a five hundred ton dry-fruit warehouse. All for the cost of \$25,000.

The dehydrator's capacity was sixty tons a day, which was larger than a similar plant in Napa, California. In its second year, other farmers wanted to join, but could not due to limited space. As a result two additional tunnels were added in 1938 and another two in 1939. By 1940, the Campbell Co-op Dryer purchased the former George Hyde dry yard.



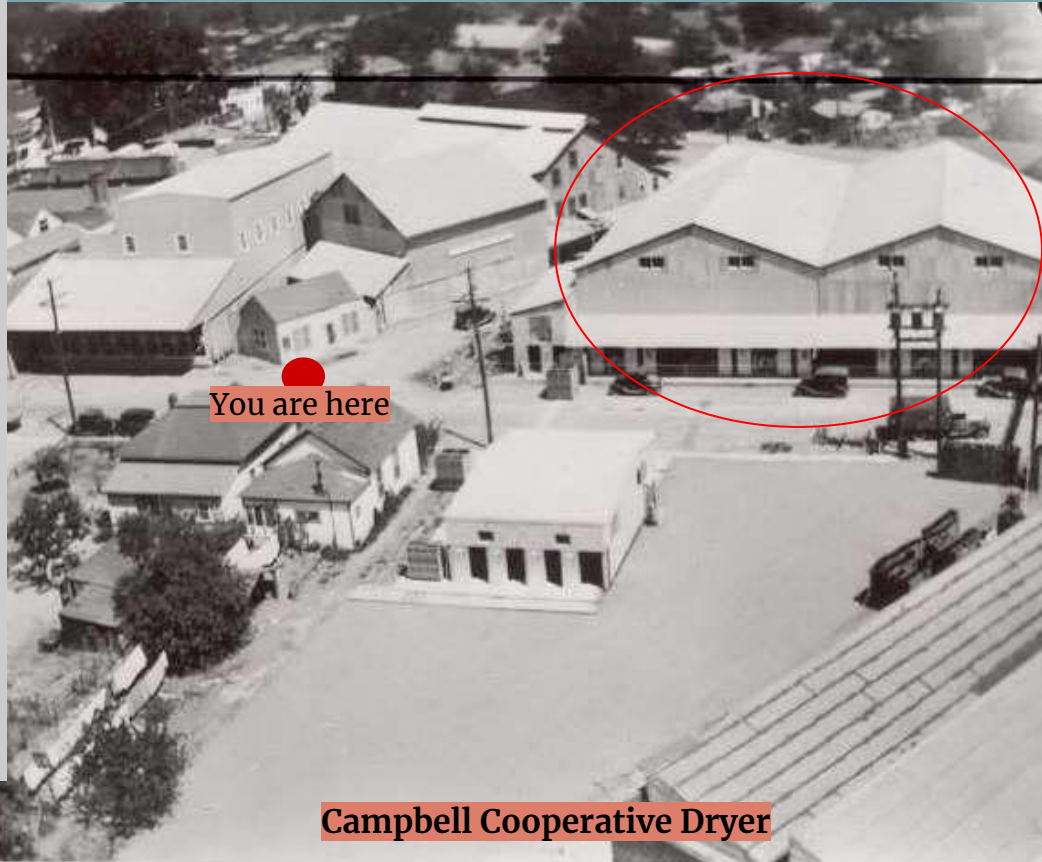
1950 map showing Campbell Cooperative Dryer and CA Prune and Apricot Growers Association (SUNSWEEET) buildings.



Many farmers felt that the dehydrator was more cost effective than sun-drying which could be risky if the rains came and ruined a crop.

By 1948, the Campbell Cooperative Dryer had increased in size to forty-eight tunnels, making it the largest dehydrator in the world. That same year it dried a record breaking 14,965 tons of fruit. This production continued for several decades until orchards started disappearing and fruit trees gave way to Silicon Valley pursuits.

## Largest dehydrator in the world!



Campbell Cooperative Dryer

Early cannery workers were largely Chinese and Japanese immigrant men, and Italian and Portuguese immigrant women. During World War I and after, women became the dominant workforce in canneries.

By the 1930s, the majority of cannery workers were Dust Bowl migrants, Filipinos, and Southern European women. During World War II, many cannery workers found full-time work in defense industry jobs, so canneries recruited Mexican laborers, mainly women, who became the dominant workforce.





During WWII, the Cooperative leased its facilities to two companies to dry potatoes, carrots and cabbages which were needed for Armed Services.

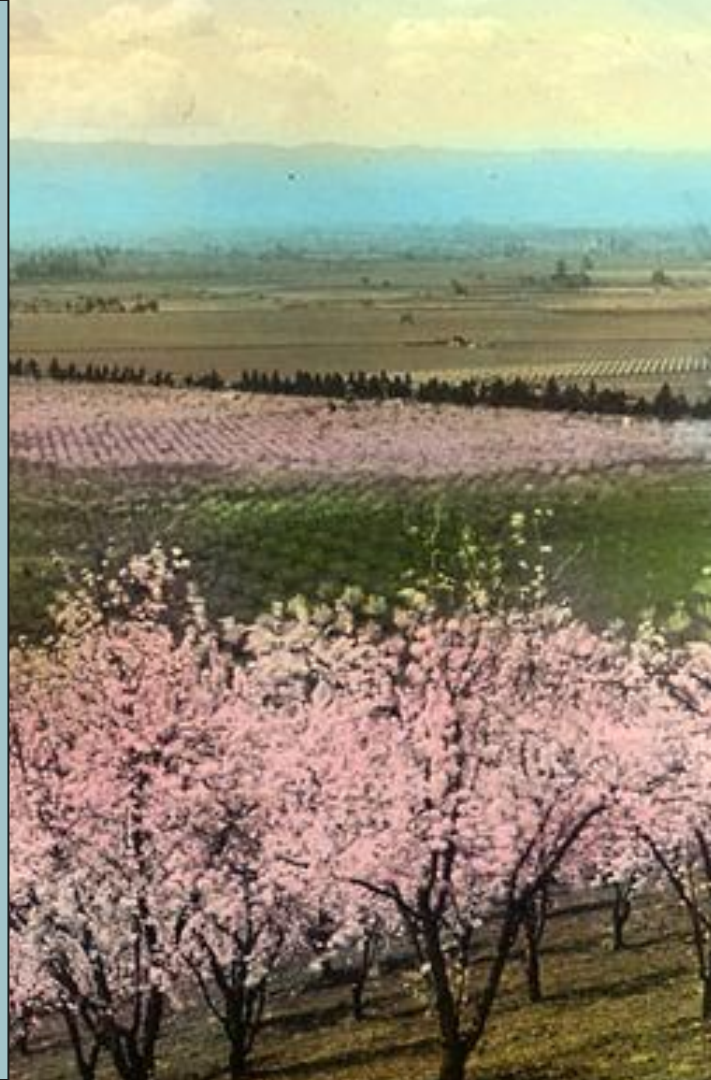
In 1946, California had an unusually large surplus of potatoes, and during the Cooperative's offseason the plant was used to dry potatoes for distilleries.





*“The Valley of Heart’s Delight”*

*The Santa Clara Valley is  
To those who hold it dear  
A veritable Paradise  
Each season of the year.  
One loves it best in April  
When fruit trees are in bloom;  
And a mass of snowy blossoms  
Yield a subtle sweet perfume.  
When orchard after orchard  
Is spread before the eyes  
With the whitest of white blossoms  
‘Neath the bluest of blue skies.  
No brush could paint the picture  
No pen describe the sight  
That one can find in April  
In “The Valley of Heart’s Delight.”  
— Clara Louise Lawrence —  
(circa 1931)*





**We hope you enjoyed our tour!  
Come visit our museums  
when they are open again,  
and in the meantime enjoy  
exploring our online collections.**

**Sincerely,  
The Campbell Museums**

