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In the article “America’s Playground: Recreation and Race,” by Lawrence Culver, the

author argues thatSunkist and other citrus producers used white men and women and an

atmosphere of a perfect, Mediterranean city to appeal to their target consumer- affluent white

families- while excluding the thousands of non-white workers that made their companies

possible. When Sunkist moved their headquarters to Los Angeles in 1935, it found that the

landscape lent itself perfectly to their business and they wanted, “to do justice to Los Angeles’

heralded Mediterranean climate.” (296) Sunkist knew that not only were they in the perfect

climate to sell oranges, but they were also in the movie making capital of the world, and because

of that, they could make innovative motion pictures (or commercials) such as *“Story of the*

*Orange”.* (299)Sunkist used the themes of “science and sex” to sell their products, showing

beautiful white women holding perfectly ripe oranges, beckoning you to “Have One”. (299)

While citrus companies promoted a feel of ease, they didn’t just have ripe oranges. Sunkist and

companies like it were excluding nearly 40,000 non-white laborers and as Culver states,

consumers saw, “the gradual disappearance of labor and laborers from the agricultural

countryside.” (300) Ultimately, the citrus companies wanted to make money, and they would not

make money by showing off the dirty, tired, and most importantly non-white workers- they

would make money by advertising nice, clean, white men and women in a perfect Californian

climate.

Culver’s point is demonstrated through several images and advertisements produced

during this period of commercialism and the selling of citrus. The first image is “*Sunkist*

*Coloring Book: Front page*”. In it is a white family looking out over the remarkably beautiful

orange orchards, seeming to enjoy themselves and loving nature. It is obvious by this image that

the company wanted to sell oranges to a family. That citrus isn’t just for adults, it’s for children

too, and vice versa. In fact, this image is part of a coloring book given out to children to advertise

the companies product in the children’s school. The second image “*Sunkist Pinup Girl 2”,* shows

three beautiful white women advertising not only oranges, but also the wonderful climate of

California and how easy it was to pick oranges. Sunkist used these images to portray a sense of

ease and glamour in order to sell their product. In stark contrast to these two images is the image

“*Japanese citrus workers”,* a real photo taken of workers and their actual conditions. Gone is the

sense of cleanliness,nicety, and ease, instead, there is a sense of dirty labor. There is no way

Sunkist would ever show the reality of citrus growing, because it’s not good business. Los

Angeles is the perfect culture and climate for citrus growers looking to make a profit. The

glamorous, affluent, Mediterranean feel was just what citrus companies needed to sell their

product. In promoting a sense of white supremacy in their advertisements and production,

however, they excluded nearly thousands of non-white laborers- men and women without whom

citrus companies would have no business.