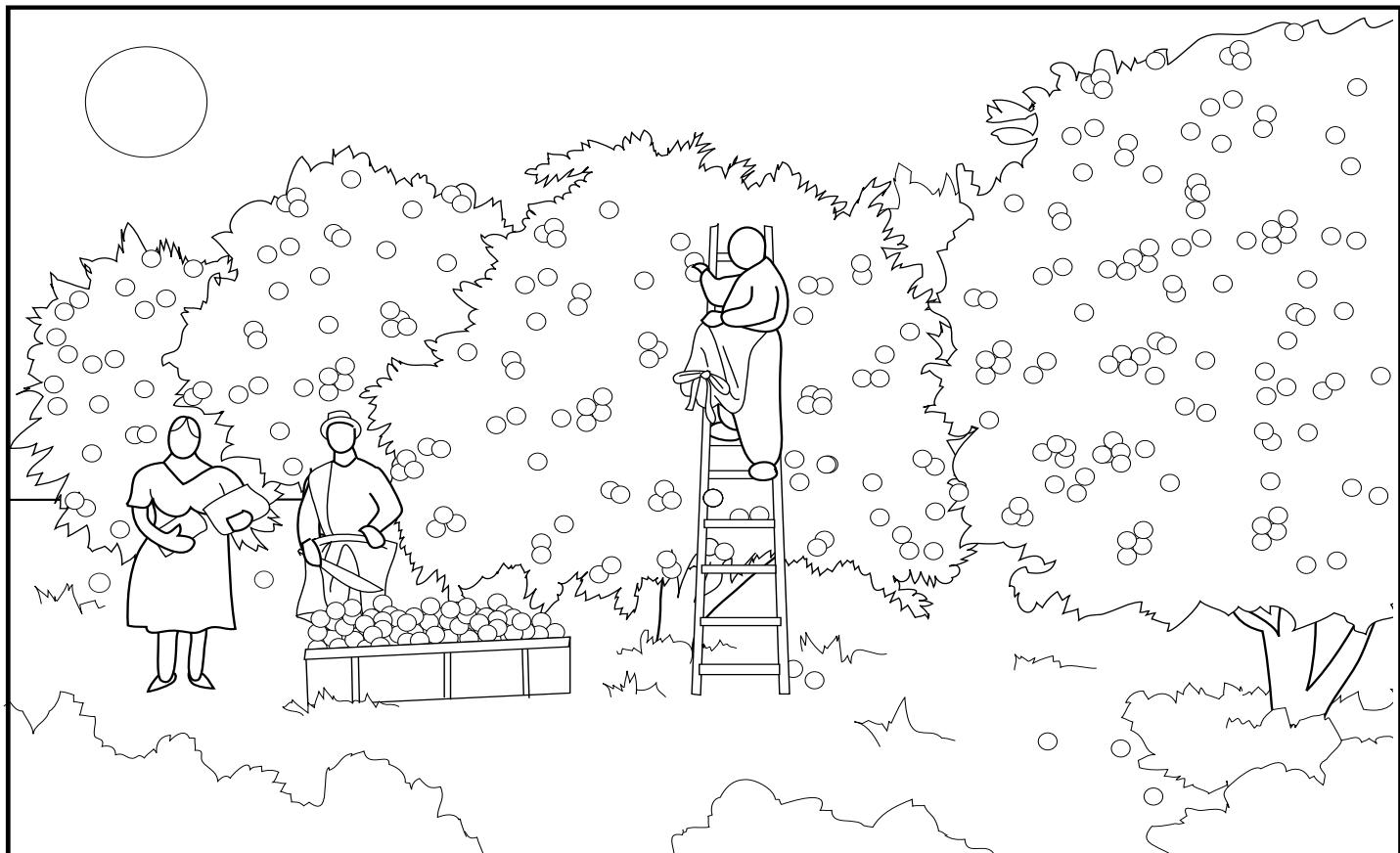


FL History | 1866-1900

Florida's Economy Booms

In the late 1800s, **resort areas** were developed throughout the state of Florida. It became a haven for those who were in need of a vacation and a place to recuperate from illnesses. Because of the state's warm weather and mild winters, it began attracting a variety of people, including the rich and famous. Two of the better-known individuals who came to Florida were Thomas Edison and Henry Ford. They later built their own winter homes in the Fort Myers area. The city of Miami also grew and soon was connected to the railway system.

The **citrus industry** became important during this time. Because the state had railroads that could quickly transport fruit to other states, the citrus industry became a staple of Florida's economy. This industry boomed until the winter of 1894 when two freezes destroyed crops in the northern and central parts of the state. In contrast, southern citrus growers were unaffected, and the citrus industry continued to boom in the southern part of the state. Using the lessons learned from the freezes, citrus growers developed frost-resistant fruit and renewed citrus groves throughout the state.



The citrus industry has been important to the Florida economy for over a hundred years

Central Florida was home to many. The cattle ranches were not close to ports and so the cattle had to be driven to ports. By using long whips that made a loud cracking noise, these cowhands became known as "Crackers." The cattle business became very popular and many cattle ranch owners became very rich.

Forest products were abundant. Cedar trees were available and the wood from these trees was used to make pencils and build furniture. Pine trees were equally plentiful and the sap was used to make turpentine.

Phosphate rock mining companies started in Florida when this mineral (prehistoric bones and sea shells) was discovered underground. Phosphate is a key ingredient in fertilizer and was shipped all over the United States and Europe.

In Key West and Tampa Bay, **cigar making** became a major business. Using tobacco leaves, the cigar was rolled and then packaged and shipped all over the world. Because of the need for skilled workers within this business, many immigrants came from Cuba. Ybor City, in Tampa, became a capital for cigar making.

The success of many different kinds of businesses made Florida more and more popular. Growth continued and Florida became a very important economic place.

Cigar factories contributed to the economies of Key West and Tampa in the late 1900s.

