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KAILA: WELCOME TO VALLEY 101, A PODCAST FROM *THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC* AND AZCENTRAL.COM WHERE *WE* ANSWER THE QUESTIONS *YOU* ASK ABOUT METRO PHOENIX. I'm your host, Kaila White.

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KAILA: This week's episode is a look at one of Arizona's 5 C's. Citrus. But before we get into that what are the other 4 C's?

If you grew up in Arizona as a young kid, chances are you learned about these C's in school. But if you didn't, maybe you've heard about them. So what are they? How did Arizona even get this alliteration?

Producer Maritza Domingez brings you the history of the 5 C's as well as an answer the question from one listener "what happened to derail the citrus industry in Arizona?" Maritza, take it away.

Maritza VO:

I grew up going to school in Mesa Public Schools so the knowledge of Arizona's 5 C's HAS been there since I was a young child. However, the majority of Phoenix's population IS not Arizona natives. So let's dive in.

Maritza: [00:00:22] What are the five C's of Arizona? [00:00:24][1.7]

Philip: [00:00:25] The five seas of Arizona's. I think you can probably see in many places it'll say every schoolchild should know the five C's. [00:00:34][8.1]

Philip: [00:00:34] Its copper and cattle. Citrus, climate and cotton. [00:00:42][7.2]

[17.0]

This is Philip VanderMeer a retired professor of history from Arizona State University. For 35 years he taught about American history and the history of Arizona.

The 5 C's were a way to highlight the industries that created Arizona's economy.

I asked Philip who were the ones to come up with the 5 C's.

Philip: [00:03:48] Well, the problem is there's no they it's not an official thing. It is by the 1920s. It seems that people are talking about this now. [00:04:01][13.3]

Arizona was a young state in the 1920s. In order to attract people to move to the state, various groups like chambers of commerce used the 5 c's as a way to promote the area.

Philip: [00:04:31] And by the 1920s, included in the promotional literature is a reference to this. By the 1930s, there is a famous WPA guide to the state of Arizona. And if it mentions the C's and by the late 40s, it's quite common to talk about the five C's .
[00:04:53][21.4]

Ok, so the Five Cs were a marketing tool used to try to get people to move to Arizona. But before they had that fancy name, they really were the big drivers of Arizona's economy. Obviously, our climate has been sunshine for hundreds of years. But it also played a big role in citrus becoming a thing here.

Citrus originate from South and East Asia. So how did they get here? We have to go back in time a bit.

Selwyn: [00:19:12] it came out to the United States that came with the missionaries, you know, out here to the US. And so as a result of that, citrus has actually been in Arizona since like 1700.
[00:19:23][10.9]

This is Selwyn Justice a 5th generation citrus grower in Arizona. You'll hear more from him later in this episode. It was Italian Catholic missionary Father Eusebio Francisco Kino who brought citrus to *Southern* Arizona. There are differing accounts of who first planted citrus in the *Valley*. Here's what Philip had to say.

Philip: [00:00:57] *it begins really in 1890 when Winfield Scott, who is. It had been in the process of developing a settlement in what become Scottsdale decides to import citrus from California and Florida. And the Arizona improvement company decides to do the same thing.* [00:01:19][21.4]

The man who created the Arizona Improvement Company was William J. Murphy. He created the Arizona Canal in 1885. Once Murphy was able to get water flowing into what is now the Glendale area, he also imported citrus trees from California. This was happening at the same time as Winfield Scott.

People started moving west to find new opportunities. This included Selwyn's great-grandfather.

Selwyn: [00:06:44] My family's been operating in the same place since 1928. We according to the packing house that packages our fruit. We are the longest continually operating citrus orchard in the state of Arizona. My family moved out here from Missouri a little bit before they started the farm and they bought it and 28. And we've been farming ever since [00:07:07][22.5]

I met up with Selwyn at the Justice Brothers U-pick, separate from his family's ranch. Selwyn hates being inside, so we sat outside on the back patio looking out to his grove. If you hear the birds chirping in the background that's why.

If you're visualizing a farmer in a rocking chair right now, well, Selwyn isn't that. He's a 30-year-old with a business degree from the University of Arizona who enjoys going to concerts

Selwyn: [00:46:18] yes, I farm. I also, like, play D&D.
[00:46:20][2.9]

Selwyn: [00:46:22] And like, you know, listen to like, you know, doom metal sometimes you know and like, you know, go to punk shows.
[00:46:28][6.2]

[9.2]

But back to oranges and lemons...

(CUE MUSIC)

Arizona was seen as the land of plenty in those years soon after statehood. Groves popped up in areas like the west valley. Much like Selwyn's family who bought the land in what is now Surprise. There were also groves in the north Mesa area, scattered around the outside of Phoenix. Selwyn tells me at that time oranges were *the* citrus to grow but by the 30s grapefruit became the king crop.

Selwyn: [00:25:37] We planted a lot of grapefruit. We had a lot of grapefruit out there. Acres and acres and acres of it. And we still have the majority of our of our citrus. And our commercial operation is still grapefruit as a result of that. [00:25:48][11.2]

In 1935, 21,000 acres in Arizona were dedicated to citrus farming. Over the years more and more trees were planted. Soon Arizona became well known for their citrus production.

[05:08] "Arizona's citrus, oranges, lemons, tangerines, lime and grapefruit are unsurpassed for quality and flavor." [05:18]

That's how one educational documentary from the 1930s described the fruit. It's probably thanks to weather that rarely goes below 40 degrees in the winter.

Selwyn's grandfather and also his namesake Selwyn the elder and his brother Robert bought the farm from their father. And that's how they got the name the Justice Brothers Ranch. They would go on to grow not just citrus but a variety of other crops and cattle.

The number of acres with citrus trees continued to rise until its peak in the 1970s. By then there were 80 thousand acres with citrus planted. Major citrus companies like Sunkist, used Arizona citrus to sell commercially.

Local valley farmers would pick the fruit and send them to packing houses. Those are warehouses where the fruit was cleaned and then packed into boxes before being shipped to a grocery store. But soon after the 70s the industry took a sharp decline.

Selwyn: [00:59:54] The success of Arizona agriculture, including citrus, led a lot of people to move here and to develop this region. And unfortunately, that is the same thing that led to the decline of the industry. [01:00:11][17.0]

According to the data from the US Census Bureau, from 1970 to 1980 the Maricopa County population increased from 900,000 to 1.5 million. The population in Arizona continues to climb especially Metro Phoenix.

(OUT CUE MUSIC)

So what happened to derail the citrus industry?

Philip: [00:16:15] It's urbanization. So that if you look at the value of an acre of land and you figure out how many houses you can put on this, and if the lot size is between 6000 and 9000 square feet for most houses, you can get seven houses on one acre of land and you can make a lot of money. [00:16:46][30.6]

Areas that were once bare land now are houses, shopping centers or even freeways. The last packing house in the Valley closed in 2010. It didn't impact Selwyn personally because his family aren't Sunkist farmers but many in Mesa were.

Selwyn: [00:33:31] And that that was pretty much for a lot of people. That was the death. That was the the final blow, or at least an indicator that the industry was was pretty much dead up here. At

least the classic model there is that there is anybody doing it.
[00:33:46][14.8]

Many of the valley citrus growers have turned to a new business model. They are no longer selling commercially to companies like Sunkist. Now with suburbia knocking on farmers doorstep they are finding new ways to continue. Selwyn was looking for a way to diversify his business. So he bought a U-pick from a family friend who was ready to retire. Its a farm where the public can pick fruit themselves.

Selwyn: [00:38:42] there are people that really like doing fruit. u-picks. They love it. They love picking their own fruit.
[00:38:48][6.0]

Many other local farmers are doing this as well. While citrus isn't a cash crop to Arizona, it's still culturally important to us Arizonans.

Philip: [00:17:48] The citrus industry is also its it's iconic
[00:17:53][4.6]

Even last year Arizona got an official state drink that is a nod to the citrus industry.

12 News: [00:07] "Whether you like it sweet or tart, flavored or natural, lemonade is now our official state drink." [00:12] [5.0]

(CUE MUSIC)

The future of citrus in Arizona is unknown. I asked Selwyn why he continues to dedicate his life to citrus.

Selwyn: [00:32:02] I like farming and I like feeding people. And I'd much rather be farming and feeding people than I don't I don't know what the alternative is. But you know what? Whatever that looks like, I don't like it. [00:32:12][10.2]

His role as a farmer doesn't end at the U-pick but it goes on in various leadership roles including working with the National Young Farmers Coalition. The United States Department of Agriculture reports that the average age of a farmer is 58 . As farmers get older, we could see an even greater decline in local agriculture.

Selwyn: [01:01:10] *There are almost no young people entering this profession. There are very few first generation farmers at all, period. And there are a lot of young farmers that are leaving the agriculture industry. And this produces a number of things. One, to*

reduction in the total farmed acres, which sucks. Two, this leads to further consolidation of farm practices. [01:01:30][19.3]

Even though Arizona citrus has been in decline for his entire lifetime, you can tell it's his passion just by talking to him. He's continuing the foundation his family built.

Selwyn: [01:24:52] Those are kind of important values for me too. And you know, I have a daughter, she's 7 and I know for a fact that like I will at least keep farming until she graduates from high school. I wanted to have every opportunity to kind of explore that lifestyle before she before she goes out into a world that it's not going to have any of it, you know [01:25:12][20.1]

(OUT CUE MUSIC)

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Kaila: Now that we know a bit more about one of the 5 c's of Arizona. Next week we bring to you another.

DOC: [07:57] Arizona is a major cotton producing state. And not just ordinary cotton but superior cotton produced in record yields per acres and used for fine fabrics. [08:10] [13.0]

Kaila: Head of podcasts Katie O'Connell dives into why cotton is one of Arizona's 5 C's. More on that next week.

Well, that's it for today.

If you have more questions about how metro Phoenix is changing, submit them to us at valley101.azcentral.com. And if you're a new listener, remember you can go back and listen to old episodes. Let us know what you think by leaving us a rating or review on your podcast-listening app. As always, thank you for listening to Valley 101, a podcast from *The Arizona Republic* and azcentral.com. See you next week.