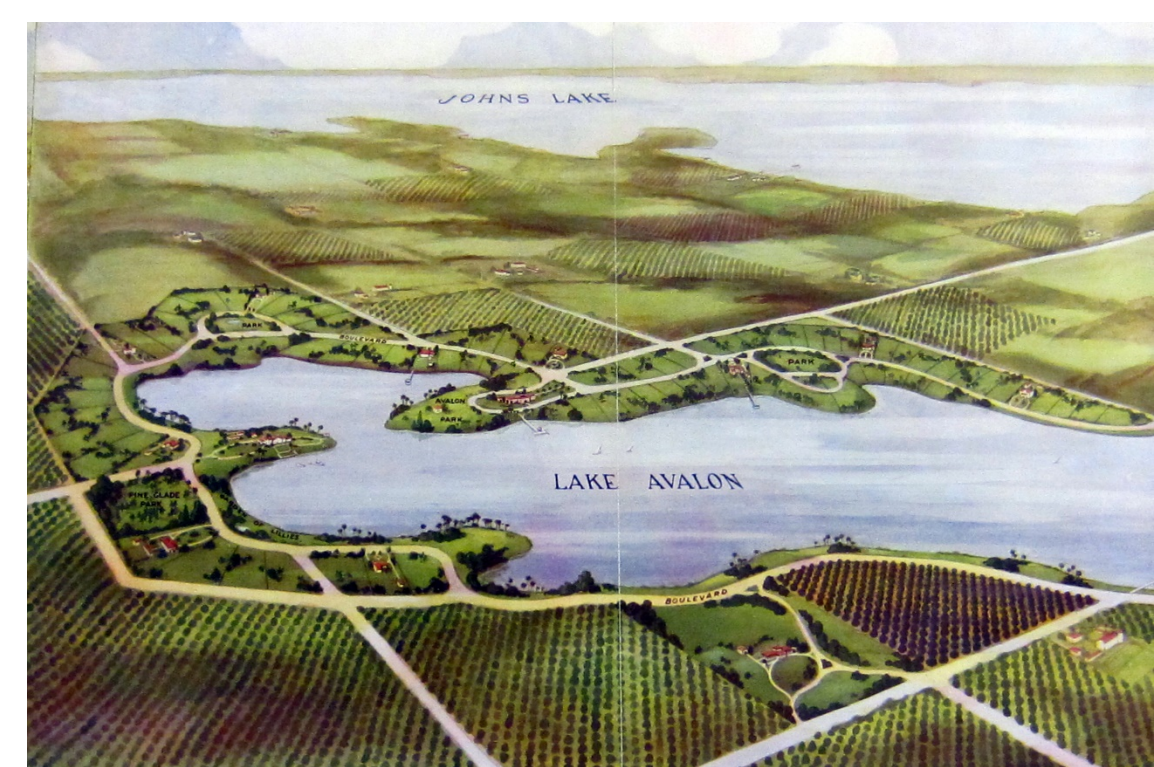


# “On To Avalon”: The History of Avalon Groves

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McKay Archives and Florida Citrus Hall of Fame

## Introduction

"When we think of oranges, we think of sunshine, soft winds, flowers and palms. We think of romance and unreal things because the turning of sunshine into golden fruit is one of Nature's absorbing miracles." This is the opening line of a flowery brochure produced by the Orlando Orange Groves Company, in the mid 1920s, and given to every potential investor and tourist who would take a tour of the land outside of Winter Garden, Florida. The business proposal acquired by the staff of the McKay Archives in August 2016, is more quick to come to the point of the sales pitch. It begins "Orange County ... produces approximately one-third of all the oranges grown in the State of Florida. The rolling ridge land, composed of the famous Norfolk Fine Sand, is especially adapted to the culture of the orange."



## Our Process

At the McKay Archives, work study students spent time investigating the origins and influences of historic life on the events of the time. We consulted and cross-referenced a variety of sources, such as:

- The Interlibrary Loan System
- Newspaper Databases
- FSC Roux Library
- Our manuscript
- Florida State Archives
- Winter Garden History Center
- Other archival records



The team:

- Peter Edgar is a English and Communications double major.
- Kelsi Shanks is a Business and Communications double major.
- Caitlin Harper majors in citrus.
- Kaitlynn Hoffman is an art history major.



## Citrus and Fruit

Fact-checking: Caitlin Harper spoke with FSC horticulture professor Dr. Manners for his verdict regarding certain statements made by the Avalon Groves leadership in the manuscript.

1. "Orange County... [yields] one-third of all the oranges in Florida." Dr. M: 1920s, true. "Today, Orange County is... well under 5%."
2. "Only 5% of Florida's land is suitable for growing citrus." Dr. M: "This may have been a belief back then. Today we grow citrus on many thousands of acres with improved technology."
3. "The tract will contain 280,000 trees, with a potential annual product of more than one million boxes." Dr. M: "Unacceptably low yield by today's standards." (half)
4. "Certain it is that orange trees are among the longest lived of any trees." Dr. M: "This part is silly nonsense-marketer talk."



## The Manuscript

Over the past year, student workers at the McKay Archives Center have analyzed a manuscript acquired by the Archives in order to put together a history of the groves and the lives of the original stockholders and directors that inspired and funded it. The manuscript is dated between 1925 and 1928. The 4500 acres of Avalon Groves, as it was named, and the Orlando Orange Groves Company, its parent company, were surrounded by money, influence, and (as we discovered in the course of our study) scandal. We have put together historical data from journalism, history books, and articles of incorporation to put together a picture of the events and influences surrounding the company, the Orlando of the late Twenties, and of Central Florida when it was still dominated by swamps and citrus with the purpose of shedding light on and providing a holistic look at this business proposal dated almost a century ago.



The Avalon Groves manuscript can be divided into three parts based on their subject matter:

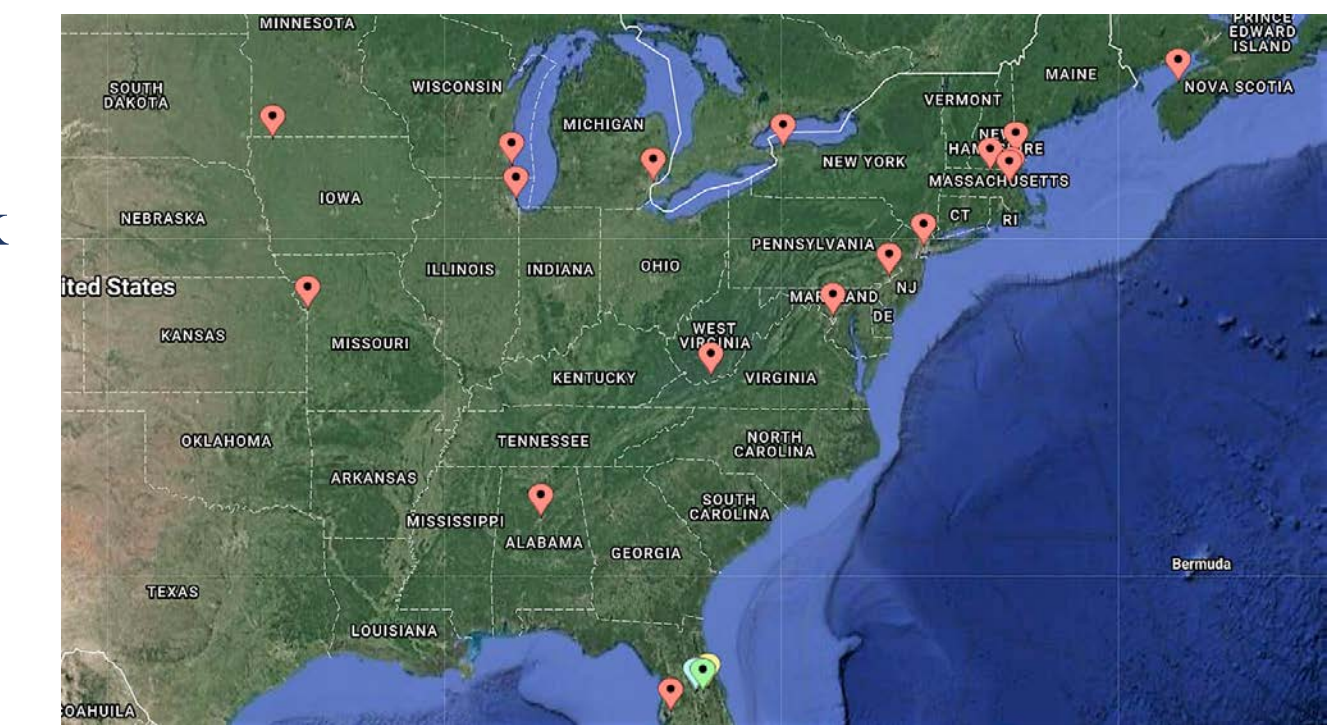
1. Overview of Avalon Groves stockholders and holdings pp. 1-19
2. Features of the surrounding areas (Orlando & Winter Garden et.al.) pp. 20-47
3. Description of citrus and what stockholders can expect if they sign on with Avalon Groves pp. 48-70



## Who Invested in Avalon Groves?

### Board of Directors:

Thomas Picton Warlow  
Frederick H. Thwing  
John Pendleton Holbrook  
Charles E. Mitchell  
Eugene G. Duckworth  
L. H. Gedge  
H. D. Piper  
S. V. Straley  
T. M. Mink  
Wilbur Warren

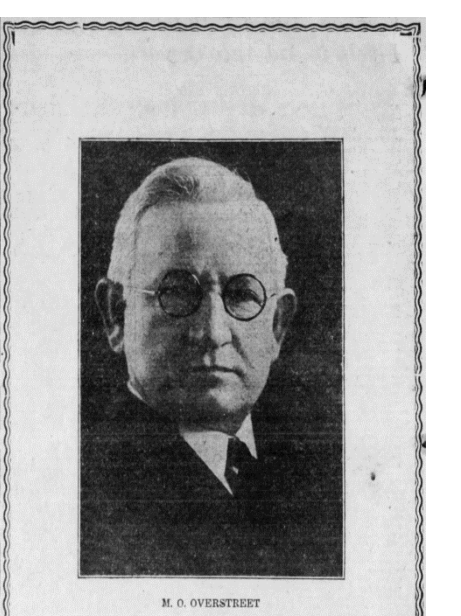
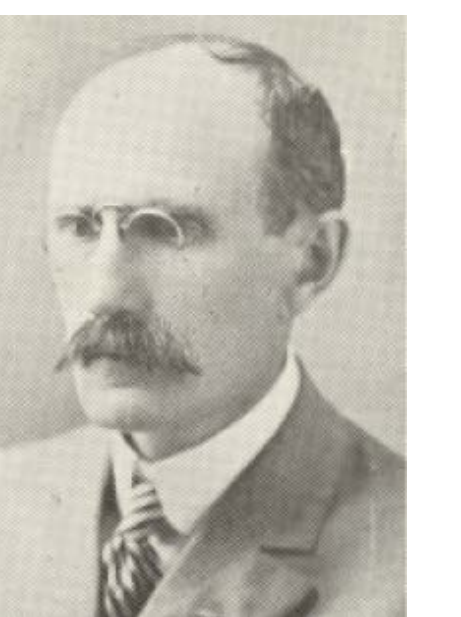


### Orlando Stockholders:

Nixon Butt  
Martin J. Daetwyler  
Gaston Holcombe Edwards  
Charles Russell Emerick  
Samuel Kendrick Guernsey  
Thomas Hopkins  
Stephenson Waters Howe  
E. D. Kenyon  
James A. Knox  
R. E. Duckworth  
Arthur E. Landstreet  
John McCulloch  
Dr. John Singer McEwan  
Arthur McKean  
Dewitt Miller  
W. H. Brokaw  
Senator Moses Oscar Overstreet  
I. W. Phillips  
D. P. Sias  
Wilbur Luther Tilden  
S. Y. Way  
Newton Pendleton Yowell  
Harry M. Voorhis  
Jasper N. Joiner

### Other Stockholders:

Frank W. Pickels  
Loren M. Robertson  
Charles G. Greeley  
William H. Arthur  
S. J. Campbell  
Charles S. Bates  
Henry M. Hale  
James D. Cole  
R. M. Havens  
M. H. Thwing  
H. J. Babcock  
C. G. Sutliff  
James Sutliff  
James Fister  
James Hardy Sadler  
B. G. Smith  
George D. McCutcheon  
Mrs. Kate Mahood  
W. J. Higgins  
L. W. Smith  
J. R. Bahne  
D. C. Gillett  
James R. Rounding  
H. W. Jenks



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- [https://www.floridamemory.com/photographiccollection/photo\\_exhibits/citrus/citrus2.php](https://www.floridamemory.com/photographiccollection/photo_exhibits/citrus/citrus2.php)

## Special Thanks

The Winter Garden History Center  
Gerriane Schaad & Jeffrey Zines

## Timeline of the History of Avalon Groves

