

# Japanese Floriculture in Southern California : Evolution of an Ethnic Industry

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## I. Introduction

California is known for many unique characteristics.<sup>1)</sup> Among them is its diverse and highly productive agriculture which has substantially supported the state's economy.<sup>2)</sup> The contributions of Japanese immigrants and their descendants to the development of California agriculture are well known,<sup>3)</sup> but careful and detailed case studies of either an agricultural community or the Japanese role in a given sector of agriculture are yet very few. The present paper is a case study of the successful participation of Japanese in the southern California floriculture from its beginning right before the turn of the century through the recent period.

Japanese immigrant agriculturists in the pre-World War II period had highly competitive power with their small but intensive operations even under negative social conditions. One of the biggest factors of their competitive success in agriculture was their propensity to organize. Ethnic solidarity is maintained both in fraternal and economic activities by many first-generation immigrants of any ethnic background, but the Japanese agriculturists developed tight and efficient organizations to meet special needs and to protect themselves in the foreign setting. These associations united the immigrant agriculturists with little knowledge of English, and became a motive force of successful Japanese agriculture.<sup>4)</sup> After World War II, however, ethnic dimensions of the industry have substantially weakened.

Japanese made a significant contribution to the expanding population of Los Angeles by supplying fresh cut flowers, though Ichihashi did not mention it in his classical work on the Japanese in the United States.<sup>5)</sup> The evolution of the Japanese segment of floriculture in coastal southern California, the topic of this paper, paralleled in many ways the development that was taking place in the San Francisco Bay Area under the Japanese initiative. It, however, had certain characteristics that differed from those of its northern California counterpart. These were largely due to the differences that existed in the physical as well as socio-economic environment of two regions. The present paper, a sequel to my study on Japanese floriculture in northern California,<sup>6)</sup>

also attempts to make a comparison between these flower growing regions of California.

## II. Japanese Floriculture in the Los Angeles Area before World War II

### II-1. Pioneering Phase

The rapidly expanding economy of Los Angeles and vicinity (Fig. 1) attracted Issei immigrants, providing them with increasing opportunities, particularly in farming. Accordingly the Japanese population of Los Angeles county increased remarkably after the turn of the century. Experiencing a hundredfold increase from 1900 to 1920, the population reached some 37,000 in 1940 which accounted for 39 percent of the total Japanese population of the state, the largest clustering of this group in the country.

Flower growing was one of the areas where newly arrived Issei became well established. In early 1892 Sotaro Endo from Saitama prefecture leased two lots at the corner of South Main and West Jefferson streets in downtown Los Angeles and started production of garden plants, carnations and violets to pioneer Japanese flower growing. In May of the next year, Jinnosuke

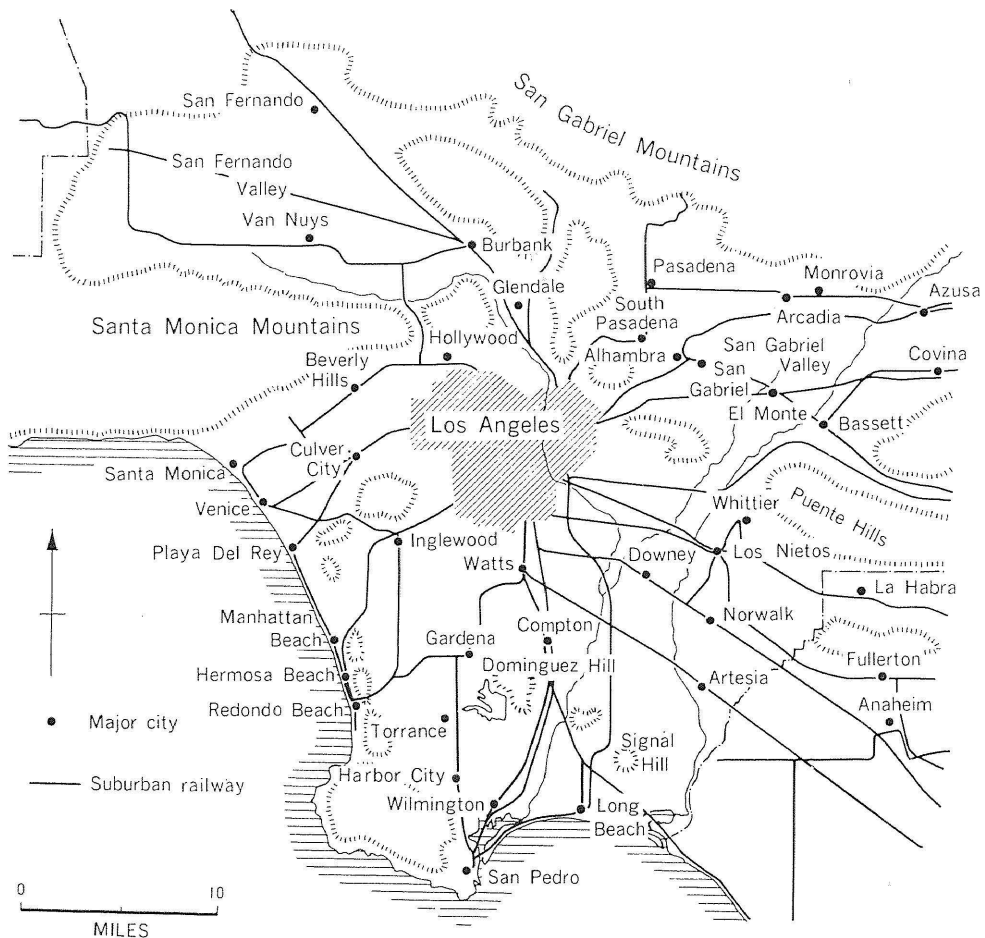


Fig. 1. Los Angeles area prior to World War II.

Kobata from Wakayama prefecture joined him, who had arrived on American shores two years earlier and lived for a time in nearby Riverside. Fusataro Adachi from Tottori prefecture joined them the next year, coming from San Francisco. These three are remembered as pioneers among Japanese flower growers in southern California. While Endo gave up his operation and migrated to Mexico before the flower industry had fully developed into a flourishing business, the other two contributed a great deal to its early evolution. Kobata and Adachi served as the first president and vice-president, respectively, when the Southern California Flower Market, Inc. was organized.<sup>7)</sup>

Japanese flower growers originated from humble beginning, as did other Japanese agriculturists. Rough and unpainted shacks were one of the visual characteristics of Issei agriculture in Los Angeles county in the first years of this century, reflecting the low standard of living of Japanese farmers.<sup>8)</sup>

[Flower growers] first lease three to four acres of land and build a simple hut using rough lumber and canvas. There is, of course, no decent furniture, except a kerosene stove for cooking. They build such structures as silkworm shelves, which make beds. The kerosene stove is conveniently used to make coffee as well as hot water for washing hands and feet... (the author's translation).<sup>9)</sup>

The location of flower growers and their marketing activities depended on available transportation. In those early days of the industry when automobiles had not yet gained popularity, streetcars were the major means of transportation. Accordingly streetcar lines largely determined the location of nurseries. *Yanagi-kori* (wicker trunks) which they brought from Japan were used as flower containers. They were wrapped with a piece of cloth and carried on the shoulders. As flower growers took streetcars passengers began to complain about the increasing number of these growers. Although they sometimes tipped conductors, they were eventually prohibited from bringing those huge baskets full of flowers into the cars. Growers had to change their means of transportation to horse and buggy and then to motorcycle side-cars. Later the automobile became widely used.

Peddling was the major way of selling flowers when the city had only half a dozen florists. When flowers were left over, they were peddled from door to door. This surely stimulated people's curiosity when they saw a Japanese peddler with "sun-tanned and unshaved face, sweated and unclean shirt, and worn-out shoes walking bandy-legged."<sup>10)</sup> Prices fluctuated greatly depending on demand and supply. The day's proceeds might vary from two to five dollars but rarely exceeded ten dollars.<sup>11)</sup>

The number of Japanese flower growers increased considerably between 1905 and 1910. The San Francisco earthquake and fire brought a mass migration of Japanese from the devastated northern city to rapidly growing southern California, including those who had an interest in flower growing. Others shifted from vegetable and strawberry production and some started newly from scratch.

When the Japanese moved into growing flowers in Los Angeles, a few Greeks, Italians, and Germans were already in the business. These groups tended to specialize in greenhouse-grown, high-value products requiring considerable capital, while Japanese generally raised a wider variety of field flowers. This was in interesting contrast with the San Francisco Bay Area where the Japanese were from the beginning engaged in greenhouse production of high-value products. The warmer winters made the field production of flowers easier and more popular in the southland. This explains why many people with little capital were attracted into the business, sometimes as sideline to vegetable and strawberry production.

Several attempts were made to establish a flower market in downtown Los Angeles even in the first decade of this century. A small market was opened by Japanese growers in 1909, while another attempt was made at a nearby location later in the same year.<sup>12)</sup> Although these early attempts failed, the growers' concerns for a better marketing system continued.

Competition intensified until shortly after 1910 when there were some 70 Japanese growers in the area. Grower cooperation and unity were strongly advocated in the face of growing competitive pressures and dubious commercial practices of some other wholesalers and retailers. A meeting was held in April, 1912, in which tentative articles of association for the Southern California Flower Growers Association were drafted. A week later the inaugural meeting was held at a Japanese restaurant in the Japanese quarter of Los Angeles with 36 flower growers in attendance. Thus was born "Nanka Kaengyo Kumiai," an exclusively Japanese grower organization. At a second general meeting held five months later with some 70 growers in attendance, the establishment of a flower market was decided. The California Flower Market, a Japanese establishment already in successful operation in San Francisco, particularly encouraged the opening of an ethnic market in the southern metropolis. The first Southern California Flower Market opened in January of 1913 was a modest facility on South Los Angeles street. The formal incorporation of the non-profit Southern California Flower Market, Inc. was proposed to the state a year later and approval was granted, thus making a new era in the history of Japanese floriculture in southern California.

## II-2. Locational Pattern

No other flower-growing region in the continental United States can produce such a wide variety of products over so long a growing season and under minimum protection as southern California. Most cut flowers can be commercially grown successfully along most of the California coast south of Santa Barbara. But most Japanese flower growers before World War II were located in Los Angeles and its immediate vicinity, close to their major outlet (Fig. 2).

The distribution of pre-war Japanese flower growers is explained by a complex of factors such as climate and soils, availability of land, accessibility to transportation and social conditions. Growers were not always able to obtain the best located land for the cultivation of flowers. They often had to compromise and to make maximum use of whatever land was available. The majority of the Japanese growers did not own the land they wanted and thus were susceptible to external influences beyond their control. They preferred to cluster with their own kind, sometimes because it offered a more attractive social life and feeling of security, and sometimes because they were exploiting the discovery of a favorable environmental niche by fellow growers.

Land was selected by growers by experience and sometimes by chance. These decisions were seldom based on scientific knowledge of local soils and climate. They knew by experience that sandy loam or loam soils were generally good for flowers. They sought western exposures and frost free thermal belt where air drainage was good. Most flowers grow best in light to medium soils when sufficient fertilizer is supplied. Alkaline soils are particularly harmful. Light soils are best for flowers grown during cool and moist seasons as those soils are warmed quickly by sunlight while maintaining good drainage. Where the average temperature is higher, heavier soils may become more productive. The region which enjoys the widest variety of flowers year round are the coastal zones, whose relatively cool summers are dominated by onshore breezes while winters tend to be frost-free.

Since field flowers either with no protection or sometimes with muslin covering dominated



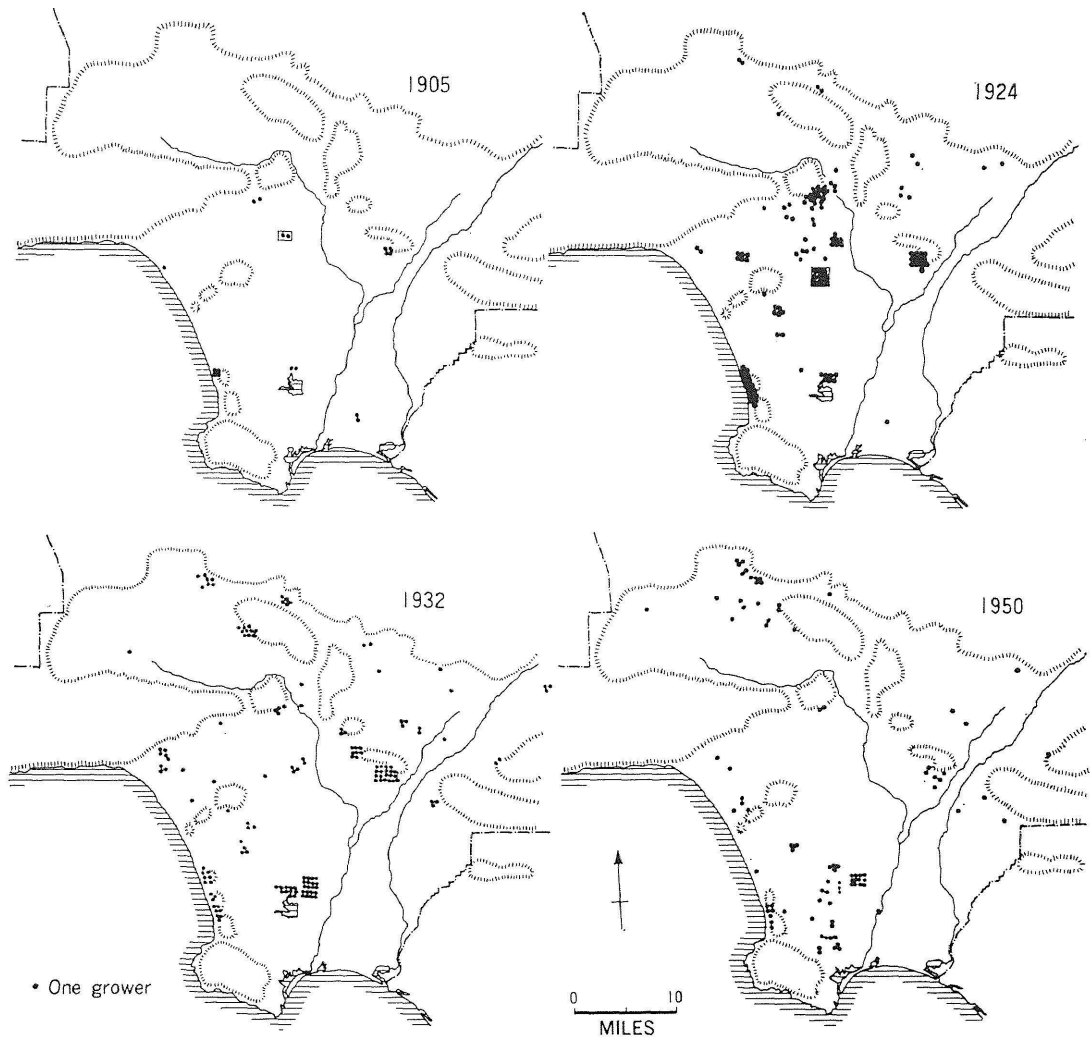


Fig. 2. Distribution of Japanese flower growers in the Los Angeles area, 1905-1950.

Dots in a square show the Los Angeles flower grower whose locations are unidentified.

Source : Nanka Hana Ichiba (1952) : *History of the Southern California Flower Market* (in Japanese), Nanka Hana Ichiba, Los Angeles, p. 13 ; The Japanese Consulate of Los Angeles, "Registrtaion Cards, 1920-1924," in JARP Collection ; Nanka Kasho Kumiai (1933) : *History of the Southern California Florist Association* (in Japanese), Nanka Kasho Kumiai, Los Angeles, pp. 393-401 ; *Japanese Telephone Directory of Southern California 1950-1951*, Los Angeles.

production, flowering was highly seasonal. Summer flowers came mainly from the beach areas, while the interior San Fernando Valley and other inland areas specialized in winter crops.

One of the first centers was the area at the foot of Signal Hill (Long Beach) where the Tujunga fine sand and Ramona fine sandy loams were ideal for the production of violets and carnations. In 1911, 75 acres were under flower cultivation here.<sup>13)</sup>

The south beach areas, including Hermosa Beach, Redondo Beach, and Manhattan Beach, all within one mile from the ocean, became another center of Japanese growers where stocks,

asters and pompons were mainly grown. The area is dominated by the sandy soils of old beach ridges (Oakley fine sand). It is high enough and close enough to the Pacific not to experience extreme cold during the winter and enjoys relatively cool springs and summers. Chrysanthemums bloom one month earlier in this coastal zone due to the cooler early fall temperatures compared to the areas farther inland. By the early 1900's the white-owned Redondo Beach Floral Company near Redondo Beach, then the largest commercial cut flower producer in southern California, was growing carnations on 30 to 40 acres. Other flower on smaller acreages included outdoor roses, lilies and centaurias.<sup>14)</sup> Around 1905, there were already four Japanese growers in Hermosa Beach. In the mid-1920's Redondo Beach and Hermosa Beach counted 16 growers, while 17 of the Southern California Flower Market members were located in this beach zone, including Manhattan Beach in the early 1930's. The area continued to be an important growing region through the pre-war period, especially summer blooms.

Hollywood had been famous for roses even before the advent of the motion picture industry. The slightly higher land along Los Feliz Blvd. was a center of Japanese growers by the 1920's. Carnations and sweet peas were mainly grown here. The sandy soils (Hanford sandy loam) were adequate and frosts were rare. Proximity to downtown Los Angeles put Los Feliz growers in an especially advantageous position. Later, with the surge of housing development, this same factor worked inversely as flower growers began to be driven out in the early 1930's.

The west slope of Dominguez Hill also had a cluster of Japanese flower growers before World War II, producing fall and winter chrysanthemums and winter stocks. The Whittier area also produced winter blooms. The San Fernando Valley and its eastern foothills were later added to the flower growing areas where land was still easily available. Hot and dry summers with the average maximum temperature reaching as high as 93°F. in July and August which is nearly ten degrees higher than that of Los Angeles, and occasional strong winds, harsh to many sensitive flowers, did not allow the successful growth of a wide variety of flowers here during the summer season. The region, therefore, became a successful winter producer.

### II- 3. Characteristics of Producers and Production

Very few Japanese agriculturists owned land in southern California. Instead they rented it. According to a survey of eight southern California counties in October, 1911, 25,620 acres were under Japanese control. Of these, 81.7 percent was under cash rental, and another 11.9 percent was share cropped. Two years later, the acreage under Japanese control had risen to 32,100 acres, only 1,518 of these were directly owned.<sup>15)</sup> Japanese agriculture in Los Angeles county followed the same pattern. While in 1907 some 6,300 acres of cultivated land were under the control of 519 Japanese farms in the county, about 5,200 acres, or 82 percent, were cash rented.<sup>16)</sup> Three years later it was estimated that Japanese owned 1,429 acres of cultivated land while renting more than 5,000 acres.<sup>17)</sup>

Flower production followed this general pattern. In late 1911, 37 acres were Japanese-owned and 158 acres were under cash rent by flower producers in Los Angeles. In the following years, although the area under cultivation increased enormously, the ratio of owned to rented land did not change much. In 1940 members of the Southern California Flower Market controlled 2,549 acres, of which 514 acres (20.2 percent) were owned and the rest was leased land. Of the owned acreage at that date, 218 acres were held in the name of Nisei, and 170 acres were held by companies. The total cultivated area was 1,635 acres, some two thirds of the total.<sup>18)</sup>

This low ratio of rented land among flower growers in southern California contrasted with

the situation in the San Francisco Bay Area where growers owned most of the land that they used. The northern California industry, of course, had had a much longer history, being well established before the Alien Land Law of California was passed in 1913. The southern California counterpart experienced its major development much later.

The warmer southern California climate encouraged field production of flowers in the Japanese-dominated industry in southern California, while in the Bay Area greenhouses had been the rule. The average January temperature of Los Angeles is around 55°F., some six degrees higher than that of the Bay Area. Los Angeles' average maximum and minimum temperatures of this winter month are 65° and 45° respectively, while those of Oakland are 56° and 38° and San Jose, 57° and 40°. Since greenhouses required higher capital investment, control of land through fee simple ownership was preferred where they were used, but the semi-permanent white structures gave Bay Area growers considerably less mobility than the open field operators to the south. Since available good land was much scarcer in the Bay Area, land purchase was often the only way to acquire growing rights. The greater mobility of southern California growers was to prove a significant advantage since many flowers are sensitive to repeated planting on the same land. Especially when two or three crops were grown during one season, harmful fungi, bacteria, and viruses might develop in the soil, making costly sterilization and other special care techniques obligatory. In the end, Bay Area growers persisted longer even in the face of surging urbanization, as signified by the greenhouse enclaves around the San Francisco Bay that survive even today.

Japanese tended to specialize in annual flowers grown from seeds, while non-Japanese more commonly grew perennials. As the Japanese often had difficulty in purchasing land or even obtaining long-term leases, this specialization in annual products was in part their adaptation to a condition in which they had no guarantee to continuous access to the land.

Further, many of the early growers were not flower specialists. They often grew flowers as a sideline to other agricultural crops especially in the first decades of the present century. Strawberry and vegetable growers might turn to flower production especially between November and March, after the fall harvest and before a new season started for vegetables or strawberries. Bushberry growers raised flowers between berry vines. In 1907, the Burnett (now Signall Hill) area had 12 Japanese flower growers, among whom only four were flower specialists, the others growing both flowers and vegetables. In 1913, among 52 Japanese flower production units in the vicinity of Los Angeles, only 17 were flower specialists (Table 1). This combination of crops gave early growers more security and balance, especially when the marketing of flowers was not yet well organized. Growers' increasing specialization in flowers came mainly after 1930.

Southern California floriculture before World War II was also characterized by the cultivation of diverse varieties of flowers which by far exceeded those grown in the Bay Area. Over one hundred kinds were probably raised in the fields. In terms of production area, in 1940, stocks ranked first covering 272 acres, followed by pompons (188 acres), asters (184 acres), delphinium (95 acres), and sweet peas (89 acres). The flowers which were dominant in northern California such as carnations, roses, and chrysanthemums appeared at the very bottom of the list, occupying 21, 10 and 31 acres, respectively.<sup>19)</sup>

Production value expanded remarkably during the course of time. In 1911 the annual Japanese production of flowers was estimated to be around \$130,000. Six years later it was roughly estimated to be from \$500,000 to \$700,000. In the early 1930's Japanese probably produced \$1,750,000 to \$2,000,000 worth flowers. In 1939 total flower sales, including both Japanese and

Table 1. Acreage of Japanese farms growing flowers in the vicinity of Los Angeles, 1913.

crop combination	Los Alamitos	Burnett	El Monte	San Gabriel	Newmark	Total	
						acres	number of farm
Flowers	8, 8, 8, 7	13, 8, 5, 5, 5, 5, ?, ?	—	5, 3	5, 5, ?	90+	17
Flowers & berries	17, 17, 13, 4	25, 16, 13, 12, 11, 10, 10, ?, ?	—	5	8.5, 9	175.5+	17
Flowers, berries, & vegetables	14	45, 35, 25, 10, 10, 10, 10	—	—	—	159	8
Flowers & vegetables	10	40, 21, 10, 9, 6	—	20, 10	—	126	8
Garden plants	—	—	—	—	5, 5	10	2
Garden plants & vegetables	—	5	—	—	—	5	1
Garden plants & berries	—	—	13	—	—	13	1
Flowers & nursery stocks	—	—	—	5, 5	—	10	2
Total	106	379+	13	53	37.5+	588.5+	
Total number of farm	10	30	1	7	8		56

Note: Number in the table indicates acreage of each farm. The survey was made in February, 1913. Compiled from *Rafu Nenkan 7* (Los Angeles, 1914).

non-Japanese grown, amounted to some \$3,550,000, of which nearly 80 percent were shared by field-grown flowers.<sup>20)</sup> According to an old-timer, the Japanese segment of the industry in the 1910's constituted some 60 percent of Los Angeles' floriculture in terms of number of growers and 35 percent in terms of production, which, by the time of evacuation, had increased to a little over 50 percent both in numbers and values.<sup>21)</sup> There were over 200 Japanese flower growers in the Los Angeles area at the time including some 150 Southern California Flower Market members, with about 30 belonging to the Union Flower Market, and additional 20 peddlers.

Flower production was a family operation. Registration cards at the Japanese Consulate of Los Angeles as of 1924 counted 144 individuals or families engaged in floriculture in the area. Fifteen were single males and eleven were married but without wives present. Thirty-six were couples without children. Seventy-six growers had one to nine children, the average number of children of these families being 2.8.<sup>22)</sup> In the late 1930's flower growers in southern California employed an average of three workers. The average size of farm was nine acres, of which seven acres were under cultivation.<sup>23)</sup>

There was no single dominant prefectural group among the Japanese flower growers in 1924. Among the 144 growers mentioned, 24 came from Fukushima, 16 from Wakayama, 13 from Fukuoka, and 10 from Tottori. Here there were no such dominant figures as the Bay Area's Domoto brothers. Furthermore, field production allowed people to get into the business easily without a large amount of initial capital or specialized floricultural skills. Flowers were often grown on the side, with another crop predominating.

#### II-4. The Southern California Flower Market, Inc.

The Southern California Flower Market, Inc. played the central role in the history of the Japanese flower industry in southern California comparable to that of the California Flower Market of San Francisco. Although this was an organization established and operated exclusively by the Japanese, the ethnic exclusiveness was not explicitly stated. According to the articles of association the purposes of organization were to operate a market place, to improve the condition of horticulturists, agriculturists, floriculturists and nurserymen, to deal with products grown by the members and to manage business related to this operation. Products grown outside southern California were not to be handled. One who sought membership had to apply with two or more signatures of members and pay the very considerable entrance fee of \$2,000. Japanese was the "official" language, all the articles of associations and other documents having been written in Japanese.

The next year after its establishment at its South Los Angeles location, the market moved to nearby Wall Street. Five years later another shift and further expansion was discussed, and three lots located three blocks to the south on the same street were leased for a term of fifty years beginning in October 1922.<sup>24)</sup> The shift was completed the following year and membership at the time numbered 137. Within less than a decade, a further expansion was considered in view of the growing number of Japanese flower growers and their increased production. During the economic depression of the 1930's vegetable growers changed over to flower production. The construction work was done by the Golden Sky Investment Corporation, a Nisei-owned holding company which actually owned the market building and leased it to the Flower Market. The new marketplace area covered some 20,000 square feet at the same location. The membership at this time was 159 (Photo 1).



Photo 1. Southern California Flower Market in the early 1930's.  
Reprinted from Nanka Hana Ichiba (1952): *History of the Southern California Flower Market*, Nanka Hana Ichiba, Los Angeles.

Activities of the organization were not limited to providing its members with the market. It also engaged in such functions as research, mutual aid, cooperative purchasing, and shipping. A research department established in the early 1930's functioned most efficiently promoting

savings, sponsoring excursions, and floral fairs as well as round-table discussions on new techniques of flower production, and providing members with other information useful for the management of nursery. The Japanese language *Flower Market News* was published, first as a monthly publication but later only on special occasions.

Expanding the outlet for southern California flowers was one of the major concerns of the market from the beginning of its organization.<sup>25)</sup> A sales department was organized in late 1914 to promote shipment of flowers to eastern cities. Two years later this department, which was functioning unsatisfactorily, purchased the Golden Floral Company which had been earlier organized by some members of the Market to undertake shipment of flowers to Chicago and other markets. Although attempts at long distant shipment in these early years were not always successful, they offered a basis for the large-scale expansion of later years. By the outbreak of World War II, long distance shipments of flowers became a commonplace. Eastern demand for southern California flowers was especially large during the winter. Ice packing was used, movement all being by rail.<sup>26)</sup> Out-of-state shipment amounted to some 500 carloads annually, each carload containing 200 boxes. Southern states, including Oklahoma and Texas, received a surprising 80 percent of these shipments, the Midwestern and Eastern states being mainly supplied by Bay Area growers.

The idea of the mutual assistance department was based upon a Japanese common practice of giving *koden*, a monetary offering for the dead, to the family of the deceased. This department offered 500 dollars *koden* upon a death of a member or his spouse. Table rent was raised by five dollars and charges for push trucks in the marketplace were accumulated, in order to create a reserve fund for this aid activity. From 1934 through 1940, 15 members received *koden* from this department. Although this practice was common among the overseas Japanese, the Southern California Flower Market was the only trade association in southern California which practiced this mutual assistance on a systematic basis.<sup>27)</sup> It created a sense of solidarity and security against a possible disaster. Although the activity had to be interrupted due to the wartime evacuation, one hundred dollars of *koden* was offered to each of the families of the thirteen members who died during the war.<sup>28)</sup> No similar program seems ever to have been in effect in any of the Bay Area organizations studied.

Operating costs for the market were met by membership fees charged according to acreage and kind of flowers grown, and table rent in the marketplace according to location.<sup>29)</sup> On the cemented floor, 157 tables were arranged in two circles, which were divided into two groups, A and B according to the proximity to the entrance on Wall Street. Each table was numbered, assignment of tables taking place at the annual meeting of the members each January.

Although flower markets are known for their early morning activity, the opening time of the Southern California Flower Market changed several times in response to changing relationships between growers and buyers and competition with the non-Japanese operated market, the American Florist Exchange, located across the street. When the new marketplace opened in 1923, it started with the opening time of eight o'clock, which was soon revised to seven, then to six. Growers tended to prefer a late opening while retailers preferred earlier opening hours. The competing flower market originally opened earlier than the Japanese one, which was thought to weaken the competitive position of the Japanese market. In the late 1920's, both markets opened as early as five in the morning. In the meantime, an agreement was reached between the two markets located face-to-face across Wall Street to open at six a.m. with the exception of the week before major holidays when they were to open one hour earlier.<sup>30)</sup>

The original articles of this Japanese association stating that "products grown outside southern California should not be dealt with (General Rules, Article 2)," sharply contrasted with the present situation in which all kinds of flowers from the world over are handled. This restrictive policy was to protect local flower growers against the dumping of northern California flowers which greenhouse owners might buy at low prices to be kept in their greenhouses until the market was good.<sup>31)</sup> They apparently had to keep an eye on each other so that none of them would unduly expand his acreage. It was also agreed to sell the same quality products at the same market price during the market hours. Thus the association operated strictly. In 1917, two members were dismissed for behavior that "neglected the mutual benefit of the Market and decisions of the board of directors."<sup>32)</sup>

The Southern California Flower Market had a restrictive membership policy due to the limited capacity of the market.<sup>33)</sup> The membership stayed at 159 for a long time. The slow growth did not come close to keeping pace with the total number of Japanese flower growers in the Los Angeles area. The restrictive policy was further manifest in the remarkable increase in the association's entrance fee.<sup>34)</sup> This restrictive policy was probably successful in preventing those already in the business from acute competition and in maintaining a certain level of market prices for flowers. Without table space in the flower market, flower growers were put in a less competitive and disadvantageous position. Svensrud, in his study of a Japanese agricultural community "X" in the suburbs of Los Angeles in the early 1930's, mentioned: "Thirty of the families grow vegetables. Most of the families, previously raised flowers, but they are tending to change to raising vegetables as it costs them more to market flowers, due to the high rents for flower stalls at the public market where they sell their produce at wholesale."<sup>35)</sup>

This restrictive administration policy eventually resulted in the establishment of a second Japanese flower market in Los Angeles and an intra-ethnic dispute. The Union Flower Market had been organized by two dozen flower growers, both Japanese and white, in late 1930. Some growers, mainly newcomers in the business kept from joining the Southern California Flower Market, rented space near the marketplace and sold their flowers outdoors before they organized this second flower market. A proposed merger of the two markets which ended in a failure in 1931 was the principal cause of the long term dispute, which led to the largest lawsuit in the history of the Japanese community of southern California. Both flower markets published statements in a Los Angeles' Japanese newspaper, *Rafu Shimpō*,<sup>36)</sup> while attempts within the Japanese community to mediate this dispute failed. In the spring of 1934 the Union Flower Market sued the Southern California Flower Market for the damage of some \$300,000. This legal dispute lasted for more than three years until the case was closed in favor of the Southern California Flower Market. By this time the ill feelings between the two groups had faded.<sup>37)</sup> The incident well demonstrates the cohesive and exclusive nature of the Southern California Flower Market as a protective trade organization. Only certain members of the Japanese community, those 150 who were its members had access to the economic benefits it provided. The controversy clearly exposed the factionalism existing in the Japanese community of southern California.

## II-5. Inter-ethnic Relations

With an increasing number and the success of Japanese flower growers, anti-Japanese sentiment grew among the non-Japanese population in the business in the 1920's. Japanese nurseries began to be investigated by the public prosecutor's office for violations of the city code which, from 1922, prohibited establishment of new nurseries in residential districts.<sup>38)</sup> Japanese in the



business generally perceived this sentiment not as a product of their distinct ethnicity, but rather as a response to fears and jealousies to which their activities had given rise among non-Japanese growers.

Some of the charges brought against Japanese farmers included working on Sundays and the use of female field hands. For those diligent immigrants trying hard to make ends meet and to improve their economic conditions, Sunday work seemed a normal activity, as did working women in these family-type operations. Responding to these charges, the Southern California Flower Market at an extraordinary meeting held in 1919 stated that flower growers should respect the American custom and abolish work on Sundays and that women should not work in the fields.<sup>39)</sup> The Japanese flower market in Los Angeles continued to open even on Sundays.

Sunday work and women working in the field continued to be a controversial issue for Japanese farmers. In 1920, four Japanese agricultural associations in southern California distributed a notice among their fellow members, "Take a Day Off on Sundays." Although lengthy, it is worth reproducing it here (author's translation).

\* \* \* \* \*

#### TAKE A DAY OFF ON SUNDAYS

1. We should abolish Sunday work, except picking strawberries, melons, vegetables and others for the Monday market. In the United States, Sunday is supposed to be the day for rest when people rest themselves after a week of work. When you work, you must spare no pains to work, and when you rest, you should take adequate rest. Otherwise your work efficiency is affected. Trains and horses quickly become useless if they are used without any break throughout the year. If you overexert yourself through carelessness in your youth, you fail in health and fall too soon into dotage. On Sundays, it is necessary to rest your body, nourish your mind and enjoy life. Exceptions will be unavoidable, as the picking of strawberries, vegetables, melons, etc. which must not be too ripe, and irrigation of the fields on assigned Sundays. But clever persons will be able to avoid work on Sundays by careful planning. You must stop weeding and using horses in the fields on this day under any circumstances. Do your work during the weekdays. If you believe you can continue to contradict American customs and that you must overexert yourself, you are very wrong. Please do not. Such vain efforts will only promote anti-Japanese sentiment.
2. Field work by women on Sundays should absolutely be abolished: Neither men nor women should work on Sundays. It is especially wrong for females to work in the fields on Sundays. Any such work is likely to be attended with trouble, and women's presence in the fields will double this. Thus, Sunday field work should be abolished. If the present situation continues, it will be increasingly difficult to defend ourselves before the Japanese exclusion movement.
3. Every effort should be made to minimize the use of women workers in the fields, even on weekdays: It is a mistake to make women work in the fields. There is plenty to do at home as wives and mothers. Their responsibilities include education of the children, preparation of meals, doing the laundry, repairing clothes, and cleaning of the house, as well as many other things that reduce living expenses. It is a great mistake for them to work in the fields all the time, thus neglecting the other work. You do not have to always imitate people, but you may learn good things even from Americans. You should be careful not to sow the seeds of your own exclusion. It is embarrassing when slovenly behavior of some Japanese give others trouble. From now on, we must correct our bad practices and promote good customs. Please understand the situation, observe the above provisions, and be a good Japanese.

July 1920

Central Japanese Association of Southern California ;  
Nippon-California Farmers Association ; Japanese  
Farmers Association of Southern California ; Strawberry

## Growers Association of Southern California

\* \* \* \* \*

In order to help ease the growing anti-Japanese sentiment, the Southern California Flower Market dropped its Japanese-only membership policy in 1915. The market was opened to non-members, including non-Japanese, when space was available, although the space limitation did not allow them to bring this decision into practice.

The greatest competitor of the Southern California Flower Market was the American Florists Exchange established in 1921 in downtown Los Angeles by some 50 flower growers of other ethnic stocks. Later it relocated to Wall Street, across from the Japanese marketplace.<sup>40)</sup> While at the Japanese market growers themselves brought in flowers and displayed them on tables, consignment sales dominated the transaction at the American market.<sup>41)</sup> Japanese growers did not "cross the street" until the early 1930's. One old-timer in the business recalls that some and perhaps most of the problems were obviously derived from language difficulties.<sup>42)</sup>

Improvement in the relationship between Japanese and white flower markets came in the early 1930's. The Southern California Floral Association, Inc. was organized in May 1933 under the National Recovery Administration act through the collaboration of both Japanese and white flower growers. This was reorganized five months later as a trade association. The board of directors was made up of approximately equal numbers of Japanese and Americans throughout the pre-World War II period.<sup>43)</sup>

## II- 6. Generational Transition

Generational transition of leadership from Issei to Nisei mainly took place after the war, but it was beginning to be evident in pre-war days. In the late 1920's, only an occasional Nisei helped his Issei father in the market, in the spare time from their school. By 1940, most Issei had reached the retirement age, while the second-generation population in Los Angeles county numbered some 25,000. Among Southern California Flower Market members in that year, half were over 50 years old and 10 were Nisei. Another 40 or more Nisei were engaged in transactions in the marketplace on behalf of their Issei members.

A Junior Floricultural Society had been established within the Southern California Flower Market in 1933. It was designed to promote fraternal relationships and to expand knowledge of floriculture among Nisei. It sometimes sponsored parties and picnics as well as lectures and excursions. The Golden Sky Investment Corporation, a holding company of the Southern California Flower Market, was owned and operated by Nisei. Around 1940, 484 Nisei and Sansei were counted in the families of the Japanese flower growers belonging to the Market. Of these were 136 men and women aged 20 years and over.<sup>44)</sup>

## II- 7. Retail Florists

Japanese involvement in the floral industry in the San Francisco Bay Area was largely limited to the production sphere. The retail florist business was taken over by other ethnic groups. In contrast, Japanese in Los Angeles were also active in the florist business at the retail level. The modern history of the city of Los Angeles is much shorter than that of San Francisco, and the florist trade had not yet been taken over by any other group when the Japanese arrived. In San Francisco there were already 59 florists in business in 1900, while Los Angeles in the same year had only 14 such shops.<sup>45)</sup> The explosive rate of population growth in southern California created a rapidly expanding demand for floral products there. Japanese thus

found this retail business waiting to be filled. Their activities as florists were certainly supported by Japanese engaged in the flower production and retailing of flowers went hand in hand from the beginning.

Since the opening of the first Japanese flower shop in 1906, the number of Japanese retail florist gradually grew. The Southern California Florist Association was established in 1922 as an ethnic organization consisting only of Japanese members. A decade later its membership reached 73.<sup>46)</sup> Right before the outbreak of World War II, there were over 200 Japanese retail florists in the Los Angeles area, accounting for one quarter of the total such retailers.<sup>47)</sup> The grower-retailer alignment was thus observed in the Los Angeles' Japanese floriculture to a limited extent. Such ethnic continuity of channels existed in the production and marketing of fresh produce in much an exaggerated manner.

### III. Relocattion and Reconstrction

The outbreak of the war between the United States and Japan had a great impact on the Japanese community in the United States. With the subsequent evacuation of the group from the West Coast, Japanese agricultural activities, so prosperous prior to this time, suffered an abrupt and even catastrophic interruption. The evacuation exerted far reaching psychological as well as economic influences on the Japanese involved and brought about changes in the locational pattern of the group.<sup>48)</sup>

The period between December 7, 1941, and the mass evacuation was that of special turmoil for Japanese engaged in the floral business. On December 8, one florist of Glendale, Los Angeles county, reported a business of only 50 cents all day long against the usual 100 dollars of sales. The subsequent days were as bad, sales seldom reachig as much as two dollars a day. As wartime travel restrictions increased, customers continued to stay away until he finally closed the shop on April 7, 1942. By this time the majority of the Japanese florists had already gone out of business.<sup>49)</sup> The American public naturally was reluctant to do business with Japanese following Pearl Harbor. The wartime econmy also restricted the demand for flowers which were obviously secondary items, readily dispensed with.

The Southern California Flower Market quickly responded to the abrupt shift in outlook for their business. Preparation was made by the members to transfer all the rights of the management of the market from Issei to Nisei hands. Reasonably enough, Issei assumed that Nisei, who were American-born citizens presumably fully protected by the United States Constitution, would not experience treatment as enemy aliens. Even if all the Issei were evacuated, Nisei, they thought, could contiune to operate the marketplace and the auto park as well as flower production. They proposed to establish a nonprofit corporation, the Southern California Floral Exchange, 100 percent owned by Nisei. A license was granted to the corporation on January 26, 1942.<sup>50)</sup>

Despite all these efforts the situation worsened and the Nisei-owned Southern California Floral Exchange never functioned. Race, not citizenship or loyalty, was to become the criterion for evacuation. Issei who set their hopes on their Nisei children to carry on the industry were wrong and so were Nisei who thought their patriotic activities and American citizenship would fully protect them.

When the Japanese living in "military area no. 1" along the coast were advised to evacuate voluntarily into the inland areas, the Southern California Flower Market distributed forty

dollars to each member to facilitate the evacuation process. The Market also made an effort to look for land to which its members might move to establish a flower growers' colony outside the West Coast military areas. Representatives were sent to Western and Midwestern states searching for possible locations. These efforts in any case ended up in vain with the force migration decree in March, 1942.

The outbreak of the war had severely restricted the operation of the Japanese market on Wall Street in downtown Los Angeles. Japanese were placed under a curfew from eight in the evening through six in the morning, and under a six-mile radius travel restriction unless with special permission. Flower growers who used to travel from 15 to 35 miles to the downtown flower market to wholesale their flowers suffered great inconveniences. Market hours, which had been from four to ten o'clock in the morning, had to be adjusted, delaying the opening time for two hours. Credit restrictions for the Japanese tightened. Among white creditors there was a reluctance to extend credit to Japanese, given the uncertainty as to how long this ethnic group could remain at their present locations and the fact that they might not be able to return again to California once they were evacuated. Attempts were even made to discourage Japanese from remaining where they were.

Under these circumstances most Japanese flower growers stopped producing flowers. Many attempts were made by outsiders to take over the Japanese operations. In the end some ninety percent of Japanese nurseries in the Los Angeles area were taken over by whites, almost always at severely reduced prices. In some cases, landlords stepped in and took over the business by cancelling the lease.<sup>51)</sup>

At the meeting of the board of directors in late March, it was decided to invest the legal advisor of the Southern California Flower Market, Inc. with full powers concerning the management of the market. The 105 members who had not yet been evacuated, submitted power of attorney to him. It was also decided to give members an extension for paying off their debt to the Market and its cooperative purchasing department until the reopening of the market expected after the war was over. Some of the stock at the cooperative purchasing department was returned to wholesalers while some was consigned for sale. All the accounts were closed on March 31, 1942. The Market and auto park were both leased to the United Wholesale Florists, on the condition that the lease could be cancelled at six months' notice. The part of April saw no Japanese in the marketplace, unfamiliar non-Japanese faces having taken over the scene.<sup>52)</sup>

When the Japanese disappeared from Wall Street the American-owned American Florist Exchange expanded its operation by purchasing land, expanding the marketplace and constructing an auto park. Flowers began to be grown more by non-Japanese ethnic groups such as Italians, Mexicans, Greeks, and Filipinos. Some of the new growers had formerly worked at Japanese flower farms. They took full advantage of this opportunity to climb the ladder from worker to nursery owner, using their experience with Japanese growers. Many of them enjoyed a booming business during the war. The flower business did not come under the control of Office of Price Administration and no OPA ceilings were established on flowers. The business actually did not suffer any of the wartime restrictions which others experienced, except for fertilizer availability which did not really become a serious problem. The flower business under non-Japanese control thus was booming and those in the business enjoyed a prosperous time and made substantial profits. Some of the Mexican and Filipino flower growers established at this time eventually became major producers.

During the evacuation period, Los Angeles flower growers were making efforts to prepare

for their return to their businesses. They communicated with their legal advisor and other related persons about the situation of the market. When temporary release to the West Coast became possible, directors of the board actively communicated with each other, sometimes visiting others at other centers, and sometimes visiting Los Angeles to hold meetings with those who managed the marketplace. Thus economic reconstruction of the flower business started even before the evacuees physically returned to the West Coast.

In order to resume business, land had to be acquired and equipment had to be purchased. Most of the Japanese growers in the Los Angeles area did not own land before the war. The Southern California Flower Market helped their members purchase necessary equipment and lease land for production. Now lacking their own flower market upon their return, there was no alternative but to do business with white wholesalers. To counteract this situation some ten Nisei growers organized the Golden State Wholesale Florist to handle the wholesaling of Japanese grown flowers. Its manager traveled throughout the country looking for customers of Japanese grown flowers from southern California.

With the increase of returnees, the Southern California Flower Market reopened. Office space was leased in November 1945, in the Japanese quarter of downtown Los Angeles to make preparations.<sup>53)</sup> This temporary office became a focal point of members both for the circulation of information and social reunions. The market was reopened in September 1946.

When the Japanese flower growers returned they found that industry had experienced some changes. The vacuum created by their absence had been filled by other growers, while structural changes had been taking place in the industry as well. In order to cope with these changes and to increase the competitive power of the Southern California Flower Market, which had been established over three decades earlier, reorganization was called for. It was time to pass the business on to the Nisei generation, the majority of whom had grown up in the industry and were ready to take on responsibility for it. A non-profit corporation, the Southern California Flower Market, Inc. was closed out, and in its place a new company, the Southern California Flower Growers, Inc. was established in August 1950. All the assets and belongings of the former organization were transferred to the new company which was to be responsible for all the debts of the old. The books of the Southern California Flower Market were closed in October, 1950. This succession from Issei leadership to Nisei was successful.<sup>54)</sup>

Flower growers were the group most quickly resumed business among Japanese engaged in farming in southern California. A Japanese telephone directory of 1950 listed 103 flower nurseries in Los Angeles.<sup>55)</sup> Although Japanese involvement in flower growing experienced a quick recovery, its locational pattern showed some change. They now had to look for space for their activities beyond the inner urban zone of Los Angeles. There was a sharp decline in beach areas as well as in central Los Angeles. San Fernando Valley, where space was easier to obtain, saw its flower-growing operations increase. It was especially those flower growers who did not have title to the land who had to look for new locations as well as purchasing new equipment for their operations.

The retail florist business in Los Angeles, in which the Japanese held a substantial dominance before the war through their ethnic trade association, proved difficult to reconstruct. During the evacuation, non-Japanese florists had taken over the trade and it was not easy for returnees to find shop space in good locations. Their recovery was very slow and the business never attained the pre-war level.<sup>56)</sup>

#### IV. Japanese Floriculture in Transition

After World War II California's floral industry expanded remarkably from the pre-war foundation. The development of transportation systems increasingly stimulated it by enlarging markets for California-grown flowers. California presently produces nearly half of the nation's total cut flowers. With this expansion, however, California floriculture has experienced multifaceted changes in the post-war decades. The structure of the industry has changed substantially, while its original locational pattern has been largely modified. In southern California, the Los Angeles area became exceeded by the new floricultural regions emerged along the sunny coast of San Diego, Ventura, and Santa Barbara counties.

The Japanese segment of the industry has experienced significant qualitative transformation in this changing picture of the industry.<sup>57)</sup> The socio-cultural milieu surrounding the Japanese in this industry has changed. In addition, the ethnic cooperativism which Issei growers had nourished so effectively prior to the war has lost most of its vitality.

##### IV-1. Los Angeles Area

The Japanese flower industry of Los Angeles has been experiencing changes following its reconstruction immediately after World War II. Those changes are, first of all, to be observed in the context of the area's agricultural trends. The decline of agriculture in Los Angeles county became most conspicuous after World War II. Its agricultural land which has long fed the rapidly increasing population of the metropolitan Los Angeles area has been constantly encroached on by urban land use. The acreage of intensive type farming, including citrus and other fruits and nuts, vegetables and berries, has continued to decline since the mid 1940's. Citrus fruits which covered a little over 55,000 acres in 1940 and some 47,000 acres ten years later had shrunk to merely 254 acres in 1980. Vegetable acreage has been reduced from 49,000 acres in 1940 to 6,446 acres four decades later. Field crops and range land still dominate the county's agriculture in terms of area, but they are found in the periphery of the vast county's territory which covers 2.6 million square miles. The production values of citrus and vegetables shared 41 and 23 percent respectively in the total plant production of 1940, while they were reduced to only 0.2 and 19 percent respectively in 1980.

Cut flower production in Los Angeles county has also experienced significant changes since World War II. Production values of cut flowers increased right after the war reaching a peak of some \$16 million in 1948. Values steadily decreased thereafter. Considering the high inflation rates in recent decades, this continuing decline from \$16 million of 1948 to some \$6 million of 1980 must be more acute than the figures literally show. On the other hand, foliage and potted plant and flower production has expanded since the 1960's and especially during the 1970's. Their values exceeded that of cut flowers by 1970 and have continued to rise. In 1980 foliage and potted plant and flower production was valued at some \$13 million.

The decline of cut flower production is more precisely depicted in Fig. 3. Carnations, the highest value product of the county, have experienced a major decline since the peak was reached in 1962, although an unexplained sharp jump took place from 1979 to 1980. The production value of pompons, the second largest crop, has not changed much over the last two decades. But chrysanthemum production dropped a great deal from the peak period of the early 1960's,

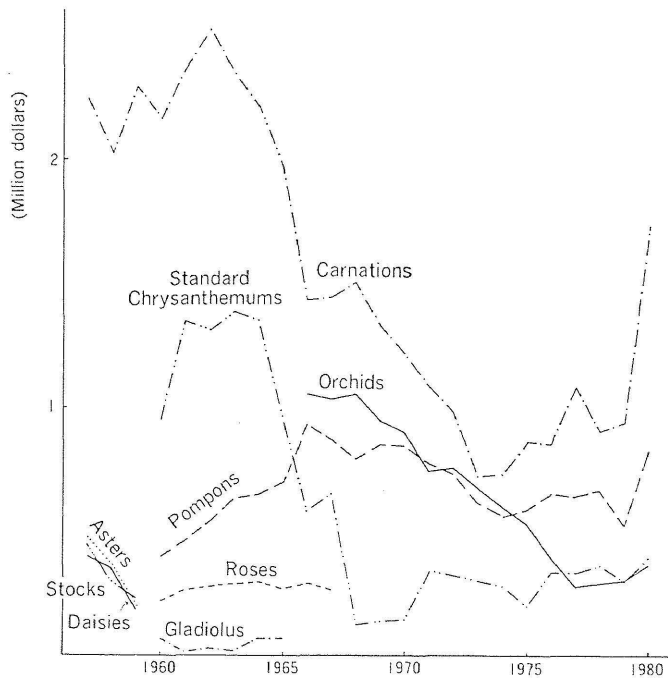


Fig. 3. Los Angeles county, flower production values.

Source: Los Angeles county, *Agricultural Crop Reports*.

and has remained low during the past decade. Orchids have been declining steadily. Other major flowers which were important before the war such as roses, gladiolus, asters, stocks and daisies do not even appear in the county's statistics in the past two decades.

The characteristics of the flower industry have changed, too. After the war, the seasonality among the producing districts observed prior to the war disappeared, (i.e. the winter crop coming mainly from the inland and summer crop from the Beach zones). This was partly because of the declining number of flower growers in these districts, and also because improvements in production techniques and facilities have made possible the year round production of flowers.

The size of Japanese nurseries that were reestablished after World War II has generally greatly expanded. Now large growers have the operation of over 30 acres of greenhouse area while medium size growers range from five to twenty acres. Smaller growers are generally specialized in high value products in order to remain competitive in the industry.

Unlike Japanese growers before the war, many growers now hold titles to land. They have been under increasing zoning and other restrictions due to the urban fringe location of their nurseries. But ever increasing land values have brought substantial profits to landowners who decided to sell whether quitting the operation or shifting to new location where land was less valuable. Many a flower growers has made his fortune not by raising flowers but simply by selling his property. When a grower has decided to relocate to a less crowded location, usually to the north or south along the southern California coast, returns from his property in the metropolis has provided the financial basis for his shift and expansion.

The diversity of flowers grown has decreased significantly. Contemporary growers must be commercially competitive. Growing a great many types of flowers in limited space, as many Issei typically did prior to the war, combining business and hobby, is no longer economically



feasible. Increasing operating costs for growers to seek the highest possible returns per square feet and per man-hour.

Both sides of Wall Street between Seventh and Eighth Streets of downtown Los Angeles still retain the flavor of flowers. This is still the wholesaling center of the southern California industry (Photo 2). The sotheastern side has eleven wholesale florists and suppliers including

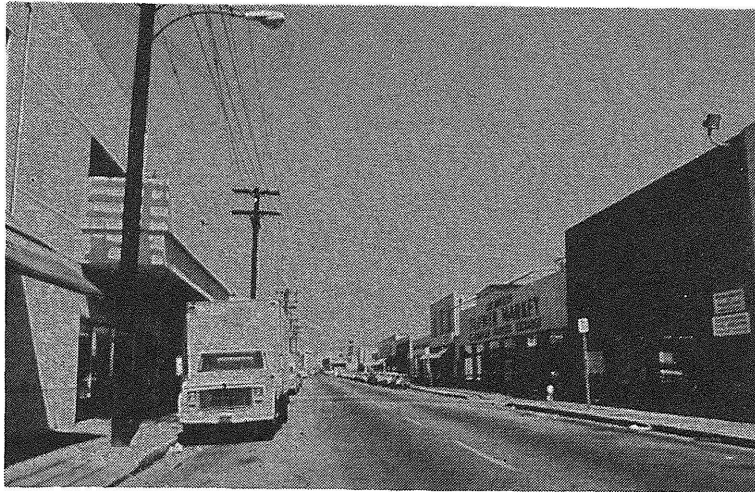


Photo 2. Los Angeles' flower terminal on Wall Street. The white structure on the left is the newly opened Los Angeles Wholesale Flower Terminal operated by the Southern California Flower Growers, Inc.

the Los Angeles Flower Market (American Florist Exchange) with some 60 tenants, a traditionally white flower market. Three wholesalers on this side are now Japanese-owned. On the other side of the street are the Japanese-owned Southern California Flower Growers and the San Lorenzo Nursery Co. along with a non-Japanese wholesale florist. A restaurant housed here offers a place of meeting and information circulation among those related in the terminal.

The Southern California Flower Market, established and operated by Issei before World War II, was reorganized into the Southern California Flower Growers, Inc. in 1950, as a Nisei owned and operated corporation. During the past three decades this traditional ethnic organization of the Japanese has experienced many changes. Japanese is no longer their "official" language. Unlike the pre-war period when the market's stockholders were almost exclusively flower growers, some 55 percent of the present 157 shareholders are non-growers. Now non-shareholders can rent space in the market. The market currently has five commission merchants, fifteen wholesalers and some 60 grower-wholesalers. Seven large northern California growers hold shares, while there is one white stockholder in this traditionally all-Japanese company. The market currently has three non-Japanese tenants, a Filipino and two whites. Non-Japanese elements are increasingly apparent in terms of tenant and their employees. Grower members of the Market no longer occupy the cohesive locational pattern which was observed prior to the war, as many have moved their production activities beyond the immediate Los Angeles area (Fig. 4). Annual meetings are the only time when all the stockholders get together. Social and fraternal events, which were sponsored by the Market prior to the war, are no longer held.

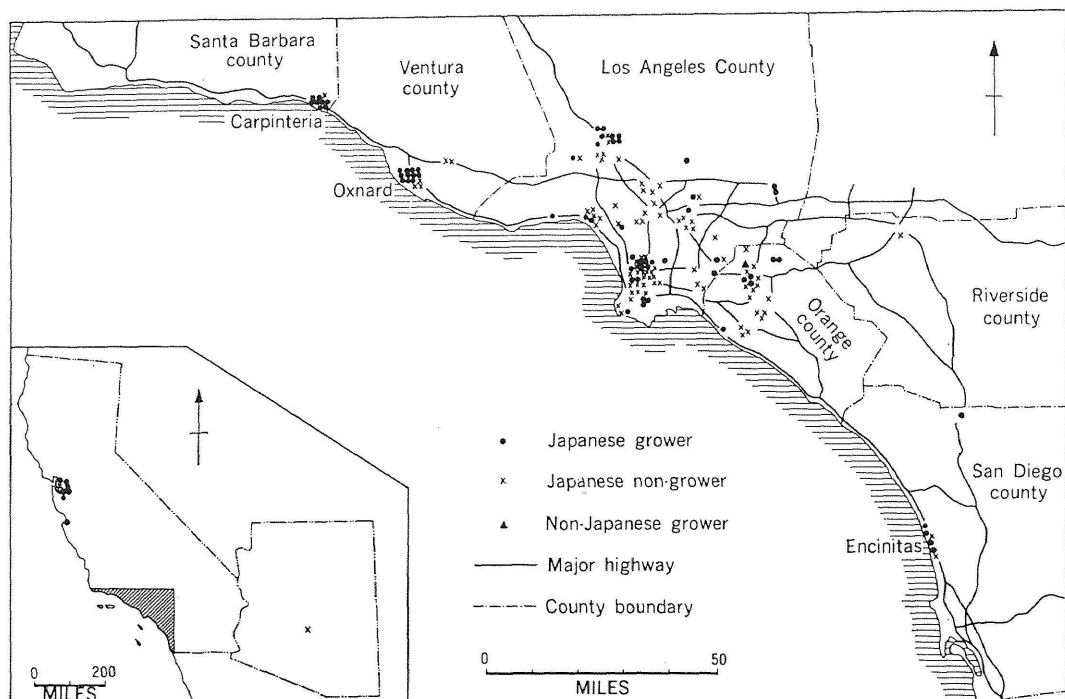


Fig. 4. Distribution of the stockholders of the Southern California Flower Growers, Inc., 1980.

Source : The Southern California Flower Growers, Inc.

The most recent innovation in this center of the floral industry is the construction of the Los Angeles Wholesale Flower Terminal by the Japanese-owned Southern California Flower Growers, Inc. completed in the fall of 1981. This is really an extension and expansion of its traditional marketplace. The new two-story building has a business space of some 103,000 square feet, while the old marketplace had 60,000 square feet for transaction. All tenants have expanded their operations. This new flower terminal also has ample parking space, so crucial to an urban wholesale market. On top of the old marketplace two stories of parking place were constructed while the roof of the extended building is also used for parking. This expansion represents the positive outlook of Nisei growers for the future of the industry. But this positive outlook is purely economic. It no longer implies ethnic ties or the cultural cohesion these formerly represented.

#### IV-2. New Development in Coastal Southern California

A major expansion of flower production beyond the traditional center of the Los Angeles metropolitan area took place after World War II (Fig. 5). The extension was both southward and northward along the coastline of southern California. In San Diego county, the Encinitas area constitutes the core of the industry, while the Oxnard area of Ventura county and Carpinteria in Santa Barbara county are similarly important flower producing centers to the north. Goleta, north of Santa Barbara is to a lesser extent significant, while the Lompoc area to the west has been for some time one of the centers of the nation's flower seed industry.<sup>58)</sup>

The coastal terraces of San Diego county favored by a mild climate and available land

attracted flower growers as early as the 1920's to meet local demands. But commercial floriculture developed only after World War II, having been stimulated by the availability of rapid highway and air transportation to other parts of the county. The Encinitas-Carlsbad zone, on the coast, is the principal growing region of the county. Here are generally found moderately fertile, deep, well drained sandy soils on gently sloping land.

In a San Diego county agriculture dominated by livestock, early vegetables, avocados and citrus, cut flower production remained negligible until the early 1960's. Flowers did not appear in the county's agricultural crop reports until 1957 when they represented only 2.9 percent of the total farm production value. In 1960, the cut flower production value amounted to \$2.8 million and that of indoor decoratives, \$1.1 million. These combined figures were only 3.7 percent of the county's total agricultural production which was still dominated by livestock (46 percent). Carnations and gladiolus were the two dominant flower crops. A decade later, the value of floral production had reached \$17.5 million, or 12 percent of the county's total agricultural production.

Floral production had reached some \$60 million by 1980, the largest of any California county, more than tripling that of 1970. Cut flower production remained at the 1975 level, while indoor decoratives increased remarkably during the second half of the 1970's. The flower production of the county is characterized by a wide range of products, but with high specialization of each grower in a limited number of flowers. Some 90 percent of local flowers are estimated to be shipped to out-of-state wholesalers.

The floral industry in San Diego county, flower growers as well as wholesalers and shippers, are organized under the San Diego County Flower Association, a trade association headquartered in Encinitas.<sup>59)</sup> There are 14 Japanese members (16 percent) among them, mainly growers. No clustering of Japanese nurseries exists.

On the coast north of Los Angeles development of flower production first took place after World War II in Goleta Valley, immediately beyond the city of Santa Barbara. The late 1940's saw only a few white growers producing flowers, such as stocks, delphiniums and daisies outdoors. At the end of the decade one white grower moved there from Montebello which is near Los Angeles, to grow roses and carnations in greenhouses. He was followed by a gypsophilla grower. Major expansion came in the early 1950's when two large white growers, one specialized in orchids, started production in Goleta Valley. In the mid 1950's the first Japanese growers, the Shinoda Brothers, moved to Goleta from Los Angeles.

Flower production of Santa Barbara county was largely limited to Goleta until the mid

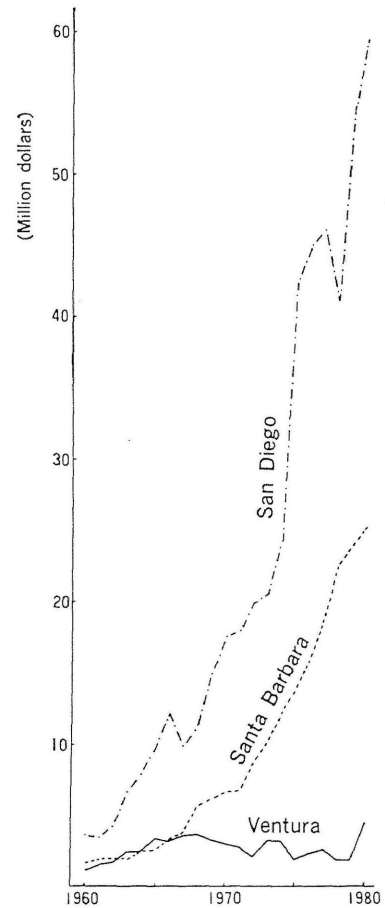


Fig. 5. Floral production of San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties.

Source: *Agricultural Crop Report* of each county.

1960's when the Carpinteria plain, east of Santa Barbara, began to emerge as another center of floriculture. It soon exceeded Goleta in importance. Several Japanese growers moved from the Los Angeles area to this location to take advantage of the near optimal conditions for flower production. Development in the Carpinteria area was accelerated in the late 1960's by a group of immigrants from Holland. Four Van Wingerdens brothers purchased property to start carnation production. In a short period of time, their family members started independent operations, while other Dutch also moved to this location. This process has created the concentration of 18 Dutch nurseries in Carpinteria, mainly growing pompons. As of 1981 there were 41 flower growers in Santa Barbara county, the majority being located in Carpinteria. Among them are 13 Nisei growers.

Flower growers of Santa Barbara county have recently complained about the tightened zoning regulations imposed by the state's new Coastal Commission. Californians voted in November, 1972, to protect the state's coastline by establishing the California Coastal Zone Act of 1972. Due to restrictive land use policies on this narrow coastal terrace of exclusive homes, newcomers in the area have difficulty obtaining land or permits, while existing nurseries cannot easily expand their operations. In some cases requests have taken as much as two years to be approved. Under these circumstances, new development has been curtailed.<sup>60)</sup>

The Oxnard Plain, with fertile sandy loam alluvial soils, has long been the center of agricultural activities in Ventura county. The plain enjoys a mild coastal climate with cool summers, being protected against heat and cold extremes so common in the interior. Since the beginning of irrigated agriculture around the turn of the century, the area's farming has been dominated first by sugar beets, then by lima beans and most recently by citrus. The area has long been the nation's main lemon production district.

Commercial flower production started in the late 1950's. Japanese growers in San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles county first moved to the Oxnard area to avoid urban congestion, smog, and the excessively warm summers that had proved damaging to flowers. Before World War II when refrigeration techniques were underdeveloped, San Fernando Valley-grown-flowers had advantages, for flowers grown under the hot climate have longer durability. Coast-grown flowers, due to moisture in the air, could not stand long distance shipment as well and were often damaged on the way. Development of transportation and refrigeration techniques solved this problem, making San Fernando no longer competitive as a flower growing area. In this traditional citrus region of Oxnard several lemon orchards have been converted to flower production. Because of a wide coastal plain that is beyond the Coastal Commission's jurisdiction, no legal restrictions are imposed on growers here.

In these new floricultural regions of southern California, Nisei flower growers no longer form a cohesive cultural group. Japanese nurseries are increasingly dispersed geographically. Southern California Flower Growers' members still market their products in the traditional downtown flower market of Los Angeles, but there are numerous alternatives. Numerous Japanese producers are not stockholders in, and have no relation with, the traditionally Japanese organization. Nisei growers seem to have less and less knowledge of the activities of other flower growers of the same ethnic stock, and indeed appear to have little interest in them. Japanese flower growers, thus, have largely lost both the geographical and cultural closeness and cohesiveness that characterized them prior to World War II.

## V. Conclusions

The present paper described and analyzed the evolution of Japanese flower industry in southern California from its initiation before the turn of the century through the present. Special attention was paid to the ethnic characteristics of the industry and their changes. It became clear that ethnic cooperativism played an important role in the successful participation of the Japanese immigrants in this intensive agriculture prior to World War II. The changing geography of Japanese floriculture in southern California after the war reflects both factors internal to this culture group and those external in the larger society. The considerations which once functioned to promote ethnic cohesion and cooperativism more recently have worked in the opposite direction to lessen them. The ethnic character appears to continue to diminish in the future and the kind that might be maintained in the industry and in the Japanese-American community at large may be quite arbitrary ones kept up by individual discretion, not by external forces.

## Acknowledgements

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- 8) Although the economic condition of rural Japanese gradually improved, the "shack landscape" continued to prevail. Burnight observed in 1920: "It seems strange to come upon a ranch in full bearing ; covering from ten to forty acres, and showing every evidence of prosperity, and then to find a group of shacks in one corner which serve as the house, barn and stables of the farmer. Often there can be seen in the barn or beside the house an expensive automobile which is further evidence of the economic standing of the owner." A building inspector of Los Angeles county mentioned in the same year a great improvement made in the living conditions of Japanese farmers : "Ten years ago the shacks of

- the Japanese had but one room; they had dirt floors; the cooking was done over a crude stone fireplace which had no chimney; and a low, shelf-like structure was built across the entire length of one side of the room and served as a bed for the entire family. Now the conditions are much better; the bed room is separated from the main living room by a partition; wooden floors have been installed; and furniture is beginning to make its appearance." R. F. Burnight (1920): The Japanese problem in the agricultural district of Los Angeles county. M. A. thesis, University of Southern California, pp. 30-31.
- 9) Nanka Hana Ichiba (1952): *History of the Southern California Flower Market*. Nanka Hana Ichiba, Los Angeles, p. 9 (in Japanese).
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- 11) *ibid.*, p. 11.
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- 13) *Nichibei nenkan* 7 (San Francisco, 1911), p. 169.
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- 15) *Rafu nenkan* 7 (Los Angeles, 1914), pp. 61-62.
- 16) *Rafu nenkan* 1 (Los Angeles, 1907), pp. 52-68.
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- 19) *ibid.*, pp. 75-77,
- 20) *Nichibei nenkan* (San Francisco, 1911), p. 168; *Nanka nihonjin nenkan* (Los Angeles, 1918), p. 83; and Nanka Kasho Kumiai (1933): *History of the Southern California Florist Association*. Nanka Kasho Kumiai, Los Angeles, pp. 66-67 (in Japanese).
- 21) Oral history of Frank Kuwahara, Japanese American Research Project (JARP) Collection, University of California, Los Angeles.
- 22) The Japanese Consulate of Los Angeles, "Registration cards, 1920-1924," in JARP Collection, Most of these flower growers had followed a step migration, having passed through northern areas on the way to Los Angeles. As to the port of entry of the same growers in the mid-1920's, 67 percent had arrived at San Francisco and 22 percent at Seattle.
- 23) Nanka Hana Ichiba, *op. cit.* footnote 9, pp. 92-93.
- 24) These lots were leased at a yearly rent of \$4,749.99. After World War II when Japanese flower growers came back from relocation centers, the reorganized Southern California Flower Growers, Inc. purchased the previously leased land.
- 25) For local producers and retailers, *Rafu Shimpō*, a Japanese newspaper in Los Angeles, initiated to report flower market conditions three times a week from March, 1917.
- 26) Although long distance truck shipment started in mid 1940 with flowers leaving Los Angeles twice a week, it was still at an experimental stage at the outbreak of the war.
- 27) F. Fukuoka (1937): Mutual life and aid among the Japanese in southern California with special reference to Los Angeles. M. A. thesis, University of Southern California, p. 57.
- 28) Nanka Hana Ichiba, *op. cit.* footnote 9, pp. 24-25 (postwar part).
- 29) In 1920, annual table rent consisted of three classes, \$35, \$30, and \$25. Anyone wanting a specific location could bid for it. Three years later, annual rent of these classes went up to \$80, \$70, and \$60. Later improvements brought still higher rents.
- 30) Nanka Hana Ichiba, *op. cit.* footnote 9, pp. 41-44.
- 31) Oral history of Shigematsu Takeyasu, JARP Collection.
- 32) Dismissal advertisement was made on *Rafu Shimpō*, 6 January 1917.
- 33) I. Nodera (1936): A survey of the vocational activities of the Japanese in the city of Los Angeles. M. A. thesis, University of Southern California, p. 83.
- 34) Upon its organization in 1914, only 25 dollars were required as an entrance fee, which four years later was raised to \$100. After several revisions, the market was imposing \$2,000 charge for admission by 1930.

- 35) M. Svensrud (1931) : Some factors concerning the assimilation of a selected Japanese community. M. A. thesis, University of Southern California, p. 22.
- 36) *Rafu Shimpō*, 10 and 24 March 1931.
- 37) The case was frequently reported in the Japanese papers: *Rafu Shimpō*, 16, 17, 23 January 1932, 23 April 1934, 19 January 1935; *Nanka Sangyo Nippo*, 1, 5 February 1937, 2, 21 June 1937.
- 38) *Rafu Shimpō*, 1 January 1931.
- 39) Nanka Hana Ichiba, op. cit. footnote 9, p. 28.
- 40) The membership as of February, 1942, was 67, none of which were Japanese.
- 41) Takeyasu, op. cit. footnote 31.
- 42) Kuwahara, op. cit. footnote 21.
- 43) In 1941 the association had 1,360 members of whom 420 were growers (Japanese 220, Italians 24, Germans 22, and others 153), 26 were truckers (Japanese 4, Italians 4, Germans 1), 9 were shippers (Japanese 1), and 905 were retailers (Japanese 208). "Report on Japanese activities in the cut flower industry in southern California," February 1942, JERS Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
- 44) Nanka Hana Ichiba, op. cit. footnote 9, pp. 59-60,
- 45) *Crocker-Langlely San Francisco Directory 1900* (San Francisco, 1900), p. 1981; *Los Angeles City Directory 1900-1901* (Los Angeles, 1900), pp. 852-853.
- 56) Nanka Kasho Kumiai, op. cit. footnote 20, p. 188.
- 47) See footnote 43.
- 48) For the evacuation's impact on the settlement pattern of the Japanese in Los Angeles, see, M. Nishi (1955) : Changing occupance of the Japanese in Los Angeles county, 1940-1950. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington.
- 49) Kuwahara, op. cit. footnote 21.
- 50) Nanka Hana Ichiba, op. cit. footnote 9, pp. 10-11 (postwar part).
- 51) Kuwahara, op. cit. footnote 21.
- 52) Nanka Hana Ichiba, op. cit. footnote 9, pp. 48-49 (postwar part).
- 53) The traditional Japanese quarter, "Little Tokyo," of downtown Los Angeles had filled up with blacks after the Japanese were evacuated. After returning from relocation centers the Japanese tried to regain this traditional ethnic quarter, their homeland in Los Angeles. Although this process of reestablishment was slow, by the end of 1945 there were 130 Japanese-owned stores and offices operating in the district to meet the demand of Japanese returnees.
- 54) In November, 1950, the newly established Southern California Flower Growers, Inc. purchased the Golden Sky Investment Corporation which, established in 1928 and owned by Nisei, was a holding company of a non-profit corporation, the Southern California Flower Market. The Nisei owned Golden State Wholesale Florist established two years earlier was also purchased at the same time to strengthen the enterprise.
- 55) *Nanka Nihonjin Denwacho 1950-1951*. Los Angeles.
- 56) Thirty-five retail florists were listed in the 1950 directory. Ibid.
- 57) Various factors contributing to the changes are treated elsewhere. Yagasaki, op. cit. footnote 6, pp. 113-118.
- 58) For details of the flower seed industry, see S. M. Modry (1970) : The California flower seed industry, a study in interrelationships of commercial, ecological and human factors in the distribution of a horticultural activity. Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.
- 59) As of 1981 it consisted of 87 members.
- 60) Flower and nursery growers are organized under the Santa Barbara County Flower and Nursery Growers Association. While meetings had been held on an informal basis since 1955, it was only incorporated officially as a non-profit association in the late 1970's. It originated in part to cope with the problems of tightening controls being imposed by the Coastal Commission.