

CALIFORNIA HISTORY

PUBLISHED IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY WINTER 2017 VOL 94 NO 4

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COVER ART: *This is how watermelons grow in California*, c. 1910; Edward H. Mitchell Postcard Collection, Kemble Z3, California Historical Society. Edward H. Mitchell (1867–1932) was one of the most prolific postcard publishers on the West Coast. From his printing establishment in San Francisco he published millions of cards, including a series of tall-tale postcards of California fruits and vegetables. This sample is from the California Historical Society's Kemble Collections on Western Printing and Publishing. An early example of trick photography, such western-humor postcards featured oversized produce, documenting larger-than-life prosperity. While they were created to help advertise unique aspects of a place, in California—home of the world's tallest trees and an agricultural wonderland—the stretch of imagination to attract and allure may not have been all that necessary.

—Shelly Kale, California Historical Society