the WAYWARD TENDRILS Newsletter

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WINE-MEMORY AND MEMORIES OF WINE: Ian Maxwell Campbell and his "Wayward Tendrils of the Vine"

by

Ernest Oldmeadow

[*In celebration of our tenth year, it seems fitting to feature our namesake. This tribute to Campbell and his book by literary epicure Ernest Oldmeadow (1867-1949) originally appeared in the Winter 1947 issue of Wine and Food. We are grateful for the kind permission to reprint.* — Ed.]

Although the world's extant literature abounds in descriptions of banquets and more intimate meals, the writers have usually been grudging of details. They tell us that wine and food were lavishly provided: but not what wine, what food. We learn that gods and demigods and heroes drained countless goblets: but not what the goblets held. Noah, we know, achieved his unseemly intoxication on new wine, not on a skinful of older juice which he had literally put by for a rainy day: but not even the shortest of wine lists can be gathered from the Bible. The Roman poets treated us better, with the wine which Horace had kept for four years in a two-eared jar and the Falernian, *nota inferiori* – a phrase translated by a delightful schoolboy as Falernian of an inferior brand. Two hundred years later, we have those garrulous pedants, the Supping Scholars of Athenæus, whose tongues fondled the names of many famous wines, Italian as well as Greek. Then comes a long break, with only rare mention of any particular vineyard. Chaucer's father, a vintner, must have chosen better from worse in his purchases from Bordeaux: yet his son did not think it worth while to set down names. When Shakespeare mentions wines other than sack, his words are usually without warmth.

With the new literary interest in wine, search was made for allusions to growths and vintages; and the searcher who uncovered a passage which had been overlooked rejoiced like a man who had found a pearl in a river. The definite mentions of wine, even by 19th century writers such as Thackeray, Peacock and Meredith, were reproduced so proudly that those authors were almost made to seem as if they had done wine an honour by naming Sauternes, Burgundy, Amontillado, Vintage Port and Rhenish and all.

Beginning about forty years ago, there came a change. Posterity will not be able to justly bring against the 20th century the accusation of vagueness and meagreness in their wine-allusions which could be made against the centuries running before. Such books as André Simon's first book, *A History of the Champagne Trade in England*, appeared in 1905, C. E. Hawker's *Chats about Wine* followed in 1907; but the pace quickened after the war. Professor Saintsbury's famous *Notes on a Cellar-Book*, first published in 1920, was soon followed by Frank Hedges Butler's *Wine and the Wine Lands of the World* [1926], Charles Walter Berry's *Viniana* [1929], H. Warner Allen's *Romance of Wine* [1931], Frank Schoonmaker's *Complete Wine Book* 1934], Maurice Healy's *Stay Me with Flagons* [1940], T. A. Layton's *Choose your Wine* [1940], André Simon's *Vintagewise* [1945], and fifty others which have been supple-

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

mented by abundant and often intelligent lines about wine in the works of contemporary novelists and essayists. And now we have Colonel Ian Campbell's *Wayward Tendrils of the Vine* [London: Chapman & Hall, 1947], which is like a vast pergola, leafy with many vines and magnificent with amber and purple clusters of the vine's unique and noble fruit. Its eighteen chapters contain hundreds of appreciations, comparisons, and reminiscences of wine and wine-folk, as well as much sound wine-lore in general.

But Ian Campbell has done more than add another to the fast-multiplying pile of wine books. For the moment, let us make a distinction, not verbally perfect yet useful, between writers with wine-memories and writers with memories of wine. Many authors who, in all honesty, have penned such sentences as "I remember the Château X of 19..." do not truly remember the wine. They remember having drunk it, the occasion, the names of their host and fellow guests, the pleasure the wine gave them, and perhaps even a few facts such as the wine's lightness or bigness, its dryness or fruitiness, its colour, its freshness or ripeness. Yet they do not truly remember the wine itself. This unamiable conclusion can be tested by giving them, soon after their earlier experience of it, a glassful from the same bin, but with no mention of the name and date, no showing of the label. They do not recognize it, do not identify it. And herein lies their difference from the man with a wine-memory—the man who, after a few tastings, or even only one, has the wine itself, and not merely a batch of collateral reminiscences, established in his memory. This co-operation of mind and matter may be denied by those who minimize the physiological element in memory as a "faculty of the soul." Yet the part played in memory by the sense-organs is beyond dispute. Innumerable men and women can testify that the sudden bringing-in of a strongly scented flower has recalled and revivified some almost forgotten episode in their past lives.

A wine-memory in this sense requires a natural gift as a starting-point: just as a music-memory requires what we call "an ear for music." And those who signally possess an innate wine-sense must, like the born musician, develop it by study, study, study; practice, practice, practice. Legends concerning men who have "never been caught out" as to a shipper, a château, a vintage year, are exaggerated: indeed, Ian Campbell himself humbly confesses to misses as well as hits. It remains true, however, that the number of men with wine-memories in working order is large enough to prove that all this is no fancy and that wine-memory is a biological fact in the richly developed sense-life of civilized man. Its reality is felt all through Campbell's pages, even when he seems to be concerned only with wine-gossip and anecdotes. He knows not only "about" the scores of wines he names: he knows the wines. He has risen above the wine-prattle of those ready writers who would cut sorry figures if their judgements were put to the test. In short, he has honoured that great saying of Lord Bacon: "Get to know things in themselves."

Without throwing too wet a blanket over readers of Ian Campbell's book who aspire to "go and do likewise," it is kind to warn them that he has had advantages over most of us. He entered the wine trade while in his 'teens. His first task was to cork sample bottles of Graham's "Jubilee" Port. In his own words, he became "so saturated with the taste and smell of that 1887" that it has ever since been his "yardstick" in assessing young vintage Port. Soon afterwards, he went to Spain and lived with the Jerezanos, "acquiring the good habit of drinking sherry through all meals." After coming of age, he went to Bordeaux and dwelt among the growers and shippers of Claret. Still later, he spent months, off and on, in Champagne and in Portugal. Experiences such as these contribute incalculably to the formation of a wine-memory. Most of us learn wine in a land where it is an exotic. However excellent our English wine merchant, however fine and varied the stocks in the cellars of the clubs and restaurants and private houses we frequent, we cannot be on the same terms with Claret, Burgundy, Sherry, Port, Champagne, Rhenish, Moselle, as are the men who have sojourned on the banks of the Gironde, the Douro and Father Rhine, on the Côte d'Or, in Reims and Epernay, or in Andalusia, on the soil where the wines are produced, eating every day the food associated with the wine throughout fifty generations, breathing the aromas which abide in old cellars like the ghosts of ancient incense lingering in a cathedral; because a wine-memory is nourished by sense-organs as well as by a thinking, recollecting, co-ordinating mind.

The tendrils of the vine, with what he calls their "silly, curly fingers," ministered so subtly and delicately to Ian Campbell that we who know only the vine's old gnarled wood and new lusty stalks cannot but envy him those elfin caresses.

[EDITOR'S NOTE ON THE BOOK: Written by Campbell (1870-1956) in celebration of his golden jubilee as a wine merchant, *Wayward Tendrils of the Vine* was first published in a signed, hand-numbered edition of 750 copies in 1947, with a two-color title page. The handsome book was printed at the Curwen Press, the venerable London printing house recognized world-wide for its excellence of craftsmanship, and printer of numerous Wine & Food Society publications. A second edition of *Wayward Tendrils*, with a plainly lettered title page, was published in 1948.]

NEWS & NOTES

We **WELCOME** to our membership several new Tendrils : **Jean-Luc le Du**, Sommelier at Restaurant Daniel, New York; **Mike Sarmento**, who has a special interest in the history of Zinfandel; and the **American Center for Wine, Food and the Arts** (Napa, CA), which we hope to learn more about.

ANNUAL Membership *ROSTER*

is enclosed with this issue. Please remember to keep your editor up-to-date with contact information.

KUDOS to our Contributors!

Michael Amorose sent his best wishes with a note that he "particularly liked the January 2000 issue of the Newsletter and the excellent articles by Thomas Pinney, Paul Scholten, and Charles Sullivan. I plan to review them from time to time in an effort to stick a little more history in my head."

And, **Robert Fraker**, long-time Tendril and savvy proprietor of Savoy Books, wrote: "It is hard to believe W-T is entering its 10th year. The newsletter continues to prove itself an entertaining and worthwhile publication. Congratulations to all!"

PORT WINE Insert

Our thanks to **Isaac Oelgart**, collector of all things on Port, for the fine reproduction of the 19th century Page & Sandeman brochure, "A Few Remarks on the Non-Gouty Properties of Fine Old Port Wine in Wood." À votre santé!

More *NOVEL* Reading

Here's a trio of wine fiction titles to perhaps add to your reading table. Please be inspired to send in your favorite, not so favorite, vintage or just-released wine fiction titles! ***Blood is Thicker than Beaujolais***, "a wine lover's mystery" by Tony Aspler (Toronto: Warwick Publishing, 1995, 203 pp). Aspler, who has written several non-fiction wine books (including *The Wine Lover's Companion* and *Tony Aspler's International Guide to Wine*), sends internationally distinguished wine journalist, Ezra Brant, to Beaujolais for the release of the famed Nouveau only to uncover "a plot of murder, fraud, and international intrigue." Thanks to **Ron Unzelman** for the following note on ***Full-Bodied Red*** by Bruce Zimmerman (NY: Harper Collins, 1993, 310 pp): The winemaker knew the taste of one Cabernet vat was off, and "not for the usual reasons." Once again, in a wine novel set in California's Napa Valley, a dead body is pulled from a wine vat. The amateur sleuth, Quinn Parker, solves the case with minimal insight into things vinous. ***Deadly Vintage*** by William Relling, Jr. (NY: Walker & Co., 1995, 200 pp) introduces Jack Donne, urbane investigator, who runs into "greed, deception, and murder" in California's Central Coast wine country, the Santa Ynez Valley.

LATE BULLETIN!!

WINE BOOK COLLECTION FOR SALE

The *Newsletter* has just received notice of bookseller Stephen Lunsford's Catalogue 55 WINE & DRINK – available mid-April – featuring the Alison Bridger wine book collection. For a copy of the catalogue, contact him at Box 3023, Blaine, WA 98231; phone 604-681-6830; fax 604-681-6994; e-mail: lunsford@direct.ca

ARPAD HARASZTHY BOOKLET

Our good fortune! (and *à-propos* Charles Sullivan's Haraszthy essay this issue) — Wine historian and honorary Tendril member **Ernest P. Peninou** has found a cache of his 1983 publication, *A History of the Orleans Hill Vineyard & Winery of Arpad Haraszthy & Co.*, and offers copies ($15 each) to all interested Tendrils. Only 1,000 copies were printed of this attractive, well-illustrated 33-page history (card covers, 8"x5½"). Send your order, with payment, to Ernest Peninou, c/o Wayward Tendrils, Box 9023, Santa Rosa, CA 95405.

DUPLICATES!! WANTS!!

To all Tendrils: WHERE are those lists of your duplicate wine books that are occupying precious shelf-space or are shamefully relegated to a cardboard box "to be taken care of later" that fellow members might desperately want?! And, remember: submitting a Want List often turns up elusive titles! The *Newsletter* always welcomes your lists. Send them in.

THE WAYWARD TENDRILS is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1990 for Wine Book Collectors. Yearly Membership / Subscription to THE WAYWARD TENDRILS NEWSLETTER is $15 USA and Canada; $20 overseas. Permission to reprint is requested. Please address all correspondence to THE WAYWARD TENDRILS, Box 9023, Santa Rosa, CA. 95405 USA. E-mail: tendrils@jps.net FAX 707-544-2723. Editor and Publisher: Gail Unzelman.

THE GENESIS OF A BOOK

by

Thomas Pinney

PART II: A Difficult Birth

[*We celebrate the birth of* The Story of Wine in California *in our continued history of this California wine literature classic.* — Ed.]

ts genesis was, in fact, a very long and difficult process, some of which can be reconstructed from the surviving documents. At some moment in 1951 the Wine Institute, the trade organization of the California wine industry, and Max Yavno, who had already been attracted to the possibilities of the subject, agreed that Yavno would make a series of photographs for the Institute to illustrate the entire process of winegrowing. At the same time, the University of California Press, under the direction of August Frugé, began to plan the publication of a book about California wine that would use a selection of Yavno's Wine Institute photographs in combination with a narrative text. Frugé wrote to M.F.K. Fisher in November 1951, inviting her to write that text. Mrs. Fisher, who was then living in her parents' house in Whittier, was evidently attracted by the idea but not ready to commit herself. Yavno called on her with some samples of the pictures that he had been making, and, even though she was still not ready to sign a contract, Mrs. Fisher's imagination began to go to work on the idea of the book. A long letter from her to August Frugé dated 24 May 1952 is full of suggestions about what that book should be and how it should be developed, suggestions that, despite the many interruptions and delays that obstructed the creation of the book, had a powerful influence on the outcome. The book, she wrote,

> should be light and easy. Everything in it, every phrase, should be agreed to by such experts as Amerine, maybe Winkler, maybe some such amateur as Harold Price. BUT for people, or do I mean PEOPLE, the book should be basically lively, light and easy as I've said, gay. It should tell in a dozen different ways the warming truth that wine cannot spring from the soil and be poured into a goblet without man behind it... human beings, loving vile?? wonderful basically living men.

She went on to suggest that the photographs ought to begin with intimate and sensuous shots of grape leaves, shoots, and flowers, then go on to show how the grape must be separated from its parent vine and go to the press:

> how that happens is a wonderful mixture, photographically, of ox-cart techniques and the latest production-belt methods: tiny Escondido and Napa wineries vs. Fresno and Cucamonga wine-factories run by Eastern distilleries.

She suggested that the sequence run (as it does in the book) from the southern border of the state northwards, "giving an impassionate resume of the geographical set-up of the present industry." The photographs of machinery and technical procedures should be

> not too technical but correct, to give some guy from Montana who only knows about cows an idea, and a good one, of the subtle intricacies of producing a bottle of honest-to-god wine.

Frugé responded to Mrs. Fisher's suggestions by saying that he was "pleased, and perhaps even a little bit surprised," after her protracted hesitations, to receive her notes towards the book, and that he would use them "to work up for Max something approaching a shooting script."

More than a year after this letter Mrs. Fisher was still interested but still uncommitted, while Yavno went on making photographs. Finally, by early 1954 she had agreed that, if she could have a final set of pictures from Yavno "by the end of May at the latest," she would try to supply a text to accompany them. Unluckily Yavno, though he had produced an abundance of photographs, could not be persuaded to go into the darkroom and produce finished prints of his work. Mrs. Fisher therefore wrote in June 1954, that she could have nothing to do with the enterprise before September 1955: she and her daughters were going to France and would not return to St. Helena until then. But she thanked Frugé for

> letting me feel myself a part of your project. I have great faith in it. It is too bad that things have lagged so often, but as one who has sat in on some of the periods of enthusiasm and activity, I must say that I feel there is plenty of life in it yet...and I hope that all continue to feel the same way.

At this point, with the photographer reluctant to print his photographs, and the writer gone off to France, the project was shelved.

The Wine Institute, though it had commis-

sioned Yavno to make photographs back in 1951, seems not to have been directly interested in the book, which was wholly a University of California Press enterprise. The Institute was now soon to be involved, however. In 1955 a new group, called the "Premium Wine Producers of California," was formed within the Wine Institute in order to carry forward the gradually-building idea that California produced not just wine but fine wine. When they learned of the projected but now dormant *Story of California Wine*, they were at once interested. So far the promotion of California wine through the Wine Institute had been carried on by so-called "generic" advertising, most of it in the form of print ads. The Premium Wine Producers wanted, instead, to employ public relations in their cause—that is, the formation of good opinion through the agency of wine tastings, wine festivals, newspaper articles, organized tours, books—the whole apparatus of publicity without direct advertising. From an early point in their deliberations, the Premium Wine Producers had put the idea of a book about California wine high on their list of desirable items. It was not long before the Premium Wine Producers and the University of California Press were in touch, the one in search of a book, the other with just such a book waiting to be taken from the shelf and revived.

In June of 1958 the Press' proposal for a "California grape and wine picture book" was put before the Premium Wine Producers with a request for a subsidy towards its publication. [1] The proposal was explained again at a meeting in October 1958, but no action followed. In April 1959, a sub-committee of the Premium Wine Producers was appointed to settle the question of financial support but was still unable to make up its mind. After the fashion of committees, meetings continued through the next two years. The minutes of the sub-committee preserve something of the intimate history of the book, as in these details from a meeting held in San Francisco on 2 August 1960:

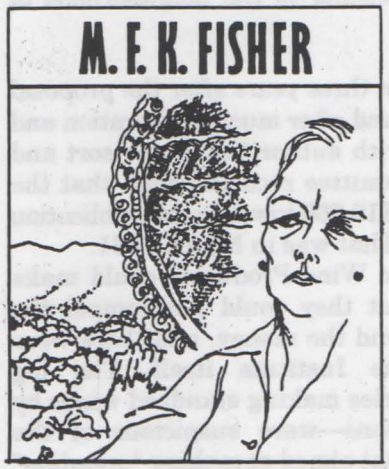
> The secretary...outlined the background of this project and explained the purpose of the meeting, viz., to try to resolve some of the basic issues still pending which have retarded positive action looking toward completion of the project. These issues include the selection of an author for the text and captions; the use of color plates; the number of copies of the book to be printed; and the possibility of industry assistance, such as advance commitments to buy copies, agreement to acquire any excess (i.e., unsold) copies, and various others.
>
> Mr. Frugé outlined the difficulties his office faced with respect to authorship, financing and editing. The basic question now requiring attention, he said, is this: Is this to be a large, handsome book for limited distribution, or a small, popular one for mass production? The answer to this question will resolve a number of others, he added. Mrs. Carroll [Rita Carroll, designer for the Press] pointed out that the size of the run (i.e., number of copies) will have a direct bearing on the authorship question, in particular.
>
> Dr. Amerine said it was possible that Mrs. M.F.K. Fisher, who had been designated originally as the first preference for author, may return to California this Fall after a prolonged sojourn in Europe and if so, may be available to write the text thereafter. His offer to collaborate on the book, he said, was "strongly tied in with Mrs. Fisher" and the understanding that she alone would do the text. He would be reluctant to enter into any other collaboration agreement, he added.
>
> The group consensus seemed to clearly favor Mrs. Fisher as the first choice. Alternatives considered, in case she may not be available, were the Mssrs Mark Schorer, George Stewart, Henry Miller, and Wallace Stegner, together with a number of others who for one reason or another were mentioned only briefly and casually .... [2]
>
> Mr. Frugé and Dr. Amerine indicated that full industry financial support of the book, as originally outlined by Mr. Frugé and proposing a figure of $6910 (including author's honorarium of $1000), would now come to something in the neighborhood of $15,000.

At last, almost three years after the proposal had first been made, and after much deliberation and much consultation with authorities of one sort and another, the sub-committee recommended that the Wine Institute allow $10,000 towards the publication of proposed volume. That was in March 1961.

The Premium Wine Producers could make recommendations, but they could not compel the Wine Institute to spend the money, and there were obstacles within the Institute itself. The big producers—the wineries making standard wines by the millions of gallons—were suspicious of the handful of wineries that aimed at making "premium" wines, and though both groups belonged to the Wine Institute they often disagreed about their aims and methods. Why, the big producers may have thought, should we subsidize a book that promotes "premium" wines and implies quite invidious comparisons with our "standard" wines? Moreover, they had been used

to direct advertising rather than to the indirections of "public relations." In helping to overcome this sort of reluctance the eloquence and conviction of Louis Gomberg were of crucial importance, according to the recollections of both August Frugé and Rita Carroll. Gomberg, a lawyer by profession, a former official of the Wine Institute, and now an independent consultant to the wine industry, was also serving as secretary to the Premium Wine Producers group. He believed in California as a source of good wine, and he understood the importance of publicity. While others hesitated or resisted the doubtful idea of subsidizing a book, Gomberg never doubted that it was a good idea, worthy of whole-hearted support.

In any event, and no doubt at least in part because of Gomberg's advocacy, the Wine Institute made a grant of $5000 to the Press in 1961, and with that the book became an active project again. It should be noted here, however, that in one form or another the book would have gone forward anyway: the Press had informed the Premium Wine Producers in March 1961 that "they intended to put the book out, with or without industry aid" (Minutes of 3 March 1961). The Institute had also made an earlier indirect contribution to the costs of the book by buying a set of photographs from Yavno many years before, when the book was still only a shadowy proposal. These were to be used for Institute publicity, but might also be used in the book. Through this arrangement, several of the pictures that appear in *The Story of Wine in California* became quite familiar images through their repeated use in pamphlets, brochures, calendars and other promotional items produced by the Wine Institute.



Subsidy in hand, the University Press could now settle the unanswered questions. It was decided that the book should be a "large, handsome" one, with color plates, rather than a "small popular one for mass production." Mrs. Fisher was again asked to provide a text, and this time the work went on quickly. Early in 1962 it was finished and in the hands of the Press: the subsidy had also allowed the Press to increase her fee from an originally-proposed $1000 to $2,500.

The support of the Wine Institute was not without its price. Lest any "unfair" advertising seem to be provided by the book, none of the subjects —people or places—was to be identified. That restriction, it has always seemed to me, seriously diminished the historical value of the book. The Wine Institute also asked for the right to review the manuscript of the book, with authority to "suggest changes in the text, captions and photographs selected, or accept them as proposed." [3] A subcommittee of the Premium Wine Producers was appointed to carry out such a review, and presumably did so: its members were Otto Meyer, head of Paul Masson, John Daniel of Inglenook, and John Ellena of Regina Grape Products (Cucamonga).

Early in 1962 the Wine Institute gave another $5,000 towards the costs of the book—specifically for the costs of the color plates, as August Frugé remembers—and asked for the right to "see the text in its revised form and the photographs and transparencies finally selected for the book." [4] To this, Frugé replied that things were now far too advanced to allow any revision, and that neither photographs nor text could give offense: "I believe that all the objectionable pictures have either been omitted or heavily cropped," he wrote; as for Mrs. Fisher's part, she "was quite cooperative and, so far as we know, a suitable compromise was found for each problem." She was, as the published text shows, careful not to offend the big producers, who, as she tactfully says, "with the most hygienic and spotless equipment produce uniformly good wines for almost every purse and palate" (p.14). Mrs Fisher was no wine snob, and was certainly happy to see "uniformly good wines" made widely available through mass production. On the other hand, she pays no respect to the then-familiar notion energetically promoted by the Wine Institute that "every year is a vintage year in California." Instead, she emphasizes the risks, the failures, the uncertainties of grape growing, dependent, like any other agricultural enterprise, on the whims of nature:

> Will it be a hot summer and raise the sugar content to the right level for a great wine, a good wine, a poor but still drinkable one? Will there be a late and murderous frost? Will there be cruel drought and blistering sun, to wither the finest grapes as they swell out to full perfection? (p.36).

This was certainly not the rhetoric of the Wine Institute. [5]

Mrs. Fisher's preparation for writing the text probably did not demand much homework, for the knowledge of California's special history and conditions shown in the text is such as anyone might have worked up in a short time with the aid of some judicious advice. She clearly understood the basics of the subject from her own experience; she had, after

all, had a vineyard in Switzerland. And she had lived some years in St. Helena, in the heart of Napa Valley, where her enthusiastic interest in wine was not likely to miss any chances for instruction. The received tradition of California history that she was working in, however, accepted a number of things that later inquiry has shown to be wrong. Serra did not bring grapes with him in 1769, for example: the first European grapes were not planted then, nor did that first planting take place in San Diego. There is no evidence that Jean Louis Vignes brought in "Frenchmen...with cuttings from their finest vines," and the handful of San Francisco residents in 1840 certainly were not critics of the wine that "flowed from their own rolling hills," there being no significant production of wine in northern California at that early date. She gives, as did everyone else at the time, far too much credit to Agoston Haraszthy, who was not the first to bring in new grape varieties to the state, who did not introduce the Zinfandel, and who was emphatically not "the father of modern wine growing in the Western world." But it is precisely because the book belongs to its particular moment that it can say these things. One may also note a few more or less technical confusions. Phylloxera did not arrive in Europe from California; it was the other way around. Grapes are not "crushed" in presses (p. 80) but in crushers, and the practice of opening the doors of a cellar in the winter has nothing to do with disgorging champagne (p.99). These are minute specks on the surface, however, leaving the persuasive enthusiasm of the text untouched.

Max Yavno's part in the book extended over more than a decade, and one wonders how many thousands of pictures lie invisible behind the one hundred and eleven that were finally chosen for publication? Unlike Mrs Fisher, who could remain quietly at home, he had to be strenuously busy in the work of making pictures. For this, he had to travel the length of the state to visit wineries and vineyards, find vantage points for photography, go up in airplanes, arrange studio shots, revisit scenes in different lights, weathers, and seasons—in short, do all of those things that make documentary photography a challenge to patience and persistence. When he worked on the problem of getting wide-field pictures of wineries he told an editor at the Press that "it is impossible to get them from anything but a very tall tower." The editor thereupon arranged with some friends at the California Air National Guard to

> take Max up on a special flight to photograph some vineyards and wineries from the air. Knowing the National Guard pilots, I think we should get some rather interesting, not to say spectacular, pictures. Whether Max will survive mentally and morally is something else again. [6]

But more important than any such assistance were the photographer's own high formal standards. Rita Carroll, who designed the book, made several trips with Yavno in search of sites to be photographed. Sometimes, she recalled, the subject was known in advance; sometimes they sought out suggestions from all quarters; sometimes serendipity decided:

> Foremost in my reminiscences are the untold hours "on location" spent waiting for the precise moment when Max finally clicked the shutter. He was a perfectionist. Every blade of grass, each vine, shadows and clouds had to be just what he anticipated. His concern was almost entirely with the mechanics of the situation rather than the subject.

Maynard Amerine, who was evidently a strong influence in determining the character of the book, was a fitting choice to write an introduction. At that time Professor of Enology and Chairman of the Department of Viticulture and Enology at the University of California, Davis, Amerine's work went back to the beginnings of renewed University research following Repeal. Through his association with W.V. Cruess, with whom he collaborated on the exhaustive testing of grape varieties and their wines from different sites in California, he linked up with the research work of pre-Prohibition California; his work in writing the basic guides to California winemaking after Repeal was a map of the industry's future. He enjoyed a unique position both as an important contributor to the work of winegrowing in California and as a member of the University: he was thus in the industry but not of it. He had also the experience of having served on the board of editors of the University of California Press and so could lend an understanding hand to the progress of the book towards publication.

This account of the genesis of *The Story of Wine in California* may now conclude with a brief account of its birth and reception. The book was officially published on 29 September 1962 at a price of $15 in an edition of 7,500 copies—a very high price for a book then, and a very large press run for a university press book. By the end of October, nearly 4,000 copies of the book had been sold, and an active promotional campaign continued. As the Press reported to the Wine Institute subcommittee:

> UC President Kerr had given a copy of the book to each member of the University's Board of Regents, as Christmas gifts; copies of the book had been presented within the last several days to former President Dwight D. Eisenhower and to President John F. Kennedy, at informal presentations by Chair-

> man Meyer [of the Wine Institute] and Governor Pat Brown, respectively; and ... an important announcement in the book trade regarding high honors accorded the wine book will be made in April. [7]

The high spirits that appear in this report did not last long. As perhaps a further evidence of the book's unusual character, it attracted remarkably little notice from the reviewers. Time magazine mentioned it, to be sure, but only in a joking, one-sentence notice (7 December 1962). Brief notices appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle, the Los Angeles Times, and, surprisingly, the Cleveland Plain Dealer. The trade journal Wines and Vines gave the book an intelligent notice by the editor, Irving Marcus, who evidently knew something of the book's history. And that seems to be it. Sales soon fell off. There was no widespread and sustained notice in the press. The Wine Institute, despite Louis Gomberg's pleas, made no purchases for promotional distribution. After the early flurry of sales, another two thousand or so copies were worked off, but partly at sale prices. Later, the bindery in New York informed the Press that a thousand unbound sheets of the book had been "lost," and with that the commercial life of the book ended. It did not recover its expenses, and the Press had confirmed, through the experiment, that not much of a market yet existed in this country for a celebration of California wine. This was a meager reward for the patience and persistence of August Frugé in bringing to publication such an unusual and interesting book, but the history of publishing is strewn with such inequalities between merit and reward. Frugé, incidentally, makes no mention of *The Story of Wine in California* in his memoir of his career at the University of California Press, *A Skeptic among Scholars* (1993): it was not, one supposes, an important disappointment.

Much has changed since 1962. Wine books—whether coffee-table confections or solid technical treatises or anything in between—are now a staple part of American publishing. And the trade of winegrowing mirrored in such books has itself changed almost out of recognition. We may now turn our attention to the third of the book's claims: its record of a trade that was just about to undergo quite revolutionary changes.

NOTES

.1. They were now known as the Academy of Master Wine Growers, a change of name forced on them by resentment on the part of other members of the Institute of the word "premium" in their original name. If they represented "premium" wines, it was hotly demanded, then what did that make the wines of the other producers? In the face of the protest, they yielded and adopted the inoffensive "Academy" name. In this discussion, however, it seems simpler to continue to use the original name.

.2. Mark Schorer, George Stewart, and Wallace Stegner were all Bay Area English professors, with numerous published works to their credit. Henry Miller, the "odd-ball" of the group, was the author of *Tropic of Cancer*. The proposition that he do the California wine book is delightfully absurd.

.3. Roy W. Taylor, Public Relations Director, Wine Institute, to August Frugé, 19 January 1962.

.4. Taylor to Frugé, 9 May 1962.

.5. Not all have agreed. The late Roy Brady, knowledgeable lover of wine and collector extraordinaire of its printed word, wrote February 1963: "In my opinion, and in this virtually everybody I know agrees, *The Story of Wine in California* is a disgrace. I doubt that M.F.K. Fisher wrote the text. I have long admired her work and I do not find any of her style in the book. Quite to the contrary it sounds like the commercial enthusiasm of 717 Market Street. It is no secret here that the Wine Institute was the guiding hand behind the book. The pictures are fine – too bad there's no description of or rationale to them."

.6. Emlen T. Littell to M.F.K. Fisher, 4 December 1953.

.7. Minutes of Premium Wine Producers of California, 31 October 1962.

"The Blessing of the New-Born Book"

[*In our next issue we shall conclude Prof. Pinney's study with his notes on Yavno's brilliant and historical photographs.* — Ed.]

IN THE WINE LIBRARY
with
Bob Foster

The Heart of Burgundy: A Portrait of the French Countryside by Andy Katz. NY: Simon & Schuster, 1999, 112 pp., cloth, $30.

Andy Katz, an American professional photographer who has already published two books on California's wine-growing regions [*A Portrait of Napa & Sonoma* and *The Vineyard: A Year in the Life of California Wine Country*], has now turned his considerable talents to France's legendary Burgundy region. The result is a magnificent book that captures the special countryside feel of the region.

Katz has an eye for the small details that make Burgundy so intriguing for the visitor. Rather than just photographing landscape after landscape, Katz hones in on small details set against the lush green of the vineyards. I am particularly struck by his eye for such architectural details such as roof patterns, windows, doors, wrought iron fences, and even traffic mirrors. The ninety photographs warm the heart. The end result of his skills is a superb work that can only add to a wine lover's enjoyment of the wonderful wines of the region.

The only jarring note is the lack of information given to the reader. Virtually all of the photographs are framed with a border of white paper on the page. This area could have been stylishly used to identify where in the region the photograph was taken. Instead, there is a very small block of type on the last page of the book that gives the reader this information. It thus requires one to continually flip pages forward and backward to gain the ultimate sense of place. It's a needless frustration for the reader.

Nevertheless, this is a superb book that simply adds to the glory of the region. It is a must for all lovers of Burgundy. Very highly recommended.

[*With all kind permissions, Bob's review is excerpted and reprinted from the December 1999 / January 2000 issue of the California Grapevine.* — Ed.]

A GOURMET by André L. Simon

"Gourmets drink wine. ...the greater number of people who now drink wine with their meals, as evidenced by the greater sales of wine and of wine books, is sufficient proof that there are more Gourmets than ever before."

— *Gourmet's Week-End Book*, 1952.

WINE IN PRINT: A REVIEW
by
Hudson Cattell

[*While California has its Zinfandel controversy and myth, the eastern winegrowing regions have their own: Cynthiana vs Norton. The following review is reprinted from Tendril Hudson Cattell's fine journal, Wine East.* — Ed.]

From this Hill, by my Hand, Cynthiana's Wine by Paul Roberts. Baltimore: Resonant Publishing, 1999, 188 pp., paper, $16.95.

In 1998 Paul Roberts opened a winery, Deep Creek Cellars, in Friendsville, Maryland. This book in part is an account of his love affair with the grape variety Cynthiana which dates back to sampling a 1981 vintage from Stone Hill Wine Co. in Hermann, Missouri.

Most readers will be aware that a considerable amount of controversy surrounds Cynthiana and Norton, a genetically identical grape variety. In the early 1990s researchers at the State Fruit Experiment Station of Southwest Missouri State University and at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, New York, tested both varieties and concluded they were identical. There was immediate disbelief on the part of many growers who were certain that they could spot differences in their vineyards. As Paul Roberts writes, "To this day plenty of growers and wine-makers do not accept the findings. As a result, most Midwestern wineries market Cynthiana wines as a lighter drink for immediate enjoyment, while the wine from Norton, generally, is presented as the one for longer aging." As for his own position, he writes, "I consider my vines Cynthiana, but tend to use the name interchangeably with Norton."

Roberts goes into the origins and background of both Cynthiana and Norton in some detail, and it is a complex but colorful history mixed with a certain amount of myth. "Midwestern wineries love all this intrigue," he writes. "For new customers coming through the door, the name controversy heightens the allure of Cynthiana's wine. Most sellers happily supply a short recitation."

Much of Roberts' book comes from journal entries dating back to the winter of 1990-91. Not surprisingly, it is autobiographical, going into some detail about what the author was doing and thinking. The last part of the book deals with his strong views on environmental philosophy, and he quotes a number of people who have been prominent in American "environmentalism." He delves into the ecology of North American Indians, especially their reverence for the earth and life, "where the most

profound meaning for living dwells" ... and where "ultimately, a sense of well-being comes from personal contact with the earth and its forces."

When I was reading the book, I began to wonder what audience Roberts was writing for. There are several long passages dealing with various aspects of grape growing – five pages on pruning alone, for example, where we learn that the trellis supports the vines during the growing season, and that the vine bears fruit only from buds on a cane. This basic information suggests that the audience in part might be readers who know very little about grape growing. The origins of Norton and Cynthiana are fascinating; the autobiographical material may be a bit overlong for some readers; and his section on environmental philosophy may well be of interest to anyone who shares these concerns.

Readers familiar with Everett Crosby's *The Vintage Years: The Story of High Tor Vineyards* [New York: Harper & Row, 1973] will immediately recognize how different it is to start a vineyard and open a winery today than it was in 1952. But however striking the differences may be between the past and the present, there is a certain commonality among those who grow grapes and make wine.

UNUSUAL ITALIAN-AMERICAN "MUG" BOOK

by

Bo Simons

[*Bo Simons, co-founder of The Wayward Tendrils and wine librarian at the Sonoma County Wine Library, shares the library's latest treasure with us.* — Ed.]

Several weeks ago William Heintz stopped by the Sonoma County Wine Library with a small paper-bound book to donate. Heintz, author of *California's Napa Valley: One Hundred and Sixty Years of Wine Making* (San Francisco: Scottwall Associates, 1999) and a veteran and thorough historian specializing in California wine, had been interviewing George Greeott, a man in his 90s and a long-time Sonoma County Chalk Hill Road resident. Greeott gave Heintz a book to donate to the wine library.

Titled *Colonie Italiche in California – Strenna Nazionale – Cenni Biografici*, the book contains within its original greenish gray paper wraps an important piece of California wine making history. Roughly translated, the title means "The Italian Colony in California – National Gift – One Hundred Biographies." Compiled by A. Frangini and written entirely in Italian, it was printed in San Francisco (Lanson-Lauray & Co.) in 1915. Included in the 172-page book are the biographies of many Italian Americans who helped build Northern California: bankers, grocers, farmers, druggists, and wine industry people, lots of wine industry people — Enrico Prati (Martini & Prati Winery), Giovanni Greeott (Alpine Winery), Francesco Passalacqua (Healdsburg grape growers), Martino Scatena (Scatena Bros. Winery), Samuele Sebastiani (Sebastiani Winery).

This book resembles a 19th century "mug" book, except there are no mug shots, the text is in Italian, and it dates from the early 20th century. Historians gave the term "mug" books to the subscriber-written histories that flourished throughout America in the 19th century. These county and regional histories consisted largely of individual biographies of the leading citizens of the day, and were often graced with the portraits of the notables. The publishers who put together the "mug" books usually sought out the local leaders and blatantly flattered them, saying that because of their place in history they deserved a featured spot in the wonderful history book they were publishing. The locals either paid a subscriber fee or agreed to buy a number of copies of the book. They then wrote their own biographies or supplied the details that the publisher edited into a satisfactory biographical sketch. Today, if one takes into account that not every word in such self-penned, self-promoted biography is the absolute truth, the researcher can find quite a bit of useful material in these "mug" books.

Colonie Italiche in California is unusual in that it never, as far as I can tell, made it into a library before. Melvyl, the University of California's online catalog – which contains the holdings of the California State Library as well – does not list it. Library of Congress has not recorded it. The OCLC Union Catalog, the largest bibliographic utility in the world, contains no entry for it. (I suppose that those in the Italian-speaking community in Northern California who bought copies of the book, never thought to place it in a local history collection.) In my thank you letter to Mr. Greeott, I mentioned this uniqueness, and he called me immediately. "Why, I have several more copies. I discovered them in the attic. My dad must have bought them and forgot about them. Would you like several more to put in those libraries you mentioned?" Would I? You bet.

BOOKS & BOTTLES
by
Fred McMillin

The Stature of France

The Book: ***The Wines of France*** by Clive Coates. Revised edition, 2000. South San Francisco: Wine Appreciation Guild, 416 pp. $50.

A WINE HISTORY EXERCISE: Select the most important wine country of each millennium. My candidates:

4000–3000 B.C. SUMER pioneered the three W's: Writing, the Wheel, and Winemaking.

3000–2000 B.C. EGYPT produced the first drawings of winemaking, was the first to label wine jars with source of grapes, winemaker, degree of sweetness.

2000–1000 B.C. PHOENICIA invented glass, the alphabet (symbols for sounds instead of a different symbol for each word), and they took vines and wine throughout the Mediterranean.

1000–0 B.C. GREECE made the best wine of the millennium and moved quality winemaking to Italy, the Rhône, etc.

0–1000 A.D. The ROMAN EMPIRE established quality winemaking in most of today's best sites in France, Germany, parts of Spain, etc. Its Benedictine black-robed monks preserved winemaking as the Empire faded in mid-millennium.

1000–2000 A.D. FRANCE merely developed almost all of the world's best wine grapes (Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc ...) and made the world's best wines.

So, if you are seriously interested in wine, you must learn about . . . ***THE WINES OF FRANCE*** . . . which just happens to be the title of a grand new book by Master of Wine Clive Coates, veteran wine merchant and noted wine author. In 1982, Coates, long-time Decanter magazine contributor and twenty-year student of the wines of France, gave us *Claret*, a history profiling some fifty-three châteaux with twenty years of vintage assessments. After establishing in 1985 his own fine-wine magazine, The Vine, he published the first edition of *The Wines of France* five years later. He followed this with *Grands Vins. The Finest Châteaux of Bordeaux and their Wines* (1995, 816 pp.), "not so much a second edition [of *Claret*] but an entirely new work" in which he widens the scope and explores in depth almost one hundred of the best producers, and provides vintage notes extending back to 1928. In 1997 Coates was awarded the Cliquot Wine Book of the Year for his *Côte d'Or*, a 1000-page tome celebrating the great wines of Burgundy.

If his credentials don't convince you, here are a few tidbits to prove that his new book belongs at your bedside.

- MUSCAT – "There is a phrase in the Song of Solomon, 'a fountain of gardens,' which to me summarizes the flavor of dry Muscat wines... A good dry Muscat from Alsace ... makes a perfect aperitif, and is best drunk young."
- BARBARIANS – The Roman emperors forbid the sale of the wines of Gaul (France) to the barbarians ... which makes one wonder if it might have spurred their attacks on such wine districts as Champagne.
- BURGUNDY – Produces superlative reds and incomparable whites ... Classic Côte de Beaune is the most complex and perfectly balanced of all white Burgundy.
- CHAMPAGNE – "A new trend is to produce Champagnes with less sugar, even none at all. These have various names such as Brut Sauvage, Brut de Brut, and Brut Zero."
- BORDEAUX – In 1309, did Pope Clement, the former Archbishop of Bordeaux, set up his court at Avignon in southeastern France, rather than Rome, to be closer to the source of French wines?

The Bottles: Of the six varietals mentioned above, here are some recent favorite California models:

Peju Province Estate Reserve CABERNET SAUVIGNON, Napa Valley, $75.

Fieldstone '97 MERLOT, Staten Family Reserve, Alexander Valley, $25.

David Bruce '97 PINOT NOIR, Central Coast, $16.

Shenandoah Vineyards '98 BLACK MUSCAT (dessert), Amador County, $12.

Sattui '98 CHARDONNAY, Carsi Vineyard Old Vine, Napa Valley, $24.

Guenoc '98 SAUVIGNON BLANC, North Coast, $14.

ZINFANDEL: A HISTORY OF A GRAPE AND ITS WINE

by

Charles L. Sullivan

PART IV

THE HARASZTHY MYTH

[*Our January installment concluded with Sullivan's promise to expose "the myth created in the 1880s which totally confounded the history of Zinfandel for the next ninety years. ... The details are complicated and often a bit tedious, but in all I think the whole story is worth telling. It is a good tale, full of skullduggery, heroics, perhaps even a little 'recovered memory,' or better, recovered false memory." Let us begin.* — Ed.]

AGOSTON

When the matter came up in the press in May 1885 the first thing anyone should have asked was, "Well, can't someone show me where Col. Haraszthy mentioned the Zinfandel in his voluminous public writing on California wine." It was almost seventeen years since the extraordinary Hungarian had quit California for Nicaragua, where he was devoured a year later by alligators. But he was well remembered as the man who, more than any other, had filled the Northern California press between 1857 and 1866 with letters, articles, speeches, and interviews on viticulture and winemaking. But if Agoston Haraszthy ever uttered or wrote the word "Zinfandel," there is not a trace that remains, or even remained in the 1880s, except in the mind of his son, Arpad Haraszthy.

The basic biographical data for the father has never been in question. It can be found in any good library in the *Dictionary of American Biography*. And there aren't many nobodies in those volumes. Haraszthy is truly an important figure in the history of the American West.

I have already mentioned his birthplace, Futak, in the Vojvodina, then in 1812 a part of the Kingdom of Hungary, which was a portion of the Austrian Empire, today in Serbia, formerly part of Yugoslavia. His family was of the landed gentry and thoroughly Magyar (Hungarian) in ethnicity. He came to America in 1840, ending up in the Wisconsin Territory where he helped found the town of Sauk City. In that area he was into at least a dozen entrepreneurial enterprises. He also got into politics and was on hand when Wisconsin became a state in 1848. He had become a power in the Wisconsin Democratic Party and campaigned mightily for Lewis Cass, the conservative Michigan senator and his party's presidential candidate in 1848. Cass lost by a whisker to Zachary Taylor; had he won, Haraszthy would probably have stayed in Wisconsin as a political beneficiary of his friendship with Cass.

A few months after the election the news of gold in California reached Wisconsin. In April 1849 Haraszthy, his wife, father, and six children headed off on the Santa Fe Trail for San Diego. There he called himself "Colonel" Haraszthy, an honorific he had picked up in Wisconsin. No one knows when or how he became "Count" Haraszthy.

The rough frontier life in San Diego was too much for his wife and two young daughters, so Agoston sent them back to the East Coast, along with his nine year old son, Arpad. The boy and his father were not reunited until 1857 in Sonoma, and then briefly.

Meanwhile Agoston began investing in San Diego County real estate, planting fruit trees and grape vines in nearby Mission Valley. In April 1850 he was elected sheriff and his father, Charles, was elected to the town council. San Diego historians remember the two for their role in building the first jail there. One has called the business the "first instance of municipal graft in California." But no charges were ever brought against the Haraszthys.

Agoston became a power in local politics from the outset and joined the pro-Southern wing of the Democratic party. In 1851 he was elected to the State Assembly on a platform calling for a north-south division of the new state. The mission of the Southern California Democrats, many recently there from slave states, was to set up a separate territory that would eventually be a political ally of the "Cotton Kingdom." Haraszthy accepted the idea, but when he arrived in Northern California he saw that this was where the action was; he did not return to San Diego.

Haraszthy realized that this new frontier needed a totally different type of agriculture than had served the sparsely populated Mexican province California had been before the American Conquest. There had to be nurseries, orchards, vineyards, and

truck farmers to feed the burgeoning population. A few had made huge fortunes in 1850 and 1851 by raising vegetable crops and by cornering certain parts of the state's slender fruit production. He decided to help meet this challenge, buying a piece of land near the old mission outside San Francisco to start a nursery. He called it Las Flores. He also made good money brokering fruit, particularly fresh table grapes. In 1853 he was able to acquire a 640-acre tract in the uplands on the San Francisco Peninsula near Crystal Springs. There he expanded his nursery operation and even took to raising cattle. While there he planted some Mission vines and may have imported grape cuttings from the East Coast. It is not clear whether such an import was direct or through local connections here. I know from reading the Macondray letter books that the sea captain's family knew Haraszthy. But I also know that he had Hungarian connections on the East Coast, where the rest of his family was staying. This could have been the source of these vines. And anything from the east might have included Zinfindal, which was in regular use there. There were also later stories about his having imported vines directly from Europe and that these included the Zinfandel. There is not a scintilla of contemporary evidence for such an importation, not a word in the press nor a word from Haraszthy himself.

Haraszthy at the Mint

During the next three years Haraszthy began engaging in endeavors substantially far removed from horticulture. He became involved in the smelting and refining of the gold coming down to San Francisco from the Mother Lode. He, with several partners, opened a private smelting firm. In 1854 his Democratic political connections got him an appointment from President Franklin Pierce as Assayer of the San Francisco Mint.

Over the next eighteen months his activities got him into trouble with the U. S. Treasury's special agent on the West Coast, J. Ross Browne. In January 1857 Haraszthy resigned his post and in June Browne revealed his case against the Hungarian. His accounts were apparently $150,000 short. It was a long and complicated affair. But in 1860 the criminal charges against Haraszthy were dropped. The best research into the matter *clearly* indicates nothing. It does suggest that Haraszthy's guilt could not be proved, not that he was actually innocent. But comments by Browne made at a later date indicate that he was then not at all convinced of any previous wrongdoing. [1]

A Legend is Born

Meanwhile Agoston Haraszthy had set out on the venture that made him something of a legend in the history of California winegrowing. In 1855 he had visited the Sonoma Valley and tasted the wine made from Mission grapes grown there. The depressed price of land, the quality of the wine, and the healthy appearance of the old unirrigated vineyards he saw there moved him to make a serious move into winegrowing. He bought 560 acres of land east of town, including the old Kelsey place called Buena Vista Ranch, whose wine he had liked. He then had many of his young vines at Crystal Springs transferred to Sonoma. There were already several working vineyards in the Sonoma Valley, but it was Haraszthy who was able to focus the attention of the oldtimers, and many newcomers, on commercial winegrowing. In 1857 he made 6,000 gallons of wine at Buena Vista and began the estate's physical transformation.

During the coming year he expanded the Buena Vista vineyard with vines he propagated himself, which he bought from others in the area, and perhaps which he imported. But there is no contemporary evidence for such an import. He also had tunnels dug into the mountainside to store his coming vintages, and he built a solid stone winery. And he raised grain and vegetables, and planted an orchard. In 1858 a large part of his grape crop he sold fresh in San Francisco. By then he had 140 acres in vines. By 1859 he had 250 acres. And his neighbors were also doing well with their vines. Everyone agreed that Sonoma was having a boom, and that Haraszthy, more than anyone else, was its author.

In 1858 Haraszthy wrote a report on grapes for the California State Agricultural Society. From this and other of his writings that appeared in the Bay Area press it is clear that he was concerned about the wine grape varieties available in California. He was convinced that the Mission would not suffice. But in his own report he had stated that he had more than 150 varieties growing at Buena Vista. He never listed them. He couldn't. Such a claim was pure puffery. The Hungarian was employing the great American entrepreneurial tradition of substituting his hopes for facts in public statements about his enterprise.

In 1860 he gave an address at the State Fair calling for better varieties in California vineyards and at the end of the year developed a plan to import a large number of first class European wine varieties, and perhaps make a few dollars on the side.

Working through the State Agricultural Society and political friends in Sacramento, Haraszthy got a bill through the legislature calling for the state to appoint a commission "to collect together all the useful and valuable grape vines ... for distribution amongst the people." Meanwhile he advertised in the local press that he would supply farmers with several kinds of vines for a few dollars.

As I previously noted, there was virtually no response.

Haraszthy was on his own when he sailed from San Francisco on June 11, 1861, seemingly oblivious to the fact that the country was being torn to pieces by war. Back in Sacramento Haraszthy's pro-Southern cronies were calling for the nation to let the seceding Southern states go in peace. (Haraszthy himself never publicly supported the Confederacy and Union men like Warren and Osborne never questioned his loyalty.)

He stopped in New York to arrange for the publication of a book to chronicle his tour. He was on the high seas bound for Southampton when the American armies were routed by the Confederates at Bull Run. He was accompanied by his wife and daughter Ida, soon meeting Arpad in France. He was a young man now and had been studying sparkling wine production at Epernay in Champagne. They toured France, Italy, Germany, and Spain collecting vines, while Agoston took notes for his upcoming book. By October the party had amassed about 100,000 vines of some 300 varieties, which were later consolidated and shipped home.

The party arrived in San Francisco in December. Agoston quickly set about trying to get some kind of compensation for his expenses. But the political scene had changed since he left. Now Union forces controlled the state government and Haraszthy's "Copperhead" friends were in total disrepute. The legislature was in no mood to hear about underwriting this Hungarian grandee's vacation in Europe. If his collection was so valuable, his critics argued, why didn't he just sell it. The fact was that there was nothing special about the importation of good European vines. It had been going on since 1852.

Haraszthy took his vines to Buena Vista and planted them, and there most of them stayed. It is a pity they were not distributed, but there was no mechanism for it. But that it *was* distributed throughout the state became part of the legend constructed by Arpad years later. There is nothing to support such a claim. And, of course, there was nothing in his list of imports that even vaguely sounded like Zinfandel. So what? By 1862 the vine was in place in much of the winegrowing country of Northern California.

The last chapter of Agoston's adventure in California wine came in March 1863 when he was able to promote the incorporation of the Buena Vista Vinicultural Society, a move that infused his venture with much needed capital. But it was a serious error on the part of the eight San Francisco capitalists who pumped their money into the Sonoma venture. Haraszthy continued as superintendent and the result was economic disaster. In 1864 the Society's fiscal report tried to put a brave face on matters. By July 1866 the directors were lamenting the "hopeless condition of the Society." Three months later Agoston was forced out of his position at Buena Vista. After their correspondent had visited the place, the *Alta California* wondered at the sorry state of the once great vineyard. It now resembled a jungle where it was next to impossible "to get enough grapes of any one kind to make a barrel of wine."

During 1867 Haraszthy produced brandy and planted a couple of vineyards for others in the upper Sonoma Valley. Then in 1868 he was off to Nicaragua to set up a distillery.

The lively Hungarian's demise went without much notice in Northern California; the entangled vineyard and the lack of profits at Buena Vista were now symbols of his failure. Years later the slavish acceptance by journalists and wine writers of the Haraszthy Myth meant that Agoston's real contributions to the California wine industry would be overlooked and forgotten. It was laughable to assert that he was the "father" of the industry, but I don't think that anyone contributed more to its growth and development. He was a great publicist. He was the young industry's public conscience, promoting better wine through the use of better grapes and rational cellar practices. He advocated vineyard and cellar techniques in the 1860s that were considered prescient in the 1880s. Unfortunately the picture of the man's contributions developed in later years emphasized a few material accomplishments which cannot be supported by the historical evidence. His introduction of Zinfandel into California is the most obvious and most oft-quoted of these. "Still it is not true." So say all those who have examined the full record from the period between 1850 and 1868. [2]

More than a month after Haraszthy's 1869 death an unsigned obituary article appeared in the *Alta California*. The rhetorical style, the phrasing, even the vocabulary indicate that the piece was written by an indignant son, shocked at the callous forgetfulness of a once admiring Northern California community for which Agoston Haraszthy had once been a hero. The cadence of the words would echo through the son's writings on the California wine industry for the next thirty years:

– Agoston Haraszthy was the father of the California wine industry.

– His imports in 1861 were the basis for the eventual development of California's fine wines.

– He was the first to import foreign wine varieties to California.

ARPAD

The young lad of ten who was sent back to the East Coast from San Diego with his mother and sisters in 1851 was the bright star of the Haraszthy children. Intelligent, energetic, full of curiosity, Arpad was placed in academies in New York and New Jersey to advance his formal education. When he finally joined his family in Sonoma in 1857 he stayed only two months before heading off to Paris to study civil engineering. Then in 1860, encouraged by his father, he changed course and moved to Epernay to study the production of Champagne in the firm of De Venoge. He stayed there two years and accompanied Agoston on his 1861 European tour.

He was home in Sonoma in 1862 in time to supervise the crush at Buena Vista for his father. He also began experiments making California sparkling wine. Next year he and brother Attila married two of General Vallejo's daughters. According to historian Ruth Teiser, Arpad's wife Jovita "was considered the beauty of the Vallejo family." [3]

Arpad continued his sparkling wine experiments after Agoston organized the Buena Vista Vinicultural Society, but the expensive failures involved forced him to resign and leave his father's employ. In 1866 he joined forces with wine merchant Isador Landsberger and within a year had produced what eventually would be California's first commercially successful bottle fermented sparkling wine – Eclipse. By the 1870s Eclipse was a commercial success and Arpad became known as something of a man-about-town, in historian Teiser's words, a "convivial boulevardier" and charter member of the San Francisco Bohemian Club.

But Arpad was a troubled man. He and Jovita now had two children but their domestic life was unhappy. In 1877 she began divorce proceedings. General Vallejo was finally able to placate her and "avoid a scandal." Whatever the problem, Arpad had written his wife several letters, "asking her pardon." In the General's words, Jovita finally gave in, "for the sake of the children." Next year the couple's new baby died and Jovita died soon thereafter. A symbol of the couple's shaky circumstances is the fact that in their twelve years in San Francisco before Jovita's death they changed residence seven times.

In 1879 Landsberger pulled out of the partnership and Arpad was able to bring in Harry Epstein, a rancher / businessman who supplied $28,000 for the firm to buy the Orleans Hill Vineyard in Yolo County. The land was totally unfitted for the production of fine wines. Historian Ernest Peninou has written that the place was nothing but "dry, hot sun-swept foothills." I join in terming the purchase by a supposedly knowledgeable leader of the wine industry, "unexplainable." [4]

Arpad and Epstein spent more money expanding the vineyard there to 340 acres by 1885. Meanwhile they were producing still wine and "Champagne" at other premises. Next year, to secure the failure of the venture, they built a 250,000 gallon stone winery on the Yolo property. The folly of this endeavor can be guessed from the fact that the vintage there often began in July. They were dry-farming premium vines in the middle of a desert.

It was during this period of Arpad's familial disintegration and financial folly that the Zinfandel question was raised in the press. But so far as his public image was concerned Arpad Haraszthy was on top of the world. In 1878 he had been elected president of the State Vinicultural Society. In 1880 he became the first president of the Board of State Viticultural Commissioners (BSVC).

THE ZINFANDEL WAR

No one who grew Zinfandel or was making Zinfandel wine in the early 1880s gave a hoot about the battle that was soon raging in the press over the origins of that vine in California. The fight developed when a desperate man put forth a historical theory that simply did not fit the historical experience of the men who had lived through Zinfandel's coming to the Golden State, and its subsequent rise in prominence. Nevertheless, Arpad's fictitious characterization of his father's contributions became a historic block of concrete for almost a century.

The idea that the Zinfandel might have come from Hungary had been kicking around in California since the 1860s, since numerous copies of Prince's book were at hand and there was a clear reference to the "Zinfardel" of Hungary. It is doubtful that anyone noticed J. F. Allen's unwillingness later to equate this reference to the vine well known in New England that came to California. And few would have been aware of Prince's own recognition of the fact that Gibbs had brought what he now thought was Zinfindal to Long Island from Vienna. I find such references in numerous sources with no mention of any role by Haraszthy. [5] It makes sense that people would wonder about it a little, since it was then that it was really starting to catch on.

Charles A. Wetmore

The first squeak I can find from Arpad Haraszthy on the subject was in 1877 when the *San Francisco Bulletin* mentioned that Agoston had transferred the Zinfandel from Crystal Springs to Sonoma when he moved north. [6] (One must keep in mind that when these events took place Arpad was on the East Coast, later a teenager studying in France.) From then on Arpad began pushing the story to unbelievable limits. He passed it on to

Charles A. Wetmore, Commissioner-at-Large of the State Viticultural Board, who included it in his first report to the Board in 1880. It is clear that Wetmore had been duped, for he gave Agoston thanks for his 1860 "princely gift to this State, including our now famous Zinfandel." (He didn't even have the date correct.) Wetmore went on to state that the vine "is more known now in America than in Europe...." That was true, since there is no evidence that the vine was ever known by that name in Europe. Wetmore surely blushed when someone pointed out to him that in Agoston's complete 1861 list of vine imports, published as an appendix to his own supplementary report in 1881, there were 157 Hungarian varieties listed as having been brought back from the excursion, and there was no mention of Zinfandel. [7]

There is no record of the events, but it is clear that Wetmore was now challenged by men who had been on the scene twenty-five years earlier and knew what had and had not happened. The mistake he had made concerning the 1861 listing was obvious. But what was the truth as to the original introduction of the vine?

He must have talked to dozens of oldtimers and then developed a generalized theory concerning the Zinfandel's introduction to California. He had to be careful because he couldn't call Arpad a liar. And I'm not at all sure that he thought Arpad was lying. I'm not even sure that Arpad knew that he was lying. Family memory can be a very fragile thing. At the moment his family life was in shambles, partly because of a dishonest indiscretion. And he had just invested virtually everything he owned in a very tenuous new venture that would eventually come down around his ears.

In 1884 Wetmore did his best to clear up the mess he had made in his report four years earlier. He obviously had stirred up a hornet's nest. In tracing the history of California winegrowing he praised Agoston Haraszthy for his contributions, although he correctly acknowledged Charles Kohler as "the pioneer and founder" of the California wine industry.

Then he noted that Agoston had imported vines to California *before* the 1861 trip, and that among them was the Zinfandel, "which he knew in Hungary." He might better have said, "Arpad told me that his father had known the vine in Hungary." He surely wondered why Arpad had told him the Zinfandel had been in the 1861 importation and then changed his story.

Wetmore also backed away from his previous implication that Agoston had been cheated by the state, another piece of misinformation from Arpad. Now the commissioner admitted that the collections had been made at Agoston's own private cost. He also backed away from his contention that these imports had been a great service to the state. Now he could only list a few table grapes in the collection that had been further propagated. Then he went on to praise the many earlier Californians, mostly German and French, who had made truly valuable importations in earlier years, which "laid the foundations of vineyards that are now successful." It is clear that Wetmore, who was but fourteen in 1861, had been given some powerful history lessons during the previous four years by some of the people who had made that history.

Later in his report Wetmore addressed the question of the Zinfandel. First he stated that Agoston's importation of that vine from Hungary "is known to his family." He was not unkind enough to add, "and to no one else." But he did give a very adequate generalized history of the coming of the vine to California, a history which does not differ from the one that I have traced, except that he gave no names or dates. Zinfandel had come to California, in his words, in various small lots "at an early day, from eastern nurserymen who called it Zinfindal." He also acknowledged Prince's historic reference in 1830. He continued that "it was not extensively propagated from the early nursery stocks, but became sufficiently scattered throughout the State to cause much present confusion in the popular claims for recognition as to the credit due for introducing it." As to the vine's European origins, Wetmore was as correct as he could be, given the material available to him. Zinfandel was "taken from collections in Europe that are as little known there as here, rare curiosities of viticulture which we have utilized.... "

Wetmore hoped this report would put an end to the matter. Haraszthy could make his claim through "family memory," and the people who had been here in the 1850s and had taken part in the discovery of the Zinfandel had been saluted in a general fashion. Now the whole thing should go away. The industry's fortunes were soaring and they didn't need this internecine bickering.

William Boggs

But the wine men out in the country wouldn't let it go away. In Sonoma Robert Thompson, a well known journalist and local historian, had been putting the whole Zinfandel story together, talking to everyone he could find who remembered. In May he wrote a long article for the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin* and made hash of Arpad's claims. He traced the Zinfandel from New England to California, citing Macondray's, Osborne's, and Boggs' contributions. [8] A few days later Boggs himself wrote the *St. Helena Star* and told the story of his personal involvement in the coming of the Zinfandel. [9] The Boggs letter was a reply to one of Arpad's of May 11 to the *Bulletin* in

which he reasserted the claims for his father.

Boggs first made it clear that "no disrespect was meant to the memory of his (Arpad's) lamented father, or that there was any desire to detract from the credit due him for his enterprising interest promoting the wine industry of this State." But he had been on the scene and knew what happened. He had owned the land next door to Agoston's 1857 Sonoma purchase and came to know the Hungarian on a daily basis. He told in his letter how he and Haraszthy had organized the Sonoma Horticultural and Viticultural Gardens in 1859 and how he had brought the Zinfandel over from Osborne's place in Napa. Boggs noted that to that time the only "foreign" grapes in Sonoma were a few table varieties and the Black St. Peters Vallejo had acquired from Delmas.

Then Boggs told of the transportation of Haraszthy's vines from Crystal Springs to Sonoma. "There were no foreign vines shipped to Sonoma ... I know whereof I write...." He had been there and helped plant these Mission variety vines. "Col. Haraszthy may have had some foreign vines...in San Mateo (County), but there was no such grape planted by him at Buena Vista vineyard" until the Osborne cuttings arrived. Arpad was "mainly indebted to his own vivid imagination" in his claim that his father first brought the Zinfandel to Sonoma and had been the first to import foreign varieties to California.

A few days later Antoine Delmas added his voice. He had imported the Zinfandel under the Black St. Peters name in 1852. (He thought it was from France, but I think it was in his shipment from New England.) He had planted the R. T. Pierce vineyard in Santa Clara to the Black St. Peters and everyone knew those vines were Zinfandel today. (William McPherson Hill told the same story from Glen Ellen.) A week later Arpad was in San Jose for a viticulture conference and was persuaded to look at the Pierce vines. He admitted they looked like Zinfandel, but he stuck to his guns. He knew the vine had grown in his mother's vineyard in the old country, but thought it might be a seedling of the Pinot Noir. [10] He also noted Prince's reference to the Hungarian Zinfardel, to help prove his point, obviously unaware that Prince credited Gibbs, Perkins, and Allen with introducing the vine to the East Coast.

Arpad refused to back down; some of his statements became absolutely outlandish. According to a trade journal he claimed that Macondray's gardener had told him personally that the sea captain had had no Zinfandel in his grapery. (Macondray had been dead seven years before Arpad in 1869 first mentioned the Zinfandel in print.) He told a Napa newspaper that his father knew the Zinfandel in Hungary and that it made excellent claret there. He also began questioning whether the Zinfandel's growing habits were similar to those of the Black St. Peters.[11]

Historical Concrete: Bancroft

By the fall of 1885 the public controversy had subsided. Now Arpad decided to start mixing his historical concrete. In the spring of the next year he penned a four page memo for historian H. H. Bancroft in which his father's contributions to the California wine industry were given in detail. In July Bancroft produced a forty-five page typescript titled "The Haraszthy Family." Most of this document is a fulsome encomium to Arpad Haraszthy, historically accurate, for the most part, but a tedious chronicle of the great works of a great man's more than great son. Only the first twelve pages were devoted to the father. They follow Arpad's manuscript closely and contain some good history about Agoston's years in California. But squeezed in was the same historical nonsense Arpad had been recently peddling.

There were some strange inconsistencies between the manuscript and the typescript. In the manuscript Arpad had written that his father had imported vines from Europe and the East Coast in 1853 and planted them at Crystal Springs in March 1854. Of course, the Zinfandel was included. Arpad has Agoston selling vines from this importation years before moving to Sonoma, "to all parts of the state." Concerning the Zinfandel at that early date, "ever after it was his pride to recommend its plantation as the best grape for Red wine claret." In the final version put together by Bancroft the importation takes place in 1851, while Haraszthy was in San Diego. Such a claim is nonsense, but what happened between the writing of the manuscript and the production of the final draft? Did Arpad now learn of the pre-1853 importations by others? It would almost appear that Arpad was in on the composition of the final draft.

This section of the typescript ends with this sentence.

> It is now universally admitted that to Col. Haraszthy is due the sole credit of the first introduction of foreign vines into the State of California.

There would have been many a viticultural pioneer in California who would have gagged on that line. But no one would see it except historians later doing research on the history of the wine industry at the Bancroft Library in the University of California.

Another inconsistency is truly remarkable, but does not relate to the Zinfandel. Concerning the 1861 importation, that manuscript contends that the

vines "were sold throughout the state, for the first time causing a general and large plantation of foreign vines in every direction." But in the typescript the vines were "scattered through the country," which "now conduce to the general confusion in nomenclature." These are the words of Charles Wetmore, not Arpad Haraszthy. But if Wetmore was consulted, how did the "first importation" silliness get through? I think that we shall never know. But this was the document that so many later used to outline the growth of the California wine industry in the early days. Historian Thomas Pinney is gentle, I think, when he rejects the Haraszthy document, since "its demonstrable errors make it unreliable in general."

Next Arpad wrote a brief article which appeared in an obscure Northern California publication, the *Sonoma County and Russian River Valley, Illustrated.* Here he refabricated and embellished the Zinfandel story. Before, the vines had simply been imported; now they came directly from Hungary, along with five other Hungarian varieties. Now the date of the importation was precise, February 1852, and all were then planted at Crystal Springs. This was impossible, of course, since Agoston was not elected to the Assembly until later in that year, and then headed north for the first time from San Diego. And he did not acquire the Crystal Springs land first, but the property near the Mission, Las Flores. It is understandable that Arpad might not have the story straight, since at that time he was a pre-teenager living in New Jersey.

Then Arpad moves the story in his article to Sonoma with accurate detail. He gives lots of good names and numbers. And then he slips in the casual intelligence that Sonoma "suddenly became the supplying grape vine nursery for foreign vines for the whole State of California. It was from here that the Zinfandel was distributed to the four parts of the state prior to 1859...." Nothing like this happened, but the list of vines he adds to the Zinfandel is precisely that which Boggs had brought over from Napa's Oak Knoll. [12]

Arpad had large numbers of his article reprinted and he distributed them to the press here and on the East Coast, to trade journals, and throughout the industry. By the end of the decade the materials he had produced concerning his father's introduction of fine wine varieties to California were everywhere, and it was about all a person could find. When journalists wanted a picture of the origins of the wine industry, this is what they got:

1. Agoston Haraszthy was the first to import fine wine varieties from Europe, including the Zinfandel from his native Hungary.
2. His later importations in 1861 were the basis for the great success of the California wine industry since the late 1870s.
3. In Arpad's words, Agoston was "The Father of the Vine in California."

It wasn't true. There is not a shred of evidence from 1851 to 1869 to support this outlandish view of California wine history.

We can get another dimension of the picture of the Haraszthys and Zinfandel in the early years by taking a look at what Arpad Haraszthy actually said and wrote about that variety when as a young man he was an important commentator on the viticultural scene in Northern California. (I have already noted that I have never been able to find a word on the Zinfandel from the lips or pen of his father.)

Even before he returned from France after his apprenticeship in Champagne he had become a correspondent for the influential *California Farmer.* He sent publisher James Warren a series of articles on French wines and vines directed to the California reader. They began in June 1861 as letters to Warren. When he returned he continued writing for the *Farmer* until spring 1863, when he began writing articles on wines and vines for Warren's son, J. Q. A. Warren, who was now publishing his short-lived *California Wine, Wool and Stock Journal.* Up to this point Arpad had not written a word about Zinfandel which, twenty-five years later, he would claim his father had been promoting and distributing "to the four parts of the state," since before 1859.

Arpad's articles for the younger Warren were knowledgeable, intelligent, and loaded with practical information for the California winegrower. He never mentioned Zinfandel, even in his article specifically aimed at describing the best varieties for local production. [13] The University of California file of this publication is actually made up of the copies from the library of Arpad's father-in-law, Mariano Vallejo. Arpad's file went to U. C.'s Bancroft Library. In both these collections the issue which included Arpad's recommendation for red wine varieties had been removed by someone. I know not by whom, but I know the person I suspect. It would have been embarrassing indeed, in the midst of the public fight over the introduction of the Zinfandel, for it to have transpired that a famous son was making claims that flew in the face of what he had written a quarter of a century earlier.

The first mention in print of the Zinfandel that I can find by Arpad was in *Alta California* in 1869, as a good variety for sparkling wine. [14] Be-

tween 1871 and 1872 he wrote a series of articles, "Wine-Making in California," for the *Overland Monthly*. [15] He mentioned his father's 1861 vine imports and later listed a few varieties doing well in California, among them Zinfandel. But he made no familial claims.

In 1877 Edward Bosqui published the beautiful *Grapes and Grape Vines of California*. The unnamed writer of the section on Zinfandel had been primed by Arpad and declared that the variety "was first brought to this State by the late Agoston Haraszthy, between the years 1853 and 1854" from Hungary to Crystal Springs, afterwards to Sonoma, then throughout the state. Arpad repeated this claim almost verbatim for the *Bulletin* just before this handsome ampelography went to press. [16]

I think that it was this claim that started Robert Thompson and William Boggs on their ill-fated attempt to set the record straight. But they hadn't the energy or moxie to keep the fight going. Arpad had won the battle by 1888. In that year the *New York Tribune* ran an article on the Haraszthys and Zinfandel without mention of counter claims or controversy. Later the *Scientific American* even thought that it was Arpad who had made the 1861 importation. [17]

As Arpad's fortunes declined after the 1880s no one dared or wanted to bring more tragedy into his life. (After 1894 everything fell apart. His Champagne company went under and the Orleans Vineyard was lost. In 1900 he headed off to the Klondike in search of gold. He soon returned empty handed and on November 16 collapsed and died in San Francisco while waiting for a cable car.) But now and then the Zinfandel question came up in academic circles. Scholars tended to say that the matter was still in doubt. In 1888 Prof. George Husmann wrote, "the true origin and dissemination of this important variety is not yet clear." Some years later a German student of viticulture visited Professors Eugene Hilgard and Edward Wickson at the University of California. They apparently talked long on the mystery of Zinfandel, the Haraszthy story, and the vine's possible European origins. His conclusion from these conversations was that at that moment (1908) it was not possible to be sure of the origins of the variety in California nor its counterpart in Europe. But he was intrigued by the possibility that it might have come from Austria. So am I. [18]

The Haraszthy legend was now locked into the accepted popular record. Arpad's claims were generally repeated by leaders of the industry in the years after his death. Wine writers and other journalists could not be expected to go behind the story. I suppose even amateur historians should not be expected to go back and examine the sources from the 1850s and 1860s. Wasn't the truth of the matter set out in the manuscript on file at Bancroft Library, available to all interested parties? Astonishing as it may seem, not one 20th century wine writer or historian, amateur or professional, prior to the 1970s ever wrote a word about the heated debate of the 1880s from which the legend had been distilled.

NOTES

1. See *Haraszthy at the Mint* (Los Angeles, 1975) written by Haraszthy's great-great grandson, Brian McGinty.

2. Actually there is one important and quite recent exception. Brian McGinty has now written a biography of Agoston Haraszthy (*Strong Wine*, Stanford University Press, 1998). It is a fantastic piece of research and does much to clear up several parts of the Haraszthy Myth. But he clings to one aspect of the myth, that is, Arpad's outrageous and self-serving claims of the 1880s about his father. McGinty accepts the idea that Arpad's claims may be spurious, but continually cites them, inferring that they might be true. Of course, they might be true, but there is no contemporary evidence to support them. And there is plenty of evidence that shows a fairly clear picture of the truth. I wish McGinty had employed Occam's famous razor to come up with the best interpretation.

3. For Arpad's early years I have followed Teiser's biographical essay which she wrote as an introduction to the Book Club of California's 1978 limited edition of his *Wine-Making in California*, written for the Overland Monthly in 1871-1872.

4. *A History of the Orleans Hill Vineyard...* (Winters [CA], 1983).

5. *e.g.* Sonoma Democrat, 5/28/1870; Alta California, 5/20/1870.

6. 1/20/1877.

7. *First Annual Report of the Board of State Viticultural Commissioners* (San Francisco, 1881); *First Annual Report of the Board of State Viticultural Commissioners*, Second Edition – Revised (Sacramento, 1881).

8. 5/5/1885.

9. 6/8/1885. Some of the information had already appeared earlier in the Napa County Reporter, 7/4/1884.

10. San Jose Herald, 5/28/1885; Pacific Wine & Spirit Review, 7/3/1885.

11. Napa Register, 7/10/1885.

12. Arpad Haraszthy. "Early Viticulture in Sonoma," in Sonoma County and Russian River Valley, Illustrated (San Francisco, 1888): 77-79.

13. See particularly his articles from April to June 1864.

14. 3/9/1869.

15. 12/1871 - 5/1872.

16. Leon Adams wrote a historical note for the 1980 reprint of the Bosqui volume. He warned that the author was "in error" on the introduction of the Zinfandel to California, and noted that research had proved otherwise. In 1978 Adams had written that my research "into the introduction of the Zinfandel grape to California was an important contribution to the wine history of the United States.."

17. Pacific Wine & Spirit Review, 2/17/1888; Scientific American, 3/18/1899.

18. Adolf Cluss. "Kalifornien als Weinland," in Allgemeine Wein Zeitung, No.32, 33, 37 (1908).

WAYWARD TENDRILS

OF THE

VINE

By

Ian Maxwell Campbell

LONDON

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1947