



# WAYWARD TENDRILS QUARTERLY

Vol.20 No.1

A WINE BOOK COLLECTOR'S SOCIETY

January 2010

## Illustrated California Wine History: Buena Vista & the Mercurial 'Count' by Dean Walters

[It is a pleasure to introduce Vol.20 with another richly illustrated ephemera-based historical journey by our dedicated collector of early California Wine Trade artifacts, the fourth in his series. Dean welcomes questions or comments at [dean.w@comcast.net](mailto:dean.w@comcast.net). — Ed.]

A FULL ACCOUNT OF THE Buena Vista Vinicultural Society founder, Agoston Haraszthy, cannot be told in short order, for it is a tale as long as the journey he took from his native Hungary in 1840 to his adopted land in California. (For the complete, fascinating story, Tendril readers are directed to the in-depth Haraszthy biography written by his great-great-grandson, Brian McGinty, *Strong Wine. The Life and Legend of Agoston Haraszthy.*) Enigmatic, charismatic, impulsive, visionary, complex, and adventurous—speak some of his character. Webster's New World Dictionary, in its definition of Mercury, aptly sheds light on the man: "The god of commerce, of manual skill, eloquence, cleverness, travel and thievery." Agoston was all of these to varying degrees, but often left his associates and investors disappointed with lacking results. Consequently, he bred a coterie of detractors.



Agoston was not a Count, nor a Colonel, but he was clever. Born in 1812 to a family of lower level Hungarian nobility, he married up a notch to the lovely 17-year-old Eleanora Dedinszky, the daughter of a Polish nobleman. Agoston Haraszthy would successfully overplay his own role of nobility when it served him. He was good at playing the "count," which remained a theme throughout much of his life in America. It began in 1840 when Agoston and his cousin Károly Fischer left their homes in Bács County, Hungary, for New York City. In their early explorations, they discovered the beautiful but little developed Sauk prairie land in the Wisconsin Territory, where they decided to settle on the banks of the Wisconsin River.

He soon returned to Hungary, gathering up his wife, three sons (Gaza, Attila and Arpad), and his parents for a long trip back to their new homeland. Agoston founded a small town there which he called Haraszthy Town, but disappointing investments, mounting debts and lack of opportunity on the prairie

uprooted the family once again. Lured by prospects in California, they joined a wagon train in April 1849, and headed west on the Santa Fe Trail to San Diego. By this time Eleanora and Agoston had three more children, Ida, Otelia, and Bela.

In San Diego, Agoston became involved with politics, law enforcement, tax collecting, viticulture, land investment and miscellaneous entrepreneurial pursuits. The zenith of his political career came with his election as an assemblyman to the California State Legislature in 1851. Consequently, in early 1852 he left San Diego and traveled north to Vallejo to attend the first meeting of the Legislature.



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The San Francisco Bay area appealed to Agoston,

and he settled in San Francisco, never returning to live in San Diego. In the meantime, Eleanora had moved east, close to New York City where she could educate their four youngest children. He would not be reunited with Eleanora and the children until 1857. Agoston left behind his debts and disappointments in San Diego to seek a future at the vortex of California's economy.

Agoston Haraszthy's term in the State Assembly connected him with influential people in politics and commerce. Once his term in the Assembly expired, he looked to the private sector, aligning himself with fellow Hungarian ex-patriots at their gold assaying business in San Francisco. This affiliation led to his political appointment in 1853 by President Franklin Pierce as the first assayer at the new branch of the U.S. Mint in San Francisco. He soon advanced to the position of melter and refiner. Agoston's father had been appointed assistant melter and refiner.

His position at the Mint nearly proved to be his Waterloo—in 1857 Agoston was charged with embezzlement of unaccounted-for gold. Vilified in the press as well as by his political opponents, he was forced to place "in trust" the titles to all his properties pending the outcome of the trial. Perceived conflicts of interest regarding his relationship with privately owned assaying companies fueled the fire. Agoston wasn't absolved of guilt until 1861, but the ordeal cost him dearly in terms of reputation and money.

Agoston had intended to pursue winemaking since arriving in California. He planted vineyards in San Diego and later in San Francisco at his "Las Flores" property near Mission Dolores in 1852. In 1853 while at the S.F. Mint, he planted vineyards at his Crystal Springs property in San Mateo County. But with their cold and foggy climates, both properties proved to be unsuccessful viticultural experiments.

#### *Buena Vista Ranch*

Neither the impending charges against him nor disappointments with the Las Flores and Crystal Springs ventures prevented Agoston from seeking the ideal vineyard, and in the early 1850s, he discovered potential near Sonoma City, about 50 miles north of San Francisco. In 1857 he acquired about 700 acres known as Lac Rancho for \$11,500. Negotiations for the property had begun the previous year when Agoston's 21-year-old son Attila moved there to manage operations.

Agoston moved to the property the following year, and named it Buena Vista Ranch. It had once belonged to a brother-in-law of Gen. Mariano Vallejo, and when Agoston bought it, there was a sizeable vineyard of Mission grapevines. The U.S. Mint affair had not been concluded, yet Agoston moved forward at Buena Vista Ranch with great speed. He set out to

better his competition, which centered around Los Angeles, and included the Sainsevain Brothers, Kohler & Frohling, and Benjamin West of Lake Vineyards, as well as the Northern California vintners Antoine Delmas and Etienne Théé who were enjoying some success in San Jose.

The *vinifera* vines at Crystal Springs were moved to Buena Vista Ranch. By the end of 1857, about 100 acres of vineyard were planted to nearly 280 different *vinifera* varieties. Two large tunnels of 100 and 240 feet in length were dug into the hillsides by Chinese laborers. Work had begun on a Pompeian-style villa for the family home that also would be used as headquarters for the ranch. That year, the winery and distillery produced some 6500 gallons of wine, 120 gallons of brandy, and 60 gallons of Tokay made in the Hungarian tradition.

In 1858, Agoston contributed an important paper, "Report on Grapes and Wine of California," for the California State Agricultural Society; he would later become president of the association. Wine production nearly doubled, and by the following year Buena Vista Ranch grew to 6000 acres.

The year was one of steady growth at Buena Vista. Awards were given to their wines—bottled with generic names, not varietal ones—at both state and county fairs. The Mission grape was most likely still dominant as the *v. vinifera* vines were maturing. Experiments began, with failed results, with sparkling wines *à la méthode Champenoise*. The vineyards increased to 250 acres, and Agoston bought the best winemaking equipment he could find. The California State Agricultural Society reported that Buena Vista was the most extensive vineyard enterprise undertaken by any one individual in California, and that Haraszthy was experimenting with *v. vinifera* vines to discover which varieties would be best suited to Sonoma. By the end of the year, Buena Vista had an agent in San Francisco, S. Molitor & Co., at 110 Montgomery Street.

The year 1860 at Buena Vista may have foretold an impending problem which would soon affect vineyards in California and the rest of the world. Some of their *vinifera* vines withered and soon died, but the cause was not to be diagnosed until years later as phylloxera. The dying vines at Buena Vista were simply dug up and replaced.

To facilitate commerce in Sonoma, Haraszthy and partners incorporated the Sonoma Steam Navigation Company in 1861. Their steamboat *Princess* served as the first ferry service from Sonoma to San Francisco.

#### *California Commissioner for Wine*

This was a significant year for Agoston Haraszthy, as he successfully lobbied the State Legislature, through the California State Agri-

cultural Society, to create a State commissioner who would travel to Europe to study winemaking, purchase vine cuttings, and then report back to the Legislature. We can imagine Agoston had himself in mind when he made the proposal. The Legislature complied, and Gov. John Downey appointed three California State Commissioners. One refused the appointment, but accepting were Haraszthy, and Jonathan Warner, representing Southern California. It was written that these were not to be paid positions. (Haraszthy's original proposals contained more ambitious plans, including a State supported school of agriculture and an agency to guard against the adulteration of wine. However, these concepts would not mature for some time.)

In June, Agoston set off for New York with Eleanora and daughter Ida. After arriving in New York, Agoston travelled to Washington where he received letters of introduction from Secretary of State William Seward before departing for Europe. The family arrived in Paris in late July and were joined by 17-year-old son, Arpad, who was studying Champagne making in Épernay. Arpad and Ida would serve as their father's assistants in his travels to the vineyards of Europe, where he would purchase thousands of *v. vinifera* cuttings from all the wine-producing countries of Europe as well as in North Africa and the Crimea, where agents acted for him.

Agoston called on the Hungarian prime minister in exile, Bertalan Szemere, hoping to engage him as agent for his own enterprises and those of associates in California. Szemere, believing investment in California amounted to a fairy tale, rebuffed the proposal. He had been forewarned by one of Agoston's former Hungarian acquaintances at the San Francisco Mint that Haraszthy made too many reckless investments in high risk enterprises. Furthermore, Szemere later wrote in his memoirs that he had met Agoston's son Arpad when he began studies in France, and was offended by his racist point of view regarding slavery. Arpad had confided he would not want to be in the same room with a mulatto. Arpad's views may have reflected those of his father. Agoston was aligned with "Chivalry" Democrats who had no abolitionist leanings. He never publicly proclaimed racist views, but conversely became a strong proponent for Chinese labor, and supported the rights of free blacks after the conclusion of the Civil war. Incidentally, the war raged-on back home as the Haraszthys toured Europe.

In December Agoston returned to San Francisco, while his wife and daughter remained in Paris and Arpad returned to his studies in Épernay. By early 1862, over 100,000 of Haraszthy's vine cuttings arrived in California. In the batch were more than 300

varieties of *vinifera*, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, Muscat de Frontignan, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, Gewurtztraminer, and Riesling. He soon published a book with Harpers in New York, *Grape Culture, Wines and Wine-Making, With Notes Upon Agriculture and Horticulture*, which chronicled his travels in Europe. The book included translations of foreign reports on winemaking, and an updated version of his own previous report to the California State Agricultural Society. It was the first important book published by a Californian on the subject, though some argue, light in effective content.

Although Agoston paid for his travel expenses and the purchase of the vine cuttings, he sought recompense from the State of California in the amount of \$12,000 when he made his report to the Legislature. A changing political tide, lack of funds, and the fact that the original legislation for his commission did not include funding, conspired to rebuff his request. Republican Leland Stanford was the new California governor, and the new political majority in the State Legislature, consisting mostly of Republicans and Union Democrats, was not aligned with Haraszthy's "Breckenridge/Chivalry" Democrats. The consensus opinion was that the wine industry was not significant to the economy of California. Agoston took out substantial mortgages to cover his expenses, although he later profited by sale of the vine cuttings.

#### *Continued Growth at Buena Vista*

**B**uena Vista grew throughout 1862, as the operation increased in size and efficiency. A two-story stone press house was built to replace the original wooden structure, and another 150-foot tunnel was excavated. Agoston experimented with readily available redwood for wine vats and barrels, and leaching inherent flavors by steaming the wood. Sons Attila and Bela, who owned their own vineyard properties near Sonoma, also worked at Buena Vista. Attila was vineyard foreman and in charge of the Chinese labor force, while Bela worked in the cellars and vineyards. Arpad returned to Buena Vista late in 1862, and began his experiments with "California champagne." His first small, but unsuccessful, batch of about 100 bottles was made with Mission grapes.

By early 1863 Agoston had many wine growers in his neighborhood, including Jacob Gundlach, Emil Dresel, Nicholas Carriger, John Swett, and close friend Gen. Mariano Vallejo. Reports of wines held in the cellars of Buena Vista described the 1857 vintage white wine as "splendid and similar to a three year old Chablis," the vintage 1860 white wine as "the best in the cellars, having a fine bouquet," and the 1862 white wine had "a trifle Sauterne bouquet."



Buena Vista Vinicultural Society,  
Sonoma, California.

Egg Harbor Wine Company,

Chas. Worm, Sole Agent,

Dipol. S. E. Cor. Grand Arch Sts.

Philadelphia October 9<sup>th</sup> 1882

CALIFORNIA VINTAGE.

SPARKLING WINES.

PEARL OF CALIFORNIA,  
BUENA VISTA,  
NATIONAL GRAPE,  
CARTE BLANCHE.

STILL WINES.

(WHITE)

RIESLING,  
RIESLING, A,  
RIESLING, B,  
CALIFORNIA NECTAR,  
HOCK,  
ANGELICA,  
MUSCATEL,  
WHITE FOREIGN,  
WHITE MISSION.

RED.

PORT,  
ROSE OF SONOMA,  
RED FOREIGN,  
RED MISSION.

CALIFORNIA BRANDIES  
of  
SUPERIOR QUALITY.

EGG HARBOR VINTAGE.

BLACK ROSE,  
JOLHINK,  
EGG HARBOR FLOWER,  
FRANKLIN,  
EGG HARBOR NECTAR, (White)

Pleasant Valley Wine Co.  
Rhine  
Staten C. I. N. Y.

Please send me  
4 Cases of pinks &  
1 Case. Quarts  
Great Western  
as soon as possible

Yours truly  
Chas Worm  
J. F. [Signature]

2 - (Above)  
Letterhead from a Philadelphia  
BVVS rep, dated in 1882, four  
years following Johnson's purchase  
of the Buena Vista property. Was  
Buena Vista still selling off residual  
inventory? Note the ambitious  
wine list at left.

Buena Vista Vinicultural Society,  
San Francisco.

PHILIP GEROLD, REPRESENTATIVE.

### *Buena Vista Vinicultural Society*

Several years earlier, in 1859, Agoston had devised a new venture he called the Buena Vista Vinicultural Association. The BVVA offered small parcels of vineyard acreage, at liberal terms, planted in vines, and managed for three years until bearing fruit for winemaking. John Swett and Charles Krug were among the buyers, and sales of other parcels were very good.

In 1863, Agoston realized his most adventurous enterprise yet, when the Buena Vista Vinicultural Society (BVVS) was incorporated in March. He sold all of his Buena Vista properties, equipment and buildings to the BVVS in exchange for 2600 shares of 6000 shares total, offered at \$100 each. The BVVS raised capital of \$104,575, and Agoston became a trustee and the superintendent of operations. The Board of Trustees consisted mostly of businessmen from San Francisco, including Isador Landsberger, who was to play an important role in Arpad's future. Emil Dresel was also a stockholder. Ironically, William Blanding, the district attorney who had indicted Agoston for embezzlement at the S.F. Mint, became a major stockholder.

There was another reason to celebrate that year. On June 1<sup>st</sup> a Haraszthy double wedding took place at General Vallejo's ranch, Lachryma Montis. Attila was wed to Vallejo's daughter Natalia, and Arpad to Jovita, her younger sister.

Yet the year had its difficulties. Agoston had to borrow \$10,000 from a San Francisco banker and a hefty loan of \$42,800 was made with railroad magnate Cornelius Garrison in New York, a BVVS shareholder. Arpad, engaged as champagne maker for the Society, produced somewhere between nine and ten thousand bottles, but the production was unsuccessful, resulting in a costly failure. He was forced to resign, and Agoston reimbursed the BVVS over \$5,000 for the loss.

In 1864 the BVVS employed Pierre Debanne, who had produced sparkling wine for the Sainsevain Brothers in Los Angeles. With infusion of fresh capital, Agoston made improvements: a stable was built to accommodate fifty horses, a new roof was provided the Pompeian villa, a small railway was constructed from the vineyards to the press house, and a new brandy still, which could produce between 500 and 1000 gallons per day, was added to the plant. Three new 170-foot tunnels were dug into the hillside, 19 new 4000-gallon redwood tanks were added, and a new stone champagne house was built. There was now an agent in New York City.

But dark clouds began to appear on the horizon. A drought led to a smaller harvest than predicted, and the BVVS was not able to pay dividends to its shareholders nor show a profit. The wines were of

disappointing quality, and furthermore, the federal tax revenue office challenged the purity of the BVVS brandy. Outside forces claimed that Agoston poorly managed the BVVS, and the Board of Trustees saw fit to elect a change of officers at their annual meeting. In October, Agoston and Eleanora hosted a grand masked ball at the villa to celebrate the harvest, but it was temporary euphoria.

### *"Serious Financial Difficulties"*

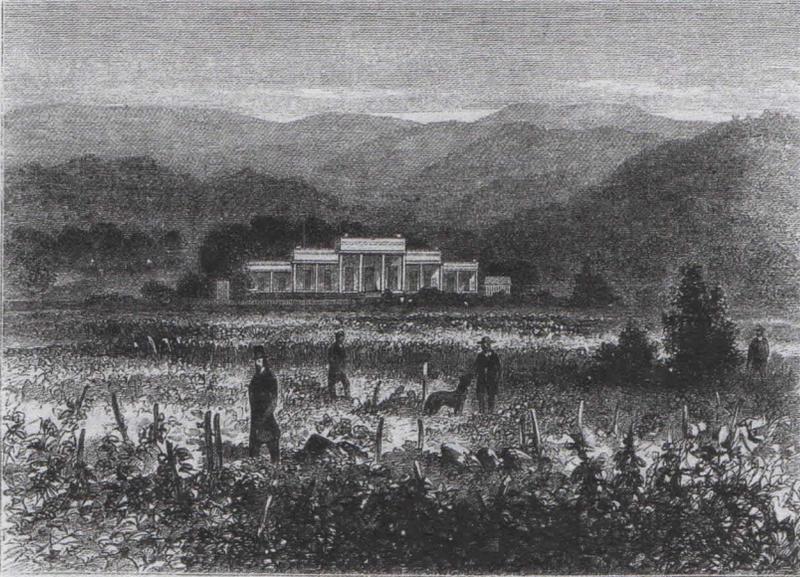
In 1865, when the BVVS found it necessary to generate new capital, the moneyed William Ralston—banker, builder of the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, and investor in the Comstock Lode—answered the call. Unfortunately, it was not enough to alter the Society's destiny. Attila now served as temporary superintendent as Agoston spent little time there. Dying vines were attributed to Agoston's vineyard layering method that he had employed to increase the number of vines. (No one had yet identified the real culprit, phylloxera.) At the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees, the board president reported serious financial difficulties, and again, no dividends could be paid. Attila, in presenting his superintendent's report remained optimistic, lauding the successful new plantings and many rooted *vinifera* cuttings. He also reported that 40,000 bottles of champagne were put up in the newly completed champagne house, and that the 1864 vintage wines were quite clear and improving rapidly.

The Society subsidized Agoston on a trip to New York, Philadelphia, and Washington to lobby Congress about lowering the inflated taxes on wine and brandy and to act as ambassador-at-large for California wine concerns. Agoston's efforts and those of others found success in 1866 when the tax on wine was eliminated. But with a blind side, Congress increased the tax on brandy incredulously from 50¢ a gallon to \$2 a gallon. Agoston returned to Sonoma in the late summer of 1865, but he was beginning to distance himself from the BVVS. In late August, he consulted for two new oil companies operating just south of Santa Barbara, to propose agricultural developments for their dormant land holdings. Apparently, nothing ever came of it, but it was a diversion from his responsibilities at BVVS. Agoston increased his debt load, and took on \$21,000 of new loans in August.

### *Arpad Haraszthy*

It is relevant to mention the destiny of Arpad Haraszthy following his very brief career as champagne maker for the BVVS. He had become a respected writer on the subject of viticulture and winemaking, and had authored several detailed accounts of operations at Buena Vista Ranch, before the formation of the BVVS. Beginning in mid-1863,

## WINE-MAKING IN CALIFORNIA.



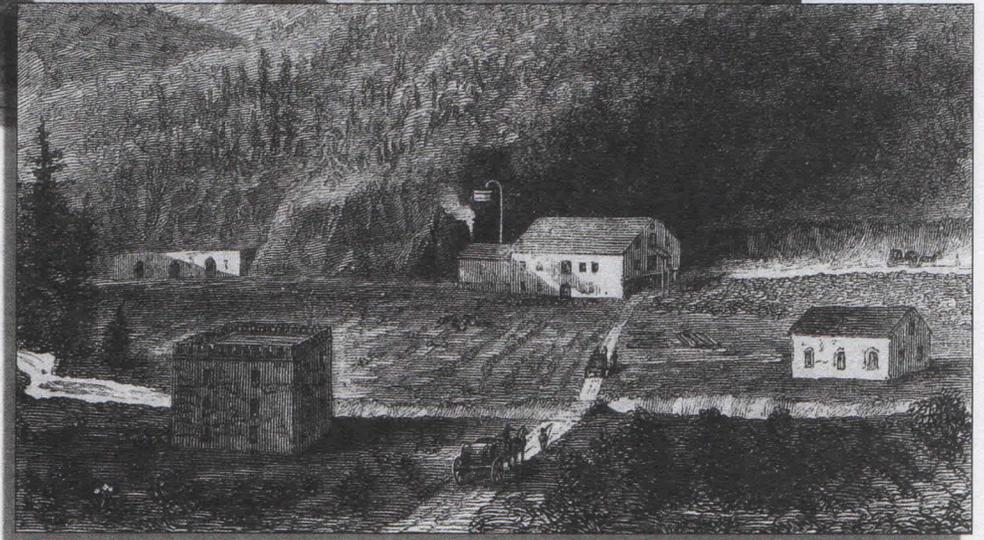
BUENA VISTA RANCHE AND VINEYARD.

4 - Left. Vineyard & the Pompeian style villa at Buena Vista Ranch. The man in the stovepipe hat is a depiction of Agoston Harazsthy. From a wood engraving in Harpers' New Monthly Magazine, June 1864.

5 - Below. The Buena Vista press house. From a stereoview photograph by Eadweard Muybridge, circa 1870. The 5 people in the photo remain unidentified. When this photo was taken, Agoston Harazsthy & Emil Dresel were deceased...both died in 1869.



6 - Right. The buildings at Buena Vista. From a wood engraving in Harpers' New Monthly Magazine, June 1864. The facade of the storage tunnels is at left center.



Arpad assumed the editorship of the "Wine Department" of the important California Wine, Wool & Stock Journal (San Francisco). His lengthy article on "Wine-Making in California" was published in the June 1864 issue of Harper's New Monthly magazine; he also contributed a four-part essay, "Wine-Making in California" to the Overland Monthly (1871-1872). Soon after his BVVS champagne debacle, Arpad partnered with General Vallejo's former vineyard manager, Pietro Giovanari, to make wines for neighboring Sonoma winegrowers. After Isador Landsberger had separated himself from the BVVS, he formed a wine and champagne firm in San Francisco, I. Landsberger & Co. in 1865. Two years later he took on Arpad as his champagne maker and senior partner, and together they produced a very popular California champagne called Eclipse. When Landsberger withdrew in 1880, the firm was dissolved. Arpad took on new partners, formed Arpad Haraszthy & Co., and successfully continued the Eclipse brand well into the end of the century.

Arpad became an effective advocate for the California wine industry. In 1880 he was elected as the first president of the newly formed California State Board of Viticultural Commissioners, serving for eight years. In this capacity, he submitted valuable "Reports of the President" that were published annually. Financially, Arpad, didn't fare much better than his father. His own wine business deteriorated, and in the late fall of 1900 he died of heart failure on a street in San Francisco.

#### *Agoston Haraszthy Resigns from BVVS*

Meanwhile, at the BVVS operation, 1866 was a woeful year. Agoston was accused by some of extravagance and unfaithfulness in the performance of his duties at the BVVS. There was some truth in it, as his absence was most likely a problem, and the yet unidentified phylloxera was wreaking havoc in the vineyards. Attila and Gaza were also moving on, with the formation of their new firm, Haraszthy Brothers. It is not certain if Arpad was directly involved, but some felt that the Haraszthy Bros. firm was a front for Agoston's interests. Possibly he hoped to insure his future in the wine business, post-BVVS.

In the annual report for June 1866, Agoston presented his last superintendent's report, writing "everything is in a thriving condition," the champagne production at BVVS was finally a success, and noted that vines on the hillsides were producing the best wines. President of the Board of Trustees, George Johnson, defended Agoston Haraszthy against many charges against him, crediting him with nearly single handedly bringing the BVVS to its present level of success. The report put the best spin possible on a

deteriorating situation. The Society was deeply in debt, and faced insurmountable challenges which would eventually lead to failure. Appearing to be in denial, the unidentified ravaging vineyard pest was nowhere mentioned in the report; the rosy outlook was obviously spun to allay concerns of the stockholders or possible investors.

By the end of 1866 Agoston's stock holdings in the BVVS had been stripped by his debt obligations. To add injury to insult, he fell from the second story of the distillery, suffering a dislocated ankle and internal injuries. He recovered, but resigned his position. Vintner Emil Dresel was hired as the new BVVS supervisor. Not knowing that phylloxera was the cause of the withering vineyards, Dresel removed many of the dense rows of vines that Agoston had layered; but remaining vines continued to die off.

Upon his departure from the BVVS, Agoston moved to the nearby 126-acre property occupied by the young couple Attila and Natalia, that was titled in Eleanor's name, an arrangement designed to leave the property free of Agoston's debt obligations. He was in dire straights at this time, and in September 1867 Agoston filed bankruptcy, claiming debts of nearly \$117,000 compared to assets of \$24,975.

#### *A Final Venture*

Failure at the BVVS and bankruptcy did not thwart Agoston from new adventures and prospects. In February 1868 Agoston and his son Gaza sailed from San Francisco to Nicaragua to launch a project that would be the Count's last. Partnering with German-born Dr. Theodore Wassmer, Haraszthy father and son invested in a sugar plantation with plans to distill sugar cane into rum. (The Nicaraguan government had granted them exclusive rights for a period of twenty years.) Agoston claimed the Hacienda San Antonio plantation encompassed 100,000 acres. It is difficult to surmise how Agoston and Gaza raised the money. (Had he secreted away cash or gold from earlier times?)

Agoston's wife and 19-year-old daughter Otelia joined him in May. Tragically, Eleanora contracted yellow fever and died only two months later. In November, Agoston returned to San Francisco to purchase equipment for the plantation, and then on to Sonoma to visit his other sons. The family sold their last remaining property, titled in Eleanor's name, for \$4000. In January of the following year, Agoston returned to the Nicaragua project.

Tragedy followed tragedy. In 1869 Agoston Haraszthy disappeared without a trace from a riverbank on the plantation near a site for a new saw mill. His exact fate has never been determined, but some speculated that while he was trying to cross the river on a fallen tree, he accidentally slipped and drowned



7 - Detail from a cabinet photo of Arpad Harazsthy (center) & friends. Signed on the back: "The Economical Club, Feb. 4th 1880. Wm. H Whitely, Col. E. McArthur, Arpad Harazsthy. To Natalia, from Arpad". The Economical Club is a mystery. Photo by Rieman & Tuttle, Yosemite Art Gallery, San Francisco.



8 - Carte de visite studio photo of Agoston Harazsthy circa 1860. His self confidence and pride is a part in this iconic portrait. Hand signed on the back "Agoston Harazsthy". Photo by Bradley & Rulofson, San Francisco



9 - Ad for Arpad's Eclipse Extra Dry, California champagne, circa 1880's. Eclipse enjoyed great success promoted as the "Champagne of the Elite".



10 - Trade card for Isador Landsberger's firm based in San Francisco, circa 1875. Arpad Harazsthy was Landsberger's senior partner & champagne maker. Eclipse champagne was first produced by this firm and later by Arpad Harazsthy & Co. Vollmer & Epstein were investment partners.

in the water below. The most colorful account was that a man-eating alligator may have secured his fate.

### *The Remaining Years at Buena Vista*

Back at Buena Vista, Emil Dresel continued efforts to improve the BVVS without much success. In 1868 he added a third story to the stone press house which Agoston had built earlier. Dresel, who lived at his own nearby property and used the villa only as office and headquarters, died in January 1869. A number of successive superintendents continued the effort with little improvement. However, the BVVS managed to produce a few fairly good wines in the 1870s. By this date, there were 400,000 gallons of wine and 100,000 bottles of champagne in the caves at Buena Vista, although by 1873, phylloxera had taken its devastating toll on the vineyards. [See "1873 Recapitulation" rear cover.]

Even though the BVVS exhibited wine at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, the Society was in its final days. In 1878, Robert Johnson bought at auction 6000 acres of the Buena Vista property for \$46,502. (Johnson's father was a former president of the BVVS Board of Trustees and a major creditor to Agoston.) Near the old villa, Johnson and his wife Kate built a grand, four-story mansion known as the Johnson Castle or, often, the Buena Vista Castle. Winemaking was not pursued by the Johnsons, and they gave up the fight to save the vines. California's wine industry went into a serious depression in the 1880s, as grape prices tumbled. By 1883 phylloxera had destroyed nearly all of the "once-great vineyard" at Buena Vista.

Attila died in 1888, leaving his widow Natalia and four young children in debt. Robert Johnson passed away the following year, and his wife in 1892. The 1906 earthquake devastated Buena Vista, taking most of the buildings and collapsing the tunnels. Sometime before 1920 the State of California took title to the Buena Vista estate due to unpaid taxes. Ironically, Agoston's daughter Ida, who died in 1913, had become one of the richest women in California, a consequence of her first husband's Los Angeles property investments where oil was discovered.

Buena Vista was revived in 1943 when Frank Bartholomew, Vice-President of United Press International, bought 500 acres of the original property. He restored some of the old stone winery buildings, and in the 1950s he hired the renowned winemaker of Beaulieu Vineyards, André Tchelistcheff, as a consultant. In the late 1960s Bartholomew sold the wine cellars to a Los Angeles company, but retained the vineyards. When Bartholomew died in 1985, his widow rebuilt the Pompeian villa which became the headquarters for the Frank H. Bartholomew Foundation that offers scholarships to Sonoma County and

Napa County high school graduates to study enology at the University of California at Davis.

Agoston Haraszthy may have suffered personal failures with most of his business pursuits, but he and his son Arpad were significantly responsible for setting in motion what was to become California's great wine industry. To credit him as the "Father of California Wine" would be to overstate his accomplishments. Had Agoston been able to partner with a business manager possessing as much talent as Agoston had of charm and influence, history might have taken a different turn. Nonetheless, Agoston Haraszthy's compelling story leaves a fascinating legacy for California.

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*Whatever Fortune sends,  
Let me have a Good Store of Wine,  
Sweet Books and Hosts of Friends.*

WELCOME! TO VOLUME 20 of our *Wayward Tendrils Newsletter / Quarterly*. During the past 19 years we have reviewed or discussed nearly 1600 wine books, visited most of the major wine libraries in the world, presented biographical studies of numerous authors, created checklists of books and ephemeral printings on wine, explored the many facets of collecting (including how to care for our treasures), reprinted noteworthy essays from vintage sources, and made novels-with-a-wine-theme a continual pleasure. In tribute to our fine, unique bunch of Tendril contributors, we have presented in this issue, "A Premier Cru Harvest" by Gail Unzelman, highlighting those articles awarded her "Editor's Choice." We also salute our 20<sup>th</sup> season with a bonus 16-page *Supplement*, "Gustav Eisen: A Man of Many Achievements" written by our indefatigable nonagenarian Allan Shields.

#### PROHIBITION FICTION

With apologies from Your Editor! This list of vintage Prohibition-related wine fiction was intended to accompany Bo Simon's review of Vivienne Sosnowski's stunning new book, *When the Rivers Ran Red: An Amazing Story of Courage and Triumph in America's Wine Country*, last issue. We found these titles in *An Annotated Bibliography of California Fiction 1664-1970* by Newton Baird and Robert Greenwood (Georgetown, CA: Talisman Literary Research, 1971), and thought they would make good follow-up reading to the real story presented by Sosnowski. ■ *If Today Be Sweet* by Ednah Aiken (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1923, 272 pp). "The first years of Prohibition in California. The main character is a Napa Valley wine-grower who gradually adjusts to a law he opposes." ■ *The Man in Gray* by Frances Crane (New York: Random House, 1958, 206 pp). "Mystery novel. Some flashback scenes show the Sonoma County wine industry before and after Prohibition." ■ *The Vineyard* by Idwal Jones (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1942, 279 pp). "Life in the Napa Valley vineyards from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the onset of Prohibition. Centering about Villa Montana and its successive generations of owners, many historical figures find their way into this story." ■ *If This Be My Harvest*

by Lee Atkins [pseudonym of the authors Margaret Lee Perenchio and Violet Atkins] (New York: Crown Publishers, 1948, 281 pp). "A novel of domestic life among the Italian grape-growers of the San Joaquin Valley, 1921-1946. The effects of Prohibition and its repeal play a role." And one more, from Gabler *Wine Into Words*: ■ *Rumbling Wine Barrels* by Bruno Buti (Cloverdale, CA: Buti Publications, 1994, 355 pp). "The story of men who defied Prohibition."

#### ADDITIONS TO "A Longman List..."

We are grateful to London Tendril Nick Hodgson for sending the following additions to our list of wine books published by the House of Longman (Vol.19 No.4, October 2009). ■ *A Treatise on the Art of Making Wine from Native Fruits ...* by Frederick Accum, 1823, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Longman Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green). ■ *A Practical Treatise on the Cultivation of the Grape Vine on Open Walls* by Clement Hoare, 1835 (Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green and Longman). Gabler lists only the William Mason & Son printing the same year. ■ *Remarks on the Art of Making Wine* by John Macculloch, 1817, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Longman, Rees, Orme and Brown) and 1821, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown). ■ *A Philosophical and Statistical History of the Inventions and Customs of Ancient and Modern Nations in the Manufacture and Use of Inebriating Liquors...* by Samuel Morewood, 1838 (Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman). Gabler lists only the Dublin imprint of William Curry, Jr. ■ *Notes on Burgundy* by Charles R. Weld, 1869 (Longmans, Green & Co.), a travel book more than a wine book, but included in Gabler.

#### A LITTLE MORE BURGUNDY

by S. Weir Mitchell was originally published in 1895 with his more famous story, *A Madeira Party* (New York: Century Co./De Vinne Press). Several early reprints of the book likewise contained Mitchell's little story on Burgundy. Then it was seen no more, until late 2009 when Tendril John Danza republished it. John has written an Introduction setting the scene for Mitchell and his story and a Preface explaining some of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century terms that might be unfamiliar to present-day readers. This has been a favorite little wine story of his, John explains, and wanted to make it more available to his literary wine friends. To keep the cost down, he decided to use InstantPublishing.com, and he was rewarded with an attractive book. Fifty-two hand-numbered copies were printed and are available from John. \$20 USA postpaid / \$18 + applicable shipping for overseas orders. He will be happy to inscribe; send him your wishes. [jdanza@wideopenwest.com](mailto:jdanza@wideopenwest.com).

## SOME RECENT RELEASES

*The Riesling Retribution* is the fourth, and latest, in the Wine Country Mystery Series by Ellen Crosby (New York: Scribner, 2009. 261 pp. \$25). This tale of suspense, set in the Virginia wine country, involves "a mysterious skeleton, a Civil War battlefield, and dark family secrets." *Gallo Be Thy Name. The Inside Story of How One Family Rose to Dominate the U.S. Wine Market* by Jerome Tuccille (Beverly Hills: Phoenix Books, 2009. 269 pp. \$23). The d.j. blurb introduces this "gripping exposé": "Beneath the E. & J. Gallo Winery's carefully polished surface is a sweeping story of passion and power, swirling with rumors of murder." *The Vintage Caper* (New York: Knopf, 2009. 223 pp. \$24.95) is the latest from Peter Mayle (11 books, 5 are fiction). "Set in Hollywood, Paris, Bordeaux, and Marseille, Mayle's newest and most delightful novel is filled with culinary delights, sumptuous wines, and colorful characters." [d.j.] *The Dark Vineyard* by Martin Walker (London: Quercus, 2009. 309 pp. £13). This is the second title by prize-winning journalist-author Walker to feature Bruno, Chief of Police of St. Denis, Périgord. A California winemaker "who plans to buy up half the valley and create a huge wine-producing operation" figures in the plot.

## CHAMPAGNE NOTES

Our retired "Wine Tales" sleuth, Warren Johnson, uncovered a few more titles to add to our Champagne fiction list of last issue. *Champagne* (1989) and *Champagne Gold* (1992) are two works by Nicola Thorne, a pseudonym of the popular British author, Rosemary Ellerbeck. Conceived by the Marquis d'Aulan, President of Piper Heidsieck, the storyline was developed for the book and a possible TV series, a French equivalent of "Dynasty." The books were very well-received (hardback & paperback editions), but the TV series never materialized.

## SPEAKING OF SLEUTHS . . .

Let's add *Madame Maigret's Recipes* (1975) to our list of wine-related fiction titles. This 183-page tribute to Georges Simenon and his Inspector Maigret series was "Compiled by Robert Courtine on the occasion of Georges Simenon's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday." Over one hundred recipes are presented that appeared in one of the Maigret books, while a "spirited" Wine Glossary is provided by Jack Lang, "an American wine expert." Courtine, a friend of author Simenon, is called "France's most famous food writer" and the author of a "great number and variety of books on food and drink." No Courtine titles are listed in Gabler, but Georges Simenon's *Maigret and the Wine Merchant* (London/New York, 1971), "a murder mystery set in Paris," is included, with a descriptive annotation.

## HELP!! WANTED

Having realized delicious success from previous pleas to fellow Tendrils for help in finding a much-wanted title, Nina Wemyss (*The Napa Valley Reserve*), sends another request: *Wines and Vines of California* by Frona E. Wait (the original 1889 imprint) and *The Pacific Union Club Wine List*, 1948, would be greatly appreciated! [nwemyss@thenapavalleyreserve.com](mailto:nwemyss@thenapavalleyreserve.com).

## AN UNKNOWN LITTLE BOOKLET

of helpful hints and recipes for *Home Made Wines. For Family and Medicinal Use*, written by George C. Williams, of New Philadelphia, Ohio, and published by him in 1915, has recently turned-up. This plain, but nicely printed, booklet of 38 pages is not listed in Gabler's *Wine into Words* and an internet search located one copy in the WorldCat. We assume the good Mr. Williams was sadly unsuccessful in selling very many copies at "\$2 postpaid," accounting for its present obscurity. Were it that he could still be reached at "New Philadelphia, O." so we could inquire.

## 5000 COPIES &amp; UNKNOWN TO GABLER!?

This is amazing. *Robert Mondavi Winery 2001*, written by the acclaimed wine writer Gerald Asher, was produced "in celebration of the opening of the new Robert Mondavi Winery To-Kalon Project." Designed and produced by the innovative graphic design firm, Pate International, it is a princely presentation in a rich ivory cloth and maroon leather binding, with folded, uncut leaves throughout: 14 pages of text and [30] pages of b/w and brilliant color photographs. The edition is limited to 5,000 numbered, slip-cased books.

## ALWAYS REMEMBER . . .

"A Bibliomaniac must be carefully distinguished from a Bibliophile. The latter has not yet freed himself from the idea that books are meant to be read. The Bibliomaniac has other uses for books: he carries them about with him as talismans; he passes his time in the contemplation of their bindings, illustrations, and title-pages—sometimes even prostrating himself before his books in silent adoration." — *Books* by Gerald Donaldson (1981).



THE WAYWARD TENDRILS is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1990 for Wine Book Collectors. Yearly Membership / Subscription to the WAYWARD TENDRILS QUARTERLY (ISSN 1552-9460) is \$25 USA and Canada; \$30 overseas. Permission to reprint is requested. Please address all correspondence to THE WAYWARD TENDRILS, Box 9023, Santa Rosa, CA, 95405 USA. E-m: [tendrils@jps.net](mailto:tendrils@jps.net). Editor and Publisher: Gail Unzelman. —

MARIAN L. GORE, BOOKSELLER (1914–2009)  
IN MEMORIAM  
by Gail Unzelman

Marian Gore, our beloved, ageless *grand dame* of the food and drink bookselling scene, has passed away—almost fourteen years to the day that we announced her retirement in our October 1995 Wayward Tendrils Quarterly. In her grand and elegant manner, Marian continued to stroll the Book Fair aisles for several years after her retirement, keeping in touch with book-loving friends. We will forever remember her presence and energy. Our “Retirement Announcement” is a loving tribute to her memory.

Marian L. Gore, Bookseller  
Announces Retirement

**W**e dedicated collectors of wine and gastronomy books signal the departure of our longest enduring U.S. wine and food bookseller. With a pang of sadness, and heartfelt congratulations on a wonderful career, we reluctantly accept the retirement of Marian L. Gore, Bookseller.

Always a reader and a lover of books, Marian began her bookselling career working for a rare book dealer in Beverly Hills. In this position, she came to realize there were no West Coast booksellers specializing in food and drink, and she would be happy to fill this need. Following the pattern of most dealers in this specialty, Marian set up shop in her home and conducted a mail-order business.

In 1967 Marian L. Gore, Bookseller issued her first catalogue: “200 Years of Cookery” listing 409 items, with about 15 wine-related books intermixed with the cook books. By 1968 her catalogue, subdivided into fourteen categories, included 75 books on wine (Speechly’s *Treatise on the Vine*, 1821, \$30). For the next twenty-five years an average of two sizeable catalogues were issued each year—every one sparkling with new-found, glorious treasures.

Marian’s first Antiquarian Book Fair was in 1972 at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco. As a member of the ABAA (Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America), Marian participated yearly in the ABAA’s prestigious Book Fairs, as well as presenting her specialized wares at the smaller, non-ABAA book fairs in Southern California. Often displayed in her booth were wine items never before seen—not only the old and rare classics, but wonderful, artistically created items of the 1930s or ’40s that she had found on her latest buying trip to France. A lesson quickly learned: snatch up these gems promptly, you will not likely see them again.

In a letter to your Editor, Marian recalled “traveling to search out unusual and special items. I went to Europe every few years. I speak a little French, and France was always a pleasurable experience. In Paris I stayed usually on the Left Bank in some small hotel, walked a lot, and scoured all the book stores.”

In 1990 The Book Collectors of Los Angeles published the noteworthy *One Hundred Books on California Food & Wine* (Dan Strehl, ed.), highlighting the “most desirable ... and most representative books that describe the first 120 years of California food and wine.” As a member of the committee to develop this important contribution to gastronomic literature, Marian was also asked to write an introductory article, “Notes from a California Bookseller.” She recalls her bookseller career—from being “appallingly ignorant” in her new chosen specialty to a long-time friendship with M.F.K. Fisher.

Marian L. Gore, Bookseller does not retire easily. She still has over one thousand food and drink books for sale—but, she will issue no more catalogues and has exhibited at her last Book Fair. “As a one-woman band the business has been very demanding and immensely gratifying. It opened up a world I would never have known otherwise. And I’m leaving all of it because it’s time!” (at 81 years of age!).

Graciously private, with a keen, droll sense of humour, Marian has graced the book world with a stately presence. We will sincerely miss her.

A REMEMBRANCE OF MARIAN  
by Brian Rea

**M**arian Gore was a classy lady, and my favorite Antiquarian. As a fanatic collector of drink books, I always made haste to Marian’s booth at the book fairs. She sold me my first *Savoy Cocktail Book*, and other quite scarce bar-keep books, and more often than not, some unusual ones. I remember what a pleasure it was to visit with her at her home full of books in San Gabriel, traveling there on my bike from Burbank. It was a nice feeling to sit and talk to her, and discuss, as usual, books. Many of her drink books were proudly sold to the famous Rainbow Room in Rockefeller Center, after I recommended same. Marian was a fine bookseller, an active, funny, different, special lady; along with many long-time book collectors, it is my loss also, as we were friends.



## WAYWARD TENDRILS WINE LITERATURE

## A Premier Cru Harvest

by Gail Unzelman

*"The ecstatic heights of collecting can be reached only by sharing the fruits of pursuit with like-minded companions, not only through the collection itself but also through the spoken and printed word. Inevitably, the things man collects inspire their own literature...."* — *American Bottles & Flasks...* by McKearin and Wilson, 1978.

THE MISSION OF OUR WINE BOOK Collector's Society and its *Quarterly* publication is to communicate the literature of wine and its lore to fellow collectors and students of printed wine material. In celebration of entering our 20<sup>th</sup> vintage season, we present the following list of "Editor's Choice" essays—those your Editor considers to be most memorable, exciting, entertaining, and valuable additions to the study of wine through its literature. While reviewing this survey, please raise a toast to our exemplary list of contributors and our faithful membership. For Tendrils who missed any of these gems, a few copies are available, along with the 5-year-compiled indexes. Contact your Tendril Editor at [tendrils@jps.net](mailto:tendrils@jps.net). *Saluté!*



Let us begin our reminiscence with one of the premier collectors of printed wine material, the late Roy Brady (1918–1998), who also was a fine wine writer. In our first volume (v.1 #2, 1991), we published his inspiring essay, "The Pleasures of Collecting Wine Books," which he began: "As is well known, all collectors

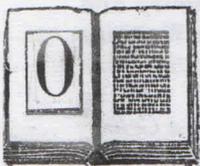
are prepared to steal or murder if it is a question of getting another piece for their collection; but this does not lower their moral character in the least.' Karel Capek understood the true collector. If you find his comment unlikely or unreasonable, that simply means that you do not have the potential to become a thorough-going collector. But never mind, there is a great deal of satisfaction to be found in collecting at a lower rate." Years later, after parting with his collection, he wrote a sequel, "The Pleasures of Somebody Else Collecting Wine Books" (v.6 #1, 1996). Following in the vintage footsteps of Brady, Eberhard Buehler (between the years 1960 and 1980) formed "with worldwide unabated collecting" a truly outstanding library. In "The Bibulous Bibliophile: Adventures in Wine-Book Collecting" (v.8 #1, 1998), he relates the extraordinary journey from his first wine book, L.W. Marrison's *Wine and Spirits* (a paperback!), to shelves filled with many rare treasures.

"Wine in America: Twelve Historic Texts," a four-part series by Thomas Pinney (v.3 #3, #4, 1993; v.4 #1, #2, 1994), initiates a basketful of praiseworthy contributions from our noted wine historian. In this essay, twelve titles (beginning with 1622 and ending with 1863), "each with a significant place, either as a first contribution to the subject, or as a special authority on it, or a major influence ... are set forth and described." Later, Prof. Pinney, using the pseudonym Philephemera, addressed the ephemeral side of wine

literature with the four-part series "Notes on [Winery and Wine Merchant] Newsletters: With a Checklist" (v.6 #4, 1996; v.7 #1–#3, 1997). "George Saintsbury and *Notes on a Cellar-Book*, with Some Further Writings on Wine by Saintsbury" appeared in 1997 (v.7 #4). This scholarly essay would become the basis for the Introduction to his published book, *Notes on a Cellar-Book. George Saintsbury. Edited and Annotated by Thomas Pinney* (U.C. Press, 2008). Pinney's "The Genesis of a Book" (v.10 #1–#3, 2000) is definitely a Tendril-variety of reading; it is a well-researched and documented history of how "*The Story of Wine in California*" came to be. Written by M.F.K. Fisher and illustrated with superb black & white photographs by Max Yavno, it is a classic book of California wine literature. Everyone should reprint this essay and insert it into their copy of this wondrous book! Tom followed with another stellar book story, "A Special Book: *The Grapes of New York*" by U. P. Hedrick, 1908 (v.10 #4, 2000), and explains his particular fondness for this encyclopedic historical survey of the grapes not only of New York, but of all those east of the Rocky Mountains. Next, he presents "The Most Important Book Ever Written about California Wine" (v.12 #3, 2002), singling out for this honor *The Principles and Practice of Wine Making* by W. V. Cruess, 1934. Pinney would also honor "A Born Collector: Roy Brady, 1918–1998" (v.14 #2, 2004); and provide a two-part essay on the remarkable wineman, "The Finest Wines in the World are Homemade Wines: The Career of Philip M. Wagner [and His Printed Works]" (v.14 #3, #4, 2004). Historian Pinney believes Wagner "certainly belongs in the pantheon of American wine."

With the July issue of 1999 (v.9 #3), we began the serialization of wine historian Charles Sullivan's ground-breaking "The Zinfandel: A History of a Grape and Its Wine." This scholarly, never-before-told story ran through Volume 11, 2001.

Published two years later by U.C. Press, it was an award-winning book. In 2006, on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great Earthquake and Fire, Sullivan began an amazing coverage of “**The Great Wine Quake**” (v.16 #1-#3, 2006) from the perspective of the State’s wine industry—another story never before researched and told. (For another astonishing earthquake story, see “**Ozymandias in San Francisco: A Medallic Memorial of the Great Earthquake and Fire of 1906**” (v.17 #2, 2007), reprinted from the *American Numismatic Society Magazine*.) “**U.C. Grapes and Wine: A Discourse on the Institution of Wine Research in the State of California with Reflections on the Early Workers and Notes on Related Topics**” (v.18 #4, 2008; v.19 #1-#3, 2009) is a superb, in-depth study by Sullivan on the founding fathers of the viticultural school of the University of California and their significant works (1868–1918).



Our ongoing “**Wine Libraries of the World**” series has featured articles on “**The Napa Valley Wine Library**” by Gunther Detert (v.1 #2, 1991); “**The André L. Simon Collection of the I.W.&F.S. in The Guildhall, City of London**” by Hugo Dunn-Meynell (v.1 #3, 1991); “**The Viticulture & Enology Collection, Shields Library at U. C. Davis**” by Axel Borg (v.2 #2, 1992); “**The Sonoma County Wine Library Collection**” by Bo Simons (v.2 #3, 1992; v.8 #2, 1998); State Library of South Australia (see following); “**Wine at the Library of Congress**” by Robert Hutton (v.6 #3, 1996); “**The Library & Archives of the Wine Institute, San Francisco**” by Robert Zerkowitz (v.13 #2, 2003); “**The Southern California Wine & Wine Industry Collection at Cal Poly Pomona University Library**” by Danette Cook Adamson (v.10 #4, 2000). “**A Visit with the Joneses and their Wine Books**” (v.6 #4, 1996; v.18 #3, 2008) and “**‘F.W.C.’ The First Wine Book Collector?**” (v.17 #4, 2007) by Gail Unzelman.

“**Oenotypophily: Wine & Print in the State Library**” (v.2 #1, 1992) is a grand tour of the “largest collection of wine books in Australia’s biggest wine-producing state,” personally directed by the rare books and special collections librarian, Valmai Hankel (who cleverly coined the term, oenotypophily). In 2001 (v.11 #3, #4), we enjoyed her scholarly and entertaining essay, “**The Eager Oenographers. With a Select List of Books on Grape Growing and Winemaking Important in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Australia,**” where, with her long-cultivated interest in Australian wine-growing history and her 45-year tenure at the Library, she brings to life many of the pioneer wine-growers and their “yeasty writings.” She generously followed this with “**Australian Wine Books of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Personal Selection of the Top Twenty**” (v.12 #2, 2002). In 2004 Valmai reminded us of “**Robert**

**Druitt’s Joyous, Forgotten Classic**” (v.14 #2, 2004), the 1865 publication with a title almost as long as the book: *Report on the Cheap Wines from France, Italy, Austria...Their Quality, Wholesomeness, and Price, and their use in diet and medicine...*

The first “**Supplement**” to our *Wayward Tendrils Quarterly* appeared with the October 2003 issue. Your Editor’s request for a “piece on Canadian wine books” became a 20-page study of Canada’s wine literature interwoven with the history of the Canadian wine industry, “**Canadian Wine Books,**” expertly researched and written by Eberhard Buehler (v.13 #4, Supplement). This accomplishment still astounds me.

A delightful piece on the day-to-day activities of a specialist bookdealer was submitted for Vol.2 No.2 (1992) by the late Mike McKirdy, the respected, popular co-proprietor of Cooks Books, Rottingdean. Titled “**Africana with the Port,**” Mike wittily relates his business adventure with the eminent, and rather eccentric, New York booksellers, Eleanor Lowenstein and Walter Goldwater, and moving a half ton of books from New York to Rottingdean. ■ Another bookseller remembrance that brought great pleasure is Eberhard Buehler’s “**Recollections of Elisabeth Woodburn**” (v.12 #4, 2002), a “meritage” of a passionate wine book collector and a much-loved specialist bookseller.



tributes, biographical sketches, and checklists of a number of historied wine authors have appeared, beginning with our first volume. “**Cyril Ray, 1908–1991: In Remembrance**” (v.1 #4, 1991); “**A Salute to Leon Adams, 1905–1995**” (v.6 #1, 1996); “**An Appreciation of**

**Philip Marshall Wagner, 1904–1996**” by Robert Hutton (v.7 #2, 1997); “**Maynard Amerine, 1911–1998**” (v.8 #2, #3, 1998); “**Roy Brady, 1918–1998**” (v.8 #2, 1998); “**George Husmann (1827–1902) in Print**” by Linda Walker Stevens (v.8 #3, 1998); “**Harry Waugh, 1904–2001**” (v.12 #2, 2002); “**Ernest P. Peninou, 1916–2002: California Wine Historian**” (v.13 #1, 2003) with tributes by Gail Unzelman and Bob Thompson; “**Julian Street, 1879–1947**” (v.14 #2, Supplement, 2004); “**Emile Peynaud, 1912–2004**” (v.14 #4, 2004); “**Gene Ford, 1927–2005**” by Hudson Cattell (v.16 #1, 2006); “**In Memoriam: Alexis Bespaloff, 1934–2006**” by Bo Simons (v.16 #3, 2006); “**William Masee, 1919–2006**” (v.16 #4, 2006); “**In Memoriam: Len Evans, 1930–2006**” by Darrell Corti (v.17 #1, 2007) and Peter Burke (v.17 #2, 2007); “**Gordon Jones, Literary Wine Man, 1921–2008**” by Gail Unzelman (v.18 #3, 2008); “**Dr. Max Lake, 1924–2009**” by Fred McMillin (v.19 #4, 2009).



special, very personal, tribute to André L. Simon, "Working with André: My Apprenticeship with the Founder of the Wine & Food Society," written by vintage Tendril Hugh Johnson (v.13 #4, 2003), remains one of my favorite remembrances of the "grand old man of wine books."

Being a long-time collector, and student of the printed works of André Simon, I relished "With All Good Wishes: Inscribed André Simon Books" (v.14 #4, 2004; v.15 #1, 2005). The idea originated with John Danza, another Simon aficionado, and several Tendrils contributed favorite Simon book inscriptions from their libraries. We continued our Simon tribute with several fine articles by John Danza, "André Simon and the Star Chamber Dinner Accounts" (v.15 #3, 2005), "The Importance of Ephemera" (v.15 #4, 2005), "The Perfect Wine Book" (v.17 #1, 2007), and "Constables Wine Library" (v.19 #2, 2009). Gail Unzelman studied the oft-puzzling issues of Simon's Pocket Library Series, and offered some helpful information in "Amidst the Confusion of André Simon's *Wines of the World*' Pocket Library Series" (v.18 #2, 2008).

In the "bibliography-checklist" category, we have an impressive list of expert contributions, including "Wine Books: A Bibliographical Tour" by Mary Haskell (v.3 #4, 1993); a follow-up article, "Wine Book Bibliography: An Extended Journey" by Gail Unzelman (v.4 #1, 1994); "Fine Press Wine Press: A Check-list" (v.3 #4, 1993) and "An Addendum" (v.4 #1, 1994; v.17 #4, 2007) by Gail Unzelman; "Literature of the Cork-screw" by Ron MacLean (v.4 #3 1993); "Madeira Wine—A Select Bibliography" by Gail Unzelman (v.5 #1, 1995); "Oak in Winemaking: A Bibliography" by Bo Simons (v.8 #3, 1998); "The Literature of the Wine Label [Bottle Tickets]" by Darrel Rosander (v.13 #2, 2003); "Wine from the Peter Pauper Press" by Gail Unzelman (v.15 #3, 2005). In "Early U.S. Titles and the Wine Book Collector" (v.9 #1, #2, 1999), Gail Unzelman explores English-language works published between 1622–1830 not usually classified as "wine books," yet have substantial information on American wine-growing, and should be considered for our collections. "La Fête des Vignerons" by Hans Weiss (v.9 #3, 1999) gives a brief history of this oldest known, and most colorful of festivals celebrating wine and viticulture, and provides a well-annotated bibliographical listing of Festival imprints. "The Bancroft Oral Histories of California Winemen, With a Brief History" (v.10 #3, 2000) is a studious examination by Allan Shields who

presents a comprehensive list of these invaluable oral histories. ■ Missouri's Bushberg Vineyards & Nursery was one of the country's most important during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the firm's catalogues were called by historian U.P. Hedrick "more popular and useful than any other book on American grapes." "The Bushberg Catalogues: A History and Checklist" by Gail Unzelman (v.5 #2, 1995) relates a descriptive history. Stephen Werner's informative "Homage to *Cocks et Féret. With Checklist*" (v.11 #4, 2001), reflects his knowledge of his special collecting interest, the "bible of Bordeaux." "Northwest Wine Books: A Select, Annotated Bibliography" by Will Brown (v.12 #4, 2002) delves into almost every book written about his favorite subject, American Northwest wines. "The Wine List of Alfred A. Knopf" by Thomas Pinney (v.13 #1, 2003) is a survey of publisher Knopf's wine books, from Prohibition times to the 1990s, that provides an historical review of America's developing taste in wines. "A Longman List of Books on Wine" by Gail Unzelman (v.19 #4, 2009) presents the impressive list of wine books published from 1820 onward by this venerable London publishing house.

Among the numerous essays on antiquarian wine books we have published, truly the most valuable is Mannie Berk's "Wine Literature Reviewed: Old & Rare Wine Books" (v.6 #4, 1996). His 13-page, finely illustrated assessment is well-researched, thoughtful, and timeless. I believe there has never been a better presentation on the subject.



One of my favorite articles is a short, one-page essay, "Roman Numerals Deciphered," excerpted from *The American Printer: A Manual of Typography* by Thomas MacKellar (Phila., 1889). This enlightening article that explains these sometimes mysterious characters appeared in v.5 #4, 1995, and again in v.16 #1, 2006. Another enjoyed favorite is "Exposé: or *Nom de Plumes Exposed!*" (v.7 #3, #4 1997), that reveals the identities of some two dozen

anonymous wine-writers in our literature. And, I am especially fond of this one: "A Chat on 'The First American Work on Grape Culture' by Liber" (v.12 #3, 2002). This invented, very entertaining discussion between two old friends, Liber and Biblos, originally appeared in the November 1867 issue of The Horticulturist.

Following Charles Sullivan's earlier diligent search for the origins of Zinfandel, Allan Shields set out on his own grape variety quest. "A Lust for the Lady de Coverly" (v.12 #1, #2, 2002) is a fascinating, scholarly investigation to "untangle the roots" of the Thompson Seedless, one of the world's most extensively planted grape varieties. He provides copious Notes, a Chronology, and a Bibliography of Works Consulted.

The intriguing story of the history of oversized wine bottles comes to light in "Rehoboam or Nebuchadnezzar? Just Who Were These Guys and How Did They Wind Up as Champagne Bottles?" by Bo Simons (v.9 #1, #2, 1999) and a follow-up note by Darrel Rosander, "More on the Big Bottles!" (v.9 #3, 1999).

A very studious and informative essay, "Thoughts and Observations on the Nature of Bibliography Relative to Collectors of Wine Books...with Brief Comments on the Types of Bibliography, Their Use, and the Role of Bibliography" by Isaac Oelgart (v.7 #1, 1997), qualifies as a major contribution to the literature. As per the title, the issues of bibliography are thoroughly discussed.

"Bookplates with Wine Motifs" is a favorite theme of several Tendril collectors, and Erik Skovenborg's fantastically illustrated article includes a tipped-in four-color bookplate by the artist Dolatowski (v.7 #2, 1997). A fine following article "On Collecting Wine Bookplates: A Newcomer's Confession" by Rae Fahlenius (v.14 #3, 2004) shows a number of his prized bookplates.



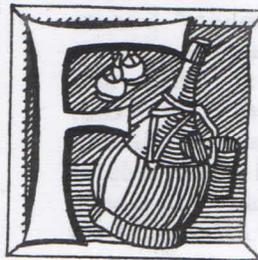
We have published two splendid essays having to do with wine and the arts: "Wine, Art, & Nicolas" by James Gabler (v.11 #1, 2001) and "Wine & Civilization: Wine's Rich Relationship with the Arts" by Nina Wemyss (v.14 #4, 2004). Jim brings to our journal a premier, first-class study and listing of the highly prized publications of Établissements Nicolas, fine-wine merchants of Paris, while Nina's artfully illustrated presentation eloquently praises the virtues of wine, a "source of truth, beauty, and joy, an inspiration to artists and lovers."

A distinctive landmark for our *Quarterly* was the publication of "*Dissertatio Inauguralis Medica de Vinis* by Joann. Mich. Schosulan (Vienna, 1767). Now Translated into English for the First Time: With an Introduction and a Note on the Translator"

by Erik Skovenborg (v.18 #2, 2008). We were privileged to present the first English-language printing of this important, extremely scarce, work.

"Thomas Jefferson and wine" has become a popular subject for several recently published books, but in 2001 we printed a remarkable, never-before-published aspect of this love affair: "The Wine Books in Jefferson's Library" by Robert Hutton (v.11 #2, 2001). Bob, a retired cataloguer for the Library of Congress, also gave us the fascinating, incredible story of the Library's "Delta Collection" (v.11 #4, 2001).

A delicious treat, "Wine Books à la Carte" by Gordon Jones (v.11 #3, 2001), explores the question: Does a cook book that is liberally sprinkled with wine constitute a wine book? The inquisitive journey is a grand banquet.



alling off the wine-book cart ever so slightly, we have enjoyed the "Barchives" of Brian Rea, a one-time wine book collector who formed one of the world's finest drink book libraries. He began his mission to educate and entertain us with "An Old Fashioned Story" (v.10 #3, 2000), then served us "Celebrity Bartenders: Jerry Thomas and the First Cocktail Book" (v.12 #4, 2002). Enjoy further servings from his library of treasures: "The Formative Years" (v.16 #4, 2006), "The Gentleman's Table Guide by Edward Ricket" (v.17 #1, 2007), "Two Early Professional Drink Manuals" (v.17 #2, 2007), "American & Other Drinks. Upwards of Two Hundred Recipes by Leo Engel" (v.17 #3, 2007), and "New & Improved Bartender's Manual by Harry Johnson" (v.18 #1, 2008).

One of the more fascinating bits of wine history seen through the eyes of a very rare book is "Queen Victoria's Cellar Book" by Bern Ramey (v.13 #3, 2003), with actual pages of the Cellar Book reproduced to accompany the article.

Several noteworthy biographical studies include "Longworth: Read Between the Lines" by Linda Walker Stevens (v.9 #1, 1999) who gives a fine insight into the life and times of the enigmatic, mid-America wine pioneer Nicholas Longworth. ■ An unrivaled biographical and bibliographical study of "H. Warner Allen (1881-1968): Classicist, Correspondent, Wine Connoisseur & Author" was presented to all Tendrils by Eberhard Buehler (v.7 #3, 1997). It contains 6 pages of illustrated text and a 5-page bibliography of Allen's works. In 2007, Gail Unzelman tackled the question about a popular pioneer American wine writer, "Who was William

Chorlton?" in her essay "William Chorlton and His *American Grape Grower's Guide*" (v.17 #1, 2007).



In Volume 16 (2006), we first experienced Tendril Marvin Collins' energetic passion for researching and reporting California wine history, and were pleased to meet the magnanimous "Man Who Ate, and Drank, California: Major Benjamin C. Truman" (v.16 #2, #3, 2006). We were next introduced to an even more

remarkable character in "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Bulldog: The Paris Letters and the Rise of Charles A. Wetmore" (v.16 #4, 2006). "How California Got Its First Great Wine Book: Edward Bosqui's *Grapes and Grape Vines of California, 1877*" (v.18 #3, 2008) is a real gem, reporting on this "Rare Work of Art" like no one else before. To close our 19<sup>th</sup> year, Marvin did a masterful job of explaining how to utilize the recently digitized "Grand Old Journal: *Pacific Wine & Spirit Review*" (v.19 #4, 2009).

Having always enjoyed the pursuit of fiction with a wine theme, it was a pleasure to see the inauguration of "Wine Tales" by our excellent sleuth, Warren Johnson (v.16 #3, 2006), whose column aimed to bring us a varied list of wine fiction—from poetry, to novels, to mysteries and romances, &c. Warren continued his popular column through Volume 18. Bo Simons, in our first volume (v.1 #4, 1991), had written on the "timeless" "Marjorie Allingham: Mystery Novelist (Who Had Her Wine References Right)." We reprinted his little gem 16 volumes later for those who missed it the first time (v.17 #1, 2007).

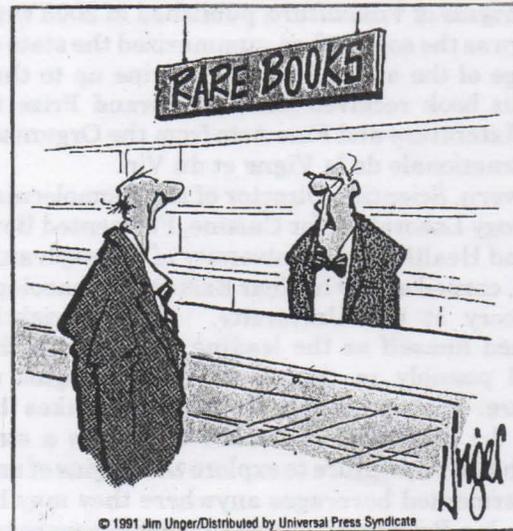
Late in the second decade of our journal, we saw long-time collector and vintage Tendril, Dean Walters, spring to life. Dean chose early printed ephemera, one of his several wine collecting interests, to share with us in his "Illustrated California Wine History" series. "The Upstate New York Connection" (v.19 #2, 2009), "A Tale of Two Brothers and a Parrott" (v.19 #3, 2009), and "Grimm Tales and Revelations" (v.19 #4, 2009), each magnificently illustrated with treasures from his archives, are the first from his pen. We look forward to a similar rich harvest in our 20<sup>th</sup> season.

A major triumph of our *Quarterly* has been the dramatic and painstakingly researched saga, "Martin Ray's Friendships with Eminent Oenophiles" by Barbara Marinacci, where we submersed ourselves into the turbulent career of this voluble California wine-grower presented through his friendships and correspondence with such wine-writing luminaries as Julian Street, Maynard Amer-

ine, John Melville, Frank Schoonmaker, Robert Balzer, Marcus Crahan, André Simon, Angelo Pellegrini, and publisher Alfred Knopf. The series ran from April 2003 through October 2008, and generated much praise from Tendril readers (while bringing in several new members who didn't want to miss the story!).

In closing this tribute, let me send my special Tendril thanks to all who provided the bountiful harvest of book reviews for twenty years: Fred McMillin, Bo Simons, Bob Foster, Hudson Cattell, Will Brown, Warren Johnson, Tom Pinney, Christopher Fielden, Ron Unzelman, R. Hume Andrews, Allan Shields, Wilson Duprey, Linda Stevens, Jack Fairchild, Orley Ashenfelter, and to all the many Tendrils who sent in articles of interest, or nonsense, to make our journal what it is — a lasting, and significant, contribution to the literature of wine.

#### MY FAVORITE CARTOON



"We don't have any!"

#### WINE IN THE MORNING: BOOKSELLERS' CATALOGUES

To read these catalogues is like drinking wine in the middle of morning; it elevates one into that state of felicitous intoxication in which one feels capable of anything. I must control myself and not write to booksellers in haste; there must be a gap between the perusal of the catalogue and my postcard... I will wait until the effects are worn off, and then write a postcard, sober, temperate, moderate, brief, restrained... But, while I wait, those more intemperate than myself will have rushed in and bought. It is obvious that I cannot wait. Probably I should telephone... — Rose Macaulay, *Personal Pleasures*.

*Uncorking the Past: The Quest for Wine, Beer  
and other Alcoholic Beverages* by Patrick McGovern  
A Review by *Will Brown*

“an ambitious undertaking...”



Patrick McGovern has previously written two books on the ancient history of wine. The first, as co-editor, was *The Origins and Ancient History of Wine* (1995), the result of an international symposium held in 1991 at the Robert Mondavi Winery in Napa Valley. At that symposium experts from the fields of anthro-

pology, archaeology, viticulture and enology among others, presented material related to the study of the origins of grape growing and winemaking (viniculture). The second book, *Ancient Wine: The Search for the Origins of Viniculture*, published in 2003 with McGovern as the sole author, summarized the state of knowledge of the ancient history of wine up to that time. This book received the 2004 Grand Prize in History, Literature and Fine Arts from the Organization Internationale de la Vigne et du Vin.

McGovern, Scientific Director of the Biomolecular Archaeology Laboratory for Cuisine, Fermented Beverages and Health at the University of Pennsylvania Museum, earned a PhD in Near Eastern Archaeology and History at the University. He has rightly established himself as the leading authority in the U.S. and possibly in the world on the origins of viniculture. In his present book, McGovern takes the study of the origins of fermented beverages a step beyond that of viniculture to explore the origins of any and all fermented beverages anywhere they may be found. In his Preface he states “alcoholic beverages are unique among all the drugs that humans have exploited on this planet for more than four million years. Their preeminence and universal allure ... what might be called their biological, social and religious imperatives ... make them significant in understanding the development of our species and its cultures.” He then proposes a “journey of exploration that extends further back than the beginnings of grape wine in the Middle East ... starting out at the center of our galaxy, moving on to the beginnings of life on this planet, and then following humankind’s preoccupation with an ingenious concoction of alcoholic beverages from continent to continent as our species spread out from Africa across the earth.” An ambitious undertaking to be sure, McGovern, a polymath of uncommon erudition, takes us with him on his travels around the world in search of the

origins of fermented beverages. In the process, he follows an interdisciplinary approach, employing methodologies from archaeology, anthropology, chemistry, botany, art history, and linguistics among others, to support his hypothesis that humans may be genetically predisposed to the use of alcoholic beverages and that their use is associated with spirituality and creativity in art and music.

In the course of his travels he has found that in each continent visited, alcoholic beverages were associated with domestication of plants and that these beverages were produced from a wide array of materials including grains, grapes, berries and fruit, honey, and even the fruit of the cacao tree in the New World. In China for example he found evidence of the oldest known fermented beverage, dating to about 9000 years ago. In some instances he found what he has called “extreme beverages” where a number of different ingredients were employed in the ferment, often grains along with honey, tree resin and fruits or berries. In each locale he correlated the fermented product with the local cultural practices. As an adjunct to his research, he set about to recreate modern versions of some of the brews that he had discovered. In collaboration with a micro-brewer of his acquaintance, he was able to reproduce several of these products that were both palatable and commercially viable.

This is not an easy book to read. It is full of scientific information some of which is very esoteric, and with geographical names, which are difficult to locate and remember, much less pronounce, even though maps are available. It should be considered as a reference book; it is sure to require revision periodically as new archaeological finds and technological tools are developed. The book is 330 pages in length and contains a table of contents, a preface, nine chapters, color plates, maps, a superb bibliography, acknowledgments, and an index. It is available from Amazon for under twenty dollars.

I can recommend this book with reservations, one of which I have already noted above. It is not a book about wine, but it would appeal to those interested in the ancient origins of viniculture and other fermented beverages. For those readers however, it should best be considered a companion volume to McGovern’s earlier books noted in this review and they should necessarily be studied first. I believe that this book would have greater appeal to archaeologists, anthropologists, historians of the ancient world, and some botanists and chemists and even brewers, than to workaday wine lovers.

[*Will Brown*, a welcome contributor to our *Quarterly*, is a retired physician, a winemaker, and an avid student of Oregon wine history, among other “retired” activities. — Ed.]

## A WAYWARD TENDRILS BOOK REVIEW

by *Thomas Pinney*

*Is This Bottle Corked? The Secret Life of Wine* by Kathleen Burk and Michael Bywater. New York: Harmony Books, 2008. 196pp. \$19.99. Hardback. Originally published in London, 2008, by Faber and Faber.



enjoyed this book and, I confess, was filled with envy because I had not thought of writing it myself. Now I will try to tell you what it is.

The promise of the title is unclear: corked? Does that mean we are to have a treatise on contamination? But then comes the subtitle, “the secret life of wine.” Does that mean an exposé of malpractice—all those shortcuts and manipulations practiced by unscrupulous winemakers? Well, no: nothing like that at all. A glance at the table of contents will show you what to expect: “So who first invented wine?” is an early entry, followed by “What was the truth about Cleopatra’s pearl?” and “What was Napoleon’s favorite wine?” and “Whatever happened to the Nicolas vans?” and so on and on. There are 88 of these entries, some very short, none very long, and they might have gone on for ever if the authors were so disposed.

What we have here is a tour through the lore of wine, and since the territory is endless there can be no necessary route but only a random course, stopping here and there without a plan. The scheme of each entry is ostensibly a question followed by its answer, but the questions are mostly unreal and the answers more often than not simply anecdotes (as in “Why did the sommelier weep?”) or elementary expositions (as in “What microorganisms make and mar wine?”).

There is quite a lot of padding in the telling of these things, but in a book of such frothy character it is not always easy to distinguish the froth from the substance. The style is whimsical throughout, even in the bibliography and the index. In the bibliography, for instance, Kathleen Burk has entered her name not as the author of a book or article but rather as the possessor of “Accumulated knowledge.” And the bizarre index entry for “udders cooked in hay” (a dish that the authors affirm that they actually ate in a British restaurant) is followed by a rebuke to the skeptic: “no, really.” But only a hopeless grouch would complain about whimsy in a designedly whimsical book, and what hopeless grouch would read it anyway?

But how well is all this done? Or, more to the point, do they know what they are talking about? I think that the general level of information is pretty high, the outcome of quite a lot of homework in history and mythology and winemaking—Kathleen Burk’s “Accumulated knowledge.” Every reader, I imagine, will find something new or unfamiliar among the entries, mixed with quite a lot that is familiar enough. I was glad to learn something about the origins of the loving cup ceremony (though I have never seen one nor ever expect to), or about the poor fellow whom Dionysos taught to make wine and who was rewarded for his work by being beaten to death by drunken shepherds, or about the life of General Palmer of Château Palmer. The level of curiosity interest will vary according to the preparation of the reader. I was not much interested by the entry revealing that Baden is warmer than the rest of Germany and so makes more red wine than the rest of Germany (“What wine is ‘pampered by the sun?’”); but the description of the wines drunk in Chaucer’s time (“What wines did Chaucer’s pilgrim’s drink?”), or the examination of the legend about the Duke of Clarence’s death (“Did Clarence really drown in a butt of malmsey?”) were genuinely interesting and instructive to me. But, as I say, different readers will make their different responses to all this.

Despite “Accumulated knowledge,” the authors cannot know everything with equal accuracy. In the few entries on subjects about which I know something, my skepticism was sometimes aroused. The discussion of early American attempts to make drinkable wine, for example, could use some corrective tweaking here and there (“Why did native American wine grapes make such bad wine?”: pp.137-139): Virginia’s efforts to produce wine did not end in 1622; the colonists did not wait until the 18th century to import *v. vinifera* from Europe: they began such importations almost immediately, and continued for the next 250 years; phylloxera was a major killer, no doubt, but Pierce’s disease took precedence in the southern colonies; *v. labrusca* is important among native species, all right, but for wine, *v. aestivalis* is much more important than either *v. riparia* or *v. rupestris*; not merely “attempts have been made to cross [*labrusca*] with other grapes” but thousands and thousands of such crosses (and hybrids, too) have been made; and, finally, Fr. Junipero Serra did not plant *vinifera* in California in 1769. There is nothing sensationally wrong here, but a good deal that is not quite right. I don’t think that this is a book that you will go to in order to settle an argument.

While I am in nit-picking mode I may note a few other blips and blurs. The *Iliad* is not set around the island of Ithaca (p.32), unless they have found a new

*cont. on p.21 —*



BOOKS &  
BOTTLES  
by  
*Fred McMillin*

[We launch the 20<sup>th</sup> season of our *WTQ* and Fred McMillin's "Books & Bottles" with a special tasting of a few of Fred's Favorites. Enjoy! — Ed.]

### A VINTAGE "TIDBIT" TASTING

#### The Books

■ *Recettes des Provinces de France. Sélectionnées* by Curnonsky (Paris, 1961).

On the Grand Gourmand, Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1775–1826): He was "extremely tall with a heavy tread. He spoke seldom and ate a lot." The year before his death he published anonymously what was called a "divine book," that "illuminated the art of eating [and drinking] with the light of genius."

■ *Women of Wine: The Rise of Women in the Global Wine Industry* by Ann Matasar (U.C. Press, 2006).

On Jancis Robinson: Robinson, considered by some to be one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's two great wine writers (the other is Hugh Johnson), changed the wine world through writings "documented with great accuracy, intricacy and intelligence." Gaining an appreciation for fine wine at Oxford University while reading in mathematics and philosophy, she began her wine writing career in 1975 as an assistant editor of *Wine & Spirits*. Author of more than a dozen wine books, and editor of the monumental *Oxford Companion to Wine*, Ms. Robinson was the first journalist to earn the designation Master of Wine and the first to be accorded the Order of the British Empire.

■ *California Place Names: The Origin and Etymology of Current Geographical Names* by Erwin Gudde (U.C. Press, 1969, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., revised)

On the name Sonoma (county, mission, town, valley): "Sonom" or "Sono" was an American Indian word for "nose" and applied to a chief with a prominent protuberance. Thus, it meant the tribe of Chief Nose, and the village and surrounding territory were given this name by the Spaniards.

■ *Plato* by Timaeus, c 380 B.C.

On "Kablewie" wines from Plato's lost continent of Atlantis: "In this island of Atlantis was a great and wonderful empire...But afterwards, there occurred

violent earthquakes and floods...and the island of Atlantis ...disappeared into the depths of the sea."

■ *Santorini: A Guide to the Island and Its Archaeological Treasures* by Christos Doumas (Athens, 1985). ■ *The Wines of Greece* by Miles Lambert-Gocs (London, 1990).

"It is probable that Plato used the real events [of the Santorini eruption] as the nucleus of his myth of Atlantis." What did this incredible explosion do to the earth's atmosphere? We have a witness in China, where the royal scribe wrote, in about 1600 B.C.: "At the time of King Chieh the sun was dimmed ... winter and summer came irregularly. Frosts in the sixth month. Ice formed in the morning." Confirming the magnitude of the cloud, Santorini ash has been found in Iceland at a depth dating the explosion to 1623 B.C. Tightly packed tree-rings in California about this time indicate that even North America was affected.

■ *Grossman's Cyclopedia. The Concise Guide to Wines, Beers, and Spirits* by Harriet Lembeck, ed. (Running Press, 2002).

Rhône wines according to Chinese Publisher? Rhône wines from Piedmont, Tuscany, Umbria, Upulia, Veneto? Considering that Ms. Lembeck was awarded the *Wines & Vines* "Perpetual Trophy for Excellence in Wine Writing" in 1983, it seems strange that 21 pages headed "Rhône Wines" were all wines of Italy!

What's going on? I asked her and she replied the *Cyclopedia* was produced over her name without any input or advice from her. There are many other surprises such as a full chapter being devoted to the "Wines of China," but there is no chapter on wines of the U.S.A. So, forget this *Cyclopedia* edition abridged from *Grossman's Guide to Wines, Beers, and Spirits* (New York/London, 7<sup>th</sup> ed, 1983) and get the original version by Ms. Lembeck.

■ *A Wine and Food Bedside Book* by Claude Morny (London: Wine & Food Society, 1972).

On Napoleon's Wine and Food in Exile (a first translation by André Simon): In his final years Napoleon was a British prisoner, exiled to the barren island of St. Helena off the west coast of Africa, administered by a no-nonsense British governor. The greatest chef of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Antonin Carême, had a friend, Chandelier, Napoleon's last chef, who told a story about Napoleon. Carême wrote up the story and many years later, Simon found it and translated it into English.

About his wine: While Napoleon could not order his own food, he was allowed to bring in his own wine. For years, the Emperor had always enjoyed a half a bottle of Chambertin with his main meal. His June 1816 wine order listed 1,140 bottles, but no

Burgundy. Instead Napoleon had to make do with 300 bottles of Bordeaux.



■ *Australian Complete Book of Wine* by Len Evans (Sydney, 1978).

On Cabernet Sauvignon: You've come a long way baby! "Disembarking on January 26, 1788 to settle Australia, Captain Arthur Phillip brought not only 1,000 men, women, and children, but also seeds of the 'claret grape,' Cabernet Sauvignon."

■ *Three Generations: Adventures in a Changing World from 1850–2000* by William E. Jarvis (California: The Author, 1998).

On The Best Educator–Vintner: William Jarvis recalled his studious years, "Fourteen years at seven universities created an expert in particle physics, music theory, Greek philosophy and electronics." Our Napa Valley wineman graduated from the University of Oklahoma (Petroleum Engineering), the U.S. Naval Academy (followed by active duty in Shanghai, Korea, &c.), Stanford University (Humanities, World Literature, World History, Music Theory and Techniques, plus a Masters in Business Administration), University of California–Berkeley (Art, Music, Philosophy), Stanford University again (Graduate School of Electrical Engineering), and finally the University of California–Davis (Winemaking).

**The Bottles:** Here are some of the best-related bottles my class has tasted recently.

- ◆ Cabernet Sauvignon/Endeavour, Dry Creek Vineyard, Sonoma Co., 2004. \$55.
- ◆ La Vita (Cal-Italia Blend), Bargetto Winery, Santa Cruz Mountains, CA (All Italian varietals grown in U.S.A.), 2004. \$60.
- ◆ Bourgogne, Jean-Claude Boisset, France, Burgundy, 2005. \$20.
- ◆ Petite Sirah, Cupa Grandis, Eos Estate Winery, Paso Robles, CA., 2004. \$55.
- ◆ Cabernet Sauvignon, Angove's, (Trinchero Imports), Australia, Clare Valley, 2004. \$20.
- ◆ Chardonnay, Jarvis Wines, Napa Valley, Finch Hollow, 2007. \$70.

PINNEY, *cont from p.19* —

location for Troy; those French colonists in Florida (p.80) had not been experimenting with vines since the mid-seventeenth century: they had all been wiped out by the Spaniards long before; "deep green olive trees" (p.145) would be a curiosity: Tennyson's "olive-silvery" is closer to the mark; and do the Bordeaux *grand crus* come from the Right Bank of the river? (p.156). Finally, I may be allowed to indulge a pet peeve, though I know that the cause is lost. The book regularly speaks of "varietals" when it means "varieties." This solecism is now standard usage among wine writers, but I wish it weren't.

Now, to repeat my beginning, I enjoyed this book and I think that other Tendrils will too. It sets one to thinking about the many other questions that might be asked: Was the wine at Cana red or white? Was there wine at the first Thanksgiving? What wine would Red Riding Hood be carrying to her grandmother? What vintage was that cask of Amontillado? Why are tendrils wayward? Maybe I will write another book like this one: there's plenty of room for it.

[EDITOR NOTE: Kathleen Burk, a Wayward Tendril since 2005, was born, raised, and educated in California's Central Valley wine country. During her post-graduate studies at Oxford, she began a serious love-affair with wine, and successfully sat the exams for the Diploma of Wines & Spirits; she writes a regular column for the *World of Fine Wine*. A Professor of Modern & Contemporary History at University College, London, Kathleen Burk has been writing about British history for almost twenty-five years (among her works: *Old World, New World: Great Britain and America from the Beginning*; *Morgan Grenfell 1838–1988: the Biography of a Merchant Bank*).

The London edition of *Is This Bottle Corked: The Secret Life of Wine* (Faber & Faber, 2008, 279 pp.), is my favorite over the U.S. edition: the paper is heavier, the illustrations larger, I think the layout better and the typeface more readable—and the light-hearted dust jacket is more befitting the content, and readies the reader for what is inside.]





WINE  
IN  
PRINT

by  
*Hudson Cattell*

*Grape Man of Texas: Thomas Volney Munson and the Origins of American Viticulture, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.* Sherrie S. McLeRoy and Roy E. Renfro, Jr., Ph.D. 334 pp. San Francisco: Wine Appreciation Guild, 2008. Cloth. \$39.95.



rapegrowers east of the Rockies have a long tradition of breeding new varieties to meet the environmental conditions they face. One of the best-known nurserymen in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was Thomas Volney Munson, who created more than 300 grape varieties at his nursery in Denison, Texas, and who is the subject of a new edition of a substantive book.

A few of Munson's hybrids are used in present-day winemaking, and TTB [Alcohol & Tobacco Tax & Trade Bureau] lists six of them on its approved list of type names for wine designation. Their most important use today, however, is by geneticists at modern research stations who use them in crossbreeding programs, because they have a high degree of disease resistance, especially to Pierce's disease. Munson is best remembered today for his role in saving the vineyards in France from phylloxera in the last century, for his work in the classification of the wild grapes of North America, and his classic book, *Foundations of American Grape Culture* (1909, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. NY: Orange Judd).

Many of Munson's records—correspondence, manuscripts, field notes and research notes—were destroyed after his death, and years of research by the authors went into the first edition of *Grape Man of Texas*. The authors were well qualified for the job. Sherrie McLeRoy's career has included 15 years as curator/director of museums in Virginia and Texas. Roy Renfro is executive director of the T.V. Munson Viticulture & Enology Center at Grayson County College in Denison, and the founder of the T.V. Munson Memorial Vineyard. Following the publication of the first edition in 2004 [reviewed in *WTQ*, v.14#4, Oct 2004], they continued their research to the point where they considered it necessary to prepare a second edition.

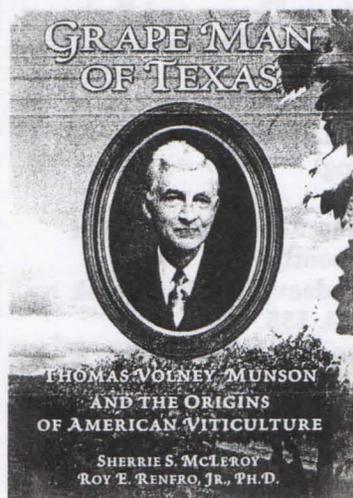
The second edition, published in 2008, and subtitled, "The Life of T.V. Munson," is 46 pages longer than the first. A final chapter was added to update the first edition's 15 chapters, as the result of new documents located by the authors. In Appendix I, there are significant additions to Munson's published works, his papers and addresses.

For some readers, the most valuable additions will be in the lists of grape varieties created by Munson, and the grape varieties he found and/or identified and used for breeding. New to this edition is a list of grape varieties that were subsequently created from Munson hybrids. This list is divided into two parts: first generation, and second and third generations. The crosses and breeders are named, along with the date, when known.

Also for this edition, the authors selected and discussed some of the most important Munson hybrids, using newly found sources both modern and contemporary with Munson. Based on thirty years' experience, the T.V. Munson Viticultural & Enology Center currently is recommending 31 Munson hybrids for wine production.

*Grape Man of Texas* was named the best wine history book in the world for 2004 at the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards in Orebro, Sweden. Two of the most interesting and valuable chapters are devoted to the phylloxera crisis in France—one on the epidemic itself and the other on Munson's role. Taken together, they provide an excellent account of the crisis. For those who are not familiar with

Munson and his achievements, this book is highly recommended. Those who have the first edition will probably decide on acquiring the second on the basis of how much they want the additional information about his hybrids.



[Since the early days of our *Wayward Tendrils Newsletter / Quarterly*, we have had the privilege of reprinting Hudson's reviews originally published in his excellent periodical, *Wine East*. In 2008 Hudson Cattell and his partner Linda Jones McKee sold their long-standing *Wine East* magazine to *Wines & Vines*, where they continue to cover the Eastern wine scene. The above review was published in the December 2008 issue of *W & V*. We extend our *Tendrils* thanks for the kind permission to reprint. — Ed.]

## CDNC Website Revisited: Significant Upgrade of U.C. Riverside's Digital Archive: A User's Report by *Marvin Collins*

FAITHFUL *TENDRILISTAS* WILL RECALL that several issues ago I reviewed the California Digital Newspaper Collection (CDNC). In the last months, the website, which is a project of the Center for Bibliographical Studies and Research (CBSR) at the University of California at Riverside, has undergone a major revision based on a new search engine powered by Veridian Digital Library software. While the old site had yielded up wonderful treasures of wine history, many gems were still locked in those caves of faded newsprint. When the CBSR replaced the old search engine, they also closed some existing holes in coverage by adding missing issues of existing runs, and new titles previously unavailable on the site.

The Alta California is still the star journal in the collection. The Alta was the paper of record for California from the late 1850s through the early 1880s; after that it experienced strong competition from the Examiner, Chronicle, Bulletin and Call, but continued to give excellent reporting to the wine industry until the final issue of June 2, 1891. The Riverside database of the Alta was missing important issues of the first years of the 1880s; now they are slowly being added into the collection which stands at 42,480 issues comprising 361,689 pages and counting.

Other papers are Sacramento Daily Union Record (covering Sacramento Valley viticulture and wine legislation); Californian (first daily printed in San Francisco); Los Angeles Herald; Amador Ledger (word of the foothills); San Francisco Call, which by the nineties had beautiful graphics which contributed to the death of the text-only Alta California, and the great Pacific Rural Press, found in every farmer's kitchen (or outhouse), the doyen of California agriculture. There are several other titles in the master list, every one is from California.

The new **Search Engine** is very powerful, pulling out references left unseen by the early software. In cases where the previous design had recovered several dozen hits, with the new I am now confronted with several hundred. Many of these references will be repetitions of serial advertisements, but at least one has the feeling that most everything contained in those old pages has been revealed. The Search Engine labels the references as "article" or "advertisement." But user, be aware that the Ad columns often contain important legal notices, vital statistics, or changes of address that are founts of rich information.

So how does it work, and how well? The search form has been simplified as to the amount of information requested. It is important to use quotation marks to delimit the search, i.e. John F Miller is a very different search term than "John F Miller." The former will give you every John, F, and Miller that the engine can find. The form lets the user select **Pages** or **Articles**. This feature is important: **Pages** will find your search term embedded in those long columns of unrelated one- or two-line news items so

avored by old time editors.

A **Calendar** is found under "dates" located in the upper header-bar. It is easy to use, and each date from 1846 to 1922 gives you the clickable names of those issues for that day that are in the collection. The calendar lets you see the gaps in issue coverage that exist; some months for some years are sparse. I have come to use the calendar function as a quick way to learn on which day of the week a certain date occurred. If the user chooses to see a paper by date, all the pages are exhibited at one time and the window requires zooming-in to enlarge the pages.

The **Advance Search** function allows the user to cull information by a range of dates, say from May 1, 1882 to May 30, 1883, or simply from 1867 to 1870, with the search results displayed chronologically.

So you have entered a search term successfully and the first twenty hits are displayed in a new window. You can sort the list by date, best match first, publication title, article title or content type. I like to follow a chronological trail and watch stories unfold in front of my eyes. Obituaries, if your subject was a living being, often top the list when sorted by "best match first."

Select and click on a reference. The original page of the paper will appear with the search term highlighted in yellow front and center. Unlike the previous system that required time-consuming zooming so that the letters were big enough to read, the current window gives you a good-sized type for reading but requires reducing if you want to see the whole page.

The pages of the newspapers can be moved around within their frames by pointing, clicking and physically dragging the images from side to side or up and down. While very simple in concept, in use the Veridian software is way too sensitive. The user often finds the image bouncing back to the place it was just moved from, much like Sisyphus' rock. Panning the image around the frame can be frustrating, tedious and slow, and is definitely an area of software performance that needs a rethink.

The **Optical Character Recognition (OCR)** feature

*cont. on p.30 —*

## BACCHUS, BOOKS, AND BARDS

by J. Martin Evans

[J. Martin Evans is the William R. Kenan Professor of English at Stanford University. He has been ensconced as Stanford's resident Milton scholar for 45 years—an anniversary he celebrated in 2008 on the occasion of Milton's 400<sup>th</sup> birthday with a reading by students and scholars of Milton's epic poem, "Paradise Lost" — 11,000 lines in 10 hours. The following is a talk he presented at the Stanford Seminar, Robert Mondavi Winery, Oakville, CA, July 10, 1986. We are tendril-ly grateful to Prof. Evans for his generous permission to publish it in our *WTQ* and to Nina Wemyss who unearthed this treasure from her vintage files and brought it to our attention. — Ed.]



1629 the great English poet John Milton, author of *Paradise Lost*, wrote a letter to his closest friend, a young Italian

student called Charles Diodati, who was spending his Christmas vacation in the country with his family. Diodati had evidently sent some poems to Milton together with a letter apologizing for their defects on the ground that he had been eating and drinking too much to write well. This is how Milton replied:

How well you describe the splendid feasts of Christmas with convivial wines drunk beside friendly fires. But why complain that banquet and bottle frighten poetry away. Song loves Bacchus and Bacchus loves songs. Ovid sent back poems from the Black Sea, but the vine was not cultivated there so the poems were no good. What did Anacreon sing about in his neat little verses but wines and roses and Bacchus with bunches and bunches of grapes. It was Bacchus who inspired Pindar's odes, and every page smells of the wine he has been drinking. The Roman poet Horace was drunk with four-year-old wine when he sang his sweet songs about Chloe with her golden hair. And now a sumptuous table strengthens your mind and warms your genius with its rich array. Your goblets of Massic wine foam with poetic power, and you pour out the verses which were stored up inside the bottle.

Milton is quite right, of course. From the very beginning of civilization wine has been associated with poetic inspiration, and the literature of western Europe is permeated with tributes to the power and pleasure of the grape.

## Ancient Greece

One of the most famous episodes in Homer's great epic, *The Odyssey*, hinges on the fact that Ulysses happens to have with him a goatskin bottle full of exceedingly potent Greek wine. He and his companions have been captured by Polyphemus, the fierce one-eyed Cyclops, and imprisoned in his cave. The monster is about to devour two of Ulysses' sailors when Ulysses, holding up a bowl full of his wine, interrupts:

"Here Cyclops, have a drink of wine ... and see what kind of drink our ship carried inside her. I brought it for you." So I spoke, and he took it and drank it off, and was terribly pleased with the wine he drank and questioned me again, saying "Give me still more, freely, and tell me your name straightaway now, so I can give you a present to make you happy. For the grain-giving land of the Cyclops also yields wine of strength ... but this comes from where ambrosia and nectar flow in abundance." So he spoke, and I gave him the gleaming wine again. Three times I brought it to him and gave it to him, three times he recklessly drained it...

Shortly after, Cyclops falls into a drunken slumber, and Ulysses and his companions are able to escape.

Given the size and strength of the monstrous Cyclops, it may seem surprising that he was so easily intoxicated, but the wine that Ulysses gave him probably had more in common with Italian *vin santo*, say, or Hungarian Tokay, than with a modern Greek wine like Retsina. In his introduction to the episode, Homer emphasizes that the wine is dark (his favorite epithet for the ocean is "wine-dark"), sweet, and "unmixed." The original owner, he tells us, "whenever he drank this honey-sweet red wine would pour out enough to fill one cup, then twenty measures of water were added, and the mixing bowl give off a magical bouquet." According to the Greek physician Dioscorides, the most highly prized Greek wine was made from the minute quantity of juice squeezed out of sun-dried grapes by their own weight before they are trodden. Small wonder that it required dilution.

Indeed, to judge from the available evidence, virtually all the wines of ancient Greece were diluted in one way or another. When the evil enchantress Circe wishes to ensnare Ulysses' companions in a later episode in the *Odyssey*, for example, she mixes wine with cheese, barley meal, and yellow honey.

She brought them inside and seated them on chairs and benches, and mixed them a potion, with barley and cheese and pale honey added to Pramnian wine, but put into the mixture malignant drugs, to make them forgetful of their own country.

A virtually identical recipe (minus the drugs) appears in Homer's *Iliad* when Hecamede prepares the following restorative for two Greek warriors who have

been wounded during the siege of Troy:

In the beauteous cup ... the lovely woman mixed a potion for them with Pramnian wine, and over it she sprinkled goat's milk cheese with a brazen grater and white barley meal, and bade them drink when she had prepared it.

If Homer is to be believed, then, the favorite drink of the ancient Greeks appears to have been a primitive alcoholic precursor of Granola. As Hugh Johnson sums it up, "what would have been nectar to Homer, or even to Jove, would probably seem to us like an oversweet *vin rosé*, possibly with a flavor of muscat, possibly tasting of resin, possibly concentrated by cooking, and needed dilution before drinking."

### Roman Literature – Virgil

Roman poets were no less interested in wine than their Greek predecessors. Virgil, in particular, seems to have had an intimate knowledge of the art of viticulture, for in the second of a series of four poems he composed on the art of farming shortly before 29 B.C., the *Georgics* as they are known, he gives detailed instruction on how to set out a vineyard:

First inquire whether it be better to plant the vine on hills or on the plain. If it is rich level ground you lay out, plant close; the wine god is no less fertile in close-planted soil. But if it is a soil of rising mounds and sloping hills, give the ranks room; yet none the less, when the trees are set, let all the paths, with clear-cut line, square to a nicety. Let your vineyard be meted out in even and uniform paths ... because only thus will the earth give equal strength to all, and the boughs be able to reach forth into free air. Perchance you ask also what should be the trenches' depth. I should venture to entrust a vine even to a shallow furrow... Let not your vineyards slope towards the setting sun, nor plant hazel among the vines, nor lop the highest sprays, nor hurt young plants with a blunted knife... When the sets are planted, it remains for



you to break up the soil oft-times at the roots ... then to shape smooth canes, shafts of peeled rods, ashen stakes and stout forks, by whose aid the vines may learn to mount, scorn the winds ... There is also the task of dressing the vines, on which enough pains are never spent; for three or four times each year must all your soil be split open, and the clods bro-

ken unceasingly with hoe reversed, and all the grove lightened of its foliage ... Now the vines are bound, now the laborer lays by the pruning knife, now the last vine-dresser sings of his finished rows; still you to worry the soil and stir the dust, and fear Jove's rains for your now ripened grapes.

Elsewhere in the same poem Virgil provides a detailed inventory of the major varieties of wine-grapes available in the Roman Empire. Of these, by far the best known was the grape that produced Falernian wine on the west coast of Italy in what is now the province of Campania between Rome and Naples. Falernian was famed above all for its longevity, the most celebrated vintage being the so-called Opimian vintage dating from 121 B.C. during the consulship of Opimius, a vintage which allegedly lived over a hundred years. In the first century A.D., for example, Petronius included in his *Satyricon* a scene in which the pretentious old millionaire Trimalchio offers his guests a wine labeled "Opimian Falernian, A Hundred Years Old." And later in the first century the Roman historian Pliny the Elder claimed that "there was such a blaze of hot weather that in that year the grapes were literally cooked by the sun, and the wines made last to this day after nearly two hundred years." It would have been hard to avoid drinking that particular wine before its time.

### Horace

Whether or not these descriptions are exaggerated, there is no questioning the literary pre-eminence of Falernian. Virgil, Martial, and above all, Horace, sing its praises; though Horace, at least, claimed that he never served it to guests. In a poem to his patron Maecenas, written at approximately the same time as Virgil's *Georgics*, Horace declares:

My dear Maecenas, noble knight,  
You'll drink cheap Sabine\* here tonight  
From common cups. Yet I myself  
Sealed it and stored it on the shelf  
In a Greek jar that day the applause  
Broke out in your recovery's cause ...  
At your house you enjoy the best –  
Caecuban or the grape that's pressed  
At Cales. But whoever hopes  
My cups will taste of Formian slopes  
Or of the true Falernian  
Must leave a disappointed man.  
\* [cheap wine ready in 4 years]

Horace's best known poem, however, was written in praise of another famous Roman wine, Massic, the wine that Milton assumes Diodati is drinking in the poem quoted earlier.

Wine-jar whose birth-year, Manlius' consulship,  
Was mine as well, unstopper of elegies,  
Jokes, quarrels, love's crazed fits and blessed  
Effortless slumber (your kindest office),

You've kept the choice old Massic in store for a  
Great moment; now, whatever occasion you  
Foresaw, descend like Jove – my guest has  
Called for a mellower wine from upstairs ...

Wine-jar, you rally lost hopes back to the worry-  
worn

You bring the poor man courage and confidence:  
Crowned kings can rage, call out their soldiers –  
After a taste of you he'll defy them.

Friends keep you up late: Liber with Venus, when  
She's gay, the three linked Graces who hate to let  
Go hands, and bright lamps burning on till  
Phoebus, returning, defeats the starlight.



With the exception of the cheap Sabine wine, which came from central Italy near Spoleto, virtually all the wines singled out for praise by the poets came from the south of Rome where, as Pliny points out, the hot sun produced grapes with extremely high sugar content. Like the wines of their Greek predecessors, it is probably safe to infer, the best known Roman wines were almost certainly sweet dessert style wines, high in residual sugar.

#### English Tastes – Geoffrey Chaucer

The reason why such wines were prized above all others in the ancient world, or course, is that they provided a rich source of sugar which was otherwise only readily available in honey. It is scarcely surprising, then, that in the cold sugarless centuries that preceded the mass-production of cheap refined sugar, the British shared the Greek and Roman passion for sweet wines. The English poet who knew most about wine was almost certainly Geoffrey Chaucer. His father, John Chaucer, was a vintner in Upper Thames Street in London, and the young Geoffrey reveals in his poetry a thorough knowledge of most aspects of the medieval wine trade, including the less reputable ones. Indeed Warner Allen has described Chaucer's best known poem, the *Canterbury Tales*, as the "wine lover's bedside book." Just to take a couple of examples, one of the pilgrims on his way to Canterbury to pay homage to the shrine of

Saint Thomas Becket is a shipman, who, Chaucer assures us, was in the habit of drawing liberal draughts of wine from the casks of Bordeaux in his cargo, while the merchant importing them across the English Channel to London was fast asleep:

Many a draught of vintage, red and white  
He'd drawn of Bordeaux while the vintner slept.

Few were the rules his tender conscience kept.

And in a mock sermon delivered to his fellow pilgrims, the Pardoner, a self-confessed beer drinker himself who preferred the "muddy ecstasies of ale," offers what one modern wine authority claims is the first extant account of the practice of fortifying wine:

Keep clear of wine, white or red,  
Especially Spanish wines which they provide  
And have on sale in Fish Street and Cheapside.  
That wine mysteriously finds its way  
To mix itself with others – shall we say  
Spontaneously – that grow in neighboring regions.  
From which there rises such fumosity  
That when a man has drunk a draught or three  
Though he may think he is at home with you  
In Cheapside, I assure you he's in Spain  
Not even at Bordeaux or La Rochelle ...

The Spanish wine Chaucer refers to here was produced in the town of Lepe, and it was often sold under its own name in medieval London near Chaucer's home. High in alcohol, it was also apparently used to adulterate the more expensive wines of Bordeaux and La Rochelle. Its fumosity, Chaucer's wonderful word for what we would now probably call its headiness, thus found its way into the weaker French wines, with the result that three glasses would go to a man's head. Then he would be transported neither to La Rochelle nor to Bordeaux, where the fumes of his wine would have taken him if they had spirited him to their supposed place of origin, but to Lepe, the home of the strong wine predominant in the mixture.



16<sup>th</sup> C woodcut from *Wine in Shakespeare's Days ... and Plays*  
by André L. Simon, 1931

### William Shakespeare

The practice of fortifying wines became even more common in the Renaissance when by far the most popular wines in England were Malmsey and Sack, wines from Spain and the Canary Isles that had much in common with Oloroso Sherry and Madeira. In Shakespeare's *Richard III* the unfortunate Duke of Clarence is drowned in a barrel of Malmsey, which seems a terrible waste of good wine unless, of course, Richard had an unreliable wine-merchant as suggested by his reference to "the vintner of our discontent." However, perhaps the most famous single tribute to the effects of wine is the wonderful speech in praise of sack that Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Falstaff in *Henry IV*:

A good sherris-sack hath a twofold operation in it. It ascends me into the brain, dries me there all the foolish and dull and cruddy vapours which environ it, makes it apprehensive, quick, procreative, full of nimble, fiery and delectable shapes, which, delivered o'er to the voice, the tongue, which is the birth, becomes excellent wit. The second property of your excellent sherris is the warming of the blood, which, before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice. But sherris warms it and makes it course from inwards to the parts extreme. It illumineth the face, which as a beacon gives warming to all the rest of this little kingdom, man, to arm, and then the vital commoners and inland petty spirits muster me all to their captain, the heart, who, great and puffed up with this retinue, doth any deed of courage, and the vapour comes of sherris. So that skill in the weapon is nothing without sack, for that sets it a-work, and learning a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil, till sack commences it and sets it in act and use. If I had a thousand sons, the first humane principle I would teach them should be to forswear thin potations and to addict themselves to sack.

Falstaff would clearly have sympathized with the *bon-vivant* who refused to eat grapes because, he said, he was not in the habit of taking his wine in the form of pills.

### 18<sup>th</sup> Century English Taste for Port

If sherry, or sack, was the preferred drink of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Port was the favorite wine of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in England. Three factors contributed to this revolution in English taste. The first was economic. In 1703 England concluded a treaty with Portugal which involved, among other provisions, a reduction in the customs duty on Portuguese wine. As a result, one authority informs us, the import tariff on the wines of Portugal was

roughly one-eighth of the tariff on the wines of France. Unfortunately, however, the wines of the Douro, the major wine producing region of Portugal, were far too harsh and dry for English taste if allowed to complete their fermentation, which brings us to the second factor. For somewhere between 1725 and 1730 the Portuguese winemakers hit upon the idea of adding brandy to the fermenting wine, thus arresting its fermentation while it still retained enough sugar to satisfy the sweet tooth of England, and providing sufficient alcohol to please the English taste for wines of high alcoholic content. The third factor was technical: the invention of the cork, which permitted the wine to be stored in the bottle long enough for the wine and the alcohol to amalgamate. The result was a potation which was anything but thin, and which the English prized above all other wines for the next hundred years or so. Hence the 18<sup>th</sup> century was pre-eminently the age of Port. The following poem by Martin Armstrong [English poet, 1881–1974] conveys something of the pleasure that 18<sup>th</sup> century Englishmen found in this new invention:

In vintage Port of noble year  
 What multifarious joys appear –  
 A liquid ruby; a bouquet  
 Like odors of a tropic day,  
 So ripe you'd almost say it glows  
 In the portal of the nose;  
 A palate luscious yet serene,  
 The right essential Hippocrene,  
 Blandness combined with potency;  
 A finish dry, yet not too dry,  
 With just a hint of cedarwood  
 To spice ripe fruit's nectareous blood.

Certain pundits, here unnamed,  
 Have unequivocally claimed  
 That 63 and 68  
 Could turn the hinges of Heaven's gate;  
 Some have held that 87  
 Rose to not so far from Heaven,  
 While others resolutely stated  
 That 87 was over-rated,  
 90 caught it up and beat it.  
 But if we gathered and repeated  
 All that has been written, said,  
 Argued, thought, upon this head,  
 And set ourselves to celebrate  
 Younger wines by name and date,  
 We should drift – a fact that shocks  
 By its glaring paradox –  
 On and on in such a sort  
 As never to get home to Port.

In the words of one contemporary diarist, Bordeaux and Burgundy were regarded in this period as "poor, thin, washy stuff," and Port was drunk not at the end

of the meal but with it, in much the same way as we might drink a table wine today.

### 19<sup>th</sup> Century Shift – John Keats

The nineteenth century saw another shift in taste, which is reflected in what was to become one of the most famous poems in the English language, *Ode to a Nightingale*, written in 1819 by the British Romantic poet John Keats. Listening to the bird's ecstatic song, and yearning to escape from the pain and sickness of the real world, he exclaims:

O for a draught of vintage, that hath been  
Cool'd a long age in the deep delved earth,  
Tasting of flora and the country green,  
Dance and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!  
O for a beaker full of the warm south,  
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,  
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,  
And purple stained mouth;  
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,  
And with thee fade away into the forest dim.

This is perhaps the most eloquent tribute ever penned to the transporting power of wine. Mortally ill with consumption in damp and dismal London, the young Keats is confident that a draught of wine from the warm south will instantly carry him to the Mediterranean countryside. But what specific wine, I can't help wondering, did the poet have in mind? With its cool temperature and its beaded bubbles winking at the brim, it sounds at first like Champagne, but Champagne is produced not in the warm south but in the rather chilly plains of northern France far from the world of Provençal song and sunburnt mirth. What is more, Keats' reference to a "purple stained mouth" indicated that he was thinking of a red rather than a white wine. In which case the wines of Bordeaux present themselves as obvious candidates. For we know from a letter the poet wrote in the same year as the *Ode* that he was particularly fond of claret:

Now I like claret, whenever I can have claret I must drink it – 'tis the only palate affair that I am at all sensual in ... For really 'tis so fine – it fells one's mouth with a gushing freshness – then goes down cool and feverless – then you do not feel it quarreling with your liver – no, it is rather a peacemaker, and lies as quiet as it did in the grape; then it is as fragrant as the queen bee, and the ethereal part of it mounts into the brain ... and walks like Aladdin about his enchanted palace so gently that you do not feel his step.

Could the poet have been recalling the taste of a Château Lafite or a Haut Brion from the famous vintage of the Comet Year, 1811, perhaps? The problem here, of course, is the beaded bubbles

winking at the brim. Either Keats was thinking of a sparkling wine, or there was something seriously wrong with his bottle of Bordeaux. The latter possibility is by no means as unlikely as it might be today thanks to the barbarous 19<sup>th</sup> century English practice of doctoring their clarets. According to Hugh Johnson, 19<sup>th</sup> century Bordeaux wines were relatively low in alcohol – the Ch. Lafite of 1866 was only 8.9% for example. With their taste for strong and full-bodied wines like Port, the English subjected their imported clarets to what was known as *le travail à l'anglaise*, which Johnson defines as follows:

The recipe called for 30 litres of Spanish wine (Alicante or Benicarlo), 2 litres of unfermented white must and a bottle of brandy to each barrel of claret. The summer after the vintage, the wine was set to ferment again with these additives, then treated as other wines and kept several years in wood before shipping. The result was a strong wine with a good flavour, but "heady and not suitable for all stomachs." It fetched more than natural wine. And in confirmation of Johnson's description, here is Cyrus Redding's recipe for English "mingled" claret, written in 1836:

The first growths of Médoc are never sent to England in a perfect state, but are, when destined for that market, mingled with other wines and with spirit of wine. The taste of the pure wine is not spiritous enough for the English palate, and more body is given these wines by the mixture of Hermitage, of Beni Carlos from Spain, and alcohol, ordinarily to the extent of three or four twentieths per cent. By this means all the delicate flavour, the delicious and salutary quality of the wine is destroyed, to give it a warmer and more intoxicating effect, without which in England these wines would not find a market... Natural and healthful wines, the genuine offspring of simple fermentation, are not the fashion in England; hence artificial means must be used to please an artificial taste.

The Bordeaux of which Keats wrote so lovingly, then, was by no means the same wine that we are familiar with today, and given the treatment to which it was subjected, it would scarcely be surprising if an occasional bottle didn't acquire a few bubbles in the process.

On the other hand, the wine in the *Ode to a Nightingale* has been "cooled a long age in the deep delved earth." Now if the English are famous for anything it is for drinking their beer at room temperature, and I find it inconceivable that a nation that enjoys warm beer would have chilled its Claret. I have to admit that for a long time there seemed to me to be only one wine compatible with all the

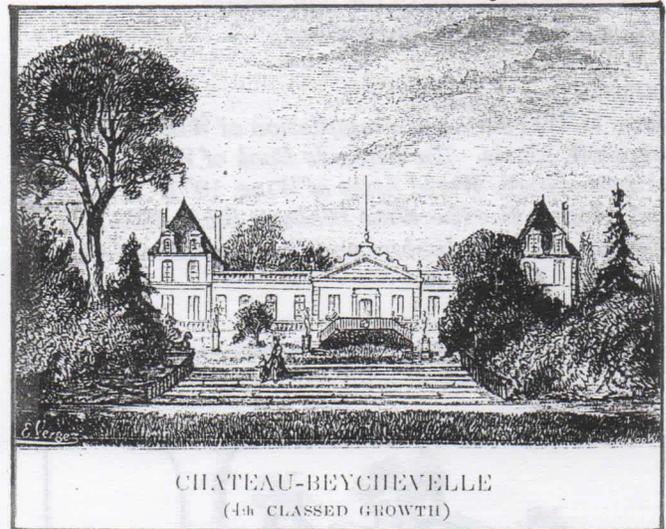
characteristics Keats describes in the lines quoted from the ode. Like so many young people, I suspected, the poet may have had a taste for Lambrusco! But more recently, two good friends who lived in Provence for several months, provided what I am convinced is the real answer. There is a Provencal wine, they assure me, that is bubbly, chilled, and red. It is called Bouches du Rhône, and that, I am convinced, is what Keats had in mind.

### The Omnibibulous 20<sup>th</sup> Century

As the passages I have cited so far all demonstrate, until the 19<sup>th</sup> century the range of wines which appealed to European taste at any given time was rather narrow. In the omnibibulous 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, the literature of wine has expanded almost as fast as the wine industry itself, and one can find poems, or prose poems, about a broad spectrum of different varietals. I would like to quote just two of my favorites. The first is by the contemporary American poet John Hollander who in 1974 sent the following charming verse letter to his friend Angus Fletcher to thank him for a bottle of French Bordeaux, Château Beychevelle 1967. The vintage date is important because, as you'll see in reading the poem, the wine serves, in effect, as a kind of time capsule, taking the poet momentarily back to the year it was produced. In 1967, when the wine was made, he was thirty-eight years old, still full of youthful zest and ambition, living in Cambridge, England. Drinking the wine seven years later, at the age of forty-five, he finds himself meditating on the changes he has undergone in the interim, on the ravages and tears that have unbuilt that youthful world of hope. The wine itself thus becomes an embodiment of the years that have slipped away since the grapes were harvested, and the act of drinking it turns into a reminder of human temporality. To empty a bottle of aged wine is to consume the time between then and now:

Dear Angus: We broke out tonight  
 In the concentrated light  
 Of eight black candles (lamps of hell?)  
 Your lovely bottle of Beychevelle,  
 Sprung and fallen, reaped, conceived  
 In the same gentle, many-leaved  
 Summer of nineteen sixty-seven  
 (My thirty-eighth quick year to heaven)  
 It tasted of its family tree  
 And chemical biography  
 In vine, in wood and in – alas –  
 Its veritable gaol of glass  
 – Not of that past year of its birth  
 When I lay on the grass-rich earth  
 Besides the trivial, moving Cam,  
 Unbuilding me toward what I am,

– Not of the ravages and tears  
 Of seven intervening years . . .  
 The history of this dark wine  
 Is, thankfully, untouched by mine.  
 But as the candles gutter out,  
 The bottle emptied beyond doubt  
 Down to its common sediment,  
 We wonder, breathless, where it went,  
 The claret of our meddling years  
 Remembered; as it disappears,  
 Inside the green glass shadows fall.  
 It is dark. Emptiness is all  
 Toward which we stare with eyes yet bright  
 That makes a little, glooming light,  
 Recalling, just before the end  
 (As the last breaths of flame descend)  
 The gift, the giver and the friend.



FROM: *Bordeaux and Its Wines* by E. Feret, 1883

The second poem was written in the late 1930s by a member of the Stanford English Department, the distinguished poet and critic Yvor Winters [1900–1968]. It is a particularly appropriate poem with which to conclude this brief survey of “Bacchus, Books, and Bards,” for it was written, in the words of its title, “In Praise of California Wines.” Unfortunately, Yvor did not live to see the great efflorescence of California winemaking that has taken place in recent years, but he loved the Napa Valley and the wines it produced. Here is his tribute:

Amid these clear and windy hills  
 Heat gathers quickly and is gone;  
 Dust rises, moves, and briefly stills;  
 Our thought can scarcely pause thereon.  
 With pale bright leaf and shadowy stem,  
 Pellucid amid nervous dust,

By pre-Socratic stratagem,  
Yet sagging with its weight of must,

The vineyard spreads beside the road  
In repetition, point and line.  
I sing, in this dry bright abode,  
The praises of the native wine.

It yields the pleasure of the eye,  
It charms the skin, it warms the heart;  
When nights are cold and thoughts crowd high,  
Then 'tis the solvent for our art.

When worn for sleep the head is dull,  
When art has failed us, far behind,  
Its sweet corruption fills the skull  
Till we are happy to be blind.

So may I yet, as poets use,  
My time being spent, and more to pay,  
In this quick warmth the will diffuse,  
In sunlight vanish quite away.

#### SOURCES

- Allen, H. Warner. *A Contemplation of Wine*, 1951.  
Bespaloff, Alexis. *The Fireside Book of Wine*, 1977.  
Johnson, Hugh. *World Atlas of Wine*, 1971.  
Pratt, James N. *The Wine Bibber's Bible*, 1981.  
Redding, Cyrus. *A History and Description of Modern Wines*, 1836, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.



FROM: Redding's *History of Wines*, 1836

*Wine: One sip will bathe the drooping spirits  
In delight beyond the bliss of dreams.  
Be Wise and Taste. — John Milton*

COLLINS, *cont. from p.23*—

is really slick. Place the cursor on the column containing your search term and click, which will highlight the entire column or story in blue. Then click on the "text" button, and quickly a new window will display the material in a manner that can be copied and pasted into the user's own Word database.

Simply drag the cursor over the desired sentences while holding down the left click to highlight the words in blue. Then press the sequences "Control + C" to copy and "Control + V" to paste, and the article is yours to work with as you choose.

One of the fundamental limitations of OCR is that the accuracy of the text generated by its software is only as good as the print quality and the preservation of the original publication. The *Pacific Rural Press*, for one, used a very clear typeface with sufficient leading between the letters: OCR and clean type is a match made in computer heaven. Nasty old news type on brown flaking paper often produces a gibberish of strange mistakes and stranger characters. Correction is then in order.

Bring the windows with the original paper and your Word file side by side onto the screen, the Word file compressed into "reading layout," found under "view." Accomplish this by using the right click and selecting "tile windows vertically," the best arrangement for small screens like laptops. The old and new can then be compared and repaired. I think of the work as text archeology, not exactly reconstructing the Dead Sea Scrolls or an Aztec Codex, but not that far away, either. Proper names and numerals are in the first order of errors, numerical lists are almost impossible to replicate. One example of the old typefaces coming up weird is the letter "h" being recognized as the letter "b," which makes "the" pop up as "tbe" and "which" as "wbicb."

This user has been unable to find a way to save-off a PDF of the original page, which was a two-step process before. I consider this lack one of the weaknesses of the system, for a PDF of a page made it easy to trim out illustrations using Microsoft Paint. Another caveat is the poor accuracy of returning from an OCR/Text window to that of the "previous article." You will come back to the same page, but good luck finding your article if it is a little one lost in a sea of type. It is better to return to the "search result list" and start over for that date.

The depth of historical material recovered makes up for the several operational glitches. While I considered myself wealthy with the history I had found using the CDNC site in its first incarnation, I now think myself rich in the density of detail that the Veridian-based system has pulled-out of the past. As my old roommate used to say while contemplating his stack of clean laundry, "It's like money in the bank." ■

## AN APPRECIATION OF FINE CRAFTSMANSHIP

by Ruth Walker

[In celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> year of our Wayward Tendrils Society and its quarterly publication, your Editor thought it might be a worthwhile exercise to review during the year a few vintage articles by our members that the more recent membership did not get to experience. This initial offering appeared in April 1993 (Vol. 3 No. 2), when our young journal was still named *The Wayward Tendrils Newsletter*. Ruth Walker, with a life-long passion for books, is a bookseller and an accomplished artisan of book restoration in Petaluma, CA. — Ed.]

ALTHOUGH THE AGE OF THE CRAFTSMAN has gone, we have a fascination for finely crafted objects. Because craftsmen—such as fishing-rod makers, saddlers, gunsmiths and bookbinders—traditionally learn their trade by apprenticeship, not much of the social history of these people is well known.



With the coming of the Industrial Revolution and mass production in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a certain nostalgia and romanticism developed for the “old ways.” William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement, started in the 1880s, conveyed a new

spirit and enthusiasm for these trades, insisting that the fine arts and applied arts, such as metalworking and printing, were not foreign to each other.

Bookbinding and similar handcrafts became socially acceptable endeavors for the middle and upper classes to explore as hobbies and professions. In fine bookbinding, the first notable figure to spread the message was T.J. Cobden-Sanderson (1840–1922), a barrister. He was dissatisfied with his career, and in 1883, when Mrs. Morris suggested that he should take up the craft of bookbinding, he followed her suggestion and eventually practiced professionally, introducing many aesthetic and sound innovations.

I am grateful for the Arts and Crafts Movement and the subsequent crafts renaissance in the last 30 years, because I am one of those who is happier working with my hands and intellect. However, the nostalgia for the past has glossed over the working conditions and life of the pre-industrial bookbinder and printer. Our appreciation for the fine craftsmanship of the books of this previous era will deepen as we review the working environment of the people who created them.

Until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, master binders conducted their businesses in two-story dwellings, with the first floor used for working purposes. Generally all work was done by the master binder, one or two journeymen and an unpaid apprentice that boarded and lodged with the family upstairs. These men were employed in cramped quarters with poor ventilation exaggerated by charcoal burning stoves.

They would work from six in the morning to nine at night. By 1805, according to Bernard Middleton in *The Craft of English Bookbinding* (1963), the standard working day was six to six, six days a week; but it

was not uncommon to work much longer hours. Since coal-gas interior lighting was not available for workshop lighting until well into the 1830s, the craftsmen frequently worked by candlelight.

Although books were in tremendous demand, binders did not command the wages that other tradesmen did. The cost of a seven-year apprenticeship was less than half of the printing apprenticeship premium. It was accepted that binders would be able to make a success at their trade only if they worked hard and were frugal. [Binders expected to make a success of their trade only if they worked hard and were frugal.] Certainly not a glamorous livelihood and never a particularly popular choice.

Overall environmental conditions revolved around water being obtained from outdoor public wells and street pumps. Sewage frequently contaminated water sources, and cholera outbreaks were common. As the cities grew, water shortages and contamination led to severe epidemics by the 1850s.

Along with these foul living and working conditions, good food was not always available. Widespread food adulteration—plaster of paris and pipeclay mixed with flour, lead with wine and cider, and copperas with beer—all caused poisoning and reduced resistance to diseases (tuberculosis, for one). In 1843, the life expectancy for the middle and trading classes was 29 years, 44 years for the upper and professional classes, and 22 years for laborers.

Handling and reading a completely hand-crafted book, including paper, printing, binding and gold-tooled finishing is always an enriching experience. I hope this brief overview of the lives of the binders enhances our enduring interests in our collections and their heritage.

SUGGESTED READING: *The Craft of English Bookbinding* by Bernard C. Middleton, 1963; and *Nothing but the Best: The Tradition of English Craftsmen* by Thomas Girtin, 1959.



