



WAYWARD TENDRILS QUARTERLY

Vol.20 No.4

A WINE BOOK COLLECTOR'S SOCIETY

October 2010

BOOKS FOR TRUE WINE & FOOD LOVERS

by George Caloyannidis

Part II

[We continue our delectable series by George Caloyannidis on the "elusive definition" of "what constitutes a true wine and food lover," as we sit down with several books that "inspire the lover-reader to go there, do that, meet the cook, the winemaker, open that bottle, cook the dish, and most important, share it." Enjoy, and look forward to one more serving next issue! — Ed.]

BETWEEN MEALS: AN APPETITE FOR PARIS

A. J. Liebling

New York, 1962 / London, 1963

"One should have money but not enough of it to be blithe about how much he spends on dinner. Modest deprivation leads to experimentation."



Abbot Joseph Liebling was a life-long, prolific journalist of many interests—including boxing—but he is probably best remembered for his love, an excessive one, for food and wine. He lived for it and ultimately died from it. But it is his fascinating life *between*

meals which make the meals themselves memorable in his beloved Paris. The city, the food scene, and his life are intertwined and jump out of every page, like a novel, over the course of twenty some years of memoirs in this, his last book. He died in 1963.

Liebling was there in the mid-1920s, perhaps the most glorious Parisian era, the one of Hemingway, Pound, Joyce, Stravinsky, Picasso, Dali and Lindbergh, along with "South American playboys who boasted they had never seen it in daylight," as James Salter writes in his excellent introduction to the 1986 edition. He participated in D-Day and marched into the city with the Allied forces to liberate it.

The restaurant became Liebling's permanent living room where "best friends are best re-met, for there, you have the opportunity to greet them cordially and to size them up." He was always interested in the

subtle relationships between inn-keeper and guest which are at the center of the joy of eating out. When a friend of his went to Restaurant Pierre, "his mind set on a sensibly light meal, a dozen or possibly eighteen, oysters and a thick chunk of steak topped with beef bone marrow, he heard M. Pierre say to his headwaiter, 'here comes Monsieur L. Those two portions of *cassoulet* that are left—put them aside for him.' M. Pierre is the most amiable of restaurateurs, who prides himself on knowing in advance what his friends will like." Monsieur L. ended up eating both portions of the *cassoulet*, "as was his normal practice; he then enjoyed his steak. The oysters offered no problem, since they present no bulk."

True wine and food lovers can live no meaningful life without at least one true wine and food loving close friend: Liebling has dedicated his book to Yves Mirande, a successful playwright and producer, personal secretary to Clemenceau and "one of the last of the great round-the-clock gastronomes of France." Among his other interests, Mirande was also an



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- A SALUTE TO TOAST BOOKS by G. Unzelman
- WINE IN CALIFORNIA 1822–1846 by C. Sullivan
- BOOK REVIEWS by Bob Foster, Will Brown
- ROMP, WINE INCLUDED by Linda Stevens
- BLACK JACKS & LEATHER BOTTLES
- ON FOXING by Ruth Walker
- BOOKS & BOTTLES by Fred McMillin ... and more!

could afford more advanced instruction. On the other nights...he would think of his menu for the magic evening, revising it five or six times, so that he had considerable pleasure even out of the dishes he decided not to order. So the bibliophile steals pleasure from a catalogue, the lover from his fantasies." The two kept in touch even after Liebling left Paris. On one occasion in the mid-1950s, Root told him of his advanced studies at Laperouse: "these feasts were rare occasions, and we always had to keep the price in mind...they bear out perfectly your theory that the rich can only be dilettante eaters."

"The Modest Threshold" is perhaps one of the greatest restaurant reviews ever written:

"In the twenties, the Rue Sainte-Anne, a narrow street...had been rendered illustrious by a man named Maillabau, a gifted restaurateur but a losing horseplayer who had no money to squander on décor. He turned his worn tablecloths into an asset by telling his customers that he wasted none of their contributions on frills—all went into the supreme quality of his materials and wines. A place with doormen in uniforms, he would say—a place with deep carpets and perhaps (here a note of horror would enter his voice) an orchestra—was *ipso facto* and *prima facie* a snare."

Maillabau was extremely expensive and ever since his year at the Sorbonne, Liebling had researched and memorized its review in the *Guide du Gourmand a Paris*, which, to his great delight, addressed it to the gourmand rather than the gourmet, "because it was impossible to like food if you did not like a lot of it." In 1927, when his parents visited Paris and after overcoming his mother's resistance when she saw it, he crossed that *modest threshold* for the first time and introduced his father to Maillabau as "the richest man in Baltimore... had I said New York he might not believe me."

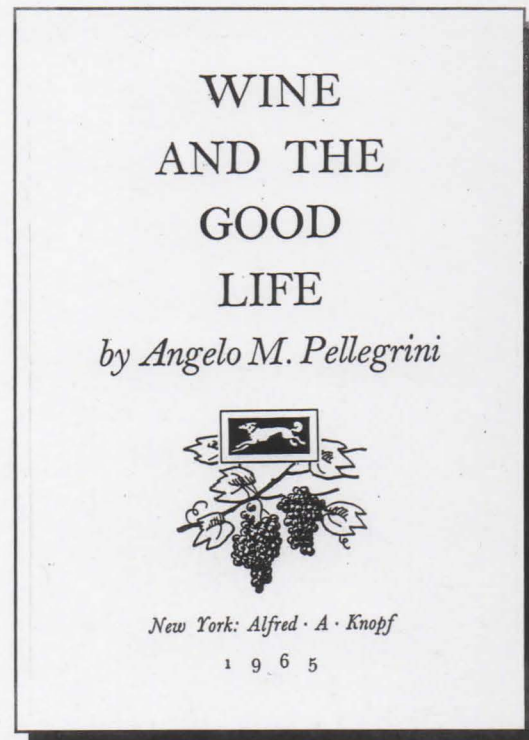
Seated at a table with a "table cloth diaphanous from wear except in the spots where it had been darned," Liebling asked for the *carte du jour*, but was informed by M. Maillabau: "There is none. You will eat what I tell you. Tonight, I propose a soup, trout *grenobloise*, and *poulet* Henri IV—simple but exquisite. The classic *cuisine française*—nothing complicated but all of the best." His father was instantly convinced to follow the advice of the expert because women who would come to him for a fur coat would "decline his advice of an Alaskan seal—something that would last them for twenty years—in favor of some faddish fur that would show wear in six." The wines: "A Montrachet to begin with, a Chambertin with the fowl."

"The *omelette au kirsh* was the sole dessert he ever permitted to be served, he said. He was against sweets in principle, since they were 'not French,' but

the *omelette* was light and healthy. It contained about two dozen eggs."

"The simple line of the meal brought out the glories of the wine, and the wine brought out the grandeur in my father's soul. Presented with one of the most stupendous checks in history, he paid it with gratitude and said he was going to take at least one meal a day at *chez* Maillabau during the rest of his stay." That is, "until his mother and sister mutinied. They wanted a restaurant where they could see some dresses and eat *meringues glacées* and *homard o porto*."

When he went back to wartime Paris in 1939, the Restaurant Maillabau had vanished. "I did not remember the street number, so I walked the whole length of the Rue Sainte-Anne twice to make sure. But there was no Maillabau; the horses at Longchamp had eaten him."



WINE AND THE GOOD LIFE
Angelo M. Pellegrini, 1965

"We drink to the day when our menus shall be written in English, when American wines shall appear on the lists in wine shops and restaurants as the equals to any imported wine." — Toast of The Twelve Gluttons

The *Good Life* is an Aristotelian philosophical term—*eudaimonia*—which signifies much more than what today we understand as a life of

plenty. It encompasses in a single word a life of happiness, virtuousness and the fulfillment of one's nature. Though Pellegrini's *The Unprejudiced Palate* (1948) is his most known book, I chose this one because in its pages one becomes conscious of how little it takes for one to live the *good life*.

To some, Pellegrini is known as the author of the first published recipe for *pesto* in America, but he is also the one who half a century before the movement gained traction, helped pave the way for *slow food*, local organic ingredients and sustainable practices. He and his wife Virginia and children grew their own vegetables, baked their own bread, and made 130 gallons of wine each year from grapes shipped by their friend Robert Mondavi. No processed foods, not even ketchup, were ever in their home.

Emigrating during the war from Italy in 1914 at the age of ten seeking a better life, working as lumberjack and section hand, he became a professor of English Literature at the University of Washington. After his death in 1991, the *Seattle Weekly* established the Pellegrini Award for persons following in his footsteps. He lived through the Depression and Prohibition and jokingly warned his visitors that once they "crossed his threshold they were in the home of a sinner." His father, also a notorious wine-making and wine-drinking "sinner" gave him his first bath in wine because of his abhorrence of water hoping to immunize him against two teetotaler family members. He obviously succeeded, because the taste of wine by his father "anointing my lips with it" during that first bath, remained permanently engraved in his persona.

All the friends and visitors we encounter in the book are made to feel relaxed at home, part of the family and one wishes to have been one of them so as to experience this magical connection to everything that is real and important; the bliss and serenity of being connected; with everything in its proper perspective. Upon his death, his daughter Angela recounted his words: "when it gets down to it, the only thing that matters in life is relationships. If you don't have good ones nothing else is worth anything." But "Bread and Wine, two of the most beautiful things in life" are the common thread.

And relationships he had plenty of, spanning all age groups. He cherished and nurtured them with the utmost sensitivity like precious gems. We encounter them one by one and we feel how his own generosity concerned him. He always wanted to give, not to exchange. "I happen to have the Bread and Wine on hand; and we are sharing them. Perhaps sharing is a misleading term; partaking may be the better word. In any case, there is no charity here, no giving; nor is hospitality the essence of what is going on."

When a young couple who had been his students six years earlier contact him offering to take him out

to dinner, he suggests that they come to his home early. While waiting for Virginia to come home and so as to make them feel "free of any notions of propriety and reciprocal obligations" and because "I had no other motive than the desire to enjoy their companionship," he puts them right away to work, cracking a bowl of filberts from his trees, pulling the cork from a bottle of wine and arranging some crackers and cheese on a tray, "because nothing puts a diffident guest so quickly at ease as the feeling that he is of some aid to his host." They end up cooking a fabulous, simple meal together while being given a serious education by the professor on wine, family, friendship, Henry Miller, Ignazio Silone [*Bread and Wine*, 1937] and the Greek meaning of the Good Life.

Old friends such as Captain McKee require a different kind of sensitivity: the simple need to relax over a glass of wine and share old stories in the garden.

"It was late afternoon near the end of the first week in October. The sun was warm, the air still, the sky clear. Laddie, a powerful, gentle creature... the most adored member of the household, was stretched on his belly in the shade of the peach tree, his muzzle resting on his outstretched paws, apparently asleep. Brent was kicking the football to one of his friends on the street below; his mother was deep in her afternoon nap; Toni hadn't yet returned from school...I had worked hard several hours and had sweated profusely doing work congenial to my nature; and now, after a shower and a change of clothes, I was enjoying the pleasure caught in the sweat of the brow. I wanted a glass of chilled Chardonnay and a piece of bread; but I had decided to wait and have them with Captain McKee. He would want a glass of wine; and it would be good to drink together."

All in vain, because the wonderful home baked bread gets Captain McKee going over the state of bread in this country, "you can take a slice out of the cellophane bag and work it in your hands into a deadly pellet. Have you never tried it?"

In spite of a life of deprivation, the childhood connections to the past are embraced with fondness—rather than lament—as part of the Good Life. No delinquent Neapolitan boys there! "My parents ruled with an iron hand...and for that reason, we didn't prowl around in packs. It was father whom we feared; not the cops or the law."

The tradition of wine had deep roots as well; "Grandfather preceded grandmother to the grave; but she had frequently preceded him to the bottle. It is an ancient custom, she would say, that a servant shall taste the wine before he serves it to his master. And aren't you my master? With that self-effacing reference to tradition, she poured herself the first glass. Then with her little head cocked, as a robin

before it strikes for the worm, she paused to let the wine produce its effect, deadly or otherwise. Perceiving nothing but pleasant consequences to herself, she pronounced the wine safe for her master. Whereupon she poured him a glass; and herself a second glass. The maneuver kept her always one glass ahead."

The proper perspective never escaped him, mindful of the *Golden Mean* being essential to the Good Life. He quotes Hilaire Belloc's speech at the Saintsbury Club: "I cannot remember the name of the village; I do not recollect the name of the girl, but the wine, my God! It was Chambertin!" Never, says Pellegrini. "Remember the wine and forget the lady? Never! Even the thought of such perverted sensibility puts a sting in my Latin heart."

On one occasion when Angelo and Virginia visited San Francisco to celebrate their wedding anniversary they were looking forward to a quiet dinner. But they decided to first go up to North Beach for some book shopping at Cavalli's Libreria and for Italian cheeses, *prosciutto* and *mortadella* at Molinari's and Mr. Lippi's, only to chance upon dear old friends who were visiting from Salt Lake City with their family, and who had attended the Pellegrinis' wedding!

Always flexible and never losing the perspective for an occasion, they all decided to have what turned out to be a wonderful dinner at the fine old Poodle Dog—where Angelo had no problem ordering Tripe. "For it is on prejudice rather than on considered gastronomic grounds that the American recoils from such unorthodox foods. The attitude is mistaken; and America shall come to tripe as it is coming to so much else that has enhanced the quality of life in older cultures. Meanwhile, anyone who hesitates to venture beyond the familiar in food and drink is setting narrow limits to his gastronomic experience." Echoes of A. J. Liebling! Then we learn how to properly cook tripe "relished by William the Conqueror and Gargamelle before she gave birth to Gargantua who made it his choice breakfast food."

There is no stronger impediment to the Good Life than prejudice, grandstanding and pretense. This is why he reluctantly accepted an invitation by "The Twelve Gluttons," all successful Ivy League graduates who in a smoked-filled impeccably furnished Seattle penthouse opened the dinner with *saumon fumé* while drinking Beefeater and *Noilly Prat*. With palates numbed, a fine French dinner followed with *vins de Bordeaux*. American wines were pronounced "not fit to drink."

When Pellegrini, employing "a bit of Machiavellian strategy," reciprocated by hosting them at his house, the menu read as if from a contemporary fine restaurant: North Pacific Coast Shrimp, Smoked Blueback Idaho Trout, Lynden Rooster Broth, Choice

Kansas Top Sirloin, Cascade Mountains Mushrooms (foraged in the company of Dominic Cresto in secret places), Yakima Potatoes, Cougar Gold Cheese... One can only imagine the results of the blind tasting of French and American wines he served! The Gluttons graciously accepted the professor's tribute to America which followed, and recognized his prophesy of a "sane cosmopolitanism."

One will not find a more inspiring ode to a new grandson who, at ten pounds, arrived "alert, healthy, handsome and structurally sound," than the one in the Epilogue: *A Note on Prenatal Care*...owing to his mother keeping the family tradition alive, with a daily consumption of a half bottle of wine.

Pellegrini in America is like a child in a toy store of plenty, a toy store which the local population had yet to discover. He did his best to change that by showing the connection of food and wine and a happy life. It took half a century for America to learn to appreciate the first two. The Good Life is still being pursued on the couches of shrinks, in medicine cabinets and drug alleys rather than in a simple glass of Chardonnay with Captain McKee under the peach tree.

ADVENTURES ON THE WINE ROUTE *A Wine Buyer's Tour of France* Kermit Lynch, 1988

If I had to choose only one book which must inspire a true wine lover, this is the one. Yet, I found it the most difficult to review, short of recommending that one read it's every page. Richard Olney—Lynch's influential mentor—has shown us the simple innocence of wine as part of life, but Lynch himself takes the concept to a much higher level.

As a consumer and participant in various tasting groups, I entered the world of wine in a serious way at the same time Lynch did as a purveyor, and by the time he wrote the book, I had amassed a vast and formidable wine collection. But I can not say that I really understood the *essence* of wine until I had read and re-read the *Adventures* over the course of a few years.

It is easy to understand a wine's pedigree and quite more difficult to judge the quality behind it, not blinded by the pedigree itself. It is even harder to understand and appreciate the personality of a wine, where the rewards are infinitely greater. This is where *Adventures* comes in. "He did not taste with a fixed idea of 'the perfect wine' in mind. He valued finesse, balance, personality and originality. If a wine had something to say, he listened. If a wine was a cliché, he had little interest," Lynch says of what Olney taught him. If one cares to listen, each honestly produced bottle has a story to tell about the land it comes from, the vines which produce the grapes, the

winemaker who creates it and the broader culture it is part of. Lynch approaches wine as if it was a living, social being, within a meaningful, broader context. He graces it with the reverence with which we approach a child, an adult or an old person. The voices which attempt to demystify wine—as it deserves to be—need to understand that though its soul is not in the exclusive domain of Latour or Romanée-Conti, it is neither as in just another beverage.

Deep in the “cavernous wine cellars tasting a flowery Vouvray, you understand that this is a perfect environment to raise fine wine. Nowadays when I see a winery storing its wine outdoors, even if the stainless-steel tanks are temperature-controlled, I drive on past... Vouvray’s wine is born underground where the vine roots suckle the cold, humid, chalky earth.” The wood barrels exchange liquid for air—that chalky air!

When he enjoys a bouillabaisse—what else—at a restaurant outdoors in the Provence, “where the sea crashes on the rocks below,” he orders a Cassis of the Clos Sainte-Magdeleine whose vines grow on a narrow cape where “the fish can almost nibble the grapes.” When in Lulu’s company, Olney had opted for a red Tempier drawn from the barrel, but this is the adventure. Another occasion, another child, another wonder.

Age, even near death has its mystery as well; it keeps on giving to the last breath. “We terminated the tasting with his 1959 Volnay ‘Taillepieds’ which Montille said was beginning to go over the hill. I wanted to go with it.”

Everything that comes between the mystery of wine and the taster is anathema to Lynch. Just before noon at his house in Provence, Olney serves him some mild *chevre* with a 1969 Bandol. “Together with the cheese it became one of the most fantastically delicious wines I had ever tasted...you find gold kicking around in the unlikely places.”

One needs to trust one’s own senses and be undependably critical. Comparative tastings, blind tastings, scores, vintage charts, labels all tend to focus one’s attention away from the real thing. “People talk about the mystery of wine, yet most don’t want anything to do with the mystery. They want it all there in one sniff, one taste.”

This is a travel book and it implicitly asks—and answers—the question: if one Cabernet tastes like the next, why bother going from one winery to the next? Almost a quarter century has passed since the book was written and the trend of uniformity is ever more alarming. How much is being missed, how much more impoverished the wine scene is becoming is not the subject—but it is the underlying message—of the book.

If the vines, the sun, the rain and the soil are the

players, the winemaker is the coach. A good coach draws the best from and develops the talent at hand. Nonetheless, his personality is always present, but not in the manner of a straight jacket for wines which taste alike all over the globe according to a recipe designed for critics’ high scores. “It is not only that Joguet makes good Chinon: it is that he is one of the rare vintners whose wines can be gripping aesthetically, spiritually, and intellectually, as well as sensoriously.” Who even bothers with Chinon these days?

And there is the wiry Rene Loyau who “speaks with the wisdom of nine decades” and who could identify the source of the grapes including the vintage of a bottle as far back as 1906, blind. An old fox who buys grapes from vineyards he knows intimately and can not be fooled if the grapes were switched on him.

Lynch does not harbor great love for Bordeaux and its *négociants*. He likes Alexandre Dumas’ quote of Cardinal Richelieu: “They are neither generous nor vigorous, but the bouquet is not bad, and they have an indescribably sinister, somber bite that is not at all disagreeable.” He believes the 1855 classification discourages imagination, but is inbred in the French by their hierarchical, aristocratic sense of order.

But then there is Madame de Lacaussade who was left to run the 18th century Château de l’Hospital all by herself, after Monsieur perished following a fall into the fermentation tank. She is an intriguing, stylish woman, yet tough as nails to deal with. Her château is so small that she does not need to pass through the *négoçant* system. She uses no chemicals, ferments in wood, and adds more Malbec instead of adding sugar to the must. When her sons moved to Paris “they began to drop their family...they made friends in the upper class...I won’t be cold in the grave before they sell this château to buy a villa at Saint-Tropez,” she laments. The wine bears her wild mark. All this intrigues Lynch as he wonders, “Can fermented grape juice express the personality of a man or woman?” When later in the book he visits Bernard Michelot and Francois Jobard in Meursault, he finds his answer.

At Domaine de la Gautiere, high in the mountains of Provence, Paul and Georgette Tardieu have escaped the city in search of the organic life in spite of their meager means. For ten years, they barely scraped out an existence with their olive oil, cheese, eggs and potatoes until Lynch knocked on their door; their wine earned international recognition. Full of flavor, bouquet and perfume “impregnated by the atmosphere, the air. The vines breathe through the leaves you know. We’re surrounded by wild hyssop, sage, lavender, pine, thyme, rosemary, broom in blossom” he is told. So, magic happens.

At Domaine de Vieux Telegraph he has been preaching non-filtering of the wine, based on pure

principle only to be told by the proprietor Frederic Brunier that it makes no difference in the wine. Finally, one day he is presented with two glasses of the identical wine made both ways and the entire family is assembled for the blind comparison. Maggie Brunier, even leaves her *pot-au-feu* unattended on the stove to join. And then, a historic victory!

There is always the issue of measure, of propriety for the occasion, the company, the setting, which every true wine lover must be sensitive to.

How to explain the difference—as so many have tried unsuccessfully—between a Pouilly-Fuisse, a Saint-Veran and a Macon *blanc*? “When trying to decide when to serve Saint-Veran, (one must realize that) the size of one’s swallow will be smaller than it is when drinking Macon, but larger in volume than with a Pouilly-Fuisse, so that the cuisine must be considered in terms of the amount of thirst, the size of the swallow it will inspire”!

“Is the Gautiere *vin de pays* better than Chambertin?” a friend asks. “Better for what?” is the only proper reply, he says. “Better when dining at Taillevent? No.” “Better served alongside black olives and sliced sausage? Yes.” “At home, alone, for a quick lunch? Yes, then it is preferable even to a great Chambertin.” One cannot do justice to a great bottle alone. Someone with whom to ooh and aah is “indispensable ... to share the intellectual and aesthetic stimulation that a great bottle inspires.”

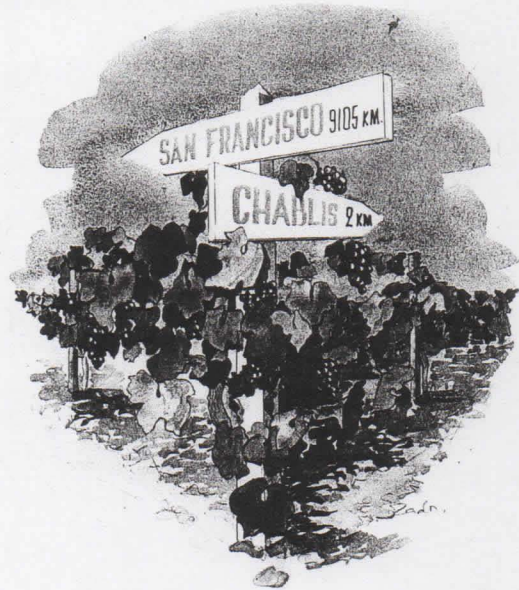
But sharing does not mean or require agreement: “The taste of that fabulous 1929 Yquem stayed with me. One of my favorite drinking companions is Jean-Marie Peyraud, the winemaker at Domaine Tempier. We both love wine, we are long time friends and we never agree about anything we taste.”

It takes several years of wine wisdom to understand Homer’s *Odyssey* as it applies to the world of wine. Thankfully, here too, destination is only a facilitator. Ultimately, this is the real *Route* in the *Adventures*; the joy of discovery and the search for the story the artist has sealed in the bottle; even if the journey takes place in the bins of a wine store and in the pages of wonderful books.

Of course, nothing beats actual travel with an open mind. As Francis Gould, whom M.F.K. Fisher regarded as the man who knew more about wine than any other, tells us, “Every wine, great or small, tastes best on its native heath and when accompanied by the local food specialties” [*My Life With Wine*, 1972].

Thanks to Kermit Lynch, who does not carry a boring bottle of wine in his entire store, you can learn how to make the most of it if you happen to find yourself under the shade of a pine tree, a few feet from the Aegean Sea, soaking up the iodine-charged sea breeze mixed with the fragrance of pine trees.

Resurrect the artist in you by ordering tiny, fresh, silvery anchovies baked flat on a sheet with lots of garlic, a liberal amount of olive oil, a few drops of lemon juice, thyme and a crispy baguette to scoop up the juices. To complete the experience, clear your prejudices: order a bottle of cool Retsina—not shy on the pine-resin—and take it all in with one more breath at the sound of the cicadas, and count your blessings.



From the dust-jacket of the French edition,
Mes Aventures dans le Vignoble de France, 1990

EDITOR NOTE: Suggested companion reading to this article: ■ Bo Simons “Between Smiles: An Appreciation of A. J. Liebling’s *Between Meals: An Appetite for Paris*.” *WTNewsletter* Vol. 4 No. 4, Oct 1994. ■ See also Vol. 1 #4., Oct 1991, where, upon the death of Angelo Pellegrini in 1991, the Wayward Tendrils paid tribute to the grand man and his wine writings with several personal member reminiscences.



“The joys of this life are not so many that we can afford to neglect one of its greatest pleasures—the art of good living. If not abused, it is conducive to health, happiness and longevity. Some of the happiest moments of my life have been passed with friends sitting around a well-found mahogany table. Those who do not know this joy have missed one of the most pleasant experiences in life.” —

FRANK GRAY GRISWOLD (1854–1937), *The Gourmet*, 1933



NEWS & NOTES



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

Welcome, new Tendrils! Our generous member, George Caloyannidis, has brought fellow wine lover James Davis (Beverly Hills, james.davis@pmiconline.com) into our Society. Thanks to Mannie Berk and his book review of *Oceans of Wine. Madeira...* last issue and his posting of it on his Rare Wine Co. website, we have gathered two new members: Chris Wolf (San Francisco, cwolf@cogowolf.com) who has a special interest in Madeira, Port, Tokay (and Rum) and their respective literatures, and Scott Rosenbaum (Jersey City, scotty@nyu.edu) who cites Wine History, Prohibition, and Ampelography as his special collecting fields. Scott mentions he is looking for copies of the following books: *Waugh on Wine* by Auberon Waugh (1986), *Madeira* by Rupert Croft-Cooke (1966), *Prohibition Agent No. 1* by I. Einstein (1932), and *Madeira, The Island Vineyard* by Noel Cossart (1984). Anyone?

WANTED, PLEASE!

Tendril Nina Wemyss (nwemyss@thenapavalleyreserve.com) is seeking the publications of the California Board of State Viticultural Commissioners—reports of the Annual Conventions, Annual Reports of the Board, Chief Executive Officer, and other works published by the Board. She is striving to collect as complete a run as possible. Can fellow Tendrils help?

A Toast to Murder

is the latest Michele Scott "Wine Lover's Mystery," the sixth in the paperback series that began in 2005 with *Murder Uncorked*. All of Scott's books revolve around the Malveaux Estate in California's Napa Valley, except for the fourth escapade, *A Vintage Murder* (2008), where her heroine travels to Australia's Barossa Valley to find trouble and murder and mystery. [For more toasting pleasure, see "A Salute to Turn-of-the-Century Toast Books" this issue.]

A NEW BIBLIOGRAPHY

Henry Notaker, a literary historian and member of the editorial board of the journal *Food and History*, has compiled a splendid new historical reference, *Printed Cookbooks in Europe, 1470–1700. A Bibliography of Early Modern Culinary Literature* (Oak Knoll Press / Hes & De Graaf Publishers, 2010,

395 pp. 11¼ x 8½, illustrated. \$125). Notaker's bibliography—the first to list all known editions of printed cookbooks published in Europe before 1700—describes more than 100 titles in at least 650 editions, printed in 14 different languages. With a scholarly historical introduction by this renowned researcher of the literature, the book also includes full physical descriptions of the entries, annotations, and biographical data about the authors. Of course, many of these early "cookery" or "household management" books include information on wine. It is highly recommended for your reference shelf.

"In Vino Curitas"!!

We all know the health benefits of wine, but the following chart might raise a few eyebrows (and wine glasses). Mike Fordon at Cornell University sent this in, wondering what one would do if he had a combination of these ailments. This beneficent guide for our "daily dosage" appears on the dust jacket of Dr. E. A. Maury's *Wine is the Best Medicine*, 1977, Kansas City: Sheed Andrews & McMeel. (The British edition of 1976 does not include the prescription chart.) Anyone feel a fever coming on? *À votre santé!*

ILLNESS	FRENCH	DAILY DOSAGE
Allergies	Médoc	
Anemia	Graves	
Arteriosclerosis	Muscadet and Provence Rosé (alternate days)	
Bronchitis	Burgundy or Bordeaux (Heat to 140° F., add lemon peel.)	
Coronary trouble, tuberculosis	Dry Champagne	
Diarrhea	Young Beaujolais	
Fever	Dry Champagne	
Gout	Sancerre, Pouilly-Fumé or Provence Rosé	
Hypertension	Sancerre, Pouilly-Fumé or Alsations	
Menopause	St. Emilion	
Nervous Depression	Médoc Red	
Rheumatism	Champagne	
Weight Loss	Côte de Beaune	
Weakness of the Liver	Dry Champagne	

"WINE COUNTRY MYSTERY" No.5

Author Ellen Crosby is running a fast pace with Michele Scott (above) with her latest Wine Country Mystery, *The Viognier Vendetta* (Scribner, 2010).

Set in the Virginia wine country and its nearby environs, Crosby's mysteries incorporate fine-wine names in their titles—*The Merlot Murders*, 2006; *The Chardonnay Charade*, 2007; *The Bordeaux Betrayals*, 2008; *The Riesling Retribution*, 2009. All are hard-back, and entertaining reads.

A NEW-FOUND TREASURE!

Thomas Pinney's "edited and annotated" edition of George Saintsbury's *Notes on a Cellar-Book* (U.C. Press, 2008) contains a much-appreciated Appendix of Other Writings on Wines and Spirits by Saintsbury, including his "The Cellar" published in *The Book of the Queen's Dolls' House* (London: Methuen, 1924, 2 vols.). What a treasure Pinney has unearthed for us! It is hard to choose a favorite between the chapter on the Library (by Stephen Gaselee) or George Saintsbury's chapter on the Wine Cellar. Noted London wine merchant Francis L. Berry acted as the Cellar Master in arranging the collection of some 1200 bottles and several casks of the finest wines, champagnes, liqueurs, spirits, and ales—all precisely crafted in miniature. The two dozen bottles of Ch. Yquem 1874 contain 1874 Yquem—authentic—as were all of the other wondrous wines! The *Cellar Book*, hand-recorded by Berry, was elaborately bound by master binders Sangorski & Sutcliffe. The miniature Library is just as amazing, with original works in manuscript by the world's most celebrated authors of the day, in all fields—and all handsomely bound by the finest binders in London. *The Book of the Queen's Dolls' House* is a supreme production, beautifully illustrated in color and black/white, while each chapter on the different areas of the "palace" are written by notable experts. Look for the exquisite two-volume limited edition of 1500 numbered copies.

Okanagan Odyssey:

Journeys through Terrain, Terroir and Culture by Don Gayton was recently released by Rocky Mountain Books. Having visited the Okanagan Valley wine country a few years ago, we were excited about a new book exploring the region, its wineries, history, and wines. Alas, it is not so. One Tendril reported that the author, "a self-styled historian of the ecology of the Valley and beyond, does a respectable job on this topic. Yet he seems to know next to nothing about wine or viticulture. He is a preservationist, but he only minimally mentions the inherent conflict between vineyards and the local ecology. This is not a book about wine, and is not recommended as such for the Tendril bookshelf." John Schreiner's *Okanagan Wine Tour Guide* (2007, rev.ed., 264 pp) remains the book for our reference shelf and touring use.

VINTAGE VACATION READING

Two wine-fiction books recently pulled from the shelf to travel with your Editor on holiday are heartily recommended. *Champagne Charlie* by Jay Franklin (NY: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1950, 190 pp.) is a quick-paced, witty tale of a young man who finds himself suddenly able to create alcoholic drinks of all kinds, leading to crazy complications that even Cary Grant could never imagine. (Jay Franklin is the pen-name of John Franklin Carter (1897–1967), American journalist and author of over thirty books.) *The Vineyard* by New York Times best-selling author Barbara Delinsky (NY: Simon & Schuster, 2000, 364 pp) is set around a Rhode Island vineyard. As the d.j. declares, "Delinsky has written her most complex and emotionally rewarding novel: a story of two women, a generation apart, each of whose dream becomes bound with the other's." No murder, no violence, no detective mystery...just a well written good read.

DOES IT EXIST??

Tendril Howard Miller (Lancaster, Pennsylvania) writes:

Dear Gail, I have exhausted all my sources and search engines in looking for this book: *The Vineyard: or, the Art of Cultivating the Vine and Making Wine*, by William Lee. It was mentioned in an 1823 article in The American Farmer. According to the article under the heading of "Cultivation of the Vine" (which came from The New York Statesman), Lee was "Consul for the United States at Bordeaux." In checking both Gabler's wonderfully thorough *Wine Into Words* as well as the Amerine-Borg *Bibliography...of [Wine Works] Published in the U.S. before 1901*, I found books by a William Lee, but not this particular one. Does it exist? I figured only you or another Tendril would know! With thanks...

Your Editor was likewise stumped until a look into Tom Pinney's *History of Wine in America. From the Beginnings...* (1989) found a most likely answer. On page 112, Tom provides a portrait image of William Lee (1772–1840) and states in the caption that, among his other viney activities, Lee "also projected a book on winegrowing in the 1820s but did not publish it." This must be the book, right? If any Tendril has additional information, please email Howard at howard@hmab2b.com.

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. Editor and Publisher: Gail Unzelman. —

ROMP, WINE INCLUDED

A Review by Linda Walker Stevens

[Linda Stevens, a Napa Valley winegrower who was transplanted to Hermann, Missouri in the 1980s, is a dedicated researcher of the history of this pioneer winegrowing area—the people, their vines and wines. She brings us a personal “inside” review of Todd Kliman’s recent book, *The Wild Vine*. — Ed.]

The Wild Vine. A Forgotten Grape and the Untold Story of American Wine by Todd Kliman. New York: Clarkson Potter Publishers, 2010. 280 pp. Cloth. Bibliography, Index. Amazingly, not illustrated.



sultry August downpour threatened as I raced it down the steep sidewalk and entered the doorway into Stone Hill Winery’s cavernous Apostle Cellar, tunneled into the vine-clad slope 150 years since. Owner Jim Held, sporting his characteristic red suspenders, called a greeting from the lone folding chair, where he rested from the discomfort of recent knee surgery. The dim cellar was lit, in this central space, by temporary spotlights that illuminated looming arches above and long racks of oak aging barrels strung across the width of the floor below them.

A small cadre of Hermann residents, all of whom are mentioned in restaurant critic Todd Kliman’s book, *The Wild Vine*, mingled by invitation in that welcome chill, and clustered around the barrels from which Tom Held and winemaker Steve Johnson suctioned samples of two distinct 2009 Norton wines produced from separate Stone Hill vineyards. Although no one was specifically making the point, these two Nortons provided a living illustration of the differing effects of *terroir*, as well as the cunning guidance of the winemaker.

Both wines offer the ubiquitous inky maroon hue imparted by this hardy native grape, but the wine vinted from the Kempersberg Vineyard, grown in shallow silt loam about two miles southwest of town, is fruity and aromatic, softer than the more familiar robust Nortons, and easier to drink young than is its counterpart. Appropriately, it is aging in American oak.

In contrast, the dense, richly earthy Norton produced from the deep loess soil of the Cross J Vineyard that flanks Jim and Betty Held’s bluff-top home overlooking the Missouri River, just a mile west of Hermann, is spicy and assertive. It is a prime candidate for lengthy aging in French oak casks and in the bottle, but still is mellower than anticipated, given its immaturity.

As we sampled and *schmoozed*, we were awaiting Todd Kliman, though none too anxiously, given the soothing effects of the wines and the satisfaction of a table spread with hors d’oeuvres. His flight into St. Louis was delayed by the storm that had advanced west to Hermann.

Meanwhile, I chatted with viticulturist Jon Held, who has taken over from his father the day-to-day management of the winery. Aglow with enthusiasm, Jon confided that they are experimenting with a hush-hush new technique for taming the naturally high acidity of the Norton grapes. Judging by the young wines I tasted, it is working.

Jon also enthused about the five experimental acres of vines he planted on Norton rootstock, which is highly efficient at extracting potassium from the soil. In yet another era of American winemaking, the “Cabernet of the Ozarks” is proving its inimitable worth and versatility.

Author Kliman proves contradictory about his purported protagonist in *The Wild Vine*. Although the title lauds a “wild” grape, throughout his text Kliman refers to the Norton grape as a French *vinifera* hybrid.

Considering a writer who came to his subject without any background in wines and vines, the confusion is readily understood. Dr. Daniel Norton, who discovered the grape, was unsure of its origin. He and William Prince, whose New York nursery first catalogued the Norton grape in 1830, seem to have decided between them that it must be a cross between the native American Bland grape and a *Vitis vinifera*, Pinot Meunier (aka Miller’s Burgundy)—one of the most important varieties grown in the Champagne region of France.

That is the hybrid Kliman touts. However, modern DNA studies suggest that Norton’s pedigree is most likely Bland (*labrusca*) x *V. aestivalis*, a true all-American cultivar. Although Kliman lumps *aestivalis* in with other native grapes he properly describes as “foxy,” it is the total lack of foxiness in *aestivalis* grapes that sets them apart and has long confused the issue of Norton’s parentage.

There are things in Kliman’s pretense at the “untold” history of Norton that should, indeed, remain untold. While I wholeheartedly recommend it as a well-written and mostly enjoyable romp, the book’s subtitle, “A Forgotten Grape and the Untold Story of American Wine,” is wholly misleading.

This book is a blend of lifestyle literature and travelogue, sensationalized by peeks behind the scenes at a transsexual winemaker, and patched together with pieces of existing wine histories and biographies, affording the author an aura of authority with those of his audience who are equally unfamiliar with the subject. (Revealingly, Kliman says of Henry Vizetelly: “Writing with authority, he became an

authority.” That does not always work out.) In fact, I take exception to Kliman’s misguided interpretations of my own research.

Read *The Wild Vine* for entertainment, but not for original research or new historical insights.

That Kliman, a resident of Washington, D.C., has an agenda for this writing is apparent. Overly apparent is his infusion of extraneous terms and topics (including a pointless insertion of Senator Barack Obama) that smacks of listing keywords to cash in on Google searches.

The theme here is not wine but the arenas of outsiders v. insiders, and their process of transformation. In an effort to coerce wine history to support his theme, Kliman takes a few unwarranted flights of fancy, making assertions that lack substance. Perhaps the most onerous of those is his anointing of “outsider” Daniel Norton as the “father of American wine.” That is too great a stretch for describing a man who simply raised a grape for which his negligent, unscientific method could not supply the source. No matter that grape’s eventual importance to the wine industry, Dr. Norton’s role with it was practically a fluke. And Virginia, which Kliman dubs the Norton grape’s true home was—and largely remains—indifferent to it. In order to establish a Norton vineyard in Virginia, Dennis Horton imported vines from Hermann, Missouri.



NORTON'S VIRGINIA

From: Husmann, *Cultivation of the Native Grape*, 1866

It was Hermann growers who brought the snubbed Norton's Virginia Seedling out of the shadows, nurtured it, defended it, and eventually earned for it the “Best Wine of All Nations” Gold Medal at the Vienna World Exposition of 1873. And if anyone fathered American wine, it was George Husmann, who scoured the nation throughout his lifetime, observing grapes and tasting wines in many regions, promoting the industry tirelessly, and sharing his almost omnipotent knowledge of American wines and vines through his numerous publications. His vision for the American wine industry was inclusive, not exclusive.

Husmann made it clear that Missouri was Norton's ideal home, the place where it flourished best and was cherished most. It had provided for him some early insight into the concept we now call *terroir*. But that term (overly used by the author, like a student's favorite new vocabulary find), that concept did not exist in American winemaking during the formative years of our industry. Husmann's years of observations of the same grape grown in different locales eventually fostered that understanding. He noted early in the Norton's career that in Ohio, for instance, it was an altogether different grape. There was, he realized, no one best winegrape for America. The chimeric varietal cure-all for American winemaking woes that was sought by naive growers like John Adlum and Nicholas Longworth did not exist.

While Kliman recognizes Missouri's role in saving and promoting the Norton before Prohibition and in revitalizing it afterward, he treats its resurgence here rather like an interesting prelude to what he foresees as its ultimate success in the preferable vineyards of Virginia. To determine his intent, look no further than the dust jacket art on *The Wild Vine*, depicting a cobwebby wine bottle on which a butterfly alights—a none too subtle reference to his friend Jenni McCloud's Virginia winery, Chrysalis. Her personal transformation from man to woman he apparently views as a metaphor for the Norton's anticipated transformation, in her hands, from “outsider” grape to Virginia “insider.” Since this notion invites indelicate mental images, I am convinced Todd has fashioned a bestseller.

Kliman terms Husmann and the other German growers in nineteenth century Hermann “outsiders,” as well. They were, of course, immigrants, and often unappreciated. A general argument fits. But, in the realm of American winegrowing during the latter half of the nineteenth century, they were the ultimate insiders. The be all and end all. Like their Norton grape.

To call Norton “a forgotten grape” rankles. It was never forgotten in Missouri. In the lost industry years

between Prohibition and Jim Held's 1960 revival of the Norton it was far from forgotten, it was legendary.

In 1992, when *Gourmet* wine editor Gerald Asher, a fellow Tendril, decided to visit and write about Missouri wineries, I was anxious to arrange an especially welcoming introduction to Hermann and its historic industry. A friend's charming bed and breakfast became the hub for our meetings and the host for a dinner, featuring lamb raised on my family property, and a few of the choicest bottles from our small cellar. (Those, alas, proved to be over the hill—a perfect, if excruciating, example of why one should not save one's best wine for perfect "occasions.") Jubilantly, I shared my research, along with tours of former Husmann properties and other sites of historic wine interest. He was my valued captive, and if his interest flagged, his graciousness and charm never betrayed it.

The introduction I most longed to perfect, however, involved the Held family and Stone Hill Winery. Certain that the idea of a dinner and tasting for this venerable wine celebrity would be viewed by them as a marvelous coup, I called Patty Held some time before Asher's planned arrival. She responded that she would discuss the plan with other members of the family and get back to me. I waited. No call came. The time until Gerald's arrival was now getting short.

In desperation, I talked with friends Debbie and Gary Buckler, who then owned the Vintage 1847 Restaurant at Stone Hill. I knew Chef Gary would welcome the chance to show off his culinary talents for such an appreciative diner. I poured out my story of frustration, hoping that they would volunteer to take up the question with the Helds. I said I could not understand the family's reluctance to commit to this unique opportunity. Debbie dashed my hopes, saying, in her calm and businesslike manner, "Just forget the Helds. Make your own plans."

I was stunned and deflated. I was also, truth be told, a little angry. Having moved to Hermann from Napa Valley, I had encountered a certain amount of defensive attitude locally, but had thought that was behind me, after dedicating six years to Missouri wine research and publishing articles that proved my genuine respect for the local industry.

Whether the Bucklers initiated a conversation, or whether the time for action had simply come, next day I received a call from Patty Held, and the evening that was to change Stone Hill's—and Missouri's—industry outlook was arranged. Gerald's admiration for the Nortons he tasted that night, and his complimentary article, proved a salve for any hidden wounds.

I share this story in print for the first time in order to clarify the record, for the benefit of future wine historians, because Kliman's breezy account of that momentous event suggests that the Helds were

thrilled by the prospect of Gerald Asher's visit. In retrospect, of course, they are. They may even have forgotten how scary a prospect it once was—for that is what I learned from the experience. The underdog did not want to risk being kicked and humiliated. It never occurred to me that was possible.

Kliman writes that if Jon Held had foreseen the consequences of that vertical tasting of Norton wines, he would have been more nervous. I can only chuckle and guarantee him that there was a surplus of nerves. Maybe they didn't much affect Jon, who took his oenology degree at Fresno, as did his sister Patty. It may have been the tenseness and ingrained wariness of the elder generation fearing rejection. One day I will learn the answer and put that, too, in the record.

For my personal record, I must reveal that I literally spent hours on the telephone with Todd Kliman, when he began his research for *The Wild Vine*. In the Bibliography section he states, "Long before visiting Missouri, I immersed myself in the writings of Linda Walker Stevens, a Hermann resident and expert on George Husmann." I can certainly verify that he did that, although there are occasional confusing gaps between the pieces he put to use. As for the bibliography, it inscrutably attributes my Husmann exhibit and catalogue to a writer named Judith Sumner. Ouch. On the record.

I am gratified, though, to be accounted a "Hermann resident," in the above quote. Throughout the book, all of us interviewed here are classified as "Hermannites," a moniker that sounds like some arcane element on the periodic table. Being a German settlement, we prefer the German model. We are Hermanners. *Ich bin ein Hermanner*. A petty point, perhaps, but would Parisians suffer themselves to be transformed into Parisites?

At the Stone Hill tasting, my fellow Hermanners were taking *The Wild Vine* at face value. People are apt to be uncritical of a book in which they are mentioned kindly, by name. No one even grumbled about the glaring misstatement of the town's founding year. They celebrated the book's publication, assuming it to be about their town, their remarkable history, their proprietary grape. I wondered how many of them had actually read it. I kept my skepticism to myself.

Finally, Todd Kliman arrived. He was ruffled and disconcerted, his fluff of dark hair waywardly curling. His rental car GPS had sent him on the long, scenic route from St. Louis to Hermann (at least, it would be scenic, in sunlight). Nevertheless, he made the effort at good humor.

Once the obligatory introduction was over, and Todd was issued a long-stemmed Reidel Norton wine glass, we Hermanners spontaneously burst into a raucous German toasting song, glasses held on high.

I glanced sideways at Todd, who looked startled, but quickly pasted on a bewildered smile. I could not help speculating that at that moment he recognized who the insiders are, and who the outsiders. With his baggage, he brought an *über* East Coast sensibility that is unfamiliar and uncomfortable with down-to-earth Missouri German *gemütlichkeit*.

Todd was witnessing an expression of local heritage that did not compliment his story line. The bond with the Norton grape has been intact here for 162 years. That connection implies issues beyond mere origin, beyond which winery or which locale produces the most pleasing Norton wine. It reflects the heart and soul of a tiny immigrant town, a town where transplants to Missouri soil once staked their American dream on the Norton grape, and pulled themselves up on its grapevines. A town with collective memory.

I suspect Todd is more admiring of struggles, the process of transforming, than of any result.

Later in the evening I sidled over to Todd, who now stood alone against a backdrop of Missouri-made American oak barrels. Delving into my dwindling cache of diplomacy, I remarked on the well-deserved popularity of his book, adding that it has appeal even for readers with no particular interest in wine.

He swallowed that as smoothly as a sip of aged Norton. "I don't think I wrote a wine book," said Todd, with soft-spoken intensity.

I chortled. "I'm glad to hear you say that," I said, "because I've been thinking the same thing."

EDITOR NOTE: For another look at Norton, see Linda's discussion of *From this Hill, My Hand, Cynthia's Wine* by Paul Roberts (Baltimore: Resonant Publishing, 1999) in our *WTNewsletter*, Vol.10 No.3 (July 2000).



SULLIVAN, *cont. from p.31*—

57. Wilson, 115-125. "Puto" comes from the Indian term meaning "grassy creek" and is unrelated to the similar Spanish word for "prostitute."
58. Wilson, 129-130.
59. Wilson, 128-142; *California Farmer*, 4/6/1854, 10/17/1855, 11/21/1856. In 1936 John Wolfskill's daughter, Frances Wolfskill Taylor, left a large tract of land near the town of Winters to the University of California. Today it is used by the College of Agriculture at Davis for vineyard and orchard research.
60. Bryant, 412.

Essential Wines and Wineries of the Pacific Northwest: A Guide to the Wine Countries of Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, and Idaho

A Review by *Will Brown*

[Will Brown, our astute follower of the wine literature of the Pacific Northwest winegrowing region, is a retired Oregon physician and winemaker. We await his work in progress on the history of the Oregon wine industry. — Ed.]

"There is a lot to like about this book..."



Just released, this guide by wine writer Cole Danehower continues a tradition of books on northwest wine started in 1979. As time has passed, this has become a more difficult chore for the writers because the number of wineries in the region has increased almost exponentially since 1970—to over twelve hundred today. The task

may have been somewhat lighter for Danehower who researches and writes a regular column "Inside Northwest Wine" in the periodical *Northwest Palate* where he is a co-publisher. He has been a recipient of the James Beard Foundation Journalism Award, and for many years published the quarterly *Oregon Wine Report*, an authoritative review of Oregon wines which, alas, has been discontinued. The stunning photography in the book is the work of Andrea Johnson who specializes in the imagery of wine and whose work has appeared in *National Geographic*, *Wine Spectator* and *Sunset*. This book is the first attempt at a comprehensive regional guide since Lisa Shara Hall's *Wines of the Pacific Northwest: A Contemporary Guide to the Wines of Washington & Oregon*, published in 2001.

Why a new book on wines of this region? Well, I believe the Portland-based author has made a number of observations and discoveries about the wines of the northwest from his research and wanted to bring them to the attention of wine lovers everywhere.

He states that the AVA's (American Viticultural Areas) and DVA's (Canadian Designated Viticultural Areas) are places where distinctive wine is made and posits that the northwest wine country is distinct from other North American wine areas (particularly from California). He explains that "an area's physical characteristics have a vital influence on the varieties of grapes that can be grown and styles of wine that can be made in each wine country." In order to understand the interplay between three vital wine variables he has developed a formula where Great Wine = (Place + Plant) x People. He feels that in the Pacific Northwest this formula for Great Wine

operates differently than in other areas because of the region's unique geography, climate and people. Although this may be true, growers and vintners in other wine countries like California, Virginia, and New Mexico could pose the same arguments for the same factors in their wine countries. Nevertheless, the author expands impressively on these factors throughout the book. Place is geography and includes the geology and soils of the areas, the northerly latitude with more sunlight during growing season days, and the physical features such as lakes, rivers, proximity to the ocean, mountain ranges and terrain. Because this region is the most northerly on the continent, climatic factors become more critical and the concept of heat accumulation in growing degree days is explained, along with considerations of growing season length due to spring and fall frosts, and the possibility of vine winter-kill due to extreme cold at the limits of viticulture. The plants are the *Vitis vinifera* grapevines, which thrive in the northwest provided they are matched with a meso-climate appropriate for their ripening requirements. The people are the viticulturists and vintners responsible for the development of the region, historically and currently, whose passion for the potential of the region has been essential for its growth.

The bulk of the narrative after the introductory chapter is devoted to a state-by-state and AVA/DVA exploration of the current industry in each area. The author has accumulated a plethora of data on climate and soil types for each area along with a discussion of the grapes best adapted to the areas geographical and climatic parameters. In each area he has selected wineries to profile. These wineries, however, represent fewer than ten percent of the region's producers, and were selected because each displays some important aspect of the wine countries under discussion.

There is a lot to like about this book and a few things that might be improved upon should a 2nd edition be contemplated. All of the requisite components are there: a table of contents, a glossary of wine terms, maps, a bibliography and an index. Scattered throughout the text are vignettes on topics that beg discourse outside the main themes.

The author's grasp of the fundamentals of viticulture and the basic sciences of geography, geology and climatology is impressive and is doubtless due to study and extensive interaction with viticulturists, vintners and experts in the basic sciences. His writing and organization of the material is authoritative and reflect his experience as a writer, editor and publisher.

What is not to like? I think that the title is somewhat misleading, especially the word "essential" which implies that the wineries included in the text are indeed somewhat more important than the rest of them, leading to the second problem which must have severely vexed the author. With 1200+ wineries to choose from, over 1000 are excluded, which tends to diminish the utility of this fine effort as a "guide." Of course, it would not easily lend itself to full inclusion of 1200 wineries for purely logistical reasons not to mention the additional expense and time involved and the publishers targeted price of the book.

Although the maps employed in the text are excellent, I would have preferred to see, in addition, a map of each AVA/DVA in order to better visualize each of the wine countries. I suspect that cost considerations were restraining here as well.

Wines of the northwest have come a long way in the few decades of their existence. While some have attained "world class" status and are wait-listed, the majority are in competition with the rest of the world's wines. Another problem is availability. The wines of British Columbia are virtually unattainable in the U.S. even in the northwest, while the wines of Washington, Oregon and Idaho may be difficult to locate outside those states unless they are nationally distributed wines from large and well-funded wineries. Boutique wines are likely to be found only at the source or the nearest wine shop to it, although some may be available by internet sales.

In summary, this is a fine effort by a skilled wine writer that will advance awareness of the wines of the northwest. I would highly recommend it to wine lovers everywhere and to collectors of important wine books. I hope the author will consider continuing his work in this area in order to facilitate future editions. Unfortunately this task is comparable to painting the Golden Gate Bridge where upon finishing one must start again straightaway.

■ *Essential Wines and Wineries of the Pacific Northwest: A Guide to the Wine Countries of Washington, Oregon, British Columbia, and Idaho* by Cole Danehower. Portland, OR: Timber Press, 2010. 308 pp. p.b. \$24.95



A SALUTE TO TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY TOAST BOOKS!

by Gail Unzelman



oasting is one of our oldest social customs: evolving from prehistoric ritual, to royal banquets, to conviviality and friendship, to romance and love. Though the custom is ancient, the word "toast" dates back only to 17th century England, where it

was used specifically to describe drinking to the ladies. In the 18th century it became common practice to place a bite of toasted bread in the cup before drinking. As the historical story was reported in the *London Tatler*:

It happened that on a publick day at the resort of Bath, a celebrated beauty was in the cross-bath, when one of the crowd of admirers took a glass of water from that in which the fair one stood, and drank her health. There was in the place a gay fellow who offered to jump into the bath, and swore that though he didn't care for the drink, he'd like to have the piece of "toast" therein. He was opposed in his resolution, yet this whim gave a name to the honor, which has ever since been called a toast.

One more toasting tale, featuring Benjamin Franklin and his clever wit, and then we shall dip into a few favorite toast books. At an official State dinner, the British ambassador rose and proposed a toast: "England—the sun whose bright beams enlighten and fructify the remotest corners of the earth!" The French ambassador, not to be outdone, raised the next toast: "France—the moon whose mild, steady and cheering rays are the delight of all nations, consoling them in darkness." Franklin, one of George Washington's closest friends, then rose and offered his crisp toast: "George Washington—the Joshua who commanded the sun and the moon to stand still, and they obeyed him!"

Charge your glasses! Here's to good cheer!

Turn-of-the-Century Toast Books

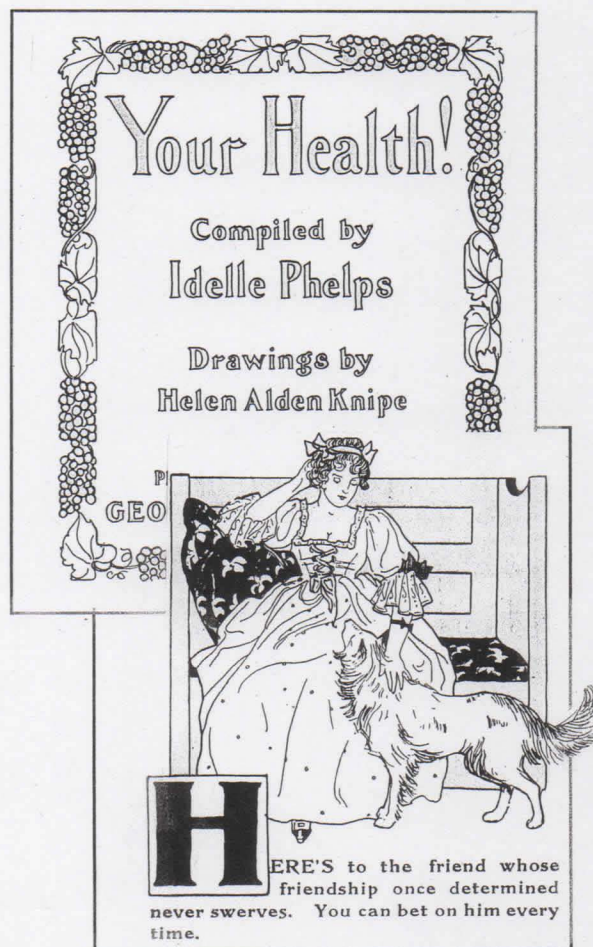
The essential measure for this sampling of favorites is the book itself—pleasures of design, decoration, printing. The first decade of the 20th century is our time-line, just because of its charm. In this case, it so happens the compilers and illustrators are often ladies recognized in their artistic fields; yet, complementing this fair sex we have several distinctly manly presentations to fancy us. Many of these books

are practical, pocket-sized volumes—easy to carry and have ready for any eloquent occasion.

For your collecting enjoyment, there is an 11-page "Toasting Bibliography" online. Some 3-dozen titles from this list fall into our time period; there are also a number of titles from the 1800s and several from the 1700s. The earliest book listed is William Prynne's *Healthes Sicknesse...A Compendium...proving the Drinking and pledging of Healthes to be Sinfull...* London, 1628. Gabler's *Wine into Words* (2nd ed, 2004) does not include "Toasts" in the Subject Index, and we can deduce from this that Mr. Gabler did not pursue these books for comprehensive inclusion, although he does list a number of toasting titles. (Because of this, I do not think we should consider valid a bookseller's description "Not in Gabler. Rare.")

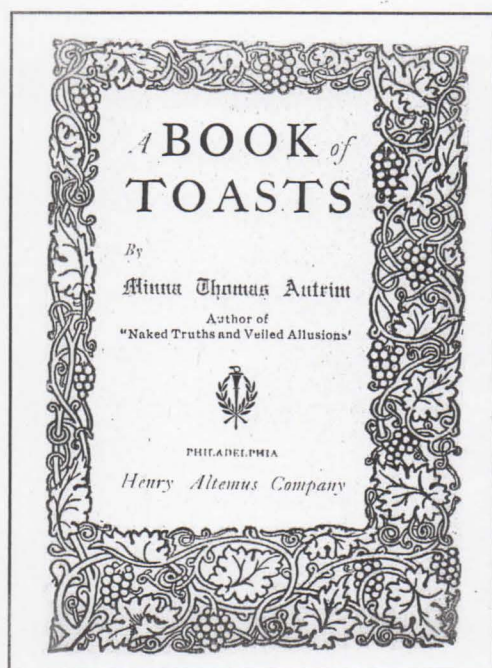
- **Your Health!** Compiled by Idelle Phelps. Drawings by Helen Alden Knipe. Phila/London: George W. Jacobs, 1906. 5¾ x 4½. 100 pp.

Talented artist Helen Knipe's beautifully sketched illustrations, tinted orange and black, of 18th C ladies and gentlemen in their finest attire adorn every page, and are perfectly suited to each toast.



- *A Book of Toasts* by Minna Thomas Antrim. Phila: Henry Altemus Co., 1902. 5½ x 4½. 112 pp.

This book makes the favorite list because of its William Morris/John Henry Nash-style title-page border of tendril entwined grapes and leaves, and its cover, a strikingly colorful and "splashy" lady ready to party. The dramatic "spider & the fly" decorated endpapers add to the alluring charm. Antrim (1861–1950) was a prolific writer of books offering homey advice for all matters social. Henry Altemus Co, likewise enjoyed a fine reputation for "pretty little books" from his Philadelphia press around the turn of the century.

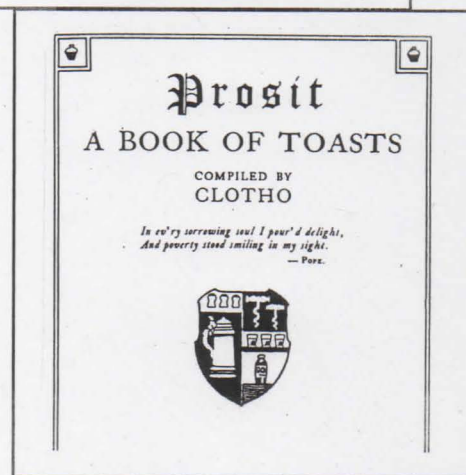


- *Prosit. A Book of Toasts*. Compiled by Clotho. San Francisco: Paul Elder & Company. Printed by The Tomoyé Press, 1904. 7½ x 5. 134 pp.

From top to bottom, *Prosit* is a very manly book. Its covers are a rough-woven grey cloth decorated with a large crest (reproduced on the title page) boldly printed in red and black. Three notable men are connected with this publication. Paul Elder and John Henry Nash were the artisan-proprietors of the Tomoyé Press, an important turn-of-the-century San Francisco printing house. Nash would become preeminent in his field. "Clotho" is said to be a pseudonym of Ambrose Bierce, active and prominent in the City at the time. There is a chapter in the book devoted to "Toasts to Wine."

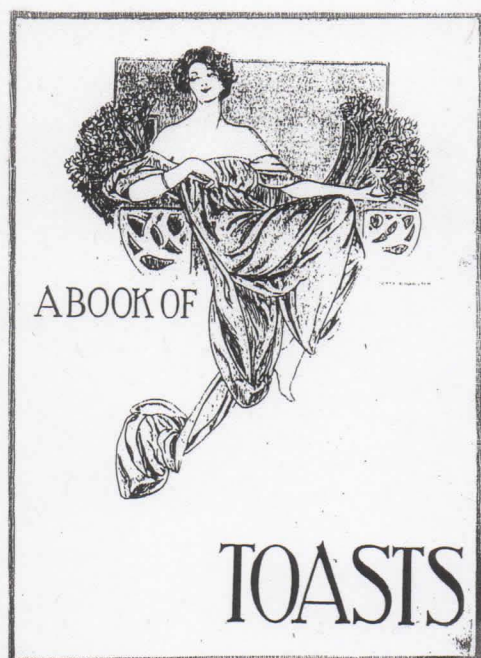
- *Toasts*. Compiled by William Marston Rhoads. Drawings by Clare Victor Dwiggins. Phila: Penn Publishing Co., 1905. 6½ x 4½. [96] pp.

This book, die-cut in the shape of a beer stein, is bound in soft leather decorated with a large, smiling grape cluster to both the front and rear covers; around the top of the stein runs a grape and leaf border. Quite amazing.



- *A Book of Toasts* by William Ramsay. With Decorations by Gerta Schroedter. New York: Dodge Publishing Co., 1906. 6¼ x 4½. [73] pp.

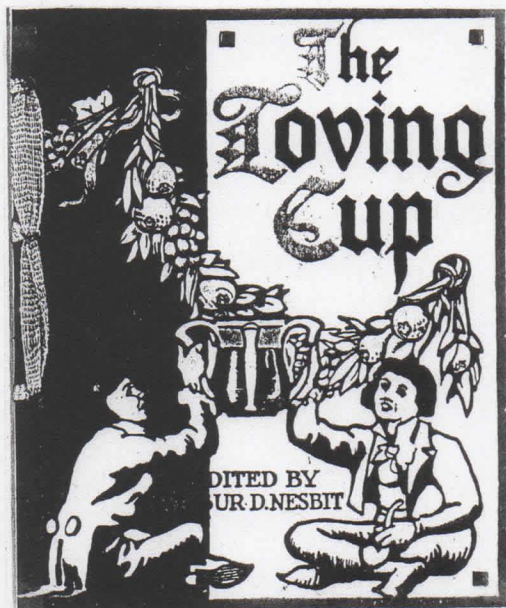
A splendid art nouveau presentation! Artist Schroedter (1879–1973)—a noted architect, designer, and illustrator—has created a sparkling gem. The cloth-bound book is captivating with its full-color front cover label; equally alluring is the colored frontispiece. The book is divided into sections including, To Love and Woman, Friends and Good Fellowship, Inne Ye Prayse of Drynkyng. All the toasts are printed within a green, delicate, flowery border.



RAMSAY'S BOOK OF TOASTS,
WITH DECORATIONS BY GERTA SCHROEDTER, 1906

- *The Loving Cup. Original Toasts by Original Folks.* Edited by Wilbur D. Nesbit. Chicago: P. F. Volland & Co., 1909. 7th printing. 6 x 5. 64 pp.

An uncommon anthology of never-before printed toasts, and a charming book with its colorful, old-style cover and two-color typography (red initial letters and brown text). The heavy-stock paper covers are sewn with a cloth ribbon. There is an



interesting story behind this little book. Wilbur Nesbit (1871–1927) was a poet of some note, a feature writer for two Chicago newspapers, and the

author of several books on friendship. In early 1909 he undertook a letter-writing campaign asking friends, acquaintances, and even prominent strangers for “a corking here’s-to-something-or-other” original toast for a book he was compiling. “Good fellowship is like a loving cup; it must be passed around to make it of value,” he wrote. Almost a century later, in 2003, Scott Petersen, a Chicago attorney, presented a paper titled “Lightly Buttered” to the venerable Chicago Literary Club in which he recalled how he had come across a batch of Wilbur Nesbit’s original toast response letters in a cardboard file box in a Southern Illinois antique shop (\$20 for the lot). In his very entertaining talk (it is available on the web), Petersen noted that “unfortunately, Nesbit never published his book on toasts” ... but what do we have before us? The gracious Mr Petersen answered my email query, saying he had mis-phrased the sentence: the book was published, but not all of the letters in his possession were included. Nonetheless, a fine representation!

Waes Hael. A Collection of Toasts Crisp and Well Buttered. Being, for the Most Part, Bubbles Gathered from the Wine of Others’ Wit, with Here and There, an Occasional Humbler Globule Believed to be More or Less Original by Edithe Lea Chase and Capt. W.E.P. French. New York: Grafton Press, 1903. Yuletide Edition of 510 copies. 9½ x 6½. 300 pp. (There is also a 1904 edition by Grafton Press, smaller format and not on the grand scale of the Yuletide Edition, but with its colorfully decorated cloth boards, it is very attractive and collectible.)

Frederick H. Hitchcock’s Grafton Press (1902–1928) published numerous works for individual authors and various societies (historical, genealogical, university). *Waes Hael* is a grand, big-book-size production whose title page is printed in red & black, while wide margins and deckle edges embellish each page; the pure-white cloth covers are lavishly decorated in gilt clusters of grapes and twining vines and old-style lettering. With some 1400 toasts, there is one for every occasion and subject. I particularly like the final one:

A Health, O reader, and ‘tis our adieu;
Good luck, good health, good fortune wait on you.
Over the wine please note our loving look: —
Waes Hael! Hoch! Skoal! Prosit! Buy the book.



Wine in California: The Early Years
Pueblos, Ranchos, and the End of the Missions
1822–1846

PART I

by *Charles L. Sullivan*

[This, the third installment in Sullivan's never-before-published, intensely researched history of how wine came to California, explores the period of the secularization of the California missions, the establishment of the early pueblos and ranchos, and their vineyard and winemaking activities. As in the first two installments, he has provided extensive, informative footnotes, with a substantial library of sources. Part II, to follow next issue, will summarize the End of the Missions. — Ed.]

IN THE QUARTER CENTURY BETWEEN Mexican Independence and the American Conquest in 1846 the character and workings of society in Alta California were almost totally transformed. By 1846 the mission system that had dominated California society was gone. After 1833 most of the agricultural land in the coastal regions fell into the hands of California-born Mexican *ranchero* families, now the basis of a new civil society. Trade and international commerce took on an importance that had only been hinted at in previous years. And by the mid-1830s there was a trickle of foreigners—European, but mostly American—which grew continually. Many of these men became leaders in the new society, and several became pioneers in what would develop into a tiny wine industry in the years after the Conquest.

PUEBLOS



California had a new governor in 1777, Felipe de Neve, and he perfectly understood the viceroy's interest in maintaining the forts, or *presidios*, established or planned at San Diego (1769), Monterey (1769), Santa Barbara (1782), and San Francisco (1776) to help secure Spain's tiny new

imperial expansion. It was also clear that supplying these forts and their attendant communities was going to be a problem. The supply ships coming up from Mexico would not suffice, and the feeble agricultural condition at the early missions precluded early help from that quarter.

Thus, in November 1777 de Neve established San José, a small civilian town, or *pueblo*, in the Santa Clara Valley, at the foot of San Francisco Bay. The fourteen settler families, or *pobladores*, were given tools, livestock, seeds and eventually title to their lands. The main task of the *pueblo*, after it had met its own basic needs for survival, was to produce an agricultural surplus on which the *presidios* could depend.

Governor de Neve waited until August 26, 1781, to issue his *Instrucción para la Fundación de Los Angeles*. The resulting *pueblo* got off to a very shaky start, mainly because of the instability of the first *pobladores*. Most of the families that had settled San José had been headed by soldiers drawn from the

northern *presidios*. Those who settled Los Angeles in its first years were far less stable. But we have seen in Father Palóu's 1769 description of the area that it was a perfect spot for such an endeavor, if agricultural surpluses were the goal. And the Los Angeles *pueblo* sat midway between the southern *presidios* that would benefit from those surpluses, as San José did between those in the north.

The chief products at both *pueblos* were grain and livestock. By the end of the 1780s both towns were producing the hoped-for surpluses. The families planted their own vegetable gardens, but for a few years there were no signs of orchards or vineyards. Since both towns were noted for their vineyards by the 1820s, the lack of concrete evidence for the original date of their viticultural activity is a bother for the historian. The vines at the missions closest to the *pueblos* would have been the logical sources for cuttings from which the *pobladores* might propagate vineyards. But both Mission Santa Clara (north) and Mission San Gabriel (south) were late in developing useful vineyards and producing wine. Thus, there is little likelihood that the nearby *pueblos* benefited from this development before 1800. In winegrowing, Los Angeles would eventually far outshine San José, but it is difficult to sense this fact in the early years of the century.

Los Angeles: City of Vineyards

The written record is almost empty, even in subsequent years. H. H. Bancroft, always ready to draw the tiniest morsel from his mountain of primary sources, complained that "the annals of Los Angeles and the surrounding ranchos (1801–1810)

present an almost utter blank."¹ But historian Robert Glass Cleland discovered a 1784 grant of land, just outside the *pueblo*, to José María Verdugo who, since 1771 was corporal of the guard at Mission San Gabriel. He did not settle on the land until he retired from the service in 1798. Cleland found evidence in the records of the U.S. Land Commission that Verdugo's brother, Mariano, managed the property from 1784 until 1798, built a home, "planted a garden, and set out a vineyard." By 1801 this Rancho San Rafael was flourishing, and it is unlikely that Verdugo's vineyard was the only one in or around the *pueblo*. When the old soldier died in 1831, his son Julio inherited most of the land, including a little distillery; his daughter Catalina inherited the vineyard.²

There is even less information available to document early vineyards inside the *pueblo* itself. Nevertheless, several pioneer vineyardists in the 1850s did trace their oldest vines back to the 1790s. Certainly there were more than these vineyards in place not long after 1800.³ How else was it possible for a local official in 1809 to report "gambling, drunkenness, and other excesses to be alarmingly on the increase"? As evidence he noted that the stocks at his office were rarely unoccupied: "the people are becoming more vicious, scandalous, and intolerable every day."⁴

The first name we can attach for sure to a Los Angeles vineyard is probably that of Antonio María Lugo, who acquired land in the *pueblo* in 1809 and soon planted a vineyard that covered eight acres with several thousand vines. He also planted vines on his Rancho San Antonio, southeast of town, and made wine commercially. In the 1850s his son-in-law, José Perez, took over the operation and expanded the vineyard to fifteen acres, which, with a little winery, were located near the present San Pedro and Second Streets.⁵

There were, of course, many other vineyardists in and around the *pueblo* after 1809. By 1817 Los Angeles was well on the way to earning one of its nicknames, "City of Vineyards." In that year the governor reported 53,686 vines growing within the *pueblo*, which would cover about fifty to sixty acres, a sizable spread for a little town of barely five hundred persons. Three years later a town official opined that the lives of the *pobladores* would improve if they gave more "attention to other products of industry than wine and brandy. . . ."⁶

In 1827 the French navigator Auguste Duhaut-Cilly visited the *pueblo* and Mission San Gabriel. In his rather detailed report he praised the local citizenry for their "liveliness, ease, and neatness." The land around the town was "cultivated with some care. . . . The vines grow well here, but the wine and brandy are quite inferior in taste to the exquisite fruit

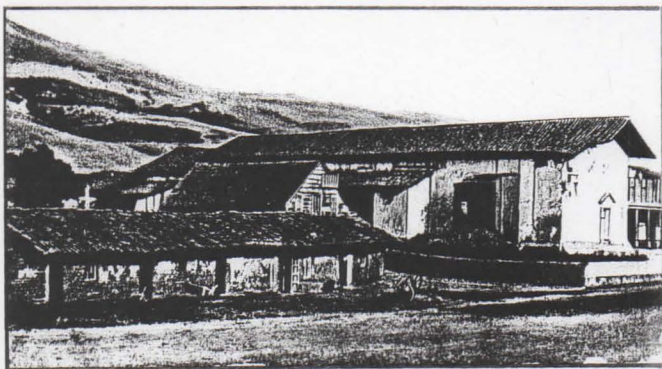
from which they are made, and I believe this inferiority must derive from the making rather than from the vintage." At Mission San Gabriel he was impressed by the "splendid vines, which produce some very good wine." It was late September and the vines "were loaded with ripe grapes, the purple and succulent clusters hanging down to the ground."⁷

A few weeks later the mission had American visitors, the Jedediah Smith party, the first mountain men to come cross country to California. Smith's clerk, Harrison Rogers, has left a lengthy and detailed description of their reception and two-month stay there. "I was introduced to the 2 priests over a glass of good old whiskey." This was actually brandy, which was always on hand before, during and after meals. Rogers soon learned to name it "ogadent" (*aguardiente*) in his diary. At this first meal there was a number of dishes, "plenty of good wine during supper, before the cloth was removed and cigars was introduced." Several days later Rogers and Smith were invited to a wedding celebrated at the mission. Afterwards they had "an elegant dinner, consisting of boiled and roast meat and fowl, wine and brandy or ogadent, grapes brought as a dessert after dinner." Rogers marveled at the padres' large vineyards and orchards, which included apple, peach, orange and fig trees. He also noted without comment that on January 1, 1827 the mission's Indians were presented gifts of clothing and wine. This diary entry took me by surprise. No where else have I read of such a practice at the missions. If these visitors had returned in a few years they probably would have been appalled by the dismal condition of the mission vineyards. But if they had visited Los Angeles they would surely have found plenty of wine and brandy.⁸

Pueblo San José

The annals of the San José *pueblo* for the period from 1790 to 1810 are much richer than those of Los Angeles. But for material concerning viticulture and winegrowing there is again, in Bancroft's words, "almost an utter blank." Nevertheless, the *pobladores* of San José did acquire vines, probably from nearby Mission Santa Clara, before 1810. Agriculture was proving highly successful around the little village. In that year, with a settler population of less than two hundred, the town produced 7,680 bushels of grain. Much of the labor was supplied by local Indians, free gentiles or neophytes, who had been able to get away from the padres at Santa Clara. The closeness of San José to the mission was a source of friction between the padres and the town folk, for the little settlement was a constant attraction and temptation for the mission Indians. And it was from the beginning the availability of local wine and brandy that irked the padres the most.⁹

When San José's first grog shop went into business is not recorded, but we know the name of the leading proprietor by the 1820s, Antonio María Suñol, a native of Spain but thoroughly French. He had served in the French navy and jumped ship from the *Bordelais* at Monterey in 1818. Shortly thereafter he was in business, producing wine and brandy. In 1822 he was selling a drink made of imported rum and honey. The following year the governor complained to the local *alcalde* that this concoction "was causing much harm" and asked him to look into the matter. Whatever the outcome, Suñol flourished in San José, marrying the daughter of a local *ranchero*. In the 1830s he acquired two ranchos of his own, one in the valley east of Mission San José which today bears his name. We shall meet him again in the 1850s as the father-in-law of a leader of the state's new wine industry.¹⁰



Mission San José

We get a pleasant picture of San José in 1824 when Captain Otto von Kotzebue of the Russian Navy visited the little town. He liked what he saw. "This *pueblo* lies in a beautiful spot. The houses are pleasant. . . , and stand in the midst of orchards and hedges of vines bearing luxuriant clusters of the richest grapes." Of the *pobladores* he wrote, "All their countenances bespoke health and contentment. . . in possession of as much land as they choose to cultivate, they live free from care on the rich produce of their fields and herds." Other foreign visitors in the '20s were not so impressed. In 1827 Auguste Duhaut-Cilly praised the town's gardens but thought San José a decadent community whose indolent inhabitants were dependent on the labor of Indian servants.¹¹

Officially there were three *pueblos* established in Spanish California, but the third, Branciforte, founded in 1797 near Mission Santa Cruz, was not successful and there is no record of viticulture there. Well into the Mexican period a fourth *pueblo* was established (1835) at Sonoma. Its history and that of the mission there are important parts of California's winegrowing history, which I shall discuss later in this chapter.

There were also important communities that grew up around established *presidios*, whose commanders were authorized to grant house lots and lands to their soldiers and to the citizens employed there. Individuals were allowed to plant vines and make wine in these de facto *pueblos* at Monterey, San Diego and Santa Barbara. By the late 1820s locally produced wine and brandy were generally available in these settlements, along with the usual reports of public drunkenness.¹²

Even before these private plots were planted, what was surely the earliest non-mission vineyard in the province was propagated at Monterey, the provincial capital, under the direction of Governor Pedro Fages. He set out a four-acre garden near the town and, true to his Catalán heritage, created a fine vineyard and orchard. In 1786 when the French navigator Jean François la Pérouse visited Monterey he found the Fages *huerta* flourishing.¹³

RANCHOS

I have already noted the 1784 Verdugo land grant that led to the establishment of Rancho San Rafael and its vineyard located between Mission San Gabriel and Los Angeles. During the next thirty-eight years, to 1822 and the end of the Spanish period, there were only twenty-five more such permanent grants, mostly in the southern part of the province and all to Spanish army veterans.¹⁴

I have taken W. W. Robinson's [*Land in California*, 1979] compilation of the twenty-six ranchos granted before 1822 and matched these to the total of sixty-eight that we know had vineyards at any time between 1784 and 1846. The latter figure was compiled by Jacob Bowman [*Vineyards of Provincial California*, 1943]. I find that at least eleven of the twenty-six ranchos had vineyards. Five were in the Los Angeles area: Rancho San Antonio, southwest of the *pueblo*; Santiago, on the south bank of the Santa Ana River; Sausal Redondo, on land between today's Long Beach and Santa Monica; San José de Buenos Ayres, today's Westwood. And there was the aforementioned Rancho San Rafael.

To the north near today's Ventura were Ranchos Simi and El Conejo. And up the coast from Santa Barbara was El Refugio, previously mentioned in the story of the Bouchard raid of 1818. Near Monterey, many miles to the north, Rancho Buena Vista had a vineyard.

By far most of Professor Bowman's research was concentrated on the land covered by the Southern District's provincial courts, below the so-called Santa Cruz Parallel, a line just north of Monterey. Thus, of the 475 land grant cases of the 1850s that he studied, only eighty lay above this line. Only eleven of these (14%) gave evidence of viticulture in the official

records, and but two of these date from the Spanish period. For a while Rancho Las Pulgas south of San Francisco near today's San Mateo had a small vineyard, but its grapes did not ripen. The other in the Santa Clara Valley was Rancho Santa Teresa, long and well established many years before the ninety-four-year-old Joaquín Bernal finally applied for and received his grant in 1834.¹⁵

There was no great surge of land grants during the early years of the Mexican period, before 1834. In all there were about twenty-five new grants, the largest number, surprisingly, in the Monterey district on lands around the bay and in the Salinas Valley. There were at least fourteen here before 1830. Two of these had vineyards, Rancho Alisal and Laguna Seca, but there may have been two or three more.¹⁶

There were also several Mexican ranchos granted in the San Francisco Bay area before 1834. Of these only the Peralta Family's Rancho San Antonio had an early vineyard. San Leandro Creek was the southern boundary of this great rancho. It was also the northern boundary of the Mission San José lands. It is likely that Father Durán as a neighbor might have encouraged a Peralta interest in winegrowing.¹⁷

Had Jacob Bowman been able to examine more than 475 of the land grant cases adjudicated after the American Conquest, he surely would have found more ranchos with vineyards. If we apply the percentage with vineyards that he found to the total of something more than seven hundred cases, we might guess that perhaps one hundred had vineyards. But I believe that number would be somewhat high. Nevertheless, overwhelmingly most land grant ranchos did not have vineyards. But, then, most land grants were not ranchos, in the strictest sense. Probably most of the more than three hundred granted between 1840 and 1846 were not developed into agricultural establishments. And most of those developed after 1834 were little more than cattle runs with minimal operational or familial improvements one associates with the term "rancho." Small orchards and vineyards were very often planted by *rancheros* after they were well settled on their land with their families. This was particularly true of those fifty or so soldiers who settled their lands before 1834. With few exceptions their little vineyards gave their family and their retainers fruit to eat and wine for their table. Some few had small stills for brandy, which they could use, trade or sell.

Our picture of these established ranchos up and down the province comes mainly from visitors, mostly between 1835 and the early 1850s. Almost always there was cheerful hospitality, loads of food and usually wine and brandy. Americans and other foreigners who traveled in California, particularly during the years of the Conquest and then the early

Gold Rush, have left behind numerous written descriptions of rancho life.¹⁸

The vines from some of the ranchos certainly supplied the cuttings for many of the new *rancheros* in the late 1830s and early 1840s. Other stocks were surely pruned from the numerous vineyards in and around Los Angeles, San José and Monterey. They did not typically come directly from the old missions, as some have guessed. The dilapidated, unpruned condition of all but a few of these after 1834 would argue against such an idea.

Secularization: More Ranchos, More Vineyards

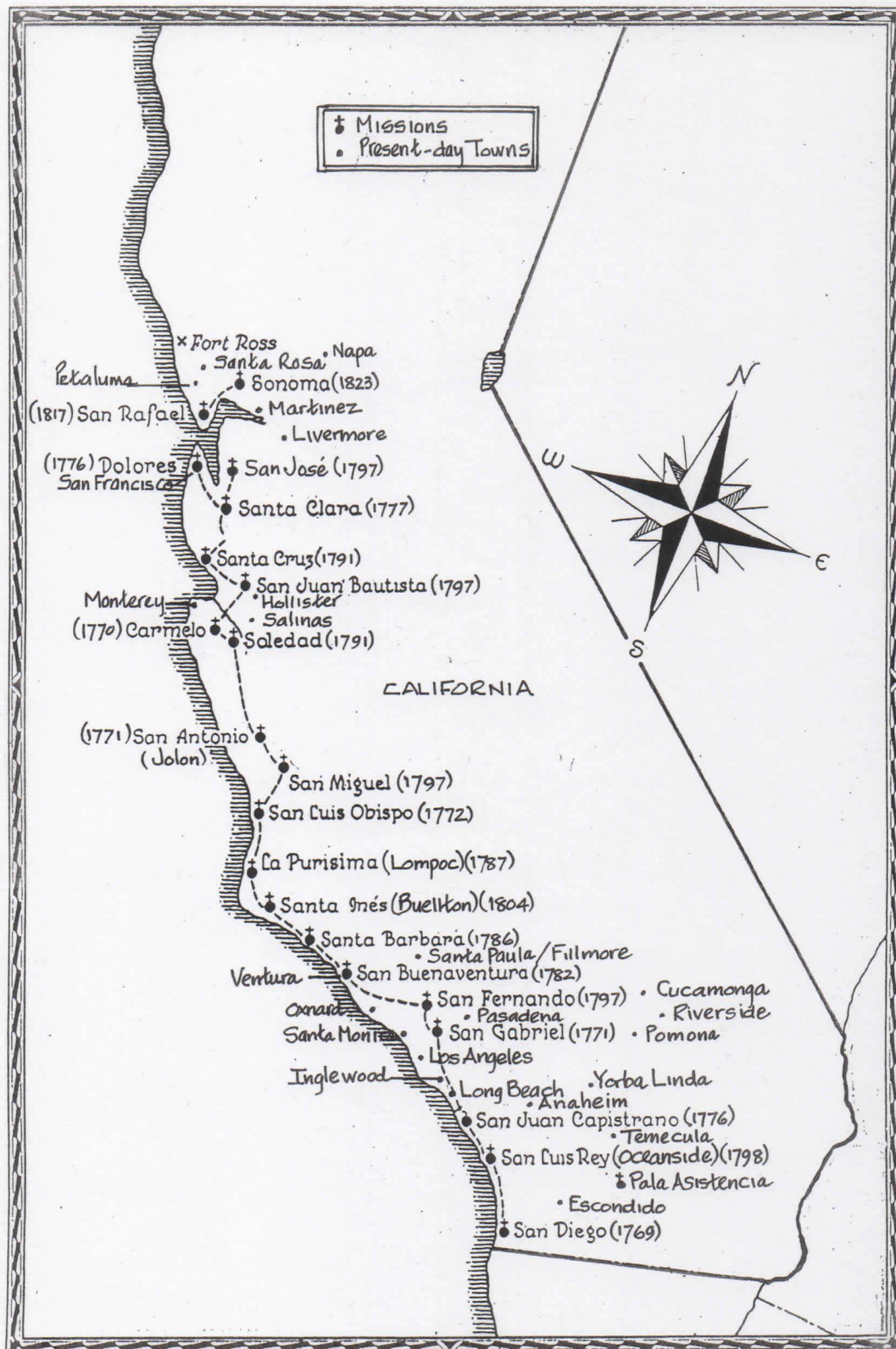
From the earliest days of New Spain's history the crown and the viceroy in Mexico had seen the mission as a temporary frontier institution which would eventually fade away, leaving settled Indian agricultural communities peopled by loyal Catholic subjects. Often in Mexico this hope was met with fair success. In Baja and Alta California this goal was not achieved.

After Independence the Mexican Congress came to see the California missions as a remnant of Spanish monarchism. Mexican republicanism tended to be anti-clerical and almost all of California's Franciscan missionaries were native Spaniards.¹⁹ Theoretical opposition to the California missions, whether voiced in Mexico or in California, was usually, in the words of historian Walton Bean, "rationalization for avarice." In California it really came down to a combination of land hunger, jealousy and avarice.

In 1833 the Mexican Congress passed the Secularization Act with a very vague description of the procedures to be followed. José Figueroa was the governor appointed to execute the new law in Alta California. He appointed administrators for each mission and directed that half of the vast mission lands should go to the Christian Indians on the site. But his plans were negated by his death in 1835. Walton Bean wrote, "His passing removed a brake from the rapacity of the mission administrators and their friends and relatives...." Of these administrators John Walton Caughey wrote, "through their fingers the mission properties slithered rapidly into private hands."²⁰ There were few examples of mission lands going to the neophytes and such rare grants were soon in the hands of the *rancheros*.

The missions had controlled most of the best land in the California coastal valleys from San Diego to Sonoma. By 1840 almost all of this land was in the hands of newly situated *rancheros*. From about fifty in 1834 the number of California ranchos had risen to about 350 in but six years.

On some of the new ranchos, vineyards were planted, some of historical importance. At the beginning of the secularization process Jacob



MAP of CALIFORNIA showing ORIGINAL MISSION SITES
and PRESENT-DAY TOWNS

From Berger, *Franciscan Missions of California*, 1941

Enhanced by G. Unzelman

Bowman's admittedly incomplete statistics show 26,400 vines planted on the old ranchos. This number, which would have covered but thirty to forty acres, is surely less than half the actual total. But there are no reliable figures on the rancho vineyard acreage before California became a state in 1850. And for grants after 1833 we have only the selected anecdotal information one can glean from the record of the hearings before the U. S. Land Commission. Bowman often provides useful data on the new rancho vineyards whenever they happened to be mentioned in the land grant cases, since planting crops, orchards and vineyards was a tangible sign of land improvement almost always required in the terms of the grants. But the mention of a one- or two-acre vineyard on a 15,000-acre rancho was certainly not thought to be a requirement to establish a claim. Nevertheless, we shall see that in many instances when these grants were examined by federal authorities after the American Conquest, the accompanying papers often supply us with useful hints as to the existence of vineyards on these lands. This is particularly true of the former mission lands that were later claimed by the Church.

Rancho Vineyards—South to North

Starting in the south four new rancho vineyards are reported in San Diego County.²¹ The vineyard at Rancho Encinitas was planted in the 1830s west of Escondido. To the south was Penasquitas. There were two vineyards planted about twenty miles up the San Luis Rey River from the old mission. These sites were located on land of the *Pala asistensia* set up by the mission fathers in 1816. Indian rancherías were located there and two of them had vineyards planted in the late 1830s. In 1844 they had about 5,000 vines between them. In 1875 the 11,000-acre Pala Indian Reservation was established, but by then there was no further record of these Indian vineyards. Northwest from Pala was more San Luis Rey land, which is a well-known winegrowing area today. There in 1844 the Rancho Temecula was granted to Felix Valdez, but its little vineyard had been planted several years earlier.²²

On land east of the San Gabriel Valley several ranchos planted vineyards in these years. Chief among them was the Rancho Cucamonga granted to Tiburcio Tapia in 1839. Nearby, where Riverside stands today, the Rancho Jurupa was granted to Juan Bandini in the same year. In years to come the lands formerly occupied by these ranchos became important commercial vineyards. South of Pomona longtime ranchero Antonio Lugo (San Antonio) added to his vineyard holdings when he planted vines on his Rancho Santa Ana del Chino, granted in 1841. Two years later Michael White, now Miguel Blanco,

planted vines on his Rancho Muscopiabe northeast of Cucamonga below Cajon Pass.²³

Between the mission lands of the San Gabriel Valley and Los Angeles there was a swarm of land grants and many new vineyards after 1833. There were four small grants near the mission where vines were planted. Much larger was the Rancho Paso de Bartolo Viejo south of the valley granted to Ivan Crispin Perez in 1835. Much of the Rancho San Pascual would someday be Pasadena. It had a vineyard soon after the same Perez received his grant in 1834. Farther south, near Downey, was Rancho Santa Gertrudis, dating from 1834, where Manuel Nieto's widow planted her vineyard.

One of the most interesting grants of mission land here, only 128 acres, went in 1838 to Victoria Reid. She was a young Christian Indian girl when she married Scotsman Hugo Reid soon after his arrival in California in 1834. He was not yet naturalized in 1838, so his wife received the little grant, the Huerta de Cuati, today the site of Lacy Park in San Marino. The next year Reid was naturalized and began developing his famed Rancho Santa Anita, granted in 1841. He planted vineyards on Santa Anita, but Victoria's land already contained a portion of one of the old Mission San Gabriel vineyards.

Much of the land in what is known today as West Los Angeles was sloppy swampland, covered with numerous ponds, marshes and lakes. Very rainy seasons caused the local overflow to run off into the bay from Ballona Creek at today's Marina del Rey. All this changed in 1825 when a deluge of biblical proportions roared out of the San Gabriel Mountains and forced the course of the Los Angeles River to the south. From then on it emptied into San Pedro Bay at Wilmington and that westerly land running about fifteen miles out to the beaches at Santa Monica dried up, making this area far more valuable. Francisco Avila had received a large and mostly worthless land grant there in 1823; by 1840 he had developed Rancho Las Ciénegas (the marshes) and had a working vineyard.

Farther west was Rancho San Vicente y Santa Monica where Francisco Sepulveda planted vines about 1829. To the south near Inglewood was Rancho Aguaje de Centinela, where Ignacio Machado began planting his 7,000 vines in 1830, although his grant was not confirmed until 1844. Farther south around today's towns of Anaheim and Yorba Linda was the Rancho Cañon de Santa Ana, granted to Bernardo Yorba in 1834. He had already planted a large vineyard there several years earlier and even had a brandy-still on his property. In the 1850s this area became the site of a huge winegrowing colony.

Up the coast from Santa Monica there was no clamor for land grants, for the same reason there had

been no missions. The rugged Santa Monica Mountains seem to drop into the ocean. But inland the land west of the San Fernando Valley through the Simi Valley to Oxnard and along the Santa Clara River through Fillmore and Santa Paula down to Mission San Buenaventura contained just the sort of rich soils potential ranchers were looking for. There had been a few grants in the region before 1834, but only Rancho Simi had vines at an earlier date. El Conejo near Thousand Oaks had been granted in 1822, but it was not until the late 1830s that José de la Guerra y Noriega planted his 4,000-vine vineyard. A few years later vines were planted on former mission land in the Santa Clara Valley at Rancho San Francisco by Antonio del Valle.²⁴ This rancho was bordered upriver by Manuel Casarin's Rancho Santa Paula y Saticoy, whose vineyard was planted in the late 1830s. In the Fillmore area farther up the valley was Rancho Sespe, granted to Carlos Carillo in 1833. He may have planted his vineyard several years before receiving the grant. South of the valley around Camarillo was José Pedro Ruiz's Rancho Calleguas whose vineyard dates from the late 1830s.

Beyond Ventura the Santa Ynez Mountains press down to the sea, and we read of no serious attempts at viticulture until we reach the Santa Barbara area, where the mission holdings took up most of the good land there. In fact, the story of winegrowing from here to the Monterey area in these years was almost totally confined to the old mission vineyards. Secularization of the Santa Barbara mission was delayed for years, mostly due to the efforts of Father Narciso Durán, who had come here in 1833 from Mission San José. As might be expected the mission's several vineyards continued producing well into the 1840s. Durán, of course, kept a watchful eye on the brandy stills.²⁵ I shall examine the fate of all the province's mission vineyards later in this chapter.

By the 1820s, in addition to the activities at the mission, a little *pueblo* had developed around the *presidio* at Santa Barbara. By 1830 there were perhaps two hundred private dwellings, many of which had small gardens and vineyards.²⁶

Historian Ernest Peninou tells of one such vineyard, acquired by Frenchman Pascual Botiller in 1843. It had been planted many years earlier by Captain Felipe de Goyoechea, one of the first commanders of the Santa Barbara *presidio* and later governor of Baja California. Botiller expanded the old vineyard and continued to make small amounts of wine long after California became a state.²⁷

To the north below San Francisco Bay, almost all the vines Professor Bowman could find in private hands after 1834 had been mission vines. But there were a few exceptions. In the Santa Rita Valley, between Lompoc and Buellton, Francisco Coto planted

vines on his Rancho Santa Rosa, which he acquired in 1839. Today this area is noted for its Pinot noir. Farther north, east of Salinas, the Sobranes Family planted vines on their Rancho Alisal in the late 1830s. Nearby the Munras Family did likewise on their Rancho Laguna Seca, acquired in 1834. Farther north near Hollister José Antonio Castro acquired a large portion of land from Mission San Juan Bautista. He called it Rancho San Justo and planted vines there in the late 1830s.

Around the San Francisco Bay area itself there were several new rancho vineyards after 1833. North of the *pueblo* lands of San José, José María Alviso was granted the Rancho Milpitas in 1835 on which he had already planted six hundred vines. Englishman

Robert Livermore had been in California since 1822 and came to live in San José in 1829. He then settled east of the great bay, probably in 1835, and acquired the valley portion of the Rancho Los Pozitas two years later. It was probably in 1840 that he planted the first vines in the Livermore Valley. He did not live to see his former lands become an important winegrowing area in the 1880s.²⁸



Robert Livermore [1799–1858]

Residents of the San Francisco peninsula called the land of the East Bay "the opposite coast," *la contra costa*; the county of this name today was the site of Rancho El Pinole, which covered 17,761 acres from the bay at Point Pinole all the way to the current town of Martinez. The grant was made in 1829 to Ignacio Martinez, after forty-one years of military service in California. He settled in the Alhambra Valley in 1836. There he planted the first vines in what would become a wonderful viticultural district in the 1880s.²⁹

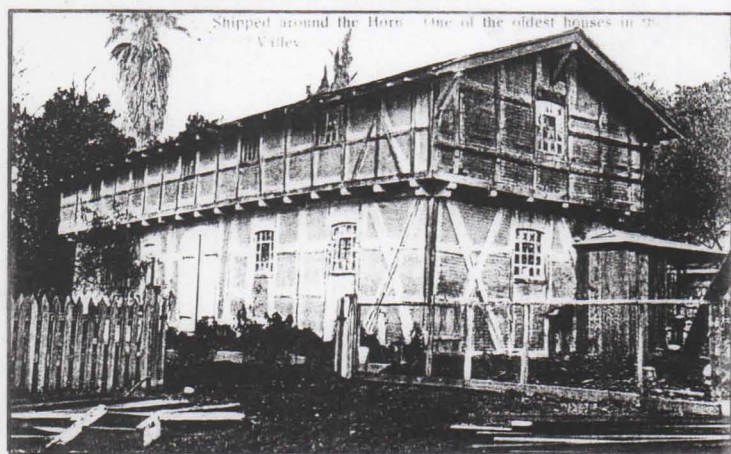
A few miles to the south, at the foot of Mount Diablo, Rancho Los Médones was granted to José Noriega in 1835. Two years later he sold a portion of the rancho to John Marsh. By the time that Edwin Bryant visited him in 1846 the former New Englander had a well-established and "extensive" vineyard. Bryant's description suggests that Marsh's vineyard was at least six years old. It was September and he already had "several casks of wine now in the state of fermentation." Marsh also had a still which supplied Bryant with his first taste of California *aguardiente*. He thought it was a bit rough and needed some age.³⁰

Vallejo at Sonoma

Finally we come to the north bay area which eventually would include Sonoma and Napa Counties, the viticultural muscle in today's North Coast appellation. We have already seen the opening of the region in 1823 with the founding of the Sonoma Mission and the planting of its vineyard. In a few years secularization brought an end to the mission, but that process brought historic forces to bear that led to the establishment of a rancho culture in the area and its very rapid growth.

The primary influence in this development came from a young Monterey-born officer who gained a good knowledge of the *frontera del norte* in 1833 when he was sent north to find a site for a possible new *presidio* and to report on Russian activities around the Ross settlement. The next year Lt. Mariano G. Vallejo was but twenty-six years old when he was appointed the commissioner for the secularization of the Sonoma Mission. He was also given free range to populate the *frontera* through liberal land grants, and was made military commander of the entire region. In 1835 he began laying out the new *pueblo* of Sonoma, encouraging settlement around a large plaza which is still the center of the historic town.

Vallejo never lost sight of his and his family's interests in the flurry of land grants. He built himself a large adobe near the plaza in 1837. He also planted a small vineyard with cuttings taken from the not-old but certainly run-down mission vineyard. Later he built a large family home west of town and in time had a larger vineyard on that site. At this early date he appears to be developing a keen interest in winegrowing, for by 1841 he was making quite a lot of wine and was distilling brandy with the little still that had been left at the mission.³¹



Gen. Vallejo erected this large brick warehouse to store fruit, wine & other products from his estate

With his eye on the Russians to the northwest he made land grants north of Petaluma which became Rancho Roblar de le Miséria, Estero Americano, and Pogolomi. Jacob Bowman found vineyards planted on all three in the 1840s. Vallejo personally acquired a large rancho in the Petaluma area, and in 1841 he made a grant to his widowed mother-in-law, María Lopez de Carillo, which became the Rancho Cabeza de Santa Rosa. Historian Ruth Teiser wrote that she "ran the rancho with an iron hand." Her home was the first built in the Santa Rosa area and hers was the first vineyard planted in that now-famous viticultural region.³²

In 1836 Vallejo set up his brother Salvador on a large tract of land east of the *pueblo*, and the next year he planted a small vineyard on the gently rising land, with a fine view of the Sonoma Valley. The place was soon dubbed Buena Vista, under which name and under another owner it later gained viticultural fame. In 1841, now-Comandante General Vallejo made a grant to his American-born brother-in-law, Jacob Primer Leese, who soon produced wine there at his lean-to "winery" along Sonoma Creek, the first in Sonoma by an American.³³

Napa Valley

Vallejo's land grant with the most powerful historical significance was to George Yount in 1836. This native of North Carolina was one of America's most famous mountain men, a tough breed who roamed and trapped the West and began drifting into California in the 1820s. He arrived in 1831 and in that year passed through and admired the Napa Valley. He ended up in Sonoma and helped Vallejo by teaching his workers the American art of shingle making. Yount did not settle on his Rancho Caymus until 1838. This 12,000-acre spread covered the valley from just below today's Yountville to about a mile below St. Helena. He built a two-story log cabin and "raised a tolerable supply of vegetables." He soon had a hundred head of cattle and later built a flour mill and a saw mill. When Yount planted his little vineyard, Napa County's first, is not certain; it probably does not date from the time of his arrival, which was the spring of the year. Although 1838 is the generally accepted date for the origin of viticulture in the Napa Valley, the best evidence points to 1839. Nevertheless, he might have started planting at the beginning of the 1838-1839 dormant season, which would fit well with the several pieces of primary evidence we have.³⁴

Readers who have lived some time in California will recognize many of the names of these ranchos with vineyards planted between 1834 and 1846. And I have named only the few for which there is evidence of viticulture. But the names of Mexican- and

Spanish-era ranchos, and those of many of their owners, dot the land today on towns, streets, schools, land developments, even shopping malls. Born and raised in Santa Monica, I tend to react perhaps as Proust did to his little cakes when I hear the words, San Vicente, La Cienega, Santa Anita, or Sepulveda. Wine lovers might react similarly at the names of George Yount's two ranchos in Napa Valley, Caymus and La Jota, today the names of two well-known wineries in the area.

Foreigners: More and Better Wine

Prior to Mexican Independence foreign visitors to California came by sea, and few failed to sail away. We have already met Joseph Chapman, an exception, who did stay and then became part of the early winegrowing history of Los Angeles. Overland from the east, fur-hunting pioneers pressed far into the heart of America, but none made it to California before Jedediah Smith in 1826. Meanwhile contacts by sea grew exponentially in the 1820s, as trade in hides and tallow became big business. In 1828 more mountain men arrived, chiefly the party led by James Ohio Pattie, which included two men who did stay and owned vineyards in Los Angeles, Nathaniel Pryor and Richard Laughlin.³⁵

Elizabeth Rhoades [*Foreigners in Southern California during the Mexican Period*, 1924] has counted 228 foreign settlers in southern California before 1846. Of these she has been able to establish the national identity of 180: Americans lead by far, 55%, over British, 26%, and French, 12%. She has also laid out a very precise 1818 map of the region from San Diego to southern San Luis Obispo County, showing the exact location of every rancho land grant to a foreigner before June 1846.³⁶ Unfortunately no such research has been done on northern California foreign landowners during the Mexican era. But I have discovered twelve of some importance, whose contributions to California winegrowing I shall discuss further on.

The percentage of foreigners who owned vineyards in southern California before 1846 is small, but no smaller than the percentage of *rancheros* throughout the province who planted vines. But these few foreigners, plus several dedicated Californio winegrowers had, by the 1840s, created a nexus of lively entrepreneurs that would develop into a small wine and brandy industry by the 1850s.

Alexander Forbes was a British merchant in Mexico who gathered information there for a book on California, the first such in English, which was published in 1839 [*California: A History of Upper and Lower California*...]. Some writers have put his work in a bad light because Forbes hadn't been to California and had acquired his information second-

hand. But for our purposes the fact that he was able to give a fairly accurate and very positive picture of winegrowing in California shows that the story of the province's small successes in this field during the period of the late 1830s, when Forbes was gathering information, was known beyond the shores of the province. He wrote: "The vine thrives in California in an extraordinary degree. It is cultivated already to a very considerable degree, and might be extended almost without limits; wine is now made of tolerably good quality and some even very excellent. Nothing is wanting but intelligent persons, to make wine of superior quality, and which would find a ready market in Mexico. . . ." He also noted that the wild grape vine of California was abundant but didn't ripen well. Wild grapes, he correctly recorded, were often made into brandy "in considerable quantity." His informants apparently had not passed on to him the low quality of this beverage. He also remarked on the long term potential of winegrowing in northern California, since the West Coast land around San Francisco Bay was in the same latitude as that of coastal Portugal. He correctly predicted that this region "embraces the analogues, at least, of the most celebrated wine countries in the world, and consequently offers a wide and promising field for the cultivation of the grape in all its varieties."³⁷

Two Heroes of Wine: Vignes and Wolfskill

A pair of foreigners stand out in the 1830s. For historian Ruth Teiser they were the heroes in the Los Angeles *pueblo's* viticultural drama in these years. One was a frontiersman from Kentucky, the other a Frenchman from Bordeaux who had worked there as a cooper and distiller. They both arrived in southern California in 1831. "Two men more unlike would be hard to find."³⁸

Jean Louis Vignes

Jean Louis Vignes [1779–1862], "Don Luis," as he came to be known by his fellow Angelinos, left his homeland and his family in 1826 at the age of forty-seven and sailed to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). Why he departed from his homeland is something of a mystery.³⁹ He had left France in the company of Father Jean Alexis Bachelot, a missionary to the Islands with whom Vignes had a close relationship. The priest had the post of apostolic prefect to the Islands and his letters to his superiors in Paris provide a vague suggestion of why Vignes left France. He "had been forced into exile as a result of troubles caused by his loyalty, his misplaced tenderness and his over-zealous desire to be of service." French history at this time suggests that Vignes' situation did not derive from the political tensions of the moment, since he and his family were quite religious. He was probably influenced by

personal problems.⁴⁰ In Hawaii Vignes raised sugar cane and distilled rum. Father Bachelot also wrote that his compatriot "has been our mission's constant friend and has performed innumerable small services. . . his decent behavior, so rare here, has made him generally liked and respected." Later he developed the same sort of reputation in the often stormy and intemperate *pueblo* of Los Angeles.⁴¹

Vignes sailed to California in May 1831, landing at Monterey, then heading south to Los Angeles where he almost immediately applied for naturalization. Within two years he had acquired about a hundred acres of land in what is now downtown Los Angeles near where the Union Station is now located. He planted a vineyard of about thirty-five acres, and before 1840 was making wine and brandy in large quantities.⁴²

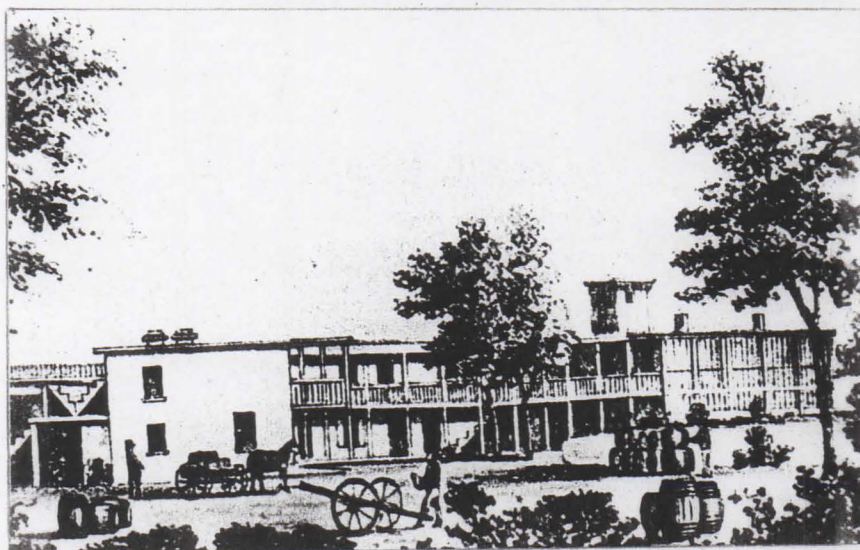
Aboard the ship that brought Vignes to California was William Heath Davis, a boy of nine and a native of Oahu, sent to California to visit relatives by his stepfather. Vignes and the young Davis met aboard ship and the two hit it off. Many years later Davis thought he remembered visiting Vignes in Los Angeles in 1833 and in 1838. His next visit may have come in 1842 when he was then twenty and Vignes was a well-established winegrower, in the words of Thomas Pinney, having "raised winemaking in Los Angeles from a domestic craft to a commercial enterprise."⁴³ Forty-five years later Davis recorded his memories of his early years in California and published them in 1889. It was a huge book in which he included some of the accomplishments of Jean Louis Vignes.⁴⁴

His general picture of the Frenchman is useful and presumably quite accurate, but only here and there do we find a time sense that helps us to understand the development of Vignes' excellent reputation as a winegrower, a businessman and as a valued member of his community. But that the Frenchman was the most important wine producer in the *pueblo* within ten years of his planting his first vines can be seen from a series of events in 1842-1843 which no history of early California ever neglects.

For many years the possibility of war between the United States and Mexico was a reality in the leaders' minds of both countries. If war came, American commanders in the Pacific were under orders to move against California, and most important, to take the port of Monterey. Commodore Thomas ap Catesby Jones was the commander of the American Pacific

Squadron anchored at Callao, Peru. There in 1842 he received information that made him believe that Mexico and his country had gone to war and that Mexico was about to cede California to England. He raced north with his little fleet and on October 18 anchored at Monterey. He ordered the Mexican commander to surrender, which he did with dispatch, technically handing over the entire provincial territory from San Luis Obispo to San Juan Bautista. Recent newspapers from Mexico giving no indication of formal hostilities, Jones hauled down the flag and loaded his troops aboard ship. The commodore stayed in the north for more than two months smoothing the ruffled feathers of the Mexican officials and visiting the area. On one trip he went up to Sonoma and visited Comandante Vallejo for two days. There he was treated to a rodeo and a great banquet with plenty of wine and brandy. Meanwhile American admirers in southern California had sent two barrels of Don Luis's wine to Monterey for the commodore and his officers.

On January 9, 1843 Jones set sail for San Pedro to meet with the Mexican governor. He arrived eight days later and was greeted with a sumptuous dinner prepared at the port town by the governor's own cooks. Jones and his entourage then went by carriage to the *pueblo* to meet with the Mexican officials. There was another banquet and grand ball, at which Commodore Jones was able personally to compliment Vignes on the quality of his wine sent him at Monterey. The Frenchman then invited Jones and his officers to visit El Aliso, his manicured 104-acre estate, for a tour of the vineyards and the winery. Next day, January 21, Jones sailed away. Of the visit Davis wrote: "They were delighted with his California wines, of different vintages, some as much as eight or



El Aliso, Don Luis Vignes's winemaking enterprise, c1850

ten years old, of fine quality. They were interested in going through his cellars, where the wines of different years were stored in large quantities in pipes (barrels). Vigne [*sic*] presented the commodore and his officers with several barrels of wine, which were gratefully accepted."⁴⁵

Since 1838 Don Luis had a very talented new hand in his operations, his nephew, Pierre Sainsevain. By this date Vignes had about 40,000 producing vines and was developing a sizable surplus, which he would rather sell than age further. The twenty-one year old Sainsevain's first major task was to help remedy this situation in 1840 by taking a large load of white wine and brandy up the coast from San Pedro and selling it at Santa Barbara, Monterey and San Francisco (Yerba Buena) at good prices. This, like so much that Vignes accomplished, was a pioneer effort. It is not clear why he did not continue this trade in later years, but the rising population of the Los Angeles area, and the seemingly insatiable appetite of its inhabitants for alcoholic beverages are reasonable explanations. Add to these the fact that Vignes' dry wines, Angelica and brandy were generally recognized as the finest of the growing local product and that many affluent Angelinos were acquiring a taste for these products with some age on them. Historian Irving McKee estimated that wine production in and around Los Angeles more than doubled between 1840 and 1850 to almost 60,000 gallons. We have no firm statistics for these years but it is probable that at least half of this production came from the cellars at El Aliso.⁴⁶

There is one "first" credited to Vignes that has a shroud of mystery about it. There is but one primary source to support the truth of this event, apparently written down by William Heath Davis about a half century after the fact. It is something noticed by no other contemporaneous visitor to or commentator on California. But it is certainly an event that should have had some kind of noticeable consequence. If there were ever an outcome, none apparently was ever recorded. Davis wrote about his meeting Don Luis on the bark "Louisa" that brought them to California, "from Boston, touching at Honolulu and Sitka." This could not be accurate. Vignes actually came to California from Hawaii in 1831 after several years there. It is obvious that Davis's memory was confused. He then wrote, "At that early date he imported cuttings of different varieties of grapes, in small quantities, which were put up with great care and sent from France to Boston; thence they came out in the vessels trading on this coast, to be experimented with in wine producing [emphasis added]."⁴⁷

A conversation on this subject between the two is unlikely in any of the years Davis recalled their meeting, except 1852. And in that year there was

much talk in the California air about importing first class wine grapes from France to the Golden State. In fact this is the year of the first documented importation of such grapes from France, to a San José nurseryman, Antoine Delmas. Thomas Pinney has wondered what success Vignes might have had with such vines, or if they ever entered importantly into the wine he made. That Vignes' wines seemed to stand above the others of Los Angeles suggests that he might have had better varieties.⁴⁸ But why was there never any mention in the press of such an important event when newspapers in the 1850s north and south were full of the possibilities of successful winegrowing?

I find Davis's garbled account of this importation to be very weak evidence, particularly in light of the total lack of supporting contemporary evidence. When the Sainsevain brothers bought out their uncle in 1855 the success of El Aliso actually accelerated. The coverage of their operation in the press was extensive, with a heavy emphasis on the historical contributions of their uncle. Yet one searches in vain for any mention in the 1850s of an earlier importation of French vines. Davis's biographer has found no need even to comment on this mysterious recollection from 1889. I cannot accept this famous first as anything resembling a historical fact.⁴⁹

Perfectly secure, however, is Jean Louis Vignes' place in California wine history, whether or not he imported vines from France at an early date. He developed the first vineyard of commercial importance in what would become the center of California's infant wine industry. He demonstrated that southern California wine could be sold at the north for a profit. He was a pioneer in making winegrowing and wine production a real business. That business became further developed in the hands of his nephews and led the state in wine production by the end of the 1850s. And by all reports in the 1840s he was making the finest wines and brandies in the province. He was a beloved community leader, generous, sagacious and caring.⁵⁰

The writers who have suggested that Vignes is the father of California's wine industry have put forth a deserving nominee. But the life and work of Charles Kohler in the 1850s and 1860s later led all who had lived during the formative years of California's wine industry to name him, in the 1880s and 1890s, the father of that industry. I accept this view but think that Vignes is also a leading candidate for the title.⁵¹

William Wolfskill

Ruth Teiser's hero number two in the early Los Angeles viticultural drama was William Wolfskill, a frontiersman from Kentucky who came to California in 1831, as did Vignes, after nine

years of trapping and trading in New Mexico. He led a party, which included George C. Yount, to the Los Angeles area where he and Yount joined forces with Richard Laughlin and Nathaniel Pryor, who arrived there in 1828. Their goal was to take sea otters along the coast and they engaged Joseph Chapman to build their boat. I doubt if it is pure chance that all five of these men were among California's pioneer American-born vineyardists.⁵²

Wolfskill soon settled down in Los Angeles and made good money as a carpenter, enough by 1833 to buy a small plot of *pueblo* land containing a little vineyard planted earlier by Máximo Valenzuela. In 1836 he acquired an adjoining lot and expanded his vineyard. In 1838 he traded these pieces of land in downtown for a hundred acres on the southeast outskirts of the *pueblo*, which had already been planted to a small vineyard and a larger orchard.⁵³ From this year on, according to H. H. Bancroft, Wolfskill devoted himself "wholly to the vineyards which were to make him rich and famous." Later in his giant history of California, Bancroft wrote that Wolfskill and Vignes "may be regarded as the pioneers of California's greatest industry, the production of wine and fruit [emphasis added]."⁵⁴ This is a more accurate generalization since it takes the California orange into account.

Most historians of California agriculture consider Wolfskill the pioneer of the orange in the post-mission era. For large-scale production he does earn the palm. But Vignes was first, by seven years. In 1834 he transplanted thirty-five orange trees from Mission San Gabriel to El Aliso and was soon making money from them. His friend's financial success in this undertaking moved Wolfskill in 1841 to plant a nursery of young trees on two acres next to the new, large, and luxuriously furnished home on his estate. Within a few years he had 28 acres in oranges and probably was earning more money from them than he did from his wine. He eventually had seventy acres in oranges and a large spread of lemons.⁵⁵

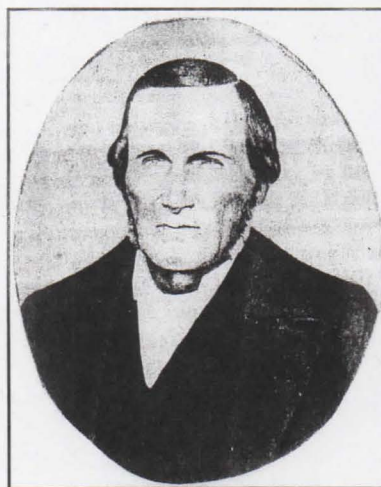
The same year that Wolfskill acquired the land for his estate a young man rode into the *pueblo* from New Mexico. This was John Wolfskill, his younger brother, whom he had not seen for ten years. John went to work on his brother's estate and became, in the words of William's biographer, "an ardent agriculturist." He also worked in town at the saloon and billiard parlor William had acquired in 1836.⁵⁶

John's desire to acquire a sizable rancho could not be fulfilled in the Los Angeles area. But there was still plenty of good land to the north where Mariano Vallejo was eager to extend grants to the right persons. But when John arrived in Sonoma the comandante made it clear that the young man could not receive a grant since he had not been naturalized.

But, in fact, William had been, in New Mexico. So with the help and advice of George Yount and Jacob Leese, who knew well the ins and outs of the land grant game, the brothers put together a plan to get John a rancho. The brothers scouted out the unoccupied land north of San Francisco Bay and decided to apply for a four-league (17,000 acres) stretch astride today's Putah Creek, which flows east out of the foothills into the Sacramento Valley, and right through today's campus of the University of California at Davis. The 1842 petition for the grant was written by Leese in William's name and for authorization was then taken to Sonoma by Thomas O. Larkin, soon to be the American consul at Monterey. He sent the signed papers to John who presented them to Governor Alvarado who signed the grant to William, "for his benefit and that of his family." It would be called Rancho Rio de los Potos. John, of course, would be the family member who would benefit most from the grant.⁵⁷

John stayed the summer of 1842 with George Yount, working on his Napa ranch. He then settled on his own rancho land and in January 1843 planted corn and beans and set out a small vineyard.⁵⁸ The years that followed were complicated for the Wolfskills by the commotion associated with the American Conquest in 1846 and the subsequent disorder in land titles. When the dust had partially settled in 1849, the brothers did what they had privately agreed on in 1841. William formally deeded to John all of the great rancho south of Putah Creek. Over the years John Wolfskill became one of the most successful ranchers in the Sacramento Valley and held most of his portion of the old rancho together to pass on to his heirs in 1897. His little vineyard was expanded to about forty-five acres in the 1850s and he built a winery whose production reached 30,000 gallons in 1854. Actually, he probably made more

money selling fresh grapes in the Bay Area during these early years. Depending on how one draws the boundaries of California's gigantic Central Valley, the little vineyard on Putah Creek is arguably the first such planted in that great valley.⁵⁹ Meanwhile William steadily expanded his vineyards and orchard



William Wolfskill [1798-1866]

during the almost unbelievable political chaos and economic volatility that marked life in southern California during the 1840s. By the time the province officially became part of the United States in 1848 Wolfskill was producing nearly 50,000 gallons of wine and copious amounts of brandy. We get a good picture of how he had progressed from the words of Edwin Bryant, who visited California during the war and whose book on the trip [*What I Saw in California*], according to Bancroft, "is a standard authority on events of '46-7."

The quantity of wines and *aguardiente* produced by the vineyards and distilleries at and near Los Angeles, must be considerable—basing my estimate upon the statement of Mr. Wolfskill. . . whose house and vineyard I visited. Mr. W.'s vineyard is young, and covers about forty acres of ground, the number of vines being 4,000 or 5,000. [Either the printer or Bryant has lost a zero here.] From the produce of these, he told me, that last year he made 180 casks of wine, and the same quantity of *aguardiente*. . . Mr. W.'s vineyard is doubtless a model of its kind. It was a delightful recreation to stroll through it, and many tropical fruit-trees bordering the walks. His house, too, exhibited an air of cleanliness and comfort, and a convenience of arrangement not often met with in this country. He set out for our refreshment three or four specimens of his wines, some of which would compare favorably with the best French and Madeira wines. The *aguardiente* and peach-brandy, which we tasted, of his manufacture, being mellowed by age, were of excellent flavor.⁶⁰

We shall return to the vinous and viticultural adventures of Vignes, Sainsevain and Wolfskill in the 1850s, when their production was expanded and diversified. We shall see also the number of serious commercial producers grow, from the ranks of native Californios and from other newcomers.

[continued next issue]

NOTES



Please refer to the Notes in previous installments, Vol.20 #2 & #3, for complete citations to the sources.

1. Bancroft, *History*, II, 110; Bowman, *Wine Review*, April 1943, 24; May 1943, 10.
2. Land Commission Case No. 403, 26-27, cited by Robert Glass Cleland, *The Cattle on a Thousand Hills*, San Marino, 2005, 12-18; W. W. Robinson, *Land in California*, Berkeley, 1979, 47-48; Bancroft, *History*, I, 661-662; II, 185.
3. See Pinney, 243, 280. I agree with him that these claims

- have "some plausible appearance of truth."
4. Bancroft, *History*, II, 111.
5. Peninou and Greenleaf, 22; Teiser and Harroun, 16, 23.
6. Bancroft, *History*, II, 350, 558-559.
7. Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, *A Voyage to California, the Sandwich Islands, & Around the World in the Years 1826-1829*, Berkeley, 1999, 144-148.
8. "The Journals of Harrison G. Rogers," Document No.AJ-116, Wisconsin Historical Society Digital Library and Archives, internet, 198-200, 203, 216; Leggett, 13.
9. Bancroft, *History*, I, 715-725; II, 132-137.
10. Bancroft, *History*, II, 605; V, 738; Charles L. Sullivan, *Like Modern Edens*, Cupertino, 1982, 4-7; Erwin Gudde, *California Place Names*, Berkeley, 1998, 379.
11. Bancroft, *History*, 602-603; Duhaut-Cilly, 130.
12. Robinson, *Land*, 33-40; Irving McKee, "Early California Wine Growers," *California—Magazine of the Pacific*, citing Archives of California, Provincial State Papers, XI, 67; Bancroft, *History*, II, 545, 574-575, 612-614.
13. Teiser and Harroun, 8-9.
14. Robinson, *Land*, 46-58; Cleland, *Cattle*, 7-18.
15. Robinson, *Land*, 56-57; Bowman, *Wine Review*, May 1943, 26, 33; June 1943, 8-9.
16. Bancroft, *History*, II, 609, 614; Bowman, *Wine Review*, July 1943, 9.
17. Bancroft, *History*, II, 594-595.
18. The Library of Congress has placed online a huge collection of these eyewitness accounts, "California As I Saw It, first person narratives of California's early years...." The full text can be read from 190 such printed recollections. They can also be searched by keywords, e.g. "rancho vineyards."
19. The large number of padres from Catalonia at the California missions should not suggest that they might welcome the end of Spanish rule. The spirit of autonomy that dominates the political life in Catalonia today was rare in these early years.
20. Bean, 62-68; Caughey, *California*, 192-194.
21. Bowman uses today's counties for geographical location. But in several cases, usually because of the large size of some grants, I have used other means to place ranchos on today's map.
22. Except where additional notes are added, all vineyard data here are taken from Bowman, *Wine Review*, May 1943, 26, 33; June 1943, 8-9.
23. Peninou and Greenleaf, 14, 43.
24. Not to be confused with the northern valley of that name, known today more often as Silicon Valley.
25. Maynard Geiger, *Mission Santa Barbara, 1782-1965*, Santa Barbara 1965, 54, 123-125, 138.
26. Duhaut-Cilly, 77-78; Geiger, *Mission Santa Barbara*, 95-101.
27. Peninou and Greenleaf, 45; Bancroft, *History*, II, 116-117.
28. Bancroft, *History*, IV, 715-716; Teiser and Harroun, 29; cf. Pinney, 320.

29. Bancroft, *History*, IV, 733; Teiser and Harroun, 10.
30. Edwin Bryant, *What I Saw in California*, Lincoln, NE, 1985, 302-303; Pinney, 259; Bancroft, *History*, IV, 730-731.
31. Irving McKee, "Historic Sonoma County Winegrowers." *California Magazine of the Pacific*, September 1955, 2.
32. Teiser and Harroun, 10, 27-28; Bancroft, *History*, V, 757-758.
33. Bancroft, *History*, V, 759; McKee, "Historic Sonoma County Winegrowers," 2; Ernest Peninou, *History of the Sonoma Viticultural District*, Santa Rosa, 1998, 50. Vallejo's position, with the word "General" attached, later led to his being called General Vallejo. But he had never attained the military rank of a general.
34. Sullivan, *Napa Wine*, 12-19.
35. Pinney, 245; Teiser and Harroun, 17; Bancroft, *History*, IV, 708-709.
36. Rhoades, 20-24, 158-179. These maps do not include land held inside the Los Angeles *pueblo* by vineyardists. Her thesis was reprinted in 1971 by R & E Research Associates, San Francisco.
37. Alexander Forbes, *California: A History of Upper and Lower California ... comprising an account of the climate, soil, natural productions, agriculture...*, London, 1839, 172-173, 264. Those who have argued against the importance of this latitudinal relationship, noting that the Carolinas are in a similar latitude, do not take into account the huge difference in climates between west and east coasts, in both the northern and southern hemispheres. The east coasts of our continents do not have Mediterranean climates.
38. Teiser & Harroun, 17; Bancroft, *History*, V, 729, 763.
39. Vignes left behind a wife and four children. His wife died in 1843. In 1851 he legally acknowledged the obligations of his estate to the children by granting them each \$3000. *Racouillat v. Sansevain* [sic], April 1867 in Supreme Court of the State of California, Rept of Cases, Jan. Term, 1867, Vol.32, San Francisco, 1906, 376-397.
40. Lèonce Jore, "Jean Louis Vignes of Bordeaux, Pioneer of California Viticulture," *Southern California Historical Quarterly*, XLV (December 1963), 289-303.
41. Teiser and Harroun, 17; Irving McKee, "Jean Louis Vignes," *Wine Review*, July and September 1948, Wine Institute reprint.
42. Bancroft, *History*, II, 317-318, 706; V, 762-763; Pinney, 246-247.
43. Pinney, 246.
44. William Heath Davis, *Sixty Years in California*, San Francisco, 1889, 168-172. Davis was preparing to update this book when many of his notes and manuscript pages were lost in the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. He died in 1909 at the age of eighty-seven, but it was twenty years until the next edition was published, *Seventy-Five Years in California*, San Francisco, 1929. It is more than two hundred pages shorter than the 1889 edition, but virtually all material on Vignes was kept.
45. Davis, *Sixty Years*, 168-169; *Seventy-Five Years*, 120-122; Bancroft, *History*, IV, 298-322.
46. McKee, "Jean Louis Vignes"; Pinney, 247-248.
47. Davis, *Sixty Years*, 169; *Seventy-Five Years*, 120-121.
48. Pinney, 246-247.
49. Andrew F. Rolle, *An American in California: The Biography of William Heath Davis, 1822-1909*, San Marino, 1956. Professor Rolle's meticulous biography of Davis derives from his doctoral dissertation at UCLA under John Walton Caughey. It is supported mostly by the tremendous collection of Davis materials which gives Rolle a solid foundation to cover the key years which Davis glanced over in his autobiographical work. The most important of these sources are housed at the California State Library, the Bancroft Library, the Huntington Library and the UCLA library. At no place in Rolle's work or in any of the material he cites is there any mention of Vignes' vineyard or winery, nor of Davis's relationship to the Frenchman or his importation of European vines. Davis wrote his book in the 1880s when the California wine industry was experiencing its first great boom years. At that time the California press was full of claims and counterclaims on who first introduced what important wine grape varieties. He also wrote after a long period in which, in Rolle's words, "His early power of concentration...had begun to deteriorate." Rolle also noted Davis's "tendency to exaggerate." There is no question that Davis's book is a wonderful source of information on events in which he was personally involved. But until some contemporary mention appears from the 1840s or 1850s concerning this much cited importation, I must conclude that Davis has at best mis-remembered or confused something that he may have heard thirty or forty years earlier.
50. For examples of his community service and charity, see Paul Bryan Fray, "Francisco P. Ramirez," *California History*, 34:2 (Winter 2006-2007), 20-24, 70.
51. H. H. Bancroft wrote: "the wine manufacture of California today is a monument to the wisdom, the enterprise, and the industry of Charles Kohler." Charles Wetmore praised Kohler in his obituary as "the pioneer and founder of the present wine trade in California." *Pacific Wine & Spirit Review (San Francisco Merchant)*, April 29, 1887; *Wine Spectator*, January 1981; Sullivan, *Companion*, 171-173; Bancroft, *History*, VII, 48-49, 101.
52. Iris Higbie Wilson, *William Wolfskill, 1798-1866*, Glendale, 1965, 64-65, 73-74, 77-80, 82-84; Bancroft, *History*, IV, 708-709, 785; Teiser and Harroun, 17, Pinney, 245.
53. Wilson, 87; *San Francisco Daily Alta California*, 10/12/1866, hereinafter cited as *Alta California*.
54. Bancroft, *History*, V, 779.
55. J. Eliot Coit, *Citrus Fruit*, New York, 1917, 2-3; Ebeling, 353-354.
56. Wilson, 92-93, 115.

IN THE WINE LIBRARY

by *Bob Foster*



Wine Myths and Reality by Benjamin Lewin, MW. Dover, England: Vendange Press, 2010. Distributed by Wine Appreciation Guild. 636 pp. Hardback. \$50.

"topics that have seldom, if ever, been in print"

This is a fascinating book. The author, one of the 300 or so Masters of Wine in the world, has written what may be the ultimate exposé about everything wine. He carefully sets forth the conventional wisdom about growing grapes, making wine, selling wine, and the various major wine-producing areas of the world. He then proceeds to discuss the reality behind the "myths" exposing topics that have seldom, if ever, been in print.

For example, in dealing with the famous producers of Bordeaux, he points out that in many instances all that remains from the 1800s is little more than the name. Over the years the actual plots of land have changed and what constituted the châteaux long ago may be quite different from today's acreage. The records are vague and the châteaux will not publicly discuss the issue. Similarly, the composition of a producer's second label is also often hidden. In some instances it may be made from barrels not good enough for the primary wine; in other instances it may be from younger vines or from vines in other plots of land. The consumer has no clear indication of the source of this juice.

The author gives his take on the major wine critics and publications of our era: Robert Parker and the *Wine Spectator*. He notes that for years Parker has had a clear preference for wines that are dark colored, full bodied, with obvious fruits and often high in alcohol. But as he quotes from an early issue of the *Wine Advocate* where Parker once stated, "The better Bordeaux are elegant, delicate wines that possess incredible subtlety and complexity whereas the best California Cabernets are massive, powerful, assertive wines bordering on coarseness." As Lewin notes, "It is not easy to relate these early views to the wine reviews of the past decade." Lest anyone thinks he singles out Parker, he has similarly sharp comments about the *Wine Spectator*, particularly for their selection of Guigal's 1999 Châteauneuf-du-Pape as the Wine of the Year. He found the wine well-crafted but middle-of-the-road at best, casting doubt upon the entire enterprise of picking a wine of the year.

He breaks new ground in his discussion of the flavor-enhancer Mega-Purple. This is a product most winemakers I have talked to will only speak about off-the-record and not for attribution. Mega-Purple (and other similar products) is an extract made from the Rubired grape, a grape developed by Professor Harold Olmo at UC Davis in 1958 from some of the darkest, most intense varieties that exist. It is so widely planted that it is almost 5% of the total crush in California. Commonly added to red wine to give it a bit more color, a bit more sugar, it can also cover vegetal notes and even hints of brettanomyces. A winery, rather than blending in other wine to improve a product, can just go to the chemical supply house and obtain a dose of Mega-Purple. Lewin laments the lack of wine making and the advent of such shortcuts. He adds that large amounts of this extract are made by a subsidiary of Constellation Wines at their plant in Madera, California. In the 19th century, elderberries were used to enhance red wines. For this era, it is Mega-Purple.

The author covers each of the major wine producing areas of the world giving an overview of the current state of affairs and debunking many of the myths carefully cultivated by numerous press agents. For example, in discussing the wines of Rioja, he notes the change in style from closed wines with strong acid that would withstand long aging, to wines that offer supple, forward black fruits. They are now more lush than acidic, with that modern international style, and the author asks if they are really Rioja. Too many of the wines are indistinguishable from international Cabernets or Syrahs.

The book is meticulously detailed with well-delineated footnotes and a supportive index. Additionally, there are numerous charts, graphs, photographs, and maps.

This is a huge work covering many topics. Certainly many of the areas under discussion are well-known, but Lewin's approach and insight are refreshing and unique. This work is expensive but worth every penny to the wine lover seeking the "real story." Very highly recommended.

*"an intense, interesting personal statement
of beliefs and purpose"*

Reading Between the Wines by Terry Theise. Berkeley: UC Press, 2010. 189 pp. Hardback. \$24.95.

Terry Theise is one of the best-known wine importers in America. His portfolio, with its emphasis on German wines, is well known to most wine lovers. In this book he outlines his highly opinionated views about how wine can move us and why wine is important.

His emphasis is on small producers whose wines

speak of the place where they are grown. He clearly does not find much value in wines that are indistinguishable as to their source. It is impossible, in some instances, to distinguish a wine from Italy from one from the U.S. "I'd rather drink something that tastes like something and not like everything. Anything can taste like everything—and too often it does, and it bores the crap out of me."

He is no fan of the 100 point system used by so many wine publications. He finds that the system implies a scientific precision in a clearly subjective area. He also notes that even with wines made by the gigantic producers, each bottle is continually changing. A numerical score is only a snapshot of how that wine tasted on a particular day to a particular palate.

Assigning points to subjective matters can lead to absurd results. He gives Molly Bloom's soliloquy a 94 and the death of Ben Gant a 99. As Theise writes, tongue in cheek, "But eventually I came to realize that all pleasure was in effect a commodity, and I owed it to myself to quantify the little suckers."

Theise expounds on his beliefs as to why wine matters and why he often finds the greatest value in the wines of small artisan producers, often from Germany. An intense, interesting personal statement of beliefs and purpose. If it only had an index. Highly recommended.

[We thank Bob once again for permission to reprint his *California Grapevine* (August-September 2010 issue) book reviews. For a subscription to, or a sample issue of, this worthy periodical, see their website www.calgrapevine.com. — Ed.]



"CORNERS BUMPED & WORN: WITH SOME FOXING, AS USUAL"

by Ruth Walker



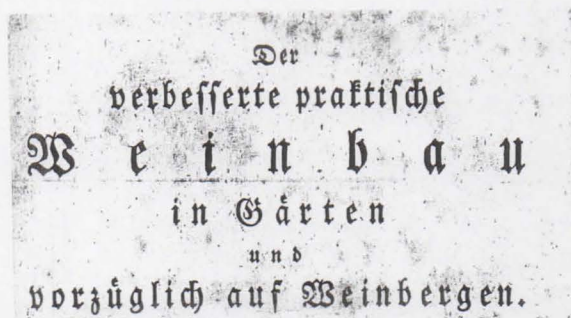
Our Editor has asked me to address a not-so-welcome, but familiar to all of us, condition in some of our older books: foxing. The entry in John Carter's *ABC for Book Collectors*—the highly informative, long established, and indispensable reference book on all aspects of book collecting—reads: "FOXED, FOXING of paper: discoloured, stained, usually with brownish-yellow spots. E.g. 'Edges foxed as usual,' 'plates foxed,' 'a fine copy except for some foxing.' Foxing is due to the chemical reaction of a micro-organism on paper which has been badly bleached or insufficiently sized in manufacture, usually caused by damp or lack of ventilation. Some authorities derive the term (first noted in 1848) from the colour of the spots: most are silent on its origin." We take one other note from an earlier source, *Notes on the Causes*

and *Prevention of Foxing in Books* by the Huntington Library's Thomas Iiams and T.D. Beckwith: "Not infrequently on old paper, less commonly on modern stocks, one finds a dull rusty patch discolored the page in annoying fashion. This is due to 'foxing,' the term going back to the rusty red of Reynard the Fox..." The authors continue: "In general, foxing occurs first along the outside border of a book and gradually spreads inward. This is possibly explained by the fact that moisture-laden air is more likely to penetrate the outside borders (top, bottom and front) of a closed book than deeper into the volume. There are, of course, exceptions to the general rule. One occasionally finds foxing on the printed surface of a page and not at all on the margins. In such cases, the moisture, and possibly a nutrient substance, may have been left by the ink, or the platen of the press, at the time the impression was made. Very often endpapers are foxed, while the rest of the volume is unaffected; the necessary moisture was supplied by the paste. And, more frequently than not, the paper is of a different quality than that found in the rest of the book."

Removal of foxed spots on paper? This can be an even greater problem and risk, and one that should be carefully appraised and handled by an expert in paper restoration and conservation. Often it is judged better to leave the foxy spots rather than treat the already none-too-stable paper.

For our home libraries, we have previously discussed creating the best atmosphere for the proper care of our books: paper-infesting fungi will not germinate where the relative humidity is less than 75%. In a bookcase, high humidity can be fatal. Give your books and bookshelves a location out of the sunlight, with a pleasant temperature, and good circulation. ■

[Ruth Walker's Fine Book Restoration Studio is located in historic old-town Petaluma, in Sonoma County wine country. Contact her for any of your restoration, conservation, or binding needs—she is heartily recommended. walker@svn.net — Ed.]



Foxing of the title page: J.S. Kecht, 1823



BOOKS & BOTTLES

by

Fred McMillin

SMELLING and TASTING REVISITED

The Book: *Smelling and Tasting (Senses and Sensors)* by Dr. Alvin Silverstein, Virginia Silverstein, Laura Silverstein Nunn. Twenty-First Century Books / Millbrook Press, 2002. 64 pp. \$12.95.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: In this Books & Bottles column, Fred brings us another challenging quiz that provides us with highlights from *Smelling and Tasting*, which we visited originally some six years ago. Remember, in each set, one statement is false. Also, we sip a taste of the subject from the Internet.]

SET I

a) Likes and dislikes of tastes in humans are inherited. Thus, you were born to dislike the taste of spinach, but Popeye wasn't.

b) In the mouth, each taste bud responds mostly to only one of the four primary tastes: salty, sour, sweet, and bitter.

c) It looks like there is a fifth type of bud that is sensitive to the "meaty" flavors found in monosodium glutamate, some cheeses, and of course, meat.

d) Your buds are being replaced regularly, with an average life of about ten months.

WHICH IS FALSE?

d) Your taste buds have an average life of about ten days.

SET II

a) Who's the most sensitive taster on the planet? With 50 times more taste sensors than man, it's the catfish, with 175,000.

b) The poorest taster? Chickens are not finicky with only 24 taste receptors, but snakes have even fewer.

c) As to smelling, the champion of the sea is the shark, with about 70% of its brain devoted to scent recognition. It can smell a fish for supper 1/4-mile away.

d) On land, it's the dog, with typically 170 thousand more receptors in its nose than in the human sniffer.

WHICH IS FALSE?

d) The dog typically has 170 million more receptors in its nose.

And, there's much more. *Smelling and Tasting* is written for the young reader, but the marvelous illustrations and clarity of writing make it a required read for anyone who wants to increase their understanding and appreciation of what they are experiencing.

TASTES and SMELLS from the INTERNET

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/2880471.stm>

SET III

a) U.S. research has shown that around 35% of men are super-tasters, compared with just 15% of women.

b) People with more taste buds are more likely to become professional chefs or wine tasters.

c) Those people with too few taste buds may not be able to tell the difference between cheap plonk wine and fine wines.

d) The U.S. research, led by Yale University Professor Linda Bartoshuk, suggested around a quarter of the population are non-tasters, 50% are tasters, and the remaining 25% are super-tasters.

WHICH IS FALSE?

a) Around 35% of women are super-tasters as compared to 15% of men.

The Bottles: From our book, we learned that people inherit likes and dislikes of tastes. In my wine appreciation classes this is obvious: no matter how glorious the wine smells and tastes to me, about 15% dislike it. However, occasionally we encounter a bottle that everyone finds good or great. Here are seven California wines that pleased everyone's smell and taste.

- Merlot: Tre Cellars, California, 2007, \$10
- Petite Sirah: Napa Ridge Winery, Napa Valley, 2007, \$12
- Chardonnay: Jekel Vineyards, Monterey Co., 2008, \$13
- Syrah: Peju Province Winery, Napa Valley, 2006, \$32
- Syrah: Cake Bread Cellars, Napa Valley, 2007, \$50
- Cabernet Sauvignon: Corison Winery, Napa Valley, 2005, \$70
- Lake William Blend: Jarvis Wines, Napa Valley, 2004, \$75

[Our indefatigable wineman, who has not missed a "Books & Bottles" column in our 20-year run, has been studying, lecturing, and writing about wine and its literature for longer than some of us number in years. Saluté, Mr McMillin, and thank you! — ED.]

Pulled from the Bookshelf
by Gail Unzelman

[As many Tendrils know, your Editor has had an avid interest in wine and its printed material for some four decades...since those first days of frequenting the San Francisco wine shop Draper & Esquin, with its welcoming case of books on wine at the head of the stairs leading to the underground wine cellar. — Ed.]

**BLACK
JACKS &
LEATHER
BOTTELS**

Being Some Account
of Leather Drinking
Vessels in England and
... of other Ancient Vessels
by Oliver Baker



One fine summer day, while browsing the bookcase for some reason not remembered, *Black Jacks & Leather Bottels* (on the bottom shelf reserved for tall books), caught my attention. This book—with its manly size and rough-woven linen brown cloth binding, with the title and Coat of Arms of the Bottle-Makers and Horners Guild boldly stamped in gilt—presents a perfect package for the story of these coarse leather drinking vessels of old. The hefty paper receives the type and illustrations crisply, while the title page is striking in red and black inks. The frontispiece is a colorful painting of a “Heraldic Jack of the Oxford Joiners’ Guild” (Plate 1 of 24); seventy-two black & white illustrations adorn the text throughout, many drawn by the author. Baker’s masterly tome was “Privately Printed for W. J. Fieldhouse, Esq., C.B.E., J.P., Austy Manor, near Stratford-on-Avon, by Ed. J. Burrow & Co., Ltd., London” and dedicated to Fieldhouse, “to whose enthusiasm and generosity it owes its publication.” The Foreword, signed by Baker with his upright artistically drawn signature, is dated January 1921; no other publication date is provided. The exact number printed is not specified, but copies signed by Baker and bearing numbers in the 400s are known. The book has always been scarce.

Oliver Baker and William Fieldhouse

The British author Oliver Baker (1856–1939) and his generous friend and supporter Sir William Fieldhouse (1858–1928) prove to be equally interesting. Baker was a renowned artist and student of antiquities. Excelling as a painter, etcher, and designer of silver pieces, his work was exhibited at the Royal Academy and the Royal Society of British Artists. (Proudly stated on the title page is his membership in the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers,

the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, and Royal Society of Cambrian Academicians.) Much of his silver work was produced for Liberty & Co., the most fashionable and prestigious place to shop in London. The store was founded in 1875 by Arthur Liberty, whose passion for hand-crafted work led to strong relationships with many leading English designers, and became instrumental in the development of the Arts & Crafts and Art Nouveau movements.

The talented, scholarly Baker also took up the study and collecting of ancient leather drinking vessels. “I found it,” he states in his Foreword, “a delightful hobby to hunt these forgotten vessels in their ancient lurking places, where sometimes their existence was unknown even to their owners.”

A proper subject for a book, he thought. But publishers found it “an uninteresting subject, and I had collected such a number of drawings and photographs that the cost of such a book was a serious problem. The question of its publication has, therefore, hung fire for a long time....”

In 1906 a well-known Stratford-on-Avon Elizabethan scholar contemplated publishing the book, but first “induced [Baker] to cut down some of the most important chapters into a series of articles for the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, of which he was the Editor.” To Baker’s dismay, the articles were printed “anonymous,” and had since been copied by other writers without acknowledgment. “I am unwilling that facts which cost me much time and labour to unearth should be supposed to have been borrowed from this source without effort.”

Sir William John Fieldhouse, of Austy Manor in the heart of Shakespeare country, Warwickshire, was a fellow collector of old leathern bottels. Baker joyously described this collection as “undoubtedly the best in existence ... with many of the finest examples ... and some of the most curious.” It was the generosity of this English nobleman who saw Baker’s work put into print, in fine fashion we might add.

Black Jacks

Corpulent and capacious” the Black Jack was a “kind of leathern pitcher or jug lined with pitch or metal, and of massive and sturdy build. ... This bulkier relative to the leather bottle remains associated with old seats of learning, with the castles of noblemen, and ancient manor-houses.” Baker traces its history—“not known as black jacks till the 16th century”—from the Norman Conquest, through monasteries, colleges, hospitals, schools, guilds, & more, all interestingly illustrated with his drawings or with photographs.

“The Black Jack in its palmy days, before it had been displaced from a time-honoured position by more fragile ware, had numerous admirers, and many are

the flattering allusions to it in the literature of the 16th and 17th centuries." The following ballad recalls the "glories of the good old times."

*Blacke-jackes to every man
Were filled with Wine and Beere,
No Pewter Port nor Kanne
In those days did appeare;
Good cheere in a Nobleman's house
Was counted a semely shew
We wanted no Brawne nor Sowse
When this old Cap was new.*

*We tooke not such delight
In Cups of Silver fine;
None under the degree of a Knight
In Plate drunke Beere or Wine.
Now each Mechanicall man
Hath a Cup-Boorde of Plate for a show,
Which was a rare thing then
When this old Cap was new.*



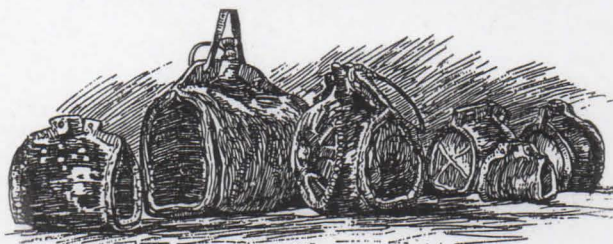
Leather Bottells

The wanderer through this island of ours," Baker begins his essay, "may sometimes encounter in castle, college, or manor-house, certain strange vessels—huge pitchers and corpulent bottles, of leather. So venerable are they, and their material so unlike any now in use, that one is apt to regard them as belonging to some foreign land, or to some far distant age. In reality they are peculiarly English, and have been a feature of English life down to almost modern times. ... It is probable that the manufacture of them had nearly ceased by the end of the 18th century; they were so durable, however, that people still living can remember seeing them used in the harvest field."

*A Leather Bottel is good
Far better than Glasses or Cans of Wood,
For when a man is at work in the Field,
Your Glasses and Pots, no comfort will yield;
Then a good Leather Bottel standing him by,
He may drink alwayes when he is dry,
It will revive the spirits and comfort the brain,
Wherefore let none this Bottel refrain.*

Baker's thorough history is immensely interesting, filled with quotes and ballads from the early literature, and the illustrations quite unique. This is a serious study, well-written, and an extremely lovely production. Although *Black Jacks & Leather Bottells* is deemed scarce, it is well worth the hunt. Cheers!

*Showing how Glasses and Pots are laid aside,
and Flaggons and Noggins they cannot abide,
And let all Wives do what they can,
'Tis for the praise and use of Man,
And this you may very well be sure,
The Leather Bottell will longest endure:
And I wish in Heaven his soul may dwell
That first devised the Leather Bottell.*



Black Jacks and Leather Bottells. Being Some Account of Leather Drinking Vessels in England and ...of Other Ancient Vessels by Oliver Baker. London: Privately Printed for W. J. Fieldhouse, Esq., by Ed. J. Burrow & Co., [1921]. 190 pp. 13 x 9½. Numbered copies signed by the author (edition not stated).



THE FIRST ENGLISH WINE WRITER?

Because wine encourages conversation, there must have been many comments written down about it since it was first made. Classical scholars can cite many instances of what the great writers of the past wrote about what they drank, but in England, for obvious reasons, not much is recorded. One, however, who did set down his love of wine was the Yorkshireman, Alcuin (c 735–804). He was librarian and master of the York schools until he was called by Emperor Charlemagne to go and teach at the Emperor's court. His writings, cited by Helen Waddell in her books *The Wandering Scholars* (1932) and *Mediaeval Latin Lyrics* (1929), indicate how, when he had to return to England, he missed French wines. To a friend he writes: "The wine is gone from our wineskins and bitter beer rageth in our bellies." His songs urging the cuckoo to return and revive Spring are certainly the wishes of anyone longing for easier, happier seasons. — *Curiosities of Wine*, Pamela Vandyke Price, 2002.