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THEODORE GIER AND THE THEO. GIER WINE CO.

by *Dean Walters* ©

AT THE YOUNG AGE OF TWENTY ONE, Theodore Gier was determined to pursue the wine trade in California. While his father Heinrich, a railroad official, left Germany with his family to practice his trade in South Africa, Theodore sailed to the U.S., arriving in 1881. He traveled first to Chicago, then San Francisco, and by the next year, south to the large German winegrowing community at Anaheim, near Los Angeles. Here he purchased his first vineyard, sold it within the year, and returned to the San Francisco Bay Area, where he settled in Oakland to begin a long and prosperous career that sadly concluded with notoriety and tragedy.



heodore Gier became one of the most successful wine men in pre-Prohibition California. He kept company with wine-trade luminaries such as Percy Morgan of the California Wine Association, Pietro Rossi and Andrea Sbarboro from Italian Swiss Colony, and Charles Wetmore and his brother Clarence. He circulated in the spheres of California's influential politicians, including governors James Gillett, Hiram Johnson, and George Pardee, connections which led to important appointments for Gier. Gier was one of the few pre-Prohibition California wine producers who was capable of remaining independent of the California Wine Association, incorporated in 1894.

The ever active Gier also engaged in pursuits outside the wine trade, although a few were in some way related. He was a bar & saloon owner, orchardist, banker, real estate developer, resort owner, and philanthropist. Arriving in Oakland in 1883, he launched his career when he established a grocery and wine & liquor business in partnership with another German expatriate and friend, Max Schultz. Max operated the grocery business, Gier ran the wine and liquor trade. Their partnership ended in 1890 when Gier became an independent wine and liquor merchant in Oakland.

He went on to expand his retail and wholesale wine & liquor operations in Oakland and into San Francisco. By 1909 the Theo. Gier Wine Co. had five

locations in Oakland, along with numerous wine-producing operations in Napa County and the Livermore Valley. He also ventured outside California: a September 1906 issue of the Daily Nevada State Journal reported that Gier had established a wholesale agency in Reno, just six months after the great earthquake and fire had destroyed his Battery Street operation in San Francisco. His interests in Reno reappeared in 1929 when he filed articles of incorporation, with the stated intent to "buy, sell and operate orchards, vineyards and wineries," most likely in anticipation of Prohibition's repeal.

Gier's nephew Henry arrived from Germany about 1900 to join his uncle in the wine business, rising to management level, and serving on the Theo. Gier Wine Company's board of directors. In 1909 Henry

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became a member of the board of directors for the newly incorporated California Vineyard Development Company, whose stated intent was to "purchase vineyards and plants, and to do business on a large scale." Theodore's interests were further represented in the

new corporation, and the same list of board members served both corporations.



THEODORE GIER, 1860-1931
— Greater Oakland, 1911

In 1904, Gier established a San Francisco retail and wholesale operation at 116 Battery Street, managed by one of his agents, Edward Gelderman. This location was short-lived, destroyed by the 1906 earthquake, and never rebuilt. However, his Oakland operations thrived and remained successful until Prohibition. His wines were sold throughout the U.S. and in a number of foreign markets. In 1904 the Theo.

Gier Wine Company was incorporated with a capitalization of \$100,000, and later in 1910 as the Theodore Gier Vineyard & Wine Company with a capitalization of two million dollars.

The Theo. Gier Wine Company also acted as an agent and represented other wine producers. According to their advertising flyer dated December 20, 1896, they were the "Sole Agent" for Schramsberger Wines of St. Helena and Ruby Hill Wines—Jno. Crellin & Sons and Chateau Bellevue—A. Duval, two wine firms in Livermore. The Pacific Wine & Spirit Review reported that Gier was still shipping Schramsberger wines from Oakland in June of 1906. Both Ruby Hill and Chateau Bellevue were located just to the east and southeast of Gier's vineyards near Pleasanton.

Gier was a great promoter whose prolific advertising hailed the virtues of his *Giersberger* and *Sequoia* brands. Signs and displays were created for retail wine and liquor shops. He produced many give-aways for loyal customers, such as beautiful calendars, corkscrews, match-safes, and sample bottles of wines. Ads appeared in the San Francisco area newspapers and in smaller publications, city directories, theater programs and flyers.

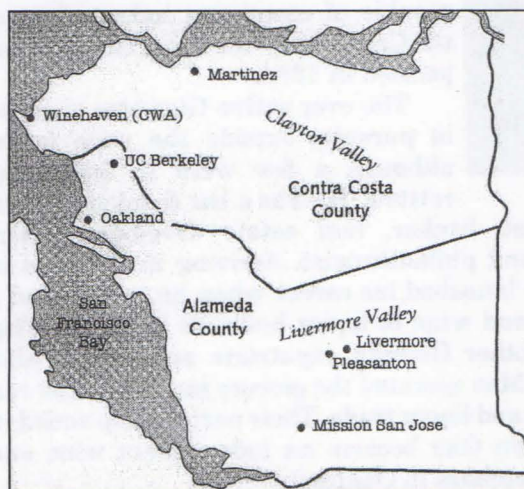
Gier featured his wines with elaborate displays at fairs and expositions throughout the U.S. and Europe. He not only served as chairman of the committees representing the wine producers of Alameda and Contra Costa counties at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, the 1905 Lewis & Clark Exposition in Portland, and the San Francisco Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915, but he also exhibited at them. Gier showed his wines at fairs in France, Belgium and Spain, and scored a gold medal and *Diplome d'Honneur* at the 1913 Exposition in Ghent, Belgium. His wines frequently received high honors at competitions, large and small; and his *Sequoia* & *Giersberger* wines could always be seen displayed at the annual St. Helena Vintage Festival in Napa Valley.

Winemaker in the Livermore Valley

In 1892, Gier bought his first northern California vineyard near Pleasanton in the Livermore Valley, establishing his *Giersberger* brand of wines. The Livermore Valley had long been recognized as fine vineyard land, and it was not far from Gier's home-base in Oakland. In the late 19th century some believed the Livermore Valley would become California's equivalent to Bordeaux. However, Gier wrote that his inspiration first evolved during a trip to the vineyards and wineries of Germany and Austria in 1892 to study their methods.

Gier purchased the former Dos Mesas Winery, some four miles south of the town of Livermore, from the Wetmore-Bowen Co. (Cresta Blanca Vineyards) in 1895. The property was located off Arroyo Road just to the south of Julius P. Smith's large Olivina Winery. Consisting of 213 acres with 140 in vineyards, it produced about 50,000 gallons of wine by 1898. The wines were labeled as Riesling, Johannnisberger, Hock, Traminer, Gutadel, Sauvignon Vert, Sauterne, Chateau Yquem, Claret, Zinfandel, Burgundy, Cabernet, Medoc Private Stock, Pommard, Chambertin, Port, Sherry, Angelica, Muscat, Malaga, Madiera, Tokay, etc. All the grape vines grown in this vineyard were reported to have been imported from France in 1892 by Charles Wetmore of Cresta Blanca (later Wetmore-Bowen Co.). But obviously, some wine varieties common to Germany had been planted.

Gier's ownership of the property was brief; in 1899 he sold it to Jerome Young, a capitalist in Stockton, California. Two years later Young sold it to two Stockton doctors, L.C. Cross and his brother Harry Cross. No tangible signs of Gier's presence at this winery exist today, although the ruins of the two-story winery building and tunnels, constructed by the Cross brothers in 1902, are still hidden on the hillside across the road to the west and above the current Wentz Vineyards.



ALAMEDA COUNTY and its prime Livermore Valley winegrowing area. — Adapted from Sullivan, *Companion to California Wine*.



Detail from a Theo. Gier Wine Co. 1897 postal cover (verso) illustrated with a Giersberger wine label facsimile showing a view of Gier's Livermore Valley vineyards & winery.

Following the sale of his Dos Mesas property, Gier directed his attention to his operation on Vineyard Avenue near Pleasanton. He had added to his holding when he purchased a neighboring 250-acre vineyard from Jason A. Rose in 1898. Gier sold some of the grapes grown in the old Rose vineyard to the Wetmore-Bowen Co. Rarely mentioning the town of Pleasanton, Gier referred to all of his Livermore Valley operations as his "Livermore" vineyards, or at times, their being near the "Arroyo del Valle," a river-wash cutting through the valley.

By 1907 Gier owned nearly 500 acres near Pleasanton, producing mainly Sauternes, Burgundies and Rieslings, which were labeled under the *Pride of Livermore* brand. Today, there is no visible evidence of Gier's old Pleasanton vineyards and winery property, located about a mile to the east of the town center, near where Bernal Avenue creates a jog in Vineyard Avenue. It has been extensively developed, known today as the Remen Tract.

Gier has been credited with being at least partially responsible for introducing Pinot Chardonnay to California, although he makes no claims of it in his public accounts. It may have been one of the "experimental" varieties in his vineyard, and it may have been already in the vineyard when Gier took ownership of the Dos Mesas property in 1895. No *Sequoia* nor *Giersberger* Chardonnay labels have surfaced, although it may have been bottled as "Chablis."

A 1903 edition of the *Pacific Wine & Spirit Review* offered another possible origin for the Chardonnay in Livermore Valley: it reported that the Wetmore-Bowen Co. imported 30,000 rooted grape vines from France, representing numerous, nearly all white, varieties on resistant stock. It is known that Gier purchased and planted a number of these in his

Pleasanton vineyards. Wente Vineyards, located not far north of the Dos Mesas winery, claims to have acquired Pinot Chardonnay cuttings from Gier around 1912.

Gier in Napa County

Gier's jewel in his viticultural crown was found not far outside the town of Napa, about six miles to the northwest in the foothills of Mt. Veeder, known to locals as the Napa Redwoods. Here Gier established his popular *Sequoia* brand of wines at the property he called Sequoia Vineyard. This site was first developed by Herman Hudemann in the 1860s, when it became known as the *Sprout Farm*, and later as the *Lotus Farm*, a reference to the Egyptian lotuses Hudemann grew in his man-made lake. He was the first to plant a vineyard here, and later built a small winery and a resort. Eventually, Hudemann found himself in bankruptcy, and in 1882 the *Lotus Farm* fell into receivership. Vintner Rudolph Jordan purchased the property soon after. Jordan had worked nearby at Nicholas Streich's Castle Rock Winery, where he had become well known as a winemaker. In 1900, Jordan sold this lovely hillside property to Gier, including a winery, vineyards and the resort.

When Gier arrived in the Napa Redwoods, he found himself in the past and present company of others in the wine trade: Stalham Wing (credited with being the earliest winemaker on Mt. Veeder in the 1860s), John Henry Fisher (currently Mayacamas), Nicholas & Ernest Streich of Castle Rock, August Benkiser, the Bauer Estate, John Brandlein, and a few others, who operated relatively small vineyards. Exceptions were Streich with nearly 200 acres, and Bauer with close to 60.

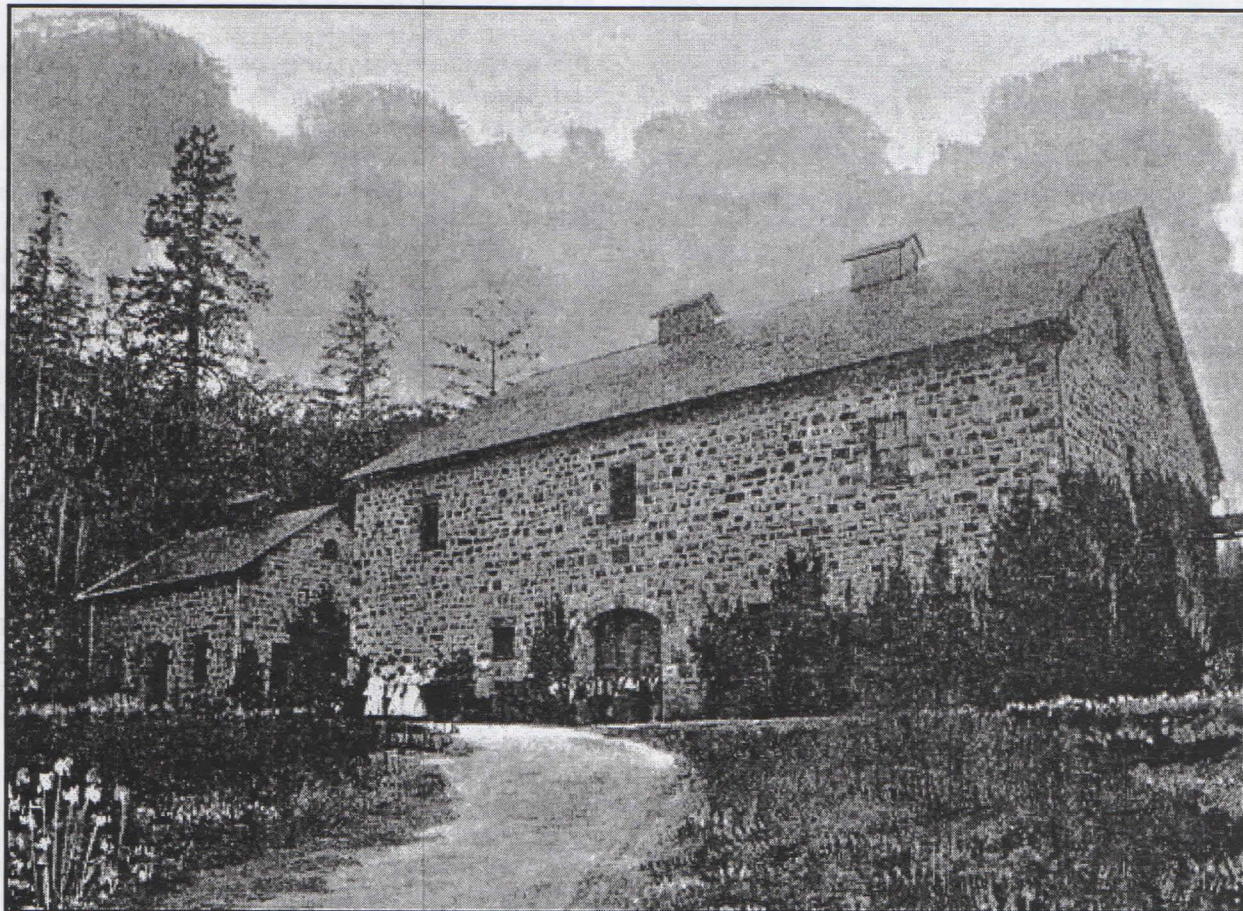
Gier made substantial improvements to the property. By 1903 he had completed a fine three-story winery and distillery from stone quarried nearby; his winery operation became the largest on Mt. Veeder, with approximately 200 acres in vines and a 200,000-gallon winery capacity. He also improved the long and winding Redwood Road that led from Napa to his Sequoia vineyards, creating easier access to the winery and resort. The 1914 journal of a visitor to Sequoia Vineyard recounts that during harvest Gier employed twenty men who were overseen by "Joe," a superintendent of French origin.

Gier's Sequoia Resort, adjacent to his winery, was advertised as "An ideal place for picnics and boarders, with the finest mountain spring water, lakes, boat riding, and dance hall." The public came to Gier's popular resort in the Napa Redwoods, and it remained his favorite place to entertain his friends, family and business associates. The get-away included a small hotel and cabins which could accommodate guests, where Gier was known to be a gracious host.

In the early 20th century, Gier extended his operations further into the Napa Valley. In partnership with C. Conradi of San Francisco, Gier bought the former John McPike place on Spring Mountain, above St. Helena, in 1903. Around the town of St. Helena, he purchased the Edge Hill Winery in 1909, and leased the Sutter Home winery. Three years earlier, in 1906, he had purchased the Bergfeld Winery, first planted in 1873 by William Peterson, and known today as Hall Wines. Gier improved the

since 1930, when Gier was forced to sell just three years before the repeal of Prohibition.

Gier owned or controlled approximately 1000 acres in the Livermore Valley and Napa County by 1909, and was growing 113 different varieties of grapes either for production or experimental purposes. Many of the grape varieties grown were outlined in Gier's own listing: "Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Verdot, Petit Sirah, Sauvignon, Semillon, Petit Bouchet, Folle Blanche, Muscatel de



The stone winery & distillery at Gier's Mt. Veeder Sequoia Vineyard, completed in 1903. — *Greater Oakland*, 1911.

operation, and continued with it until the early years of Prohibition.

By 1907 Gier's Sequoia Vineyard amounted to about 400 acres and his St. Helena acreage around 160 acres, producing clarets and Johannisberger labeled under the *Sequoia* and *Giersberger* brands. Yet, the Sequoia Vineyard remained his primary operation in and around Napa Valley.

As a testament to Gier's presence on Mr. Veeder, the beautiful stone buildings of the Sequoia Vineyard stand strong today, restored and functioning as part of The Hess Collection winery, and housing a gallery for owner Donald Hess' impressive art collection. Hess first leased the winery and vineyards in 1986 from The Christian Brothers who had owned the property

Bordelaise, Mataro, and Zinfandel." He contended that his most popular wines were Rhine type and mountain Zinfandel.

Gier's Private Life & Other Pursuits

Theodore Gier was born in 1860 in Peine, Hanover, Germany to Marie and Heinrich Gier, a railroad official. Theodore was well-educated, and achieved some experience working in the wine trade, but probably only in sales. Gier cut a handsome figure as seen in a number of his portraits. His 1892 passport application described him as 5' 10" tall, with grayish blue eyes and dark blond hair.

In 1888, seven years after arriving in the U.S., Gier became a naturalized citizen. One year earlier,

married into a pioneer California family when he wed Ferdinande Hornung from Marysville in Yuba County. They had three daughters, Pauline Grace, Elsa, and Amelie Ferdinande. The family lived in a number of lovely Oakland homes, eventually settling in the upscale community of Piedmont around 1925. The family enjoyed the best of Bay Area social circles, including a number of prominent German clubs, and were often featured in the Bay Area newspaper society columns.

Gier loved to sing, and had memberships in a San Francisco German choral group, the Arion Singing Society, and in the Oakland Turnverein singing society, both of which had a taste for songs of the homeland. These singing societies were frequent guests at Gier's Sequoia Vineyard and Resort.

In 1905 Gier was awarded the title of Lieutenant Colonel in the California National Guard and appointed to serve on the staff of Governor George Pardee. Col. Gier's most recognized achievement during this appointment was for directing his guard unit in keeping public order during the chaos that followed the 1906 earthquake and fire in San Francisco. Gier proudly wore his guard uniform until his resignation in 1911.



Theodore Gier—Lt. Col., California National Guard, 1905–1911. Photo courtesy of D. Jachens.

Skillfully molding his career and success, Gier, with his dynamic and resourceful personality, was a master of networking. He represented the interests of his trade, serving as treasurer and later Grand Lieutenant Commander of the Knights of the Royal Arch, an organization for the retail liquor trade in California. He was also a board member of the Grape Growers Association of California founded by Andrea Sbarboro (Italian Swiss Colony), served as a director of the California Board of Agriculture, and was an active member of the California Liquor Dealers' Association.

Memberships in the Elks, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Masons, and the Union League of San Francisco broadened Gier's network. He helped to organize the Army & Navy Club, the Merchants Exchange of Oakland, the Oakland Chamber of Commerce and the California Development Board. Serving as president and director of the Merchants' Exchange of Oakland, Gier's efforts were vital for the completion of the Caldecott Tunnel which cut through the Oakland hills to join Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The advantages of tying the two counties

together in trade appeared apparent to Gier.

Gier served as director of the Security Bank & Trust Co. of Oakland in 1905, and was a founder of the Bank of Germany in Oakland in 1907. In the late 1920s he served on the board of the Oakland Mortgage & Finance Co. which offered first deed of trust notes on real estate developments, including the Theodore Gier Apartments, a complex located in the old Montgomery Ward section of town.

Trouble with the Law & a Fall from Grace

With the temperance movement gaining significant momentum, the wine and liquor trades frequently found themselves on guard. Gier's scrapes with the law began in 1917, when the Theo. Gier Wine Co. was convicted on three counts of adulterating and mislabeling peach brandy, cognac and Golden Wedding Rye, infractions that were apparently initiated by employees of the company. These included his nephew Henry and others in company management, but not Theodore himself. Fines were levied. Two years later, similar charges were once again filed.

At the turn of the century, Germany, the United States and six other European nations, known as the Eight Nation Alliance, were embroiled in the Boxer Rebellion in China. Gier assisted the German campaign against the rebellion by helping to establish a supply base in Oakland, purchasing horses, and donating food and wine to German officers. Germany recognized Gier for his efforts and knighted him to the Order of the Crown, by the order of Kaiser Wilhelm II. In 1903 he was presented with this award by Herr Rosenthul, the German Consul General of San Francisco. To Gier's dismay, this award would come back to haunt him around the end of World War I.

Just as U.S. sentiments roiled against Japanese and German-American citizens during World War II, resentment against the German expatriots ran hot in the U.S. during World War I. In 1918, Gier found himself under scrutiny when charges were brought against him for being pro-German, unpatriotic, and of engaging in espionage. The Order of the Crown that Kaiser Wilhelm II had bestowed upon Gier in 1903 was remembered, and helped to inflame public opinion, even though the alliance between Germany and the U.S. during the Boxer Rebellion had faded.

A Livermore vineyardist accused Gier and some of his friends of toasting the Kaiser and singing patriotic German songs at a meeting of winemen at the Cresta Blanca winery, owned by Gier's friend Clarence Wetmore. The incident caused a noticeable stir in the local press, and Gier fought back. He placed a large ad in the Oakland Tribune denying the charges leveled against him, proclaiming his patriotism, his long standing loyalty and civic mindedness. Gier's ad headlined: "I Am Not Pro-German!" In his defense

the ad stated he was "opposed to Kaiserism," and "If the Kaiser should triumph, civilization would be endangered." Furthermore, "It's a damnable lie. I am 100% American," and added a considerable, well-substantiated list of contributions to American humanitarian and military campaigns.

Gier's detractors grew in number, and a movement was mounted to chastise him for his misperceived sins. An investigation was ordered, although no charges were ever officially leveled. Nonetheless, pressure forced Governor William Stephens to replace Gier as director of the California State Board of Agriculture, a position Gier had been appointed to in 1908. To make things worse, Gier was forced from his position as Alameda County's representative to the California Development Board, an appointment he received in 1911, as well as from his position on the Alameda County Development Board.

Prohibition!

Prohibition took a decimating toll on Gier's wine and liquor empire. He continued his Mt. Veeder operation, but only produced unfermented grape juice. By the 1930 Federal Census Theodore Gier was no longer listed as a "wine merchant," but as an "orchardist."

Attempting to protect his personal and trade interests, long before Prohibition became law in 1920, Gier had fought against the quickly rising temperance movement. In 1914, the press reported that a warrant had been issued for Gier's arrest when he was charged with a minor infraction over the theft of some Prohibition literature at a California Dry Federation booth at a local Oakland carnival. Gier claimed he had found the stack of free temperance pamphlets too tempting to leave behind on the table. Charges were later dropped.

In 1922 Gier's properties in Oakland and Napa County were temporarily impounded over yet another transgression when some of his employees sold some of the company's wine to a federal undercover agent in a "sting" operation. Gier was arrested, charged and found guilty, along with others in his company. Gier felt he had been targeted unreasonably, and made charges of his own against the agents who seized his assets, accusing them of not only stealing wine from his bonded warehouses, but of holding a party in his cellar "where women were present"! An investigation was ordered, yet nothing appears to have come of Gier's countercharges. Federal Prohibition Commissioner Haynes had personally ordered the arrest of Gier and the seizure of properties in Napa County owned by the Theo. Gier Vineyard & Wine Co. Additionally, charges of unpaid taxes owed on Gier's wine held under bond were filed. Some of Gier's employees were given fines and jail sentences, including Theodore, who would serve three months of

incarceration. Upon his sentencing, as reported in the Oakland Tribune, Gier collapsed in shock.

The End Closes In

Gier had hoped to see the repeal of Prohibition, but it was not to be. He was forced to sell his Mt. Veeder property to The Christian Brothers in 1930, only three years before Repeal. Most of his other vineyard property had already been liquidated by the early 1920s.

Prohibition, zealous anti-German sentiment, old age, legal issues, and the loss of his beloved Mt. Veeder property must have taken their toll on Gier. In a letter written in 1973 to Brother Timothy Diener of The Christian Brothers, Theodore's daughter Amelie wrote that "Unfortunately, a worthless realtor induced my father to invest in orange groves, which caused his downfall." She may have been referring to the 180-acre orchard property Gier purchased near San Jose in January 1925. Heavy frosts in the mid-1920s seriously damaged numerous agricultural crops around the Bay Area, and Gier's orchards were most certainly affected. The larger picture was more complicated for Gier.

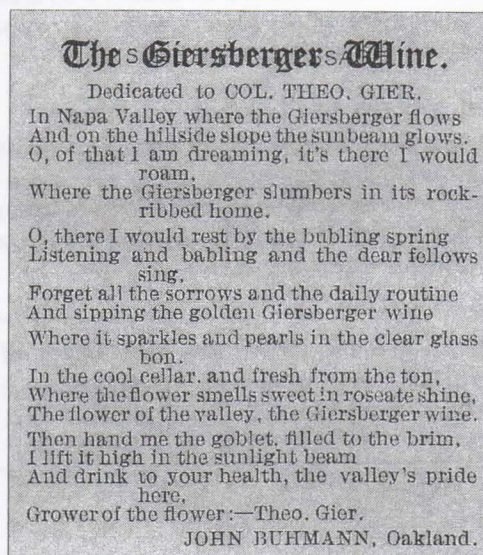
Some of Gier's descendants believe that Gier became despondent due to a cascade of unfortunate events, and slowly committed suicide by ingesting small doses of poison over an extended period of time. This dire scenario may not have been known, or was omitted, by the press in deference to the family. The official version of Gier's demise, as recounted in his Oakland Tribune obituary, proclaimed that he had suffered a heart attack while attending an event at a German club, and succumbed soon after at his hillside home in Piedmont. Gier had suffered heart problems twenty years earlier in 1911 from which he soon recovered, so the Tribune's account had credibility. The Oakland Coroner retains no records revealing details of the cause of death.

Although Gier was accused of transgressions (for which he was certainly innocent), he could not have been a more exemplary U.S. patriot and citizen. His efforts representing the interests of the wine trade, as well as those of Oakland, Alameda County, and California were well-documented. Did Gier have a good cover for espionage? A slim possibility at best, but once the seed of doubt was planted by the press, Gier's reputation quickly spiraled out of control. Trumped up pro-German charges stigmatized Gier, and may have kept him in the crosshairs of the law during Prohibition.

Scrapes with the law, the loss of his business empire during Prohibition, dubious investments, the stock market crash of 1929, and public scorn made Gier's final years more than unpleasant. This writer doesn't believe that Gier deserved these unpleasanties, and we should regard him historically in a brighter light. Before he passed January 4, 1931, at

the age of 70, nearly two years before the repeal of Prohibition, Theodore Gier had left a significant mark on California's early wine and liquor trade, and had deservedly gained the respect of the balance of his peers.

Theodore Gier, 1860–1931. R.I.P.



HERE'S TO THEO. GIER and his GIERSBERGER WINE!
From a c 1910 Theo. Gier Wine Co. advertising postcard.

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- Archives of the *Oakland Tribune*.
- Archives of the Federal Census for Napa, Alameda & Contra Costa counties.
- Archives of Voter Registration for Alameda & Contra Costa counties.
- Archives of the Museum on Main, Pleasanton, Ca.
- Archives of the Livermore Heritage Guild, Livermore.



THEO GIER WINE CO. two-horse-power delivery wagon. Probably in Oakland circa 1900. Note the refillable raffia covered bottles and other cased bottles at rear. Silver gelatin print.

[EDITOR NOTE: Longtime Tendiril and contributor to our *Wayward Tendirils Quarterly*, Dean Walters has focused his passion for the brilliant history of pre-Prohibition California wine-industry advertising into his online Early California Wine Trade Archive. A must see!]



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NEWS & NOTES



AMPELOGRAPHY "APPENDIX"

Enclosed with this issue is an excellent 12-page Supplement: "Notes and Caveats" by Charles Sullivan on the new, much-talked-about ampelography by Jancis Robinson, Julia Harding and José Vouillamoz, *Wine Grapes. A Complete Guide to 1,368 Wine Varieties...* We suggest you keep this valuable "appendix" with your copy of this monumental new work.

THOMAS HART HYATT ON THE WEB

Speaking of WT Supplements, our well-received Supplement accompanying the July 2013 issue, "Thomas Hart Hyatt: The Man and His Book" by Gail Unzelman has been up-loaded to our wayward tendrils.com website. Pass the word.

OSCAR A. MENDELSON

Peter Burke, an Australian Tendril, sends his enthusiastic appreciation for Valmai Hankel's article in our July 2013 issue, "Oscar A. Mendelsohn: Wine & Food Writer and Polymath." Peter writes: "Valmai, huge congratulations on your superb article heading the current issue of WTQ. As you said at the outset, 'Who was Oscar Mendelsohn?' Thanks to you, I now know! From the bookshelves at home I retrieved my first edition copy of *Drinking with Pepys*, and beamed at it with new-found pride. What a man! I must ferret out my deep-buried copies of The Epicurean: obviously I had been overlooking an Australian collecting treasure! ...Once again, my sincere thanks for your very great scholarship: my mind is radiating out on many tangents!" Ditto, we say!

1906 SAN FRANCISCO DISASTER

"Six Bits or Bust: Insurance Litigation Over the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire" by Robert A. James, San Francisco attorney and partner, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP, is a masterful, scholarly look at "the vital question for policyholders and underwriters alike": what did the policies legally cover? One of the biggest cases to go before the courts was that of the California Wine Association, whose president, Percy T. Morgan, flatly stated as he rejected a "six-bit" settlement: "Either you owe us money, or you don't. If you do, we want it all, with interest." A fascinating 40-page chronicle, published in Western Legal History (v.24 #2), and available at the website of Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman. Highly recommended. Visit www.pillsburylaw.com/wine-beer-and-spirits-law?view=9.

PRINTER'S INK

A Bibliographical Remembrance of André L. Simon and His Written Works published last year by Gail Unzelman is being applauded by booksellers and collectors alike. For new Tendril members who missed the initial announcement, please see her website nomispress.com for details.

"CYRIL RAY and THE COMPLEAT IMBIBER"

is the title of a fine article by Tendril Kathy Burk earlier this year in The World of Fine Wine (Issue 39, 2013). Her research and enthusiasm for her subject are top-notch. This is unquestionably the best coverage of author Ray and his enduring series.

"... an even greater gift is the true spirit of charity which prompts us to share our joy with others or show them the road to it." ANDRÉ L. SIMON, *The Saints Club. A Scrap Book*, 1943.

RECENTLY BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION

by Napa Valley Tendril Graeme Macdonald is *Checked Life: In the Old and New World* (San Francisco: Bancroft, 1877) by Rev. J. L. Ver Mehr. It is not known as a wine-history book, nor should it be, but the Rev. Dr. Ver Mehr (1809–1886), founder in 1850 of the storied Grace Church in San Francisco, provides some remarkable, detailed insights into early day California winegrowing. A close personal friend of General Vallejo in Sonoma and George Yount in Napa Valley, the author narrates several noteworthy experiences with these wine pioneers in the 1850s and '60s, including his own endeavors in establishing a 15-acre vineyard near Yount. Highly recommended.

An Evening with Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson: Dinner, Wine, and Conversation, 2nd ed.

James Gabler, a Tendril founding father and acclaimed bibliographer, wine historian, novelist, and book collector, has updated this 2006 award-winning book (Bacchus Press, 2013. Cloth and paperback). Jim explains that the core of the book, with its historical dialogue relating to the events of the day, remains unchanged; the revision essentially relates to updating the "Thomas Jefferson Wine Bottles Fraud" (pp.124-132) and replacing the original appendixes with two new ones, "Thomas Jefferson's Favorite Wines Available Today" and "Thomas Jefferson's Favorite Foods." As we will recall from Wilson Duprey's rave review in our April 2006 issue (v.16 #2), this is another Gabler title (both editions) that is a "must have" for our wine book libraries. [See also "The Fiction Shelf" following for Jim's new thriller, *The Secret Formula*.]

THE FICTION SHELF

Marina Adair, the #1 National bestselling author of romance novels, has three books available in her popular St. Helena Vineyard Series, set in California's Napa Valley. Her publicist's tasty description: "As a writer, Marina is devoted to giving her readers contemporary romance where the towns are small, the personalities large, and the romance explosive." Your resident WTQ critic is not "into" romance novels, but here they are: ■ *Kissing Under the Mistletoe* (2012), *Summer in Napa* (May 2013), and *Autumn in the Vineyard* (Oct 2013). Available, with story-lines, on Amazon. ■ Christiane Heggen, "a master at creating taut, romantic suspense," serves up the *Enemy Within* (Ontario, Canada, 2000), another mystery set in the Napa Valley. ■ With *Gracianna* by Trini Amador (2013), the connection to wine is tenuous, but the book comes highly recommended. The author is the founder of Gracianna Winery in Sonoma County, Calif, and his absorbing story is inspired by his great-grandmother, Gracianna Lasaga, a French-Basque girl forced to make impossible decisions after being recruited into the French Resistance in Nazi-occupied Paris. ■ *The Cask* by Freeman Wills Croft (1879–1957) is an oldie but goodie. A classic detective story, first published in London in 1920 (first American edition, 1924), is often touted as the first modern detective novel, one of the best and most important books in the mystery genre. When a cask breaks open in a busy London shipping yard, the discovery of its contents leads to a puzzling case for Inspector Burnley of Scotland Yard. "A charmingly tedious mystery" ... "excruciating detail at times" ... "the sheer amount of deduction is altogether impressive" ... "the central mystery is unusually ingenious." Reprinted a number of times, copies are readily available online. ■ Saving the best for last, we highly recommend James Gabler's new novel, *The Secret Formula* (Bacchus Press, 2013, 328 pp). A fast-paced, can't-put-it-down, extremely well-written and executed thriller—murder, vengeance, blackmail, sex, intrigue—whose prize is the Coca-Cola secret formula and money beyond one's wildest dreams. Fine wine plays a very minor role, but it is premier-vintage Gabler.

New-Found COOPERING Books

In an early issue of our journal (Vol.8 No.3, July 1998) we presented an article on the art of coopering, "Oak in Winemaking: A Bibliography" compiled by Bo Simons, Wine Librarian, Sonoma County Wine Library. At that time, fifteen years ago, wine trade journal articles far out-numbered the book titles. We have not done a follow-up study, but certainly the number of books on the subject has not grown significantly. We can add two titles: *American Cooper-*

age Machinery and Tools by Kenneth Cope (Astragal Press, 2003, 8½x11, 209 pp., with appendixes on English and French cooperage machinery) and *Dictionary of Woodworking Tools 1700–1970* by R. A. Salaman (Taunton Press, 1990 rev.ed., 546pp.). The first work, "largely based on information found in contemporary cooper's machinery and tool catalogs," provides more than 530 illustrations of cooperage tools and historical information on their uses. Salaman's 1975 *Dictionary* has been revised & enlarged by Philip Walker, an authoritative historian and collector of tools. "A massive and beautifully illustrated compendium that describes every hand tool used in the woodworking trades from the years 1700 to 1970" is recognized as a definitive reference work. Of special interest are the substantial sections on tools for the cellarmen, cooper, wood carvers and engravers.



On the Return of a Book Lent to a Friend

by Christopher Morley (1890–1957)

Printed by Norman Forgue, in miniature,
at his Black Cat Press, Chicago, 1963. 500 copies.

I GIVE HUMBLE and hearty thanks for the safe return of this book, which, having endured the perils of my friend's bookcase and the bookcases of my friend's friends, now returns to me in reasonably good condition.

I GIVE HUMBLE and hearty thanks that my friend did not deem fit to give this book to his infant as a plaything, nor use it as an ashtray for his burning cigarette, nor as a teething-ring for his old mastiff.

WHEN I LENT this book I deemed it as lost; I resigned to the bitterness of the long parting: I never thought to look upon its pages again.

BUT NOW THAT my book is come back to me, I rejoice and am exceeding glad! Bring hither the fatted morocco and let us rebind the volume and set it on the shelf of honour: for this my book was lent, and is returned again.

PRESENTLY, therefore, I may return some of the books that I myself have borrowed.

[Revisit WTQ v.15 #2, p.4-5, "Two Bagatelles on Wine by Christopher Morley" by Thomas Pinney. Tom introduces us to Christopher Morley, "a man of letters such as we do not seem to produce any more in this country," and his *Epigrams in a Cellar* (1927) and *Esoterica Viniana* (1938), two "Morley items that are an amusing part of the literature of wine." — Ed.]

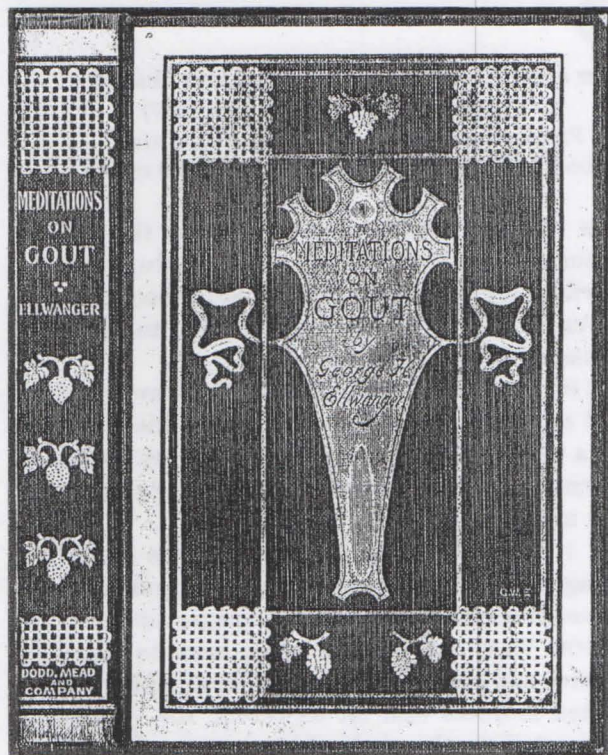
A FEAST FOR THE EYES

by Gail Unzelman



TWO BOOKS THAT BRING GREAT JOY in their beauty—without even opening their covers—are the fine gastronomical works by George H. Ellwanger: *Meditations on Gout* and *The Pleasures of the Table*. And, once you open their eye-catching bindings to investigate the text, further delights are savored.

Meditations on Gout: With a Consideration of Its Cure through the Use of Wine, written by Ellwanger in 1897 (New York: Dodd-Mead), was the first book I acquired for our collection primarily for its cover. Of course the subject qualified the book, but it was the breath-taking binding that made me have it. Grandly

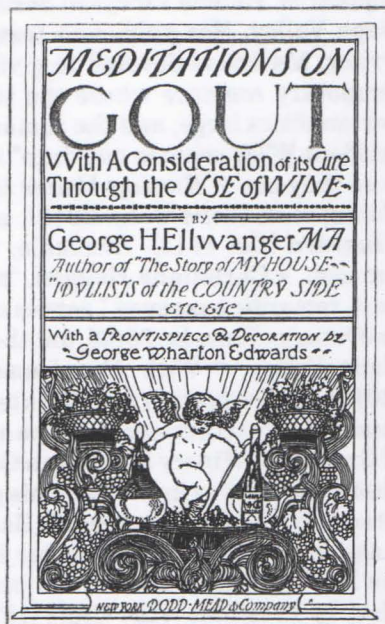


designed by George Wharton Edwards [1859–1950]—award-winning American artist, author, and book illustrator—the book's rich burgundy cloth is inset with stunning embossed and gilt decorations to the front cover and the spine—not outlandish, not overly ornate, but a perfectly balanced scheme. Upon opening this lovely package (a standard octavo, 208 pages), the reader is greeted by an Edwards-decorated title page and frontispiece: a most pleasing typographical layout, printed in red and black. Throughout the book Edwards has added red chapter initial-letters, while the text is presented within graceful, wide margins. A sumptuous feast for the eyes.

Ellwanger's masterful dissertation, with footnoted sources, is worthy of its wrappings. Jim Gabler, in his *Wine Into Words*, 2nd edition, succinctly annotates the entry: "The message of this book is clear: mature wine imbibed in reasonable quantities will not only cure the gout but also add to the imbiber's longevity. The author alleges that the disproportionate amount of gout in England when compared to other countries can be traced directly to the Methuen Treaty of 1703, which gave favorable treatment to brandied Port."

A bookseller's catalog entry goes on to describe the author's thesis: "In this elegant essay, Ellwanger reviews for a lay audience the varying theories of gout's etiology, pathology and management, intending to place in more reasonable perspective 'the charges of high-living and intemperance made by vegetarians, Grahamites, and intemperate tea and water devotees.' In a review of the relation of wine to gout that occupies nearly half the book...Ellwanger argues that the beneficial property of wine may not exist in all wines, and that wines harmful to one constitution may actually benefit another. To this end he provides a knowledgeable review of wine varieties that is as entertaining as it is informative."

The Pleasures of Gastronomy. An Account of Gastronomy from Ancient Days to Present Times: With a History of Its Literature, Schools, and Most Distinguished Artists; Together with Some Special Recipes and Views Concerning the Aesthetics of Dinners and Dinner-Giving was published in 1902 (New York: Doubleday & Co.). Large in size (6 x 9½, 477 pages), it was issued in two known formats: a limited vellum edition and an orange cloth-bound standard edition; both are striking. (A London edition, in green cloth, was published by Heineman in 1903.) The attractive orange cloth is decorated in dark green and gilt, the pages are untrimmed with t.e.g.; the decorative title page is printed in black and red, and a baked boar's head (with his apple) is a popular adornment for the front cover, end papers, title page, and chapter headings; the text body is printed within generous margins, and is profusely illustrated, with

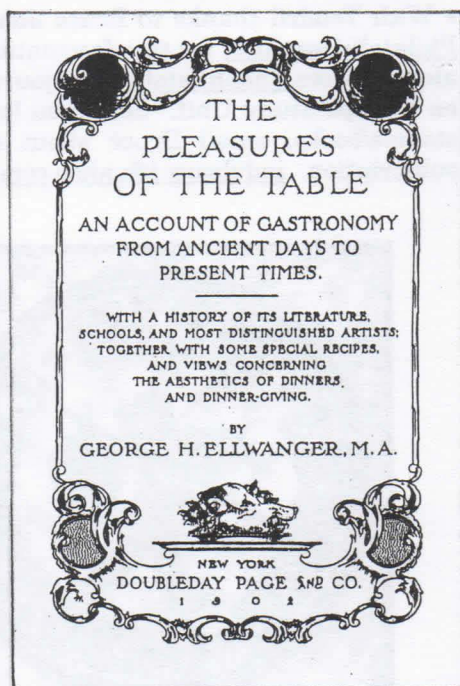


almost three dozen monochrome plates. The limited vellum edition consists of 40 numbered copies printed on Japan Vellum and bound in full vellum with the gilt boar's head embellishing the front cover; the spine is lettered in gilt. A veritable feast for the eyes.

The announcement/advertisement for this book "of absorbing interest and literary distinction, full of quaint oddities and suggestive facts," reminded "all well-rounded libraries" that "nothing has been published in America on this subject since Brillat-Savarin, and there has not existed anywhere a complete historical account of the science of eating from the earliest times."

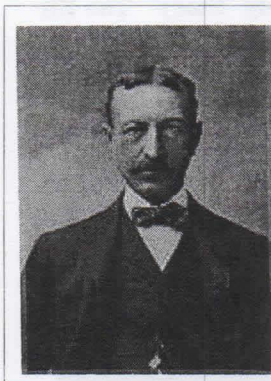
Ellwanger explained in his Introductory that "though touching upon the practical part of the art of cookery, the following chapters will be found more closely concerned with the history, literature, and aesthetics of the table than with its purely utilitarian side." His chapters include: Cookery Among the Ancients; With Lucullus and Apicius; L'Almanach des Gourmands; The School of Savarin; From Carême to Dumas; American vs. English Cookery; Sundry Guides to Good Cheer. Before his very thorough Index at the end, he provides an excellent 20-page Bibliography, inviting his readers on an exploratory journey into the literature: "A few among English, American, and French works, both ancient and modern, that relate to gastronomy and cookery are presented herewith ... the list is not intended to be comprehensive ... but a mere index or signboard pointing to the nature of the vast and varied literature that the topic has inspired. Works relating strictly to wines and alcoholic beverages have not been included, as these, though intimately connected

with the table, belong more properly to a volume on the cellar itself." Ellwanger's Index reveals numerous enriching references to wine, as he cites Barry, Dickens, Pliny, Rabelais, Shakespeare, Thos. Geo. Shaw, and other learned men.



George H. Ellwanger

Who was this erudite gentleman who brought us these admirable books with their scholarly content and book-arts excellence? For a number of years after purchasing *Meditations on Gout* [pre-computer collecting days], I associated the author with being George Ellwanger [1816–1906], the renowned horticulturist and co-founder of one of America's most notable nursery firms, Ellwanger & Barry (1840), and their 500-acre Mount Hope Botanic Garden and Nursery in Rochester, New York. He is not. Our George Herman Ellwanger [1848–1906] is the son of the illustrious pioneer nurseryman.



George H. Ellwanger
[1848–1906]

George Herman, the eldest Ellwanger son, was educated in Rochester and Germany, and on his return from his 5-year European study and travel in 1868, he entered the family nursery business. He remained long enough to become knowledgeable, but in 1874 he turned to the world of writing and printing. He purchased and became publisher of the Rochester Evening Express, and for the next 10 years, until his retirement in 1883, he was known as a journalist. That year, at age 35, he announced he was giving up the newspaper business to devote his time to writing, and to help manage the nursery. He would become a director and secretary of Ellwanger & Barry Co. *The Garden's Story* (New York, 1889), a pleasant combination of literary quotation and practical advice on gardening, was his first book, and well-received. Gardening magazine sang its praises: "Few books have done as much to promote a knowledge and love of horticulture as the *Garden's Story* by George H. Ellwanger; and no book...has taught its lesson so delightfully. With good reason, in that the author has brought to his subject a long and practical experience, a fine and cultivated taste, and the pen of a ready writer." In 1892 he demonstrated his familiarity with a favorite family subject, and contributed an introduction to the new edition of his brother Henry's book *The Rose*, "the American standard of authority on that flower." Among George Herman's next six works, published between 1892 and 1903, were *Meditations on Gout* and *The Pleasures of the Table*. Only three years later, suffering from heart disease, he died at age 57.

Wayward Tendrils are surely appreciative of these magnificent feasts set before us.

continued next page —

SOURCES _____

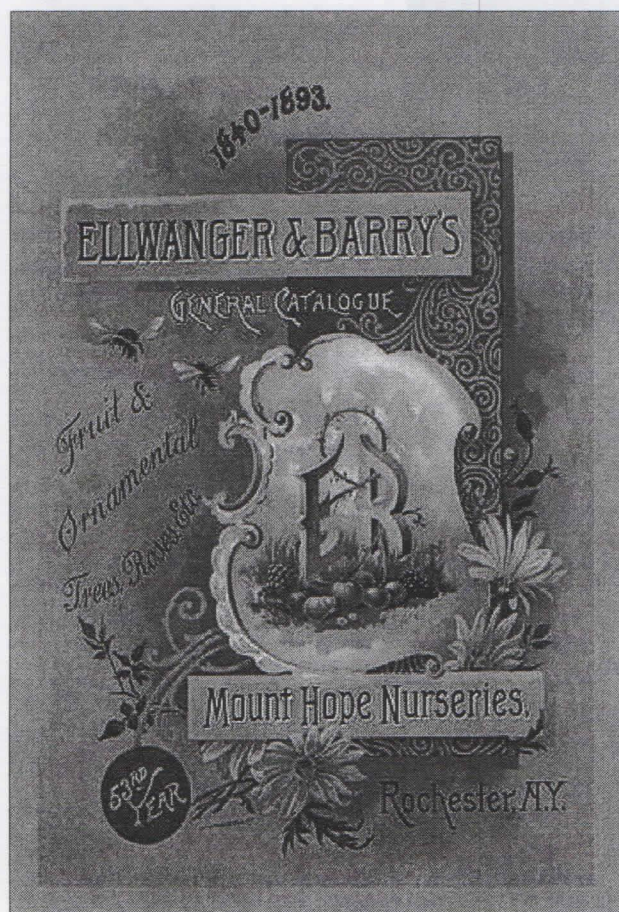
Bailey, L. H. *The Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture*. 3 vols. 1935. New Edition. New York: Macmillan Co. Illustrated with Colored Plates, Four Thousand Text Engravings, and Ninety-six Full-page Cuts.

Bailey's *Cyclopedia*, first printed in 1900, is a treasure trove of information on early American horticulture and gardening. There are extensive sections on the Grape, Horticultural Literature, and biographies of the leading Horticulturists.

Creek, Alma Burner. "A Family Story: The Ellwangers and the Barrys," *University of Rochester Library Bulletin*, Vol.XXXV, 1982.

Alma B. Creek (1946–1985), Rare Books Librarian, Rochester University, and responsible for organizing the Ellwanger & Barry archive.

Gardening, Chicago, August 16, 1902.



That "OLD BOOK SMELL" is
a Mix of Grass and Vanilla

SMELL IS CHEMISTRY, and the chemistry of old books gives your cherished tomes their scent. As a book ages, the chemical compounds used—the glue, the paper, the ink—begin to break down. And, as they do, they release volatile compounds—the source of the smell.

A common smell of old books is more than just mustiness, says the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers; it contains hints of grass and vanilla: "Lignin, which is present in all wood-based paper, is closely related to vanillin. As it breaks down, the lignin grants old books that faint vanilla scent."

A study in 2009 (*Analytical Chemistry*) looked into the smell of old books, finding that the complex scent was a mix of "hundreds of volatile organic compounds released into the air from the paper."

Here's how Dr. Matija Strlič, the lead scientist behind that study, described the smell of an old book: "The aroma of an old book is familiar to every user of a traditional library. A combination of grassy notes with a tang of acids and hint of vanilla over an underlying mustiness, this unmistakable smell is as much a part of the book as its contents."

■ With Tendril thanks to Bruce Johnson, editor of *Philateli-Graphics*, for this fascinating tidbit. Bruce also produces *Enophilatelica*, the journal of the "Wine on Stamps Study Unit." So, if you love/collect wine/stamps/books, email Bruce about membership & subscription. indybruce1@yahoo.com



"WINE - HEALTH - JOY" An early Poster Stamp
advertises an age-old message!

Wine Antiques & Collectibles
by Donald A. Bull & Joseph C. Paradi
A Book Review
by Dean Walters

[In our October 2012 *WTQ*, we announced the "Early California Wine Trade Archive—A Museum Project" of Tendril Dean Walters, and his passion for all things "old" about wine. He gives us a seasoned look at an important new book for our libraries. — Ed.]

"comprehensive look at an intoxicating field"



I N 1983, I LAUNCHED my business as an antiques dealer specializing in the field of wine-related antiques, and quickly became aware that building a good reference library was of paramount importance. Yet, however good the intent, the reality was that

books on this category of antiques and collectibles were few, and hard to find. Then, in 1986 Robin Butler and Gillian Walkling published their fine book, *The Book of Wine Antiques*, in collaboration with the Antique Collectors' Club of Suffolk, England. Robin Butler has since compiled another informative book, *Great British Wine Accessories* (2009).

The mid- to late 1990s enjoyed a renaissance of reference books, and today I am grateful to find my bookshelves filled with these works related to all things wine. A spate of reference works have appeared from the pen of my friend Don Bull—books about bottle openers, beer & soda items, corkscrews, advertising fans, and then a recent one co-authored with Joe Paradi, *Champagne Collectibles*. My review of *Champagne Collectibles*, published in the October 2011 issue of the *WTQ*, included a complete bibliography of Don's books to that date.

Don with his co-author and long-time friend Joe Paradi have collaborated once again with Schiffer Publishing, releasing their newest work, *Wine Antiques & Collectibles*, in August 2013. The book is rife with examples from their own and many other outstanding collections, while an extensive bibliography will lead the reader on to many related works. At nearly six pounds and 336 pages—a larger-than-normal-sized coffee-table book—profusely illustrated with over 2100 color photos, their new book delivers a comprehensive look into this intoxicating field. It is handsomely published in hard cover, nicely indexed, offers comprehensive descriptions, and includes a U.S. dollar price value for many of the items, in the Schiffer "price guide" tradition.

Well organized into subgenres, the broad scope of the book features everything you imagine might

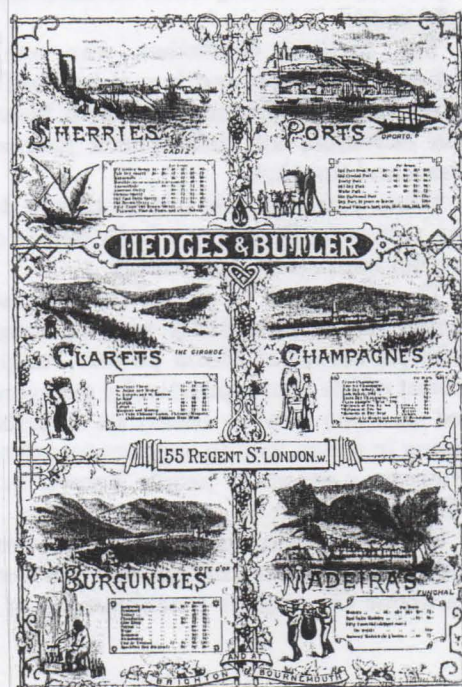
relate to wine and its enjoyment. From the sublime to the lowly, little escapes mention: Tableware for serving wine, including corkscrews, decanters, decanting funnels & cradles, coolers, wine coasters, bottle tickets & fine stemware; wine making and vineyard equipment, tools, storage vessels, and coopers' tools; wine thieves and wine tasters (tastevins); bin labels and bottle carriers for the wine cellar; advertising and ephemera, including a chapter by this writer featuring ephemera from California's early wine trade. And more.

One chapter offers a look inside the beautiful Museo de la Cultura del Vino Dinastia Vivanco, or Museum of Wine Culture, in Briones, La Rioja, Spain where a cornucopia of treasures are on display, some being over 4 millennia in age. Opened in 2005 by King Juan Carlos, it is one of the finest and largest wine museums in the world. Filled with paintings, tapestries, sculpture, and so much more, this museum should be a must visit for any travelers venturing close to the Rioja.

An amusing list of "The Necessaries always wanted in Wine and Spirit Vaults, and Gentlemen's Cellars" entertains the reader with what might be found in an early 19th century cellar. The list is borrowed from the book *The Innkeeper and Butler's Guide*, 1810, by John Davies (Davies & Co., Leeds), and presents a vision of a very different time.

Large in scope, comprehensive, entertaining, beautifully done, and highly recommended, *Wine Antiques & Collectibles* can be ordered directly, and signed by request, from Don Bull by contacting him at corkscrew@bullworks.net.

Advertising print from the June 13, 1891 *Illustrated London News* promoting the wines of HEDGES & BUTLER, merchants of fine wines & spirits, established in London in 1667. The firm was granted a Royal warrant by Queen Victoria in 1837, and has been, since that date, the official supplier to every king and queen, and to foreign dignitaries as well. [p.140]



*To a Different World:
In the Land of the Mafia*

by Gaia Servadio. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979. 191 pp. Illustrated with three sections of b/w photographs. Red cloth, with d.j.

[Reviewed in the May 1979 issue of *Decanter* by Colin Parnell. Retrieved in 2013, for our pleasure, by Tendril Joe Lynch from his vintage file of the long-lived British wine magazine. – Ed.]

Introduction, by Joe Lynch

AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR, journalist, and artist Gaia Servadio was born in Italy in 1938 and educated in London, earning degrees in typography and the graphic arts. An all-around British journalist, she has been associated with the BBC, has written for several newspapers and magazines on music, politics, and literature, has authored a number of books, and is considered a foremost authority on the Mafia.

Colin Parnell (1935–2010) was a founder of *Decanter* magazine in 1975. While an editor at the trade magazine, *Wine & Spirits*, he and fellow editor Tony Lord saw the need for a consumer-based periodical, and *Decanter* was born “in a leaky shed beneath the arches of London’s Waterloo station.” The popular monthly publication, with a worldwide audience, is still going strong.

The Review, by Colin Parnell

IT MUST BE RARE for the wife of a director of Christie’s Old Masters Department to admit publicly to having been in love with a leading Mafia man.

The Sicilian Godfather was one Angelo La Barbera who subsequently met his death in prison of knife wounds; his friend is now Mrs. Mostyn-Owen, or Gaia Servadio, an Italian-born journalist, British citizen and novelist.

What, you may ask, has all this to do with wine? Why review in *Decanter* a book whose cover depicts six grim men carrying a coffin?

The “Different World” of the title is the town of Alcamo in Western Sicily and is, according to the author, a centre of Mafia power. Judging from her account of life there, practically everyone is up to no good in some way or other, be it bribing officials, dealing in drugs, killing opponents, or becoming wine doctors, a group of people known in Italian as *i sofisticatori*.

Gaia Servadio has written an extraordinary book—extraordinary in that she has lived to tell the tale about the violent machinations of the Sicilian

Mafia. Violence might be expected in drug trafficking, but it evidently happens in the wine trade as well.

On a farm belonging to the splendidly named Baronessa Stefania Flugy d’Aspermont Papé, the corpse of her farmer, Michele Saputo, was found in the yard opposite the wine cellar the day after 9,000 hectolitres of “doctored” wine had mysteriously disappeared from it: they had been pumped into a lorry. She was accused, some said falsely, of having ordered his assassination. No case was proved against her.

Gaia Servadio makes many allegations about wine frauds on this beautiful island, from the techniques to the allegedly corrupt wine consortiums which gravitated around powerful Mafiosi and which kept several sets of accounts—one for the financial police, one for the uncomprehending peasant farmer members, and the real one for the board.

The trade in doctored wine is said to be worth 100 billion lira a year. The seldom-caught *sofisticatori* seem like alchemists. They are said to make their “wine” from “hot water, sugar, and a specific enzyme (the *invertasi*) which quickly transforms all those elements into a wine which contains no grapes at all,” and at half the cost!

Even the great Monsieur Bert of Bordeaux couldn’t match that.

The author seems a bit hazy about the precise details, but adds that with “dry must plus colourings” drinkable stuff can be produced for 135 lira a litre, compared to 230 lira a litre for the real thing.

To give a final touch of authenticity, there is said to be a steady thieving of official wine documents from local administrative offices so that the appropriate forms can accompany the bogus wines.

Just how true this picture of vinological skulduggery is I frankly don’t know. The reaction might be said to be mere male chauvinist piggery, for male journalists lack the striking blond good looks of Miss Servadio which evidently caused havoc among the ranks of the Mafiosi who, entranced by her beauty, seem to have told all and everything about the feuds and the rackets of which the tourist—not to mention the wine writer—is blissfully unaware.

If Miss Servadio ever receives an unsolicited case of Sicilian wine, I would advise her to treat it with the utmost caution. Just in case.



Wine in California: The Early Years
The San Francisco Bay Area
Part III: The South Bay 1850–1879
by Charles L. Sullivan

[With this, the 15th installment of our great history of the early years of California wine, we continue our journeys among the premier fine-wine growing areas of the state, those counties located around San Francisco Bay. As in previous chapters, extensive, informative footnotes, and a substantial library of references (all recommended for WT bookshelves), are provided. — Ed.]

ANY CLOSE OBSERVER OF THE BAY AREA IN 1850 had to conclude that the region's brightest agricultural prospects lay in the South Bay and its huge Santa Clara County, the largest county in the region. Although mountainous, almost half of its more than 800,000 acres were ready for agricultural development. The great Santa Clara Valley was blessed with marvelous soils and plenty of water. It was surrounded by thousands of acres of gradually sloping foothills, about 200 to 400 feet above sea level, also blessed with excellent and fairly deep soils.



he great bay but a few miles to the north provided the best contemporary connection to the San Francisco region. The tiny port of Alviso was located a few miles north of San Jose, California's first pueblo in 1777 and its first state capital in 1850. It was a

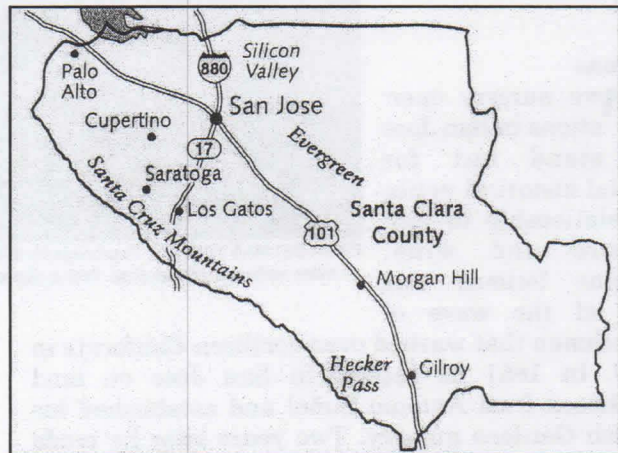
dusty, bustling boom town in the early fifties, whose population had quadrupled to almost 3,000 since the first cry of "Gold!" had emptied its streets two years earlier. Now the Argonauts who had struck pay dirt in the diggings were streaming into the town and valley with their eyes on land.

From the moment California became a state there was serious interest in orchards and vines in the Santa Clara Valley. Visitors and correspondents were far more likely to notice and lavish praise on the town's lush gardens, with their fruit trees and vines, than the valley's basic agricultural activity, raising grain. San Jose was early dubbed The Garden City for good reason. But agriculture in this great valley was overwhelmingly extensive, rather than intensive, from the 1850s to the 1880s. Then fruit began to take over from grain and fodder crops. But in 1870 there were 220,000 acres in grain and hay.¹

In 1868 a comprehensive study of California's resources observed that the valley from San Jose to Gilroy was "an almost unbroken wheat field," while the farmers' gardens all over the valley "appear like beautiful green islands in a golden sea." The San Jose area had "solid masses of orchards and nursery gardens." And almost every family garden had its vineyard, as had been the case fifty years earlier.²

One of the key developments that helped shape the success of winegrowing here in the 1860s was the attraction of a large number of French Argonauts to the San Jose area after the heat of the Gold Rush had

cooled. In 1851 most of them were still concentrated in the diggings and San Francisco, perhaps as many as 25,000. The French consul's statistics also pointed to the remarkable number of his countrymen settling in the Santa Clara Valley.³ A special attraction for Frenchmen was the relative stability of the area. And Pierre Sainsevain's father-in-law, Antonio Suñol, was more than happy to sell the newcomers good land at



In the 1850s Santa Clara Co. led all northern California counties in vineyard acreage. It fell to second place behind Sonoma Co. in the 1860s and behind Napa in the 1870s. When the wine boom began in the late 1870s, the county had about 2500 acres of vines, a total which leaped to almost 15,000 by 1883.

— Sullivan, *Companion to California Wine*, 1998.

reasonable prices. Sainsevain himself maintained his substantial holdings around San Jose after he headed for Southern California in 1855. After his return in the 1860s he was a leader of the local wine community until 1889, when he returned to France to live out his years.⁴

The "Gardeners"
Bernard S. Fox

The development of the early wine industry in Santa Clara Valley was quite different than Sonoma's. In Santa Clara, with one notable

exception, its gradual rise was fostered primarily by the activities of local nurserymen, or "Gardeners," as they chose to call themselves. Most of the leaders were Frenchmen: Delmas, Pellier, Bontemps, Prévost. The leader, however, was a New Englander, Bernard S. Fox, who had been the superintendent of Boston's leading nursery, Hovey & Co. In 1852 Fox accompanied a large shipment of nursery stock from Boston and established his San Jose Valley Nursery two miles north of town. U.C. Berkeley's E. J. Wickson described him as a "quaint Irish bachelor gentlemen, well trained in handling plants, with a fine thrift, a hunger for hard work and an acuteness in trade."⁵ He was mightily interested in viticulture and early marveled how the vinifera vines that struggled under glass in New England flourished in the environment of California's coastal valleys. He was a steady spokesman for the use of better vinifera grapes for better wine. He was no friend of the almost ubiquitous Mission grapes. Nevertheless, his gravestone is decorated with a pear.⁶

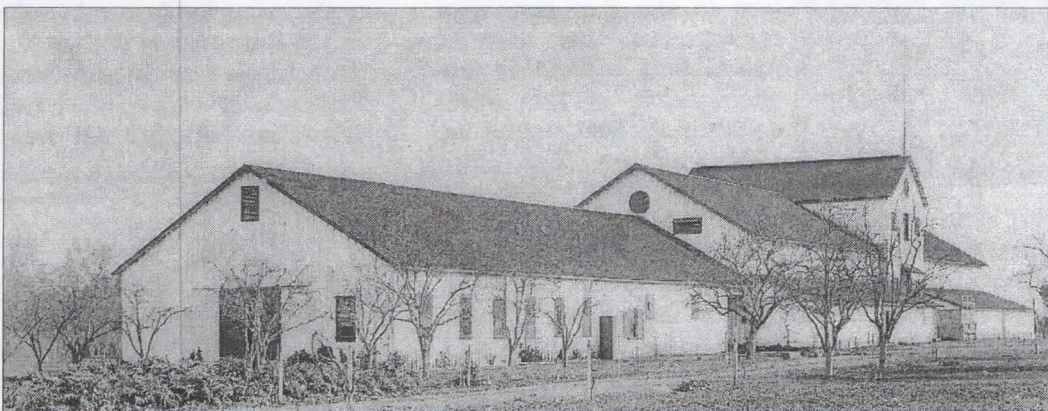
Delmas

Two nursery operations in San Jose stand out for special historical notice in relationship to viticulture and wine. Antoine Delmas was part of the wave of Frenchmen that washed over northern California in 1849. In 1851 he settled in San Jose on land purchased from Antonio Suñol and established his French Gardens nursery. Two years later he made history by doing what today seems obvious. He sent to France and imported a load of authentic and renowned wine grape varieties, the first in California. We have already seen that the mythic Vignes Los Angeles importation of such vines, years earlier, has no factual basis in the contemporary record. Delmas's vines included the Cabernet Sauvignon ("Cabrunet"), Merlot ("Merlau") and Pinot Meunier ("Black Meunier").⁷ He also imported the usual "foreign" table varieties from New England, one of which came to him as the Black St. Peters, later found to be identical to the famed Zinfandel.

By the mid-fifties Delmas had begun accumulating a string of victories for his grape collections throughout northern California, unmatched by any other nurseryman or winegrower in the state. When James Warren of the California Farmer visited San

Jose in 1856, he pronounced the Delmas nursery "the Premium grape and wine garden in San Jose. . . by far the best in the state." In 1857 he was able to show off a few of his French imports and, along with Prévost, Fox and Charles Lefranc, helped lead the drive encouraging growers to depend on better foreign varieties and less on the Mission.⁸

Delmas was a founding member of San Jose's Pioneer Horticultural Society and of The Gardeners of San Jose. Of particular value to vineyardists was his 1859 introduction of elemental sulfur to fight mildew. (He also introduced the tasty French snail to San Jose. There was no opposition at the time, but years later the arrival of this newcomer to valley gardens, now found all over California, did not bring kind thoughts to gardeners' minds.) Delmas remained a dedicated nurseryman for many years, although he did make small amounts of commercial wine.



CASA DELMAS WINERY. To process his 300 acres of wine grapes, Delphin Delmas built his huge winery in 1887 at Mountain View, 11 miles northwest of San Jose. With a capacity of 500,000 gallons, it was the largest privately owned winery in Santa Clara County.

His son, Delphin, became one of the valley's most important winegrowers. He built his Casa Delmas winery in 1887, located north of Cupertino. In the 1890s it was the largest independent winery in the county. Delphin Delmas [1844-1928] is remembered less today for his work in the wine industry than for his legal prowess. By the 1890s he was considered one of the West's greatest orators, a successful lawyer who had been elected San Jose district attorney in 1867 at the age of twenty-three. Historian Walton Bean named him "undoubtedly the most celebrated criminal lawyer in the United States" at that time. He was particularly noted for his successful 1907 defense of Harry K. Thaw, who murdered famed New York architect Stanford White. Thaw was married to the glamorous showgirl Evelyn Nesbit, who had previously been the mistress of the famous architect. The incident was popularized in the 1981 movie *Ragtime*, with Pat O'Brien playing the part of Delmas.⁹

Pellier

The history of the Pellier nursery is most often remembered historically today for its association with the local introduction in the late 1850s of the petite prune d'Agen. By 1900 Santa Clara County was deemed the prune capital of the world, the home of Sunsweet.¹⁰ But the Pellier brothers were also a substantial force in the early years of South Bay winegrowing. Younger brother Pierre [1823–1894], and his lengthy progeny, were an important part of the Santa Clara County wine industry on into the 20th century.

Louis [1817–1872] came to California in 1849 and made enough money in the Gold Country to buy a San Jose town lot and start his nursery business. Pierre joined him in 1853 and returned to France, probably in 1856, to marry his sweetheart and bring a large amount of nursery stock and seeds to San Jose to supply Louis's City Gardens. By the end of the 1850s the nursery and little vineyard covered six acres. Family tradition has Pierre in France in 1855, a date that places the vine imports in San Jose earlier than possible. The Pellier collection of fine French winegrape varieties probably dates from the early 1860s and was carefully maintained by Pierre in the years to come. Experts in the 1880s, such as Charles Wetmore, considered it still intact, authentic and unique.

We know when Pierre was in San Jose because of his recorded attendance at a wonderful party put on by the Gardeners of San Jose, August 30, 1855, at the Hotel de Bordeaux. Everyone with a hand in horticulture was there. John Lewelling came down from his nursery in San Lorenzo with a load of strawberries. Pierre Sainsevain returned on a visit from Los Angeles with a gift of his uncle's famous El Aliso wine. The Pelliers brought peaches and Isabella grapes. At the head of the hall stood a great floral display with the letters "F and A," standing for the friendly union of French and American nurserymen.

Pierre Pellier was the center of attraction late in the evening when one of the gas lamps exploded over his head. A bevy of young ladies had a great time extinguishing the flames; he finished the evening with his head wrapped in handkerchiefs. The party was still roaring at midnight when the local reporter staggered out, loaded with fruit by Monsieur Delmas, for "the folks at home."¹¹

The City Gardens continued to thrive with a special emphasis on fine French wine grape varieties, which in 1863 included "Caburet" and "Melon Blanc." Louis was also selling "Frank Rissling," probably Sylvaner, which he had acquired from Francis Stock's San Jose vineyard.

Stock's 1859 importation of German varieties soon became important in Napa wine history, for it was in San Jose that George Belden Crane met Stock and acquired cuttings which became the basis for the wine

that proved to all in the mid-1860s Napa's capability of producing fine wine.¹²

In 1861 Louis Pellier made an important commitment to commercial viticulture by purchasing a large tract of land in the foothills east of San Jose. Pierre had gone to work at Clement Colombet's winery near Mission San Jose, but Louis promised Pierre a partnership in the operation if he came south and developed the property. In 1862 he was planting City Garden vines in the new Evergreen Vineyard. Today Evergreen is still the place name for the large San Jose community that has grown up there since the 1950s.¹³

Late in the sixties Louis' health and mind deteriorated, as did his childless marriage. A rift with Pierre became so deep that the brothers actually cut the family house in two, one half carted out to Evergreen. Louis died a broken man in 1872, institutionalized in Stockton. Pierre had turned the Evergreen property into a viticultural showplace in the 1870s. In 1874 he took his fourteen-year-old daughter Henriette into the winery and taught her how to supervise the making of wine. Soon she was running the business. In 1880 she married Pierre Mirassou, whose family name became attached to this historic winery property until the 1990s.¹⁴

Pioneer Winemakers

Charles Lefranc

I noted above that there was an important exception to my generalization about the persons most closely involved in the rise of the Santa Clara County wine industry. One name stands out above those of the nurserymen, and he was by far the most important winegrowing pioneer of them all.

Before Charles Lefranc took over what was to become the New Almaden Vineyard and married its first settler's daughter, the 350-acre tract was part of the rancho whose 8879 acres were granted to José Augustin Narvaez in 1844. This was the San Juan Bautista Rancho, which is often confused with the town and mission of that name in San Benito County. Narvaez did virtually nothing to develop the land before he started selling it off in 1847.

That original settler on the 350-acre tract was Etienne Théé, who acquired it officially in 1852. We know almost nothing earlier about him, although novelist Idwal Jones pictured him in his 1949 *Vines in the Sun* as a gnarled Frenchman who rode up to San Jose from Monterey with \$1,000 in his belt. The tract was about ten miles south of town at the mouth of the Almaden Valley. In the hills to the west of that valley was the great Almaden quicksilver mine, which had been humming since 1850, its mercury being essential to separating the elemental gold from soil and crushed rock.

The county records show that this property passed legally if not actually through several hands, including the county sheriff, until it was finally purchased by "C. Le Frank and Maria A. Thee" in April 1857, the land having already about twenty acres of grapes on it. Although tradition and most histories give 1852 as the date the first of these grapes were planted, Charles Lefranc years later stated under oath, in a trial that had nothing to do with his operations, that Théé had begun planting them after they had gone dormant in the late fall of 1851.¹⁵

The property sat on a piece of gravelly bench land on the north bank of the Guadalupe Creek, about 150 feet above sea level, at the foot of the Santa Cruz Mountain chain. Lefranc had worked on the vineyard for about three years before he and Marie officially bought the place. It is not clear whether he had seen himself primarily as a wine-grower from the

start; but in 1857, in his own words, he became just that. In 1858 he exhibited his first wine at the county fair. But clearly he was not satisfied with the quality of the product of his Mission vines. In the summer of 1857 he sent off to France for the real thing.¹⁶

His world-class vinifera vines arrived the following May. In a short time he had an ad in the local newspaper for vines "from the most celebrated vineyards of France." They were for sale from what he was now calling his "Sweet Grape Vineyard." The "New Almaden" name was soon to follow. Delmas also sold cuttings "to his good friend Charles Lefranc," according to Nelly Delmas Lefranc. Charles was her grandfather; Antoine was her great-grandfather.¹⁷

The imported vines were the basis for what came to be called the Lefranc collection in the 1880s. They included Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Malbec. But there were also less noble yet respected varieties in the collection, such as Grenache, Carignane and Folle Blanche. Several other vines appeared

later in both the Pellier and Lefranc collections, as reported by Charles Wetmore.

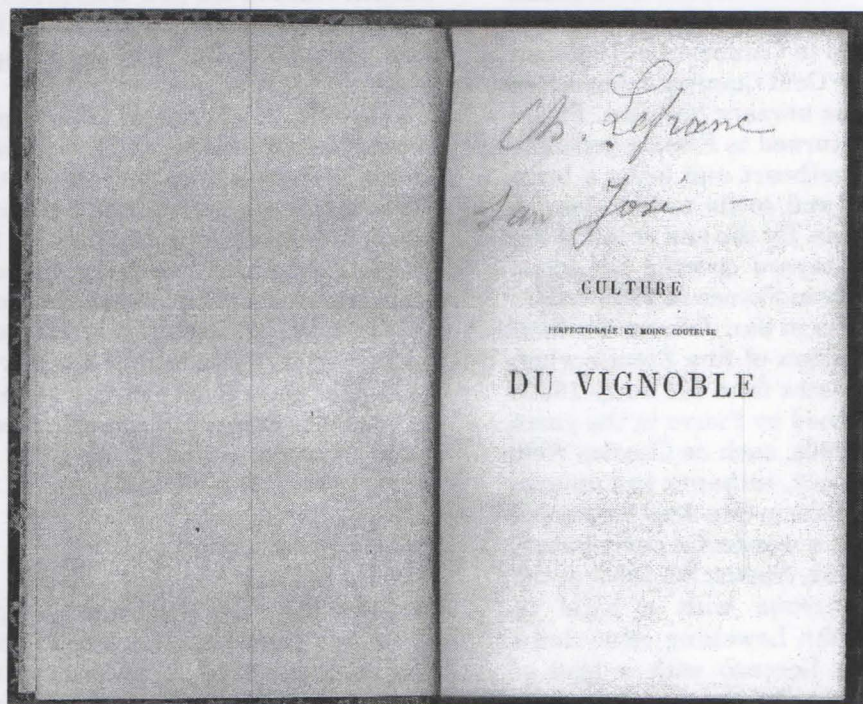
By 1862 Lefranc had led the way to the establishment of a small commercial wine industry in the Santa Clara Valley. In that year he had almost 60 acres of vines and had produced what he later called his "first substantial vintage," mostly from his new vines. His growth in acreage was accelerated by a clever viticultural technique. He grafted single and

double buds from his French imports onto transplanted *Vitis californica* vines which he found growing in profusion along the banks of Guadalupe Creek. For more than twenty years these vines flourished, until the arrival of phylloxera in the area. Then such experts as Professor Hilgard and Charles Wetmore learned that they were incorrect in claiming that all native American vines were resistant to the phylloxera root louse. Meanwhile he had

built his first winery, which survives today north of the creek. Along the creek there are still thick stands of *Vitis californica* grape vines growing wild.

By the late sixties New Almaden had 75 acres of vines and a winery with a capacity of 100,000 gallons. When Francis Stock headed back to Germany in 1869, he let Lefranc dig up his famous Riesling and Traminer vines, and they were hauled down to New Almaden by wagon. These became the basis for Lefranc's excellent Rieslings, which later won the praise of Napa's Charles Krug. Year after year Lefranc won the lion's share of medals at the county fair—for his table wines, his sweet wines and his brandies.

Charles Lefranc had a powerful influence on the South Bay wine industry from 1858 until his accidental death in 1887. Something of a primitive in his approach to winemaking, he had little concern for cellar practices that were nothing more than tradition. But year after year he produced products



Culture Perfectionnée et Moins Couteuse du Vignoble by A. Du Breuil, a well-illustrated 1863 treatise from the library of prominent Santa Clara Co. pioneer winegrower, Charles Lefranc.

that demonstrated the potential for wines of excellence from this region. The deference shown him by other winegrowers, industry leaders and wine experts was obvious and sincere. Both Viticultural Commissioner Charles Wetmore and Prof. Hilgard were his fans. Wetmore thought the New Almaden "Cabernet-Malbec" was unsurpassed in the state as a red Bordeaux-style table wine.¹⁸

By the 1870s his place was a paradise of trees, flowers and vines. It became a regular stopping place for VIPs visiting the New Almaden quicksilver mines. A visitor's comments give us a pretty picture of life at New Almaden Vineyard in these years.

The large, cheerful farm buildings are upon a gentle rise of ground above the area of vines, which is nearly level. An Alsatian foreman showed us through the wine cellars. A servant-girl bustling about the yard was a thorough French peasant, only lacking the wooden shoes. The long tables, set for the forty hands employed in the vintage time, were spread with viands in the French fashion. Scarcely a word of English was spoken.... One feels much abroad in such scenes on American soil.¹⁹

Lone Hill and the Foothill District

The area around Charles Lefranc's estate came to be called the "Foothill District." Included was the "Lone Hill Area," a mile to the west of New Almaden, named for the isolated landmark, a monadnock, that had risen above the valley floor eons earlier.

Lefranc and Théé were not the first to plant vines in the Foothill area. The first permanent settler was Isaac Branham, who bought a piece of the Narvaez Rancho in 1846, just north and east of New Almaden. Its southern border was today's Branham Lane, just above the northern border of Lefranc's estate. In 1851 Branham put in a 50-acre vineyard and for many years made a few thousand gallons of wine, most of which he sold locally. In the 1850s he also sold a large percentage of his crop as fresh fruit in San Jose. In those early years fresh products of just about any fruit or vegetable crop would have been more valuable than wine.

Two neighboring ranches to the west also had new bearing vineyards in the early sixties. They belonged to the Stockton brothers. Dr. N. H. Stockton had the Live Oak Vineyard; Stephen-son Stockton had the Gravelly Ridge Vineyard—together they totaled almost 100 acres of vines. Their operations were similar to Branham's, depending

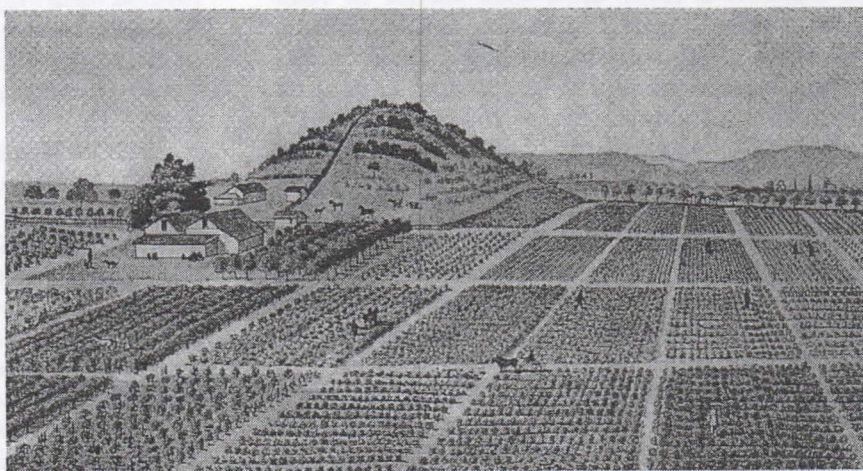
on the growing population of the Santa Clara Valley for wine and grape customers. In the ten years since the 1860 census the valley's population had more than doubled. The county ranked third in the state, very close to Sacramento, yet with only 26,246 souls.

Charles Lefranc's only rival for leadership in the Foothill area was County Assessor David Harwood, who acquired a tract of land around Lone Hill, and began planting his Lone Hill Vineyard in 1865. By the end of the decade it was the largest in the valley with a few more vines than Lefranc. Early on Harwood had a small distillery and emphasized sweet wine production. What he called "Madeira" was probably just a good Angelica, but it won awards at the county fair. He won others and was Lefranc's only competitor in gathering up medals at that annual event. His table wines were also very well received, especially those made from Riesling and Folle Blanche.

In the 1880s the Lone Hill operation passed into the hands of Christian Freyschlag. After Prohibition it was owned by Almaden Vineyards and in 1946 was acquired by members of the Mirassou family. Still operating as Lone Hill Vineyards, it was a large-scale operation from which I used to buy wine until it closed in the face of advancing subdivisions in 1968. Most of the hill had been quarried by 1950, but one can still see the rise in the land behind the houses on Harwood Road.

By the 1870s more small vineyards sprang up in the Almaden Valley and to the west towards Los Gatos and what would be Saratoga. The San Jose Mercury estimated in 1871 that the product of the Foothill District was about 75,000 gallons, well over half the county's apparent production. There were still only about 1500 acres of wine grapes in the entire valley, about a third of them in the Foothill District.

The 1870 census placed Santa Clara County in



LONE HILL VINEYARD of David Harwood. Planted in 1865, it grew to some 155 acres of fine wine grapes and was the largest in the valley when this image was drawn by Thompson & West for their *Historical Atlas Map of Santa Clara County* in 1876.

fifth place in the state for wine production, barely a third of Sonoma's output and still behind El Dorado. The county business directory that year gave data on every farm operation. Most vineyardists, like Branhams, listed themselves "farmer." One Stockton brother was a "wine grower," the other was a "farmer." Only seven of the scores who commercially raised wine grapes made that clear in this survey. Most of the obvious names were there: Lefranc, Sainsevain, Splivalo and Harwood. Twenty years later in a similar survey more than 600 identified themselves as vineyardists or winegrowers.²⁰

Most of the area's wine did not leave the valley. It was often sold by the barrel or half-barrel at the winery or grocery stores in San Jose and in out-lying communities. The valley's sizable French and German communities, which totaled more than 2,000 persons in 1870, made for a ready market. Drinking wine was a healthy part of life in many families here, whatever their national origin. Lefranc bottled some of his wine for the local market and for San Francisco, where his dry red and white table wines were popular in the large French community there. Harwood's wine could also be purchased by the bottle in San Jose.

In and Around Town: Sainsevain and Splivalo

San Jose's home gardens were replete with grape vines. Home winemaking was common and some households had enough extra to sell to the numerous town saloons. But until the 1880s there was little sign of a wine industry within the town limits. But by that date a wine industry would be as obvious here as in Santa Rosa. By then the valley had more than 10,000 acres of grapes.

By the mid-sixties Pierre Sainsevain had the most impressive winery close to town. His neighbor, Stefano Splivalo, also had a good vineyard and winery on land he had bought from Sainsevain. We met Pierre Sainsevain [1819-1904] here earlier in 1849 when he married Paula Suñol. Her father Antonio was one of the area's most important landowners; her dowry was a large piece of the 2219-acre Rancho de los Coches, on the west side of town near today's Willow Glen. The couple had about 700 acres to start with, much of which they sold off when he went to Los Angeles to work for his uncle and later develop his short-lived sparkling wine operation. It was then that he sold 55 acres to Splivalo, who planted twenty acres of vines around the adobe home on the property. This ancient abode has survived and is today a monument managed by the local Pioneer Society.

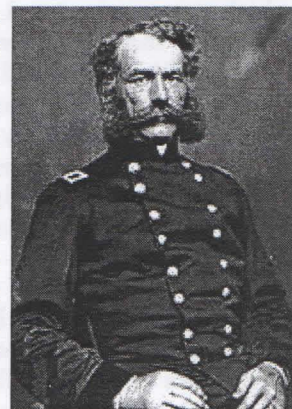
Sainsevain returned to San Jose after his sparkling wine business went under in 1862. He planted more vines on the tract he and Paula still owned, which he called Sainsevain Villa. By 1865 he was producing about 6,000 gallons of red table wine he marketed locally under the "Menlo Park" trade

name. His claret won the grand prize for red wine at the 1868 County Fair. By 1870 his production was up to 20,000 gallons. In the eighties he still made small amounts of wine and added wine bitters and vermouth to his products. He even invented a stemmer-crusher, which brought him as much notice as his wines. After Paula's death in 1889 he returned to France where he lived until his death in 1904.²¹

East of town a very different industry development took place in the late 1860s, and by the 1870s San Jose had become the brandy-making capital of California—not for the amount produced but for the world-class quality of the brandy made by its producer.

Henry Morris Naglee

Henry Morris Naglee [1815-1886] first came to California in 1846, an army officer in the war with Mexico. He had been an 1835 West Point graduate, but had resigned his commission in favor of a life as a civil engineer. He re-enlisted and came to California an army captain. He was one of the very few U.S. officers who actually won a battle against the enemy in that almost bloodless conflict on the West Coast.



He led a detachment in the invasion of Baja California and in March 1848 he captured the fortified town of Todos Santos at the foot of the peninsula. This battle and other American successes in Baja were unknown to the negotiators working on the peace treaty with Mexico, which was not initially ratified until May 30. (They also didn't know that gold had been discovered in February.) Had the Americans at Guadalupe Hidalgo known of the Baja events, would that huge peninsula be a part of the U.S. today?²²

In 1848 Naglee again left active duty but stayed in California. He made loads of money in San Francisco real estate and banking. But he also spotted the potential of the Santa Clara Valley. He bought a large piece of real estate there in 1852, moved there in 1858 and planted a small vineyard of Mission vines. Later he visited France, where he got a good look at winegrowing. He also spent time in Cognac and was dazzled by its brandy industry. War in 1861 again drew him to active duty and by 1862 he was a brigadier general in the Army of the Potomac.

After the war he embarked for France again, this time specifically to visit Cognac and learn all he could about making fine brandy. The aguardiente he had

tasted in California convinced him he would have no serious competitors here if he applied himself properly. On his return to San Jose he sent to Europe for top quality wine grape varieties, particularly Pinot Noir and Riesling. He was convinced that the key to good brandy was great wine grape varieties. He rejected the neutral varieties then used in the Cognac region. All who knew about his intentions and made their opinions public thought that Naglee was dead wrong. In 1868 he built his winery and distillery and by then had grafted over most of his Mission vines to better varieties. He was dedicated to the idea that his brandy's flavor should be reminiscent of the grape variety that had gone into the original fermentation, before distilling.

The General laid out his detailed plan of attack on California's traditionally hot brandy in 1870 in a long paper presented to the California Agricultural Society. He related his experiences in Cognac, which included his discussions with the owners of Hennessy. These experiences and his personal views led him to declare that one must make good wine to make really good brandy. Avoid complicated machinery. Take your time. Age the distillate in perfectly clean, well-steamed oak barrels. Don't make brandy from inferior grapes, no matter how esteemed they might be in France. He rejected the Folle Blanche variety, which made "a wine so bad that it can only be made into brandy."²³

The General's "Naglia" brandy was crystal clear, with none of the usual coloring agents used in France and California. It had been aged in immaculate 800-gallon upright Canadian oak casks. He used small continuous stills of his own design which produced

only one quarter the volume per hour achieved by French stills. He never gave up experimenting until the day he died in 1886.

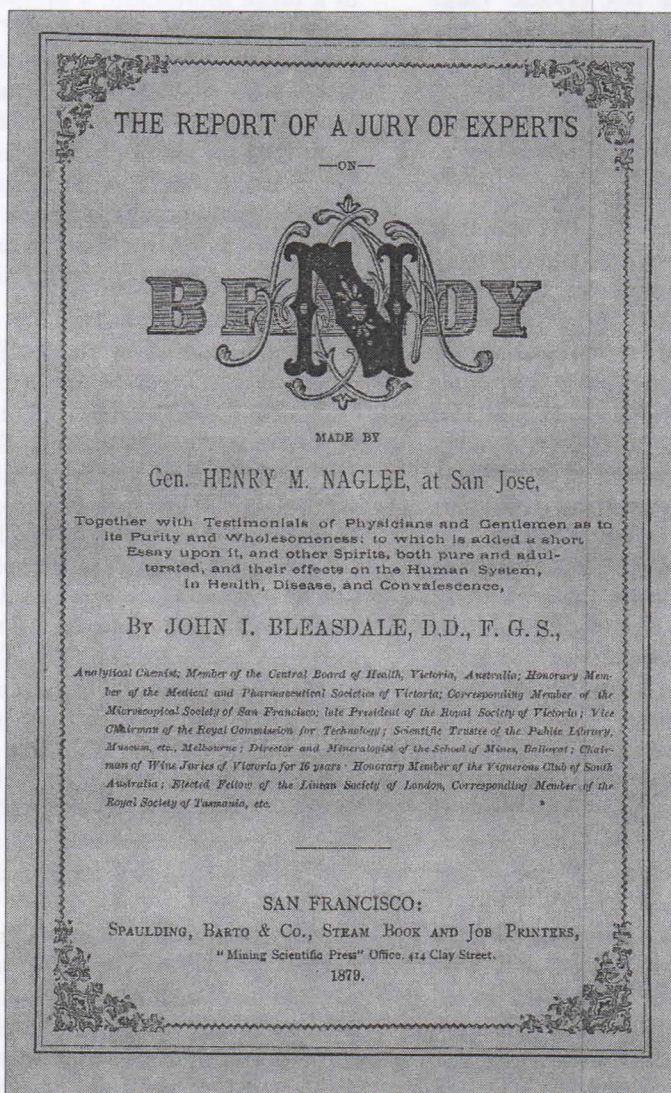
The Naglee brandies carved out a special place for themselves in the history of wine and spirits. He won a continuous string of awards and enthusiastic plaudits even from French experts. At the U.S. Centennial Exposition in 1876 his Naglia won a special award from the judges as the "only American brandy on exhibit that approached the fine French spirits in flavor." On a scale of 1-100 Prof. Hilgard gave Naglia 100; he gave the average California brandy 26.²⁴

It is difficult to evaluate California's best wines a hundred years after they were bottled. But Naglee's brandy was still to be had in the 1940s and had a special place then in the collections of several California connoisseurs.²⁵ When he died Naglee's cellars were aging almost 100,000 gallons of his brandy. His daughters began selling it gradually as it picked up age. I have found ads for it in the trade press as late as 1904.²⁶

It is no stretch to claim that Naglee's brandy was the best in California, by far, until the 1980s. Then a small Mendocino producer began making brandy that was in many ways similar in principle to Naglee's, especially the belief that top varieties make the best brandy. Like Naglee they are proud to sell a brandy derived from Pinot Noir

grapes. I keep a bottle in my VSOP Cognac cabinet.

Henry Naglee also contributed his engineering skills in helping develop the Central Valley's irrigation system. At home his wonderful gardens were generally proclaimed the most beautiful in the Garden City. But his personal reputation in San Jose was nowhere nearly as good as his brandy. He was almost continually in hot water for his relations with women, who on more than one occasion dragged him



This 48-page pamphlet by the eminent authority on wines John I. Bleasdale, published in San Francisco in 1879, extolls the magnificence of Henry Naglee's "pure wine brandy." Testimonials and analyses by the jury of experts declared it superior to all others, even the finest of French Cognacs.

into court. These events were highlighted in 1867 when one of his lovers published his fiery love letters to her. Naglee also enjoyed a practical joke. In 1883 a temperance group visiting San Jose asked to see Naglee Park. He invited them over and after the tour presented them with a fine buffet with punch. This lemonade had been laced with his crystal clear brandy. The group had a jolly time, some needing help to get out to their waiting carriages.²⁷

Little wonder that it was not until almost a quarter century after that event that the city honored him with the fine memorial statue that stands downtown today in St. James Park.²⁸

The West Side

The movement of viticulture away from town in the late sixties was primarily to the west, beyond Sainsevain's estate, in the direction of today's Cupertino. On the east side a visitor would only see Victor Specken's twenty acres of vines before arriving at Pierre Pellier's Evergreen operation, at a slightly higher elevation. But it would be several years before he acquired any winegrowing neighbors.

The earliest activity to the west was around what was left of the old Santa Clara Mission which had served as the local parish church since secularization. The tiny village of Santa Clara grew up around it, with its settlers gobbling up the remaining mission lands. Some planted grapes and somehow the little vineyard at the mission survived under the very casual eyes of the Franciscan priests.

All this changed in 1851 when Joseph Alemany, the bishop at Monterey and later San Francisco, decided to bring order to the mission by turning it over to the Jesuits, first as a preparatory school, then as a college. Today Santa Clara University is the state's oldest institution of higher learning.

A few of the settlers in the area became serious winegrowers. The early leader was L. A. Gould who had ten acres of vines in the late 1850s; in 1858 Gould won a silver cup at the county fair for his wine entry. Later J. P. Pierce became the leader. His was the first commercial Zinfandel vineyard in the county, planted by none other than Antoine Delmas. In the early years in the valley these vines were called Black St. Peters; twenty years later Pierce's old vines were one of the solid pieces of evidence that proved the two varieties were one and the same.²⁹

The almost totally undeveloped land west of San Jose and Santa Clara, and north of today's Saratoga, up to Mountain View, was for years called West Side, the name on the area's tiny post office. It was a name not particularly attractive for selling real estate, so the sign on the post office was changed to read "Cupertino" in 1895.

The viticultural pioneer on the West Side was Elisha Stephens (Stevens), who in the late 1840s

planted a little vineyard near today's Blackberry Farm on Stevens Creek Road. But as the settlers started moving into the area in the late 1860s, he headed for Bakersfield.

The winegrowing pioneer was Samuel R. Williams, who struck a deal in 1870 to clear 100 acres of a large landholder's property, a "wild land with a growth of timber and brush." Williams received fifty acres of the spread and planted a vineyard on it (near today's De Anza College) and later named his cellar Union Winery. Others soon followed, led by Alexander Montgomery, who planted his vineyard just west of Williams. He built a large winery and distillery and became famous for his peach and prune brandies. By the late 1870s the West Side was green with more than 1,000 acres of young vines.³⁰

Santa Cruz Mountains

The Santa Cruz Mountains comprise the rugged terrain west of the Santa Clara Valley. They also form the forested backbone of The Peninsula to the north. They are geologic infants, still growing, and cursed by the terrible San Andreas Fault, whose shocks have devastated cities and occasionally swallowed vineyards for the last 150 years.

The geographical nomenclature of these highlands can be confusing. A large part of the mountain area is included in the eponymous viticultural area (AVA) given official status by the Treasury Department in 1982. Three counties are involved: San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz. Surprisingly, most of the wine grapes today in the AVA are in Santa Clara County, concentrated in the high hills above Cupertino and Saratoga. There were only 103 acres of wine grapes in Santa Cruz County twenty years ago. Today there are 446. Before Prohibition that county's acreage peaked at about 1500.

For this study "Santa Cruz Mountains" refers to the official AVA. The mountainous areas in today's district have a rather unique combination of soils and climate. Cool nights, warm days above the surrounding fogs, and shallow soils on rugged hillsides have combined to produce a distinctive winegrowing history, at once an extension of the Santa Clara Valley's, but in many ways separate and singular.

For years inaccessibility limited the market for things grown in the mountains other than timber. The geology was uninviting to all forms of travel. At first rough trails became logging roads, then toll roads. Finally a dependable stage line was operating between Los Gatos and Santa Cruz in the 1860s. The area really started to open up in 1877 when the South Pacific Coast Railway reached Los Gatos from Oakland. A few weeks later 2000 Chinese laborers began clearing rock in Los Gatos Canyon. Eventually the 25-mile line to Santa Cruz was finished in 1880; six tunnels covered 2.6 miles of the route.³¹

Viticulture's pioneer in these mountains was Lyman Burrell, who acquired land near the summit in 1853. Two years later his wife wrote that the area would be a very good place "for raising fruit, especially grapes." Next year her husband was planting vines and fruit trees.³²

It was obvious that when the large-scale holdings in the upland had been stripped of timber, the land would be divided into family centered agricultural plots. Livestock was iffy because of the grizzly bear population. Fresh fruit eventually became the mainstay, but there was no rush to plant before the railroad was punched through.

Burrell's grapes went down to the valley by wagon for the local fresh fruit market. In 1859 his grapes won a premium at the county fair. There were soon notes in the press about the excellent flavors in all kinds of fruit from the highlands. Later Burrell's son-in-law, Hiram Morrell, planted more vines, as did their neighbor, Charles H. McKiernan, who planted vines and fruit trees while he was making his fortune in lumber. "Mountain Charley" was better known for his battles with grizzly bears in the early days.³³

By the 1860s a few of the vineyardists near the summit were making wine on a small scale which apparently tasted as good as their now well-known grapes. In 1866 the *Alta California* sent a correspondent down to look things over. He discovered wine being made near the summit "of a grade unlike any yet presented" that would be a "formidable rival" for the valley winemakers.³⁴

On the Santa Cruz side of the mountains serious winegrowing got started in the sixties when the Jarvis brothers, John and George, acquired 300 acres of land north of town above Scotts Valley at the 1200-foot level. This area came to be called Vine Hill District, and still bears that name, although practically all the vines had been removed by the 1990s. The Jarvises began planting vineyards in 1863. John's plot was the Sugar Loaf Vineyard; George's was Vine Hill. They also sold a few sixty-acre parcels to other settlers and helped them plant vineyards. By the end of the decade George's little winery was producing 20,000 gallons of wine per year. He also began producing brandy in the seventies. Like General Naglee, George Jarvis used small, copper pot stills and produced a "Reisling brandy."³⁵

In the sixties, on the downside from the summit toward Los Gatos, a small community developed around the stage stop of Pacheco on the San Jose to Santa Cruz line. Then the road dropped quickly toward the valley to the roaring lumber town of Lexington, full of sawmills, saloons and whore houses. Then on to Los Gatos. By the 1880s the area was full of vineyards. Lexington Zinfandel before Prohibition was considered one of the best in the state. Since the

1940s Lexington and the surrounding land has been covered by the water of the Lexington Reservoir.

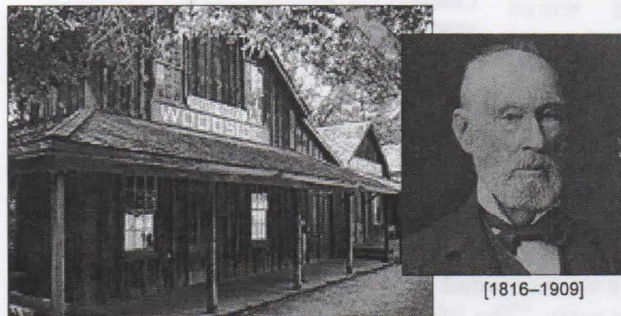
Dennis Feeley

The pioneer winegrower in this area was Dennis Feeley, whose prestige and leadership were unsurpassed in the South Bay region. He developed his 13-acre vineyard in the early 1860s, and became as famous for his table grapes as he was for his wines. As a winemaker Feeley won plaudits across the nation. He knew the difference between the ubiquitous "foreign" table varieties and the classic European wine varieties. Colonel Warren was impressed by his wines and praised them in his write-ups year after year in the *California Farmer*. While Feeley was famous for his Riesling and Sylvaner wines (acquiring his vines from Francis Stock), his clarets received the special praise of Charles Krug.³⁶

Years before the railroad arrived, Feeley hauled his grapes and wines down to the valley by wagon. And he eventually sold his wines himself in eastern markets, particularly New Orleans. Like Charles Lefranc he refused to deal through the San Francisco wine merchants, unlike the habit of an overwhelming percentage of the Bay Area's country winemakers. He wanted nothing to do with their "concocted stuff." He made wine into the 1890s, but had to sell his operation in 1896 when he began to lose his eyesight.³⁷

To the north there was yet virtually no sign of winegrowing above Saratoga, Cupertino or Mountain View until the eighties. The exception was in the foothills near Stevens Creek Canyon. There the Jesuits at Santa Clara College bought 160 acres and planted vines to augment their wine supplies. In 1875 they constructed a little winery and established a religious retreat they called Villa Maria; its ruins are still standing.

Father to the north, in the Portola Valley area of San Mateo County, Robert Tripp established his famous Woodside Store in 1854 and planted a five-acre vineyard in the early seventies. He sold wine in bulk and under his own label, designated "San Mateo County Pioneer." The store still stands there today.³⁸



[1816-1909]

DR. ROBERT TRIPP probably made the best wine in the Portola Valley area. Trained as a dentist, he also served as proprietor of the Woodside General Store, as postmaster, and as a San Francisco Supervisor.

Prosperity and Depression

In the late sixties and early seventies commercial winegrowing in the South Bay region experienced something of a minor boom. When the so-called Panic of 1873 rattled eastern markets, California was mostly unscathed. That ended in 1875 when the Bank of California went under. Then California's apparently prosperous wine industry went into an economic tailspin. But the relatively small South Bay industry was not hard hit. Its moderate size and its dependence on its own local market as the major outlet for its wines greatly softened the effects of the national depression. The situation is illustrated by the almost 1000-acre increase in Santa Clara Valley wine grape acreage between 1872 and 1879.

By 1874 D. M. Harwood's Lone Hill Vineyard had become the largest in the valley. His spread led runner-up Charles Lefranc's 140 to 105. Both were good businessmen and, perhaps equally important, both emphasized the quality of their products over quantity. They

were devoted to the use of top notch wine grape varieties; what Missions they still had in their vineyards went into the distilleries to produce sweet wines and brandy. Both, but particularly Lefranc, were noted for the cleanliness of their production facilities. And both were noted for holding their young wines for two and three years

before releasing them. Lefranc's Rieslings were known for their slightly sherry-like characteristic, the result of their years in the barrel. Years later his famous son-in-law, Paul Masson, was quoted as having preached that he would "sell no wine before its time." He got the idea from his father-in-law. Lefranc's words quoted in an extended 1879 newspaper article were, "The life of the vine is continued in the wine.... The wine has its time and we have ours. We grow, we mature, we decay, and so does wine."³⁹



CHARLES LEFRANC [1824-1887] was the father of commercial winegrowing in the Santa Clara Valley and the leading wine producer in the area by the 1860s. Following his importation in 1858 of a large shipment of fine French wine grape varieties, he produced California's first commercial wine from red Bordeaux varieties, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec.

In 1876, at a low point in the depression, Lefranc's financial position was so solid that he moved to greatly expand his productive capacity. He was able to take advantage of depression-era low construction costs and built a giant stone winery with a huge underground cellar. At the time it was second in size only to Sonoma's great Buena Vista Winery. In 1989 it burned to the ground under suspicious circumstances. But his original 1862 winery survives to this day in the City of San Jose's Almaden Winery Park, a beautifully manicured and maintained oasis in a residential neighborhood south of Blossom Hill Road.

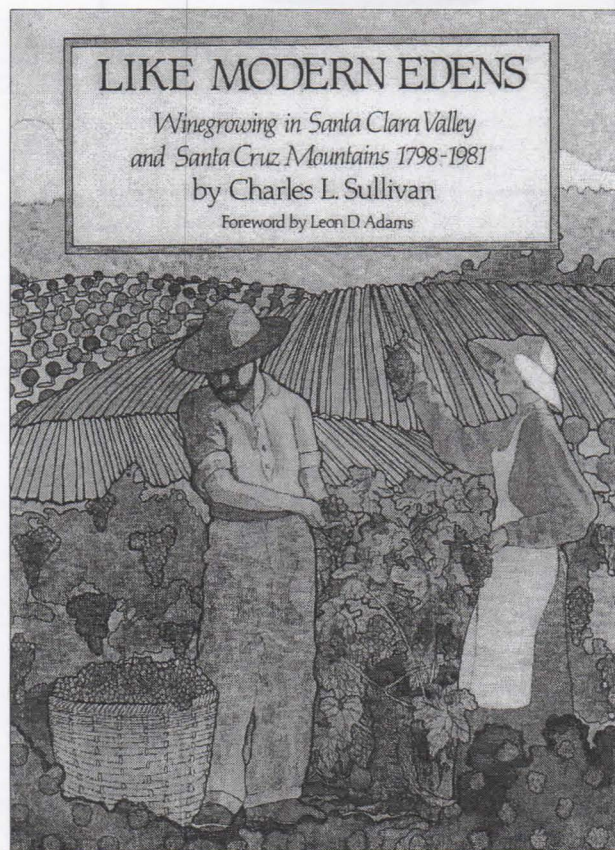
The effect of the depression came down hard on the valley's grain growers. The result was a gradual but remarkable movement toward diversification in Santa Clara Valley agriculture. The move was from extensive to intensive agriculture, from grain and fodder to orchards and vineyards. The general rise in vineyard acreage here in the 1870s was a small part of the process that eventually transformed the Santa Clara Valley into one of the greatest producers of fruit in the world. Patches of apricot, peach, pear, and especially prune orchards began appearing in the upper valley. Willow Glen became a place to plant cherries. There were now citrus groves north of Los Gatos. Almond and walnut trees were planted around Campbell. Eventually the prune was king.

When good times began returning after 1878, the future of the valley had become linked to fruit production. Wine grapes were a part of this transformation. Within five years more than 5,000 acres were planted in the Santa Clara Valley, and that was only the beginning. The great wine boom of the 1880s in California would help make the Valley of Heart's Delight an integral part of the state's rapidly burgeoning wine industry.

NOTES

1. To review the area's history of winegrowing and viticulture before 1850, I strongly suggest the reader turn back to these numbers of *WTQ* in this series: Oct 2010, 19-20; Jan 2011, 32; and especially July 2011, 30-32. My *Like Modern Edens* (Cupertino: De Anza College, 1982), pages 9-42, address in far greater detail the entire period on the Santa Clara Valley covered by this study which has a somewhat different focus and emphasis.
2. Titus Fay Cronise, *The Natural Wealth of California*, San Francisco, 1868, 134-138.
3. Stephen M. Payne, *Santa Clara County...*, Northridge, 1987, 74-77; Abraham Nasitir, *French Activities in California*, Stanford, 1942.
4. Sullivan, *Like Modern Edens*, 29-31.
5. *California Nurserymen and the Plant Industry, 1850-1910*, Los Angeles, 1921, 23-24.
6. *Ag. Soc.* 1858, 259; *San Jose Tribune*, 12/7/1856.

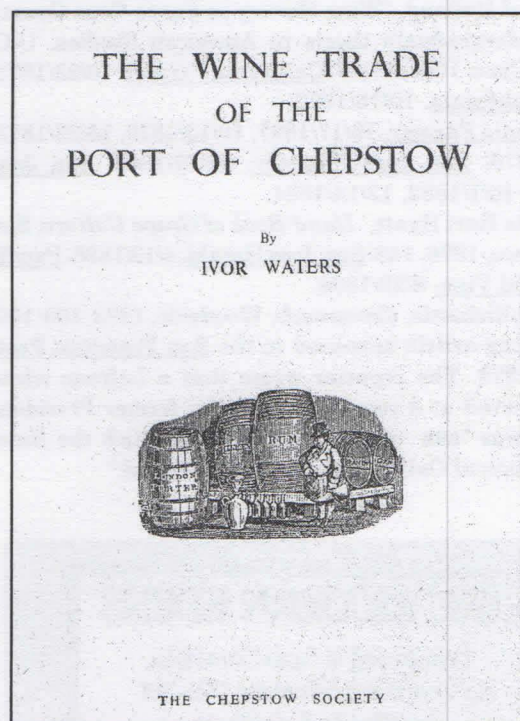
7. San Jose Tribune, 10/21/1859; For the numerous 19th century spellings of these vines see, Jancis Robinson et al, *Wine Grapes*, New York, 2012, 160, 629-630.
8. California Farmer, 10/17/1855, 10/10/1856; San Jose Telegraph, 5/19/1857; Alta California, 9/25/1858.
9. The Wave (S.F.) 10/1895 contains Frank Norris's remarkable description of that year's vintage at Casa Delmas; Walton Bean, *Boss Ruef's San Francisco*, Berkeley, 1952, 234-239; San Jose News, 4/7/1978.
10. Robert Couchman, *The Sunsweet Story*, San Jose, 1967. In 1947 Santa Clara County had 54,414 acres of prunes and 8,000 acres of wine grapes.
11. San Jose Telegraph, 9/11/1855.
12. Crane to J.L.L. Warren, 11/1/1861, Warren Papers, Bancroft Library; George B. Crane, *A Life History*, San Jose, 1886, 158.
13. Clyde Arbuckle, "Louis Pellier Nursery Lot," typescript, San Jose Public Library, California Room, 2-3, 13-15;
14. Much of the Pellier material was given to me in a 1979 series of interviews with Marie Mirassou, who as a young woman was a close friend of Henriette Pellier Mirassou. A photo of the half-house in San Jose is in Couchman, 12.
15. County deed books F-249, J-292, K-89, R-80.
16. Alta California, 5/9/1858; San Jose Mercury, 5/9/1884.
17. San Jose Tribune, 7/7/1858; San Francisco Chronicle, 10/29/1952.
18. Pacific Wine & Spirit Review, 1/4/1884, 3/27/1885; *Second Report...Board of State Viticultural Commissioners*, Sacramento, 1884, 39-40, 108-109, 112, 126.
19. William Henry Bishop, *Old Mexico and Her Lost Provinces*, New York, 1883, 359. The author made it clear that for this valley Lefranc was "the pioneer in making wine-growing a regular industry."
20. San Jose Mercury, 9/21/1871; Thompson & West, *Historical Atlas...Santa Clara County*, San Francisco, 1876, 16-17, 105-110.
21. Alta California, 8/8/1860; San Jose Mercury, 10/8/1868, 9/5/1871; San Jose Times, 10/11/1882; San Jose Herald, 5/22/1885.
22. Neal Harlow, *California Conquered*, Berkeley, 1982, 303-304; Susan Fischler, "Wine, Women and Naglee," 1977 ms. in the California Room, San Jose Public Library. The author has used seldom seen material in the Naglee Family Collection (33 boxes) at the Bancroft Library.
23. *Ag, Soc.*, 1870/1871, 496-500.
24. Alta California, 2/19/1877; San Jose Times, 4/15/1881; San Jose Mercury, 4/17/1879.
25. *Wines & Vines*, 7/1/1941; San Jose Evening Times, 11/3/1944.
26. Pacific Wine & Spirit Review, 8/30/1890, 2/6/1897, 4/23/1897, 3/31/1902, 4/30/1904.
27. San Jose Times, 2/10/1884; Fischler's paper goes into his relations with women in detail, as its title suggests.
28. San Jose Mercury, 11/15/1915.
29. Sullivan, *Zinfandel*, 27-28.
30. Mabel Noonan, *Samuel R. Williams Family*, Cupertino, 1977. The author was Williams' granddaughter.
31. Bruce Macgregor, *South Pacific Coast*, Berkeley, 1969, 117-133.
32. R. R. Steward (ed.), *The Burrell Papers*, Oakland, 1960.
33. San Jose Tribune, 10/21 and 28/1859; Stephen Payne, *A Howling Wilderness*, Cupertino, De Anza College, 1978, 75-77, 107-116.
34. Alta California, 8/14/1866.
35. Michael Holland, "Wine History in Santa Cruz County ...," undergraduate thesis in American Studies, U.C. Santa Cruz, 1982, 17-27; California Farmer, 10/23/1873; Alta California, 10/16/1872.
36. California Farmer, 10/17/1867, 10/13/1870, 10/23/1873, 10/2/1876; San Jose Mercury, 10/17/1867; San Jose Times, 10/1/1882, 12/14/1884.
37. Thomas Hart Hyatt, *Hand-Book of Grape Culture*, San Francisco, 1876, 148; San Jose Herald, 4/13/1885; Pacific Tree and Vine, 8/29/1896.
38. Gilbert Richards, *Crossroads*, Woodside, 1973, 105-106.
39. This long article appeared in the San Francisco Post, 11/29/1879. The reporter wrote that a Lefranc white wine served at a recent banquet for former President Grant was "one of those wines upon which the [fine] reputation of California vineyards is based."



A GOOD FIND
by Gail Unzelman

The Wine Trade of the Port of Chepstow

by Ivor Waters. [1967] Monmouthshire: The Chepstow Society. Printed by R. H. Johns. [9] pp. Illustrated with an 1843 Chepstow wine merchant invoice. 8½ x 5½. Yellow-orange card covers, printed & decorated in red. Limited to 1019 copies.



Jim Gabler's *Wine Into Words* (p.393) gives this annotation for the entry: "The port city of Chepstow played an important part in the wine trade soon after Eleanor of Aquitaine married Henry Plantagenet, Duke of Anjou and Normandy, and he became King Henry II of England in 1153. Henry's favoritism to Bordeaux wine merchants gave them a virtual monopoly on the English wine trade, and Bordeaux remained under English rule for three centuries. ... The booklet goes on to detail Chepstow's involvement in the English wine trade through 1882 when Chepstow ceased to be a port."

In his brief, but well-researched history, Waters made fine use of André Simon's 3-volume *History of the Wine Trade in England* (1906–1909) and his later *Wine and the Wine Trade* (1921), citing both titles for much information. Ivor Waters and his pamphlet are not well-known to the wine book world, but their story is an interesting one.

Chepstow is located in Wales, on the River Wye, just above its confluence with the River Severn, 110 miles west of London. With its ancient history, including the oldest surviving stone castle in Britain, it has been a favorite tourist destination since the late 18th century. The website of the Stella and Rose Bookshop in present day Chepstow gives us a fine biographical/bibliographical sketch of Ivor Waters and the Chepstow Society which he organized.

Ivor Waters—for us, working here at Stella books—is a familiar name among the thousands of books lining the shelves. Born in Chepstow in 1907, Harry Ivor Waters lived at 41 Hardwick Avenue [also the address of The Chepstow Society]. His family have roots in Chepstow going back to the late 1600s, at least. Perhaps it was only natural that he had a deep interest in all things pertaining to the history of Chepstow, and produced many booklets and books about the area.

In 1948 Ivor hired a room in the old Tudor Café in Chepstow's Beaufort Square, and invited anyone interested in local history to attend a meeting. A letter was published in the Chepstow Weekly Argus outlining his proposition to form a local history society to arrange lectures, excursions, the 'preservation of books, pictures, old records and objects of local interest, with the objective of setting up a Chepstow Museum archives; to publish brief monographs on particular aspects of Chepstow history or customs', etc. Ivor Waters became the Hon. Secretary of the newly founded society.

The first Chepstow Society publication, written by Ivor Waters himself, was *Chepstow Lords and Commons* (1948). *The Wine Trade of the Port of Chepstow* was the third publication of the Chepstow Society Pamphlets Series begun in 1967; it ended with pamphlet 32 in 1977. For many years the Society publications were printed by R. H. Johns Ltd. of Newport, and Waters learned much from his frequent visits to the printing works on Dock Street. Armed with knowledge gained during those twenty years, he began printing from his own private press which came to be called The Moss Rose Press—the only independent press in Wales.

It is doubtful that Chepstow would have such a well-documented history if it hadn't been for the drive and dedication of Ivor Waters who sadly passed away in 1992. [There are some 86 titles by Waters, 1948–1987, listed on the website.]

[Our Tendril thanks to Joe Lynch for bringing this interesting and unusual wine booklet to our attention. — Ed.]

NUGGETS OF THE PAST...FOR TODAY
Gleaned from Old Issues of Our WTQuarterly

A Wine-Book Collector's Reference Library
by *Emanuel Berk*
[v.10 #4, October 2000]

The Emergence of Wine Book Collecting

Prior to the 1980s, few wine lovers or book collectors recognized wine books as something to collect seriously. Most booksellers and auctions lumped wine books in with "gastronomy" or "cooking," and the prices paid for even important rarities were often laughably low. Meanwhile, a few serious collectors around the world were quietly building up priceless collections. ... Things are different today. The number of collectors worldwide is growing.

Intelligence for the Collector

When it comes to information on wine books, there is no ultimate authority. Several bibliographies deal with wine books either in part or in whole, but none of these covers the whole field. One may have to look through several bibliographies—and dig into well-annotated auction and bookseller's catalogues—to find a description of a particularly rare book. Even today, it's possible to find a book by an important author not referred to in any of the major bibliographies or catalogues.

But while the spottiness of bibliographic information can be frustrating at times, it also adds to the excitement and satisfaction of collecting wine books.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES: Valuable bibliographies to consider for your reference shelf are James Gabler's *Wine Into Words*, André Simon's three works: *Vinaria*, *Bacchica*, and *Gastronomica*, Gail Unzelman's *Wine & Gastronomy: A Short-Title ... Guide [to] the André Simon Bibliothecas*, and Georges Vicaire's *Bibliographie Gastronomique*. [We can add in 2013: M. Amerine & A. Borg, *Bibliography on Grapes, Wines ... Published in the U.S. Before 1901* and G. Unzelman, *Printer's Ink: A Bibliographic Remembrance of André L. Simon and His Written Works*. – Ed.]

AUCTION CATALOGUES: ...Several important sale catalogues of wine and gastronomy books are a good source of bibliographic and price information. Included are Gérard Oberlé's catalogue of the Kilian Fritsch collection, *Une Bibliothèque Bachique* (1993) and Oberlé's *Les Fastes de Bacchus et de Comus* sale (1989). Also noteworthy: *Marcus & Elizabeth Crahan Collection of Books on Food, Drink ...* (1984) and the 1981 *Catalogue of Printed Books and Manuscripts relating to Wine & Food ... of the Late André Simon*.

BOOK COLLECTING GUIDE: *Understanding Book-Collecting* by Grant Uden. [Also highly recommended, John Carter's *ABC for Book Collectors*.] ■

A BOOK REVIEW
by Allan Shields

Wine for Dummies. Ed McCarthy and Mary Ewing-Mulligan. IDGY Books Worldwide, Foster City, CA, Chicago, &c, 1995. 402 pp.

It is.

Silver Thoughts on Book Collecting
by

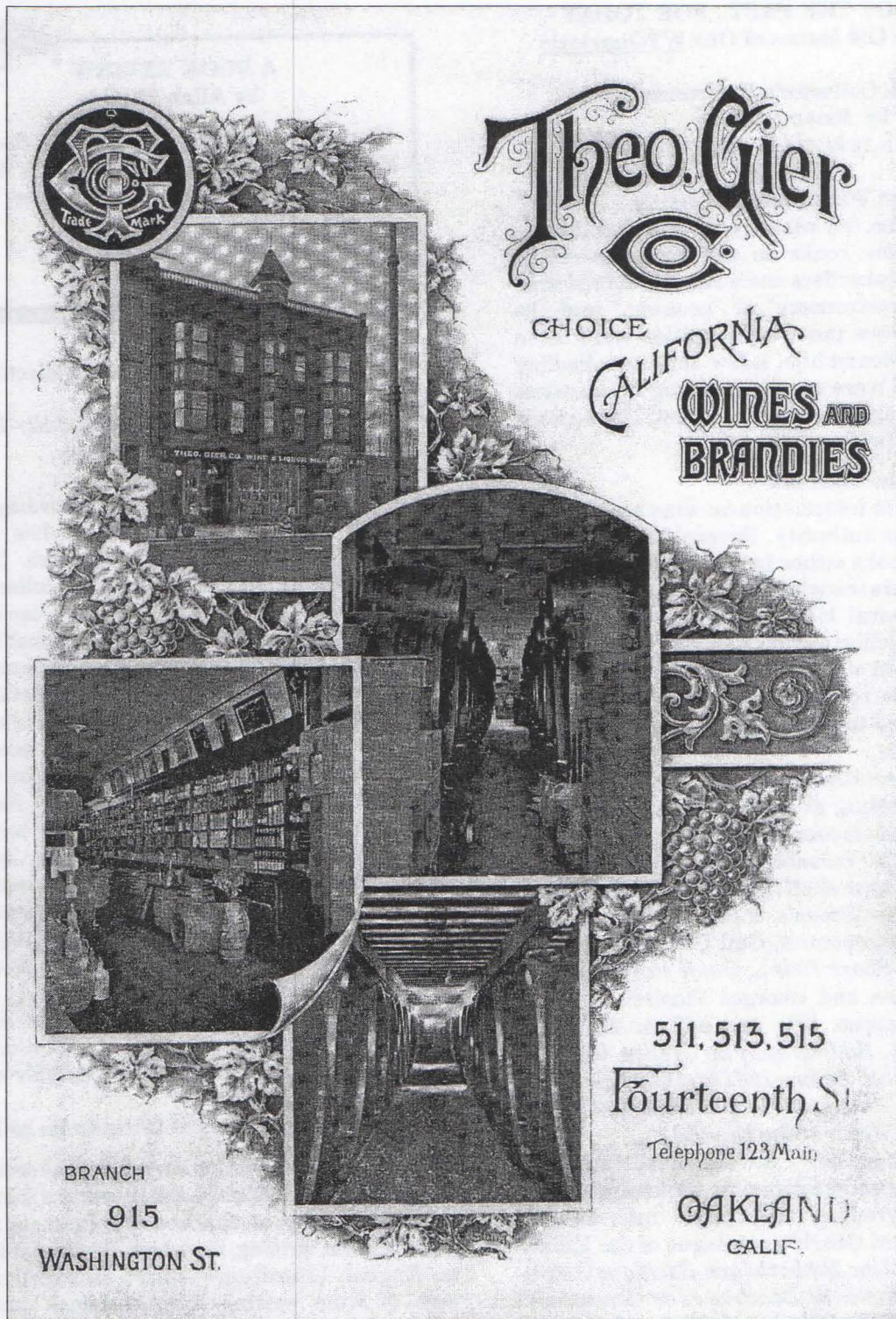
Joel Silver, *Curator of Books, Lilly Library*
[v.10 #1, January 2000]

THE PRACTICE OF COLLECTING according to a governing central idea or subject has long been considered basic by most book collectors. In doing so, we can not only build an enjoyable collection in an area in which we're interested, but we can also add to the store of bibliographical and historical knowledge in an area that may not have been explored in quite the way we're approaching it. ... The collection formed under the umbrella of this central idea should include the finest examples that the collector can obtain or afford, as well as any other reference or tangential publications related to the guiding idea of the collection. ... Rarity, which figures much too largely in the popular view of book-collecting, is entirely subordinate to that of interest, for the rarity of a book devoid of interest is a matter of no concern. ... The satisfactions—emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual—that come from collecting books are chiefly realized by their gatherers and owners. ... But in its essence the pastime of a book collector is identical with the official work of the curator of a museum, or the librarian of any library of respectable age. ■

Browsing the *Oxford Companion to Wine*

The *Oxford Companion's* several-page section on the "Literature of Wine"—the literature that concerns wine specifically, as opposed to references to wine in more general writing, for which the reader is directed to "English Literature"—offers an excellent overall view of wine writing from classical times to the present day. Written by Tendril Christopher Fielden, this "complicated tapestry" of wine literature is divided into sub-topics: Early Works and Agriculture, Wine as Medicine, The Golden Age, Specialist Books, Technical Literature, and Modern Wine Writing. Within the text, a number of individual writers and topics are indexed for further reading. ■





The cover of a folding Theo. Gier Co. trade card providing rare views of their Fourteenth Street operation in Oakland. The card includes a price list for their extensive selection of wines as well as a promotional story about Gier's vineyards in the Livermore & Napa Valleys. Circa 1905.