



WAYWARD TENDRILS QUARTERLY

Vol.24 No.3

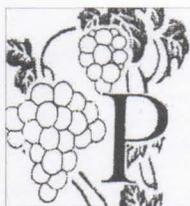
A WINE BOOK COLLECTOR'S SOCIETY

July 2014

COLLECTING BOOK COVERS: A Confession

Or, as Charles Dickens once said: "There are books of which the backs and covers are by far the best part."
by *Gail Unzelman*

[*Gail Unzelman has been collecting wine books for the Unzelman Library for over four decades ... about as long as her husband Ron has been collecting wine for the Unzelman Cellar. It is a vintage and tasty partnership. — Ed.*]



PREVIOUSLY, I MIGHT HAVE mentioned that sometimes—not often, just sometimes—a book that has absolutely nothing to do with wine finds its way into the fiction section of our wine library because of its cover. Frequently it is the dust jacket design that causes this miscue, but recently it has been the actual cloth binding itself. The titles of some of these miscreant books suggest that they have a wine theme, but in truth, not really.

That said, we find in our fiction library several very attractively attired books that are carefully shelved so that we can enjoy their showy, decorative covers. The group at hand has the distinction of being designed by Margaret Armstrong (1867–1944), acknowledged as one of America's more important and best-known designers of cloth bindings. During her 35-year career as a book artist she designed over 270 cloth bindings, highly collected today.

Of these almost three hundred Margaret Armstrong-decorated books, a lovely cluster of titles can be readily classed in the wine-cover category: three have a wine-related title, while only one can be catalogued as such. Let us indulge ourselves in them chronologically. (See illustrations p.24.)

Vinaceous Bindings

Margaret Armstrong began working as a book designer in 1890. She displayed her work at the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition and won awards for her artistic cover designs. Her talent flourished, and by the early 20th century she was among the foremost book designers in America, working regularly with the major publishing houses in New York and Chicago.

The earliest books located that wear a Margaret Armstrong vinaceous binding are in a series of studies on prominent literary figures written by Elisabeth Luther Cary (1867–1936), a New York art and literary critic, perhaps best known as art critic of the New

York Times during the first quarter of the 20th century. She also contributed a substantial list of biographical works, and one very interesting sounding title, *Books and My Food* (1904), a book of recipes inspired by quotes from famous literary personalities. This Armstrong-bound series began with two books in 1898—*Tennyson: His Homes, His Friends, and His Work* and *Browning, Poet and Man: A Survey*. Following in 1900, *The Rossettis: Dante Gabriel and Christina*; in 1902, *William Morris: Poet, Craftsman, Socialist*; and in 1904, *Emerson, Poet and Thinker*. All were published in New York by Putnam's Sons/Knickerbocker Press; all wear the same breathtaking cover design: a gilt-stamped grapevine laden with grape clusters, entwined on a decorative trellis, against a backdrop of dark blue cloth. Spectacular.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- LORE of the LABEL by T. Pinney & G. Unzelman
- RAILWAY STATION BOOK REVIEWS by C. Fielden
- IN THE WINE LIBRARY by Bob Foster
- VINTAGE TALES REVISITED by W. Johnson
- EARLY CA WINE—SONOMA CO. 1878-90 by C. Sullivan
- SO. AFRICAN WINE BOOKS by G. Unzelman
- NEWS & NOTES and MORE ...

The Wine Press

In 1905, Anna Robeson Brown's *The Wine Press* was published by the New York firm, Appleton & Co., with a fine, decorative Margaret Armstrong binding. A brief description of the story suggests your usual breathless Victorian saga; most likely the only wine material is on the title page: "I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people there was none with me."—Isaiah. (I confess I have not read the book; I do not intend to do so.)

Armstrong's bindings are easily recognizable, not only by their highly individualistic designs, eye-catching bright, bold colors with a flowing stained-glass tactile technique, but by her distinctive signature mark, an intertwined MA, that signs her covers.



The Wine Press is bound boldly in a dark rust-brown cloth, with a contrasting cream and black decoration: grape clusters and lettering in cream; the intertwining vine leaves and her signature MA incorporated within, are in black; she does the spine decoration in cream, with only a black vine leaf and a dangling tendril around a cream cluster of grapes. Compared with many of her more colorful, showy designs, this is rather restrained. But it is striking, nonetheless!

Master of the Vineyard

The next book on our MA list—and one of the most stunning—is Myrtle Reed's 1910 *Master of the Vineyard* (NY: Putnam's/Knickerbocker). This title is included in James Gabler's bibliography of English language wine books, *Wine Into Words*, so it has a legitimate claim to be in our library. But it is the book's over-the-top, lavish presentation—pale lavender cloth with brilliant purple grapes hanging from gilt grapevines encircling the gilt-lettered title—that installs it there in all its glory. It was this book that introduced Margaret Armstrong to us. She did a series of books for Reed, displaying numerous times her masterly use of botanical designs. *Master of the Vineyard* is a favorite.

Our copy has a two-color dust jacket and slip case that replicate the cloth-cover motif. I asked an antiquarian bookseller if most of the Armstrong designed books were issued with a dust jacket and slipcase: he thought the Myrtle Reed books most certainly were, and it is likely other publishers followed suit. These books, once common, are now becoming very hard to find in good condition and almost impossible to find in fine condition in their slip cases. These accoutrements certainly protect the bindings and can keep them pristine ... but we prefer to view the naked, vibrant book beaming from the shelf.

The Wine of Astonishment

In 1919, *The Wine of Astonishment* by Mary Hastings Bradley—an award-winning Chicago author, lecturer, journalist, war correspondent, and traveler—was published by Appleton & Co., who printed most of her books. For the book cover, Appleton applied the same MA design they had used for *The Wine Press* in 1905, although this is an understated presentation. The colors, a muted beige cloth with pale blue grapes and soft green leaves, are much less distinct in contrast and depth, and are pictured in an ever so slightly smaller scale. You recognize it as an MA design, but as a re-run it lacks the pizzazz of the earlier original binding.

Margaret Armstrong continued to design book covers through the mid-1920s, though after 1915 most of her work was either for her own books or continuations of series she had started at the turn of the century. After 1910, elaborately stamped cloth bindings had begun to be replaced by colorful paper dust jackets that were much cheaper to produce.

In her sixties, book artist Armstrong began a second career as a biographer and mystery novelist, publishing two well-received biographies and three mystery novels before her death at age 76 in 1944.

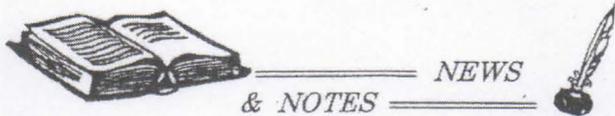
We salute her career, and for including wine-book covers in her designs.

NOTE: For a brilliant, full-color tour of Margaret Armstrong bindings, visit these sites:

- Margaret Armstrong - Publishers' Bindings Online bindings.lib.ua.edu/designerbios/armstrong.html
- Margaret Armstrong Decorated Bindings Collection <http://www.rarebook.com/index.php/collections/79-margaret-armstrong-collection>



"A WORD TO THE WISE - Have a book in case you are bored." The "Gibson Girl" at her best, created by Charles Dana Gibson, c1890.



Welcome, new members! Beginning collector, **Allen Alexis** (apa819@hotmail.com), has a special interest in wine books from the “New World and the Old” in English, French, Spanish, and other languages. **Sean Fernandez** (seanfernandez@gmail.com) has been assembling a wine library since 2006, with a special interest in History, Memoirs, California. **John Norris** (jnrarebooks@gmail.com), an antiquarian bookseller in Brno, Czech Republic, who specializes in pre-1800 books on the History of Science, has recently found a keen interest in wine literature. He sends greetings to all from the wine region of Southern Moravia. **Hennie Taljaard** (htaljaard@witzenberg.gov.za) lives in the beautiful Ceres Valley of South Africa, and collects books on S.A. wine. He is researching the literature for a future report to our WTQ.

HAVE OTHERS POPPED UP??

Is *Hugh Johnson's Pop-Up Wine Book* (1989) the only pop-up in the wine-book world? If anyone knows of others, please write the editor at waywardtendrils@att.net.

How to Elutriate Your Wine in 1838

A charming and handsome little book, *Hints for the Table: or The Economy of Good Living. With a Few Words on Wines*, first published in London in 1838, illustrates this decanting technique. Written anonymously by John Timbs, the popular guide was reprinted several times. The “New Edition” of 1860 is the latest printing located.

The book is not known to Gabler's *Wine Into Words*, but Simon in his *Bibliotheca Gastronomica* and *Vinaria* cites the 1838 (168 pp) and an 1859 (184 pp) edition; Bitting, the 1859 edition; Oxford, 1838 ed: “This book is full of interesting facts and stories.”

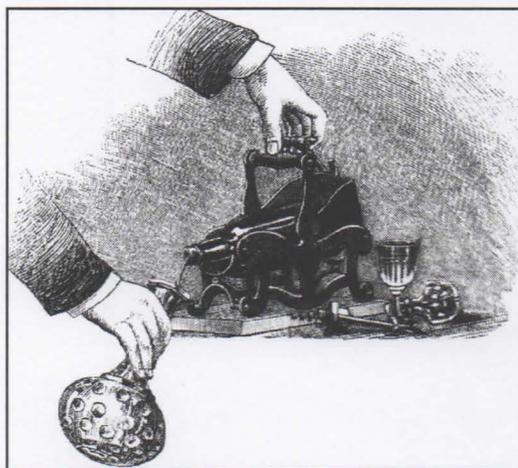
Mr. Timbs [1800–1875], elected a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1834, was a prolific author of nonfiction, with an interest, it seems, in most things historical. *Curiosities of London ...with nearly Sixty Years Personal Recollections: Curiosities of Science...a Book for Old and Young; Club Life of London with Anecdotes of the Clubs*, and his 2-volume *Coffee-Houses and Taverns of the 17th, 18th, and 19th Centuries* are but a few of his 150 mid-19th century published titles.

The section on wines is 20-plus pages, with several pages on Spirits and Punches following. After first discoursing on the wines of the world, our author eloquently slips into his essay on “Wine, and Decanting—The Elutriator”:

On a question of ‘good living,’ Wine may, perhaps,

be expected to hold the place of honor...we [should] view Wine as a delightful social friend, ...a very interesting natural product. Its beneficent influences in daily life claim our gratitude. It is beautiful to the eye, agreeable to the palate, of exquisite fragrance, cheering to the spirits, invigorating to the mental and physical powers.

Timbs is obviously captivated by the clever decanting machine, for it is pictured on the frontispiece, the only illustration in his book. (The top half of the frontispiece is an engraving of “Ortolans” which he presents on page 72, small birds, “lumps of celestial fatness,” for the gourmet and explains how best to prepare them for feasting—brandy is crucial.)



Frontispiece: “THE PATENT ELUTRIATOR FOR DECANTING WINE”

Hints for the Table...with a Few Words on Wines gets a vintage WT recommendation.

CALIFORNIA VITICULTURAL DISTRICT HISTORIES NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE!

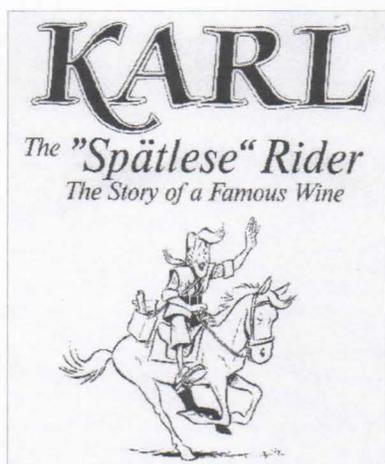
In 1880, California was divided into seven geographic viticultural districts by the State Legislature. Wine historian Ernest Peninou [1916–2002] used these designated districts to compile a descriptive and statistical review of California's wine industry: *The History of the Viticultural Districts of California* and *A Statistical History of Wine Grape Acreage in California, 1856-1992*.

In 1998, Nomis Press published volume one of the series, *A History of the Sonoma Viticultural District* (by Ernest P. Peninou, Gail Unzelman and Michael Anderson, 456pp, well-illustrated, clothbound). When Mr. Peninou died in October 2002, Gail Unzelman sorted through his countless crates of manuscript papers to assemble the six remaining histories of this seven-volume series, along with the grape acreage statistical history. These histories—covering the viticultural districts of El Dorado (203 pp), Los Angeles (255 pp), Napa (345 pp), Sacramento (173 pp), San Francisco (332 pp), San Joaquin (171 pp), and the

statistical volume of the State's grape-acreage figures (212 pp)—can now be downloaded from our Wayward Tendrils website. The volumes, fully searchable, are chock-full of California wine industry information—an invaluable asset to any student, librarian, or researcher of California wine history. What a welcome reference!

KARL COMICS

Karl. The "Spätlese" Rider. The Story of a Famous Wine (1988) and *Karl. The Huge Barrel* (1991) are volumes 1 and 2 of a brilliant series of comic books by Michael Apitz, celebrated German cartoon artist, and Patrick Kunkel who wrote the text from a story by Eberhard Kunkel. Ever since the publication of *Der Spätlesereiter* in 1988, the stories about Karl—all set in late 18th and early 19th century Germany—have enjoyed an immense success, which even resulted in spin-off wine books and mystery novels. There are some quite interesting discussions online about the series, its allusions, &c. Google "Karl Comics. Kunkel and Apitz" for a start. Question: Twelve titles were located online; are these the only two translated into English?



Another KARL

In 1979 S. W. Karl wrote a raucous novel, *The Wine Merchants*, described as "Wine, women, and war. Five GIs set out to destroy a Nazi rocket site and find themselves swimming in vino" (Manor Books, 224 pp., paperback). It won't be high-up on anyone's wine-fiction list, but it qualifies, and is a fun read.



Wine. On Noble Drink: Wine, Champagne and Cognac

is the title of a most delightful, interesting little book featuring Poster Stamps with a wine theme. Recently published in Hungary, in an edition of 200 numbered copies, 3¼ x 2¾ in size, it is strikingly hand-bound in glossy, illustrated paper boards. A two-page history of Poster

Stamps introduces these collectable little gems that, during their Golden Era from 1900 to WWII, were printed by the many thousands and became instantly popular with collectors. They look like postage stamps, but are not. Created to advertise a product or event, many are miniatures of actual posters, designed by acclaimed poster artists of the day. Facing pages of the 64-page book have a color reproduction of a poster stamp and text (in English) about the stamp, the artist, the advertising wine or wine firm. Expertly edited by Charles Kiddle (the acknowledged authority and leader of the Poster Stamp collecting world), Ch. J. Blase, and G. Unzelman, this little book, "produced in praise of good Wine, Champagne, and Cognac, offers a rich, vintage tasting of some 30 poster stamps published to promote wine." At a cost of only \$20 each (including S/H) this entertaining book is the perfect special gift for our wine friends. Copies of the book are available from WT. e-mail Gail at waywardtendrils@att.net



For a while now, your editor has been an enthusiastic collector of those Poster Stamps whose artistic images capture a little piece of wine history, and heartily recommends this very pleasing hobby. There are a number of Poster Stamp publications available: *Journal of the Poster Stamp Collectors Club* (info on their website); *The Poster Stamp Bulletin* (contact Walter Schmidt at pssoc@charter.net); *The Cinderella Philatelist*, journal of The Cinderella Stamp Club, headquartered in the UK (cinderella.stampclub.org.uk). Tendril Bruce Johnson edits a first-class journal, *Enophilatelica*, that is dedicated to wine philately (indybruce1@yahoo.com).

VINTAGE COUNSEL

IF YOU CANNOT READ ALL YOUR BOOKS, at any rate handle, or as it were, fondle them — peer into them, let them fall open where they will, read from the first sentence that arrests the eye, set them back on the shelves with your own hands, arrange them on your own plan so that you at least know where they are. Let them be your friends; let them at any rate be your acquaintances. — WINSTON CHURCHILL (1874–1965)

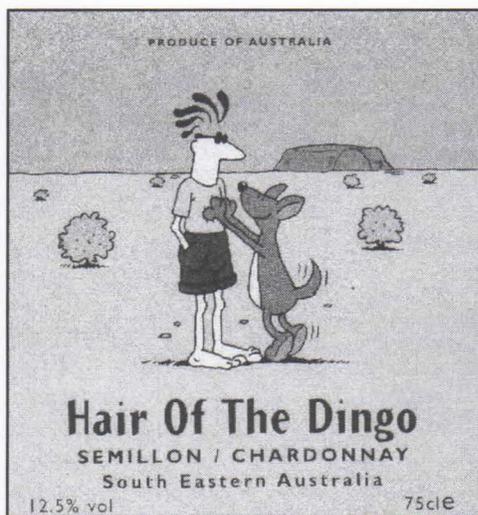
LORE OF THE LABEL
by Tom Pinney and Gail Unzelman

VINTAGE TENDRIL TOM PINNEY recently sent in this Nero d'Avola wine label and a photo of its original Greek inspiration. With it, Tom suggested we start a column in our *WTQ* called "Lore of the Label," where we can enjoy in each issue selected labels—"historic, artistic, comic, sporting, political, illegitimate, or otherwise interesting." We invite all Tendrils to participate!

Over the years, WT members have contributed a number of significant articles on the subject of wine labels to our *Quarterly* (here we are referring to printed paper labels, not bottle tickets). Beginning with v.4, 1 (1994) was "Collecting Wine Labels: A Wealth of Information" by Angela Stewart, an avid collector and publisher of the *Wine Label News*. Roy Brady's brief essay on "California Wine Labels" in v.12, 3 (2002) reminded us: "It was not until the 18th century that paper bottle labels began to be used, and well into the 19th century before they became at all common." In v.14, 2 we reprinted wine writer Edward Bunyan's 1939 *Wine & Food* review of *Clarets and Sauternes*, published anonymously [G.A. Keeler] in 1920. This admirable book is chock-full of reproductions of Bordeaux labels. A recent 2011 issue (v.21, 1), carried an in-depth study of "Printing California's Wine Labels" by Bruce Johnson.



Tom Pinney's wine label (\$4.99 at Trader Joe's, CA) that inspired our 'Lore of the Label' series. This scene of a girl holding the head of a very intoxicated young man is taken from an ancient Greek vessel. Tom thanks his friend Steve Glass, professor of classics, emeritus, Pitzer College, Claremont, for identifying the classical model: "The painter of this Attic red-figured vase painting, c 490 BC, is called 'The Brygos Painter' because he painted a number of vases (mostly drinking cups) by a potter who signed his vases 'Brygos.' That a potter did not necessarily paint his own pots, is standard in classical antiquity. I've always thought it funny that the picture here is from the bottom of a drinking cup (called a 'kylix'), for, if the drawing was intended as a warning to the drinker, it comes too late."



"With a dingo and Ayers Rock on the label, there's little doubt that this wine comes from Australia. Dingoes are native wild dogs, and a 'hair of the dog'—a small amount of what you drank the previous night—is a traditional cure for a hangover. This wine is a fine example of a uniquely Australian innovation — blending a Bordeaux variety Semillon with a Burgundy variety Chardonnay. Oh, and for the record: Dingoes do not bark, but they can turn their wrists, and rotate their heads almost 360 degrees." — From *Marilyn Merlot and the Naked Grape*, 2006.

Recommended Wine Label Books

Several of the more noted wine label books the *WTQ* has recommended over the years are:

- *Icon. Art of the Wine Label* by J. Caldewey and C. House, 2003.
- *Wine Libels. The Not-So-Ordinaire Book of Humorous Wine Labels* by M. Feigel and B. Busselle, 1989.
- *Stories Behind the Labels. The History, Romance & Characters of the World of Wine and Drink* by Andrew Jones, celebrated wine journalist, writer, and broadcaster, 1994.
- *Marilyn Merlot and the Naked Grape. Odd Wines from Around the World* by Peter May, 2006.
- *Mouton-Rothschild. Paintings for the Labels 1945-1981*. 1983.
- *Les Etiquettes de Vin. Un Monde Merveilleux* by Georges Renoy, 1981.

Email a scan of your favorite labels, and their stories, to the Editor at nomispress@att.net or waywardtendrils@att.net.

RAILWAY STATION BOOK REVIEWS

by Christopher Fielden

[Our UK correspondent and book reviewer, Christopher Fielden, has written more than a dozen wine books and contributed the Oxford Companion to Wine entry on the 'Literature of Wine.' He has also sold a bottle or two of wine during his 45 years in the wine trade. — Ed.]



RAILWAY STATION BOOKSHOP is not perhaps the most likely place to find historic wine books (and at greatly reduced prices) but an enforced wait at Oporto's Campanha Station enabled me to pick up two bargains. The first, *Madeira Wine at Home* by Don Glen Sandy,

scarcely contains what it says on the label. In reality it turns out to be a miscellany of bits and pieces about the island, its wines and, mostly, its food. The author was editor of the *Madeira Island Bulletin* for many years and this appears to be the random gleanings of his work, liberally besprinkled with random illustrations. Topics include "Sea fossils found in the mountains" to "Fashionable," which informs us that ladies in the English court "Perfumed their fingertips and laces with Madeira." The majority of the book is taken up with recipes which may or may not feature the wines of the island. Some of them do have a bizarre appeal. Take, for example, that for Wedding Cake in June, which begins, "Since 1978 the *Madeira Island Bulletin* has published a different recipe monthly. Get ready for the big one and get those hens laying. This recipe is for each kilo. Make it as big as you like. Some cakes have been so large that the chef had to stand on a ladder to finish the decorations..."

Whilst this book has a certain dated appeal, if you really want to learn something about the wines of the island, I would suggest Trevor Elliott's *The Wines of Madeira*.

I will admit straightaway that I find Portuguese an almost incomprehensible language to listen to, but with a knowledge of Spanish, I can get a reasonable idea of what the written word is all about. As a result I found *A Vinha e o Vinho no Século XX* by Orlando Simões much more interesting. It is difficult to fully appreciate just how cut off Portugal was in Europe in the 20th century, firstly under the dictatorship of Salazar and later after the 1974 revolution, when the Bergqvist family of Quinta de la Rosa felt it wise to bury the family silver in a nearby forest. The controls on the wine industry were oppressive with, in some regions, all the wine having to be made in co-operative cellars and, in others, the systematic planting of

vineyards being forbidden. The European Common Market was the great liberator and enabled the wines of Portugal (beyond Port, Madeira, and Lancers) to take their rightful place in the world.

This book tells this story, and the development is clearly illustrated with charts and graphs. This must be a necessary book for every wine historian—preferably with some knowledge of Portuguese.

I have known the wines of Uruguay since they made their first faltering appearance on the European stage in 1989, but it has taken almost twenty-five years for the first book in English dedicated to them to appear. *The Unique Wines of Uruguay*, by André Dominé has a truly international pedigree. The author is a German who lives in France and the book has been translated into English and printed in Czechoslovakia. The fact that the book was written in another language does occasionally show as the translation can appear stilted. Indeed, the first sentence in the book, "How admirable the way Uruguay's wines have developed over the last decade!" has a strange ring to it. Credit must be given to the photographs of Mariano Herrera, which greatly enrich this book.

Whilst some space is given to the varied touristic and gastronomic attractions of the country and some to the history of wine production there, the bulk is made up of profiles of the twenty-three most important *bodegas* in the country who each, presumably, contributed to the cost of the book. Each is allocated four pages of which, in most cases, half is taken up with photographs. This format, whilst understandable, makes comparisons of scale and quality all but impossible and I would have welcomed more background material, including some statistics, giving a fuller picture of the industry as a whole.

This is a book that I am very happy to have on my shelves, but I will leave a space next to it for a book that gives a more detailed overview of the wines of this small, but significant player in the world of quality wine.

Don Glen Sandy. *Madeira Wine at Home*. Funchal: Madeira Island Bulletin, 1988. 237 pp.

Trevor Elliott. *The Wines of Madeira. An Indispensable Guide to the Wines, Grapes, and Producers*. 2010. 192 pp.

Orlando Simões. *A Vinha e o Vinho no Século XX*. Lisbon: Celta, 2006. 246 pp. 21 euros.

André Dominé. *The Unique Wines of Uruguay*. Montevideo: Wines of Uruguay, 2013. 172 pp.



IN THE
WINE
LIBRARY

by Bob Foster



A Man and His Mountain: The Everyman Who Created Kendall-Jackson and Became America's Greatest Wine Entrepreneur by Edward Humes. New York: Public Affairs/Perseus Books Group, 2013. 324 pp., hardback, \$26.99.

"... story of a man with a vision ..."



his is the biography of Jess Jackson, the founder and driving force behind the Kendall-Jackson wine empire. It's an amazing story of a man driven by a love of land and a desire to make reasonably priced wines (at least at first). The extent of his drive seems to border on fanatical. It cost him

his first wife and deeply stained his relationship with some of his children. But it is also a story of a man with vision concerning what wines should capture the favor of the American palate.

It began with a stuck fermentation at Jackson's first small winery in California. After repeated efforts to get the wine to finish fermenting, it would not budge. Jackson and his winemaker decided to buy other wine and blend it into the stuck wine. They created a slightly sweet Chardonnay which became the first Vintner's Reserve Chardonnay. The wine achieved amazing press when Nancy Reagan chose it to be served at a dinner in the White House and legendary columnist Herb Caen wrote of its selection. With this publicity the wine took off.

The book goes on to chronicle the growth of Jackson's empire to its present day huge size. But, like so many biographies of famous winemakers, it glosses over, omits details, and paints every loss as caused by improper or questionable matters. For example, at one point Jackson sued the Gallo empire over the similarity of their Turning Leaf label to the Jacksons Vintner's Reserve. In the trial, court representatives of Mondavi, Sebastiani, and Wente all testified that the Turning Leaf label was not too close to the Kendall-Jackson label. Jackson attributed their positions to improper commercial rivalry rather than their honest opinions. Similarly in discussing the loss of this lawsuit, the author points out that the jury foreman, and most of the jurors, were not wine drinkers. It is implied that this fact undermined the validity of the verdict.

At other times the book becomes suddenly vague. For instance, Jackson fired his very first winemaker in Lakeport for numerous acts of dereliction of duty. The identity of this person is never stated. Similarly the book notes that at the end of the 1990s Jackson conducted a blind tasting of his wines against Mondavi, Chateau St. Jean, Clos du Bois and nine other big-name producers. The Jackson wines finished first and second, but the details are glossed over. Where was the tasting? Who were the judges? Much more was needed.

Interestingly, the book has a chapter on Jackson's venture into thoroughbred horse racing (including how he was fleeced by unethical individuals and how he sued and recouped some of his losses). It is a side of Jackson unknown to most wine lovers.

The author inadvertently shows the flawed nature of some of Robert Parker's scores and methods. After Jackson's death Parker was at the winery to taste the newest release of Vérité, the super-premium wine Jackson had developed. Parker "wept at the tasting." He missed having Jackson with him as he tasted the K-J wines. He asked the winery to put together a vertical tasting of the Vérité wines. Tasting apparently un-blind Parker gave out five scores of 98 and four scores of 99. If there is ever an example of why a wine critic should never be tasting wines un-blind this is it. A critic so moved as to weep at the loss of a winemaker ought to recognize how those strong emotions will color their evaluation of the wines.

The book is well written and fascinating but I so wish it had photographs of the members of the Jackson clan and some of the other major players. This would have added to the book's impact. Nevertheless, the book is an interesting saga. Highly recommended.

[Bob Foster, a founder of the WT, has graciously shared with us his book reviews written for the [California Grapevine](#)—the oldest continuously published private wine newsletter in the United States, now in its 39th year of publication. The above review was printed in the April 2014 issue. — Ed.]



THE WAYWARD TENDRILS is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1990 for Wine Book Collectors. Yearly Membership / Subscription to the WAYWARD TENDRILS QUARTERLY (ISSN 1552-9460) is \$25 USA and Canada; \$30 overseas. Permission to reprint is requested. WAYWARD TENDRILS, P.O. Box 9023, Santa Rosa, CA. 95405 U.S.A. — Editor / Publisher: Gail Unzelman. www.waywardtendrils.com email: waywardtendrils@att.net

VINTAGE TALES REVISITED

by Gail Unzelman, with Warren Johnson



OMETIMES AN ANTHOLOGY is just what you want for your reading pleasure, whether on the bedside table or in the holiday suitcase. Three of the best were written-up in earlier issues of our journal. For the benefit of our more recent Tendrils, let's pull these volumes from the bookshelf for another visit.

Our anthologists responsible for these prize-winning collections of vinous reading are Clifton Fadiman and Cyril Ray, two celebrated collectors of stories, and their younger cohort, Barry Woelfel.

Clifton Fadiman

It could be said of Clifton Fadiman [1904–1999], with his keen interest in literature and formidable memory, that he was literally born to be an anthologist. Over six decades, he assembled more than two dozen anthologies dealing with everything from the beliefs of leading intellectuals to poetry to mathematics to prose to limericks and the atrocious pun...and the literature of wine.

In 1962 he "Collected and Edited," and wrote the "Introduction" to, *Dionysus. A Case of Vintage Tales About Wine* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 309 pp.). A few years later, in his 1968 address to the Society of Medical Friends of Wine in San Francisco, he had fun recalling the book: "Some years ago I got together a little anthology called *Dionysus. A Case of Vintage Tales about Wine*. It consisted of stories and other literary oddments all bearing on wine. It included some names that will be familiar to those of you who are readers: George Meredith, Lawrence Durrell, Hilaire Belloc, Edgar Allan Poe, Robert Graves, A. A. Milne, for example. The book was created not to make money but as a labor of love for the subject. However, I didn't expect it to make as little money as it made. It appeared in the middle of the New York newspaper strike; and so no one ever heard of it. You can still pick up an occasional copy of the first edition in odd places; but a copy of the second edition is rare. In fact, non-existent." He went on to explain that "*Dionysus* was intended to give the wine-lover and general reader some idea of the amusing and imaginative literature wine has evoked. The Persian poet Hafiz once wrote: 'On turnpikes of wonder wine leads the mind forth.' *Dionysus* explored a few such turnpikes." [WTQ April 2003]



Warren Johnson, in his July 2008 "Wine Tales" column, gave Fadiman's book a much fuller review:

Dionysus is a "case" of varied, even rare, stories put together for pure enjoyment: some are sweet, some are dry, others are sparkling. They include humor, science fiction, fantasy, mystery, horror, a novella and an excerpt from a novel.

Three stories of mystery are excellent wine tales. The first of these is a case of identity confusion. Lord Peter Wimsey is the famed British Inspector of mystery writer Dorothy Sayers. In *The Bibulous Business of a Matter of Taste*, two men claim to be Peter Wimsey; or, are there three? Only a blind wine tasting can identify the true Wimsey. Another mystery story is that of E.C. Bentley, *The Unknown Peer*. Philip Trent must backtrack a missing man by drinking wines in the hotels where he has stayed. The popularity of this story attests to it having also been included in Barry Woelfel's *Through a Glass, Darkly* [see below]. The third intriguing tale is *The Income Tax Mystery* by Michael Gilbert. As a solicitor, the protagonist of this story is invited to join a very select outfit investigating income tax frauds. How can a wine merchant live a high-style life yet seemingly not make any money? His wine cellar holds the secret.

The Wine Beyond the World by Alfred Noyes is an incredibly delicious taste of fantasy. The ancient German village of Rosenheim is home to the world's most expensive bottle of wine. The Emperor comes once a year to drink a thimbleful of this wine; the peasants can do no more than sniff the cork. A newly married couple from America are honeymooning in Europe and visit this village in order to taste this wine. They order it with their dinner. There is an uprising in the village, for no one but the Emperor tastes this wine; nor can anyone afford to purchase such a bottle. Does this couple get their glass of wine with dinner?

One of the earliest of horror stories, *The Cask of Amontillado* by Edgar Allan Poe, is included here, as it was in the Woelfel anthology. In that volume, a good discussion was given on the distinction between Amontillado and Sherry. In the Fadiman book, a similar discussion is offered by wine writer H. Warner Allen, "whose amusing commentary" Fadiman notes, "I appended to Poe's chiller."

A wine from 1865? Twelve bottles are owned by a wealthy man who has married a young woman and they have been saved for his 65th birthday. In G. B. Stern's *The 1865*, when the birthday arrives, the husband believes his wife has taken a lover and he

knows who it is. He invites both to his birthday dinner to taste this wine and to announce that he will divorce and allow them to marry. Only one shows up. What happens to the last of this wine?

Editor Fadiman introduces each story with a brief sketch of the author, or a quick synopsis of the tale at hand. This is a delightful book to sip and savor.

Cyril Ray

We next retrieve from the shelf Cyril Ray's 1984 *Vintage Tales* [London: Century, 368 pp.], also reviewed by Warren Johnson in the July 2008 *WTQ*. Warren writes:

Subtitled *An Anthology of Wine and Other Intoxications*, this book brings together 78 short prose and poetry works devoted to wine and other beverages. The mostly British authors include some of the best names in fiction: Evelyn Waugh, Michael Gilbert, Somerset Maugham, Margery Allingham, and Robert Louis Stevenson. Known to wine and gastronomy readers are, in addition to Cyril Ray himself, Julian Jeffs, M.F.K. Fisher and Raymond Postgate.

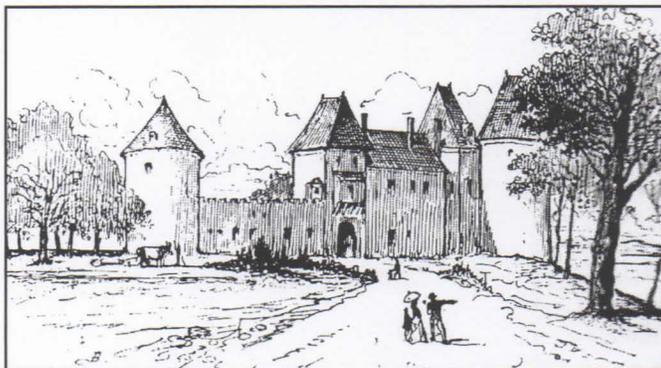
Each work is identified as to its origin—book, newspaper, or magazine. Many of the works are from Cyril Ray's own *The Compleat Imbiber*, a series of twelve volumes published between 1956 and 1971. (*The New Compleat Imbiber* from 1986–1992 is a revival.) The *Imbibers* present numerous works of fact and fiction celebrating the pleasures of food and wine. Old photographs and drawings—and almost every known decorative printing device—were used to illustrate these highly recommended volumes.

Here is a tasting of these *Vintage Tales*. From a 1961 *Compleat Imbiber* comes a story by James Cameron, who prescribes drinking only the local wines when traveling, whether in South Africa, Tibet or New York. A memorable line in his story, *Buzzings of a Far-Flung Bar Fly*, is "I may not know a good wine from a marvelous wine, but I can tell a real stinker—not that it stops me drinking it; still, I can tell." Rosemary Bazley wrote the poem *Bottle Doggerel* which ends with the quatrain "Try counting bottles / Instead of counting sheep, / For the right kind of bottles / Will send you to sleep."

Brian St. Pierre in *Bottling the Bookies* writes about playing the ponies: "There are many better ways of letting money slip through your fingers, I discovered, one of which was wine—enough of a

sporting proposition in itself." And, "I prayed as the horses left the starting gate but Pete's Sirah was true to type—he uncorked well, opened up immediately (even aggressively), dithered a little in the middle, but came through with a very lasting, hearty finish. (The price was right, too)."

Vintage Tales includes a story by Viennese Joseph Wechsberg, *Afternoon at Château d'Yquem*. Wechsberg, a writer on gastronomy, politics, and travel, wrote frequently for *The New Yorker* magazine. In a pre-dinner conversation, the writer and Monsieur K discuss the wines of Yquem. "No matter what some people may say about Bordeaux wines, they can't say anything about Yquem.... Yquem is perfection." For Yquem lovers, this story is followed by Godfrey Smith *The Case of Yquem*. The Robert Louis Stevenson entry is from his *The Silverado Squatters* of 1883.



"An hour later we arrived at the gravel-covered courtyard of Château d'Yquem, a large, medieval stone structure with walls a yard thick and a round watchtower overlooking the gentle slopes of the Sauternes district."

— *Afternoon at Château d'Yquem*.

Cyril Ray's choices of works make *Vintage Tales* a very delightful book, one that can be picked up and randomly delved into—it will be particularly appealing to any wine lover. The only fault I find with the book is its lack of biographical sketches for the contributing authors. Some of the authors are less well known than others and information about them would have added immeasurably to their writings.

Barry Woelfel

Again we applaud Tendril Johnson, wine fiction super sleuth, for bringing us our third anthology, Barry Woelfel's *Through a Glass, Darkly: 13 Tales of Wine and Crime* [NY: Beaufort, 1984. 223pp.]. In our July 2007 *WTQ*, we read:

No salad and oregano here, but it seems that, mysteriously, wine and crime go together. We have in this book thirteen authors—many well known—who bring the two together. The book is not recent, nor are the tales. Yet, the tales are significant in the literature and some of them would be hard to find outside this anthology. Nine of these tales involve wine while the remaining four concern liquor or spirits.

The Introduction to the book is written by the wine journalist, Terry Robards, an interesting choice in the least. As he himself points out, he has spent a career trying to take the mystery out of wine and here he introduces the connection between the two. Ah, but as we know, literature can enhance the wine experience.

The Last Bottle in the World

Opening the book is a story of obsession, the pursuit of the finest bottle of wine in history. An interesting game to play—name the country in which such a bottle would have originated. In this case, the country is France. One bottle is found to lay this claim, and the proof will be in the tasting. It has been laying in cellar so long, could it be just vinegar? A very large bet is placed, the bottle is opened, and the results are a spell-binding story by American author Stanley Ellin (1916–1986). A prolific writer, renown for his short stories, Ellin had several of his works dramatized by Alfred Hitchcock.

Taste

Another wagering story, this one to name the wine being served, is contributed by Roald Dahl (1916–1990), one of the world's greatest children's authors. The bet starts with a case of the wine in question and proceeds to a bet for the hand of the host's daughter. The host is certain that his guest cannot guess the wine, since it is from a very small winery that has no distribution. Is he right?

The Unknown Peer

British author E. C. Bentley (1875–1956) gives us the next story, "The Unknown Peer." Philip Trent, the detective in Bentley's most famous story ("Trent's Last Case") is here looking into the matter of a presumed suicide in Devon. The victim's last dinner included a bottle of Ch. Margaux 1922, a more expensive but poorer wine than the tavern's Beychevelle 1924. Why? Would the real victim have ordered this?

The Cask of Amontillado

The best known title in the anthology is Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado." This may be Poe's best work and, because of that, does not need much of a review here. What is interesting is Poe's creation of a character who purports to be a wine expert and makes a distinction between amontillado and sherry. Was this a mistake by Poe or an intentional gaffe? Poe was a satirist as well as a horror writer. The Foreword to the anthology gives a good discussion on this point.

Raffles and Operation Champagne

One of the longer stories is by Barry Perowne (pseudonym of the British writer Philip Atkey, 1908–1985), successor to the A. J. Raffles character created by E. W. Hornung. The story takes place with the ending of World War I and the transport of a cache of Champagne in France. Peacetime celebrations, however, like military campaigns, sometimes go amiss—and occasionally it's all for the best.

Connoisseur

Bill Pronzini, a 1940s generation Californian, is a highly regarded and very prolific American writer

of detective fiction. He is also an active anthologist, compiling more than one hundred collections, most of which focus on mystery, western, and science fiction short stories. His best known works are the Nameless Detective series. In the present anthology, "Connoisseur" is the story of Norman Tolliver, a connoisseur of many things, including wine. A bottle of Ch. Margaux 1900 had been given him by Roger Hume, a man Tolliver detests. Upon opening the bottle, Tolliver discovers it has gone bad. He is so infuriated that he demands a replacement from Hume. They get into an argument, Tolliver kills Hume, then finds Hume's cellar stocked with only the best of wines. Unfortunately, Tolliver gets locked in the cellar. The murder is likely to be discovered, but will Tolliver escape?

The Wanted Man

Henry Cecil, pen name of Henry Cecil Leon (1902–1976), British judge and fiction writer, provides in his "The Wanted Man" a look at how knowledge of vintages can tell much about a person. In a short five pages, the story of new neighbor Mr. Partridge reveals that he can't be who he says he is. As it so happens, an escaped criminal has never been found and the neighborhood begins to speculate that Mr. Partridge might be this man. Then the criminal is found and everyone is relieved. But where has Partridge gone?

An Educated Taste

This story, as much about food as it is about wine, and a 1983 contribution to the *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, was written by Maralyn Horsdal, a contemporary Canadian. Wendy is the proprietor of a wonderful new, classy restaurant, with a very respectable wine list. She is the only person with a key to the wine cellar. However, she discovers that her better wines are disappearing. No one has access to the cellar, even briefly. She must find who gets in and how, so she camps her nights in the cellar until ...

The Curious Conspiracy

The final wine story is "The Curious Conspiracy" by British mystery writer Michael Gilbert (1912–2006). During his writing career of some fifty years, he published thrillers and short stories, espionage and police procedural novels; he wrote plays for the theater, radio, and television, and he compiled books on interesting legal cases. The narrator of the story is a lawyer who must take over his grandmother's once-fashionable estate after her death. Much of the money is gone, so are the paintings. Also sold are some fifteen-hundred bottles of raspberry wine, elder flower champagne, and plum cordials. He knows that his grandmother preferred good French and German wines. Why would she have had such a collection of berry wines? Or did she?

Through A Glass, Darkly is highly recommended.

Wine in California: The Early Years
Boom & Bust
Part II: Sonoma County and Its Neighbors 1878–1890
by *Charles L. Sullivan*

[With this, the 18th installment of our great history of the early years of California wine, we continue our journey through the “Boom & Bust” years of the state’s winegrowing counties. As in previous chapters, extensive, informative footnotes, and a substantial library of references (all recommended for WT bookshelves), are provided. — Ed.]

OUR LAST WORDS ON THE SONOMA COUNTY wine story were upbeat.¹ The miseries of the 1870s’ depression were surely things of the past. The Bay Area press could not have predicted the massive effect of the wine boom on its way, but observers in San Francisco and out in the country were all smiles. Nevertheless, there was a sad note as well. Buena Vista had fallen after twenty years of pioneer leadership, the victim of a double-knockout blow by the depression and the phylloxera.



At the end of the seventies, vineyards were a “here and there” phenomenon in Sonoma County, as was the case in Napa County. But Sonoma had a very different geography than Napa. It was about twice as large with almost 400,000 acres with an agricultural potential.

These were mostly range lands, but tens of thousands of acres were suitable for winegrowing, evidenced by today’s almost 60,000 acres of wine grapes.

In 1878 Sonoma vineyards covered about 6,000 acres. Two years later the number had passed the 10,000-acre mark. When the planting frenzy cooled toward the end of the eighties there were almost 23,000 acres in vines. Still, this number was actually about double Sonoma’s total in 1970, at the beginning of our modern wine boom.

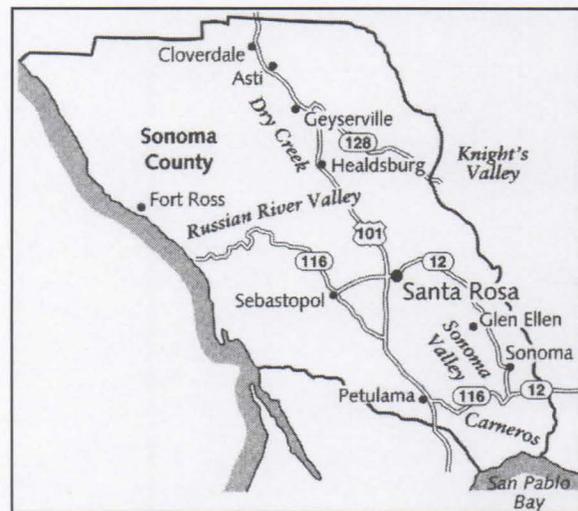
The county’s geography helps make the pattern of early expansion understandable. There are three large and fairly distinct areas where viticulture was important. The first is the Sonoma Valley, whose southern portion lies east and west of the town of Sonoma. It is about six miles wide and looks out on the great bay and today’s Carneros AVA. The valley narrows and bends to the northwest toward Santa Rosa. This northern portion is commonly referred to as The Valley of the Moon. Between the villages of Glen Ellen and Kenwood the Bennett Valley, where Isaac De Turk pioneered winegrowing, also heads northwest towards Santa Rosa.

The second area extends north and south of Santa Rosa from Petaluma to the town of Healdsburg, covering about 300 square miles of agricultural land. Once referred to as the Santa Rosa Valley, today its parts are identified by various towns and their surroundings such as Trenton, Forestville, and Windsor.

Healdsburg is the third area with two of Sonoma’s most important valleys and AVAs. Dry Creek Valley is just northwest of town and today has about 8,000 acres of wine grapes. Just to the east and north is the Alexander Valley with the towns of Geyserville and Cloverdale. The valley runs southwest toward Mt. St. Helena and the Napa County line. Today it contains about 15,000 acres of wine grapes.

Because southern Sonoma Valley had the oldest vineyards in the county, it was the earliest devastated by phylloxera. Only those vines on resistant rootstock escaped. But there was not much planting here in the eighties. Prunes and apricots were most popular when ravaged vineyards were replanted.

There was far more planting in the valley to the north, towards Glen Ellen. Although the number of wine cellars grew some in the eighties, the wine grape acreage here expanded at a much greater rate. A smaller percentage of growers actually made wine; the rest came to depend on larger producers to buy their grapes. In this area, and to the west around Santa Rosa and the north, rising grapes prices in the



SONOMA COUNTY From Sullivan, *Companion to California Wine*

1880s and the capital expenses inherent in wine production encouraged this situation. When the bubble broke in the 1890s many individual growers were ruined when embattled winery owners could not afford to buy their grapes.

Of special historical interest in the upper Sonoma Valley was the stabilization and growth of several winegrowing operations developed earlier in the 1860s and 1870s, and the establishment of others of equal importance, which came to life in the boom years. I shall cover these in some detail later in this section.

Vineyard expansion west of the Sonoma Valley during the boom was concentrated north of Santa Rosa up to the Healdsburg area. In 1880 there were 203 vineyardists in this region, but only 26% had as many as ten acres of vines. Above Healdsburg and out into the Alexander Valley the numbers and percentages were very similar. This picture before the boom supports Thomas Pinney's observation that this portion of the county was populated by "individual farmers, still unspecialized, who grew grapes among their crops and who ... sold their crops to nearby wineries."²

By the end of the eighties there were about 800 vineyard proprietors in Sonoma County; only about 115 of these actually produced wine commercially. The 1890 figure of 23,000 acres accepted by most authorities suggests that by then the mean average holding was 30-35 acres. This is a misleading number; using the median or middle point gives a better picture. The numbers from three areas illustrate this point.

In the Windsor area between Santa Rosa and Healdsburg the mean was 23.3, the median was 12.2. In the Alexander Valley about 3500 acres in 1890 were held by 114 proprietors, indicating a mean of 30.7 acres, but the median holding was only 20.1 acres. Large holdings, such as the Italian Swiss Colony's 600 acres, explain this difference.

Even more dramatic numbers are recorded for Glen Ellen, a far more settled winegrowing area. The mean holding was 41.4, the median only 20.5. With about 1700 acres in vines, the area had sixteen wineries; Windsor had only six. The area just north of the Glen Ellen village, often called Los Guilicos, had ten growers with 63% of the area's entire wine grape acreage. Several of these large-scale producers I shall soon look at in detail.³

The expansion of Sonoma's winegrape acreage before 1887 was not particularly exciting for a county with such a huge agricultural potential. Actually, only 8% of this agricultural potential was planted to wine grapes. But events during some vintage years could be exciting and elicit headline coverage by the local press. Occasionally this was true during the spring in

a way that would astonish observers today.

In the 1950s what we called a late spring frost ordinarily came in late April. Today even in April such frosts are rare, and recently leafed out vineyards can be protected by sprinklers. Today one can hardly imagine a hard, killing frost in late May. But that is what hit Sonoma in 1885. As usual the pre-dawn sky was blackened by dense smoke from burning coal tar. Since the 1870s Isaac De Turk had led the way in developing primitive smudge pots for this purpose. He was also the early advocate for storing up cuttings and brush from earlier pruning. The modern smudge pot was not available until 1913, developed in southern California to protect the citrus groves there. In the 1880s Glen Ellen's J. H. Drummond introduced an English mechanical warning system to alert workers when Jack Frost brought night time temperatures below 35°F. It was generally agreed that Sonoma's Chinese vineyard men were the consummate warriors in such pre-dawn battles.⁴

Chinese Workers

Weather during the fall vintage could be just as exciting in the 1880s as it is today. Heavy rain in September and October could ruin much of the grape crop, particularly the Zinfandel. Warning of a deluge was far less long range than today, but there was often enough time to gather pickers. Sometimes schools closed their doors for a day or two. Most women and young folk didn't object to making a few quick dollars bringing in the grapes.

Chinese workers were excellent pickers with a reputation for speed and thoroughness. Actually far more Sonoma County Chinese had steady work in the hop yards than in vineyards. But virtually all were happy to pick grapes when the opportunity arose.

The work of Chinese laborers in the Sonoma wine industry is special, one might even argue unique, particularly in the Sonoma Valley. But, for the county to the west, particularly in the Petaluma and Santa Rosa areas, it was the same sad tale of ugly discrimination and occasional violence.

The anti-Chinese public furor had only smoldered until the late 1860s when the completion of the trans-continental railroad released about 9000 Chinese workers onto the labor market. The clamor from the Democrats became so blatant that Agoston Haraszthy finally left that party in 1867.⁵

The real economic hurt of the depression in the 1870s caused unemployment figures to spiral upward. This situation fueled the growth of a powerful anti-Chinese political movement in California fearful of the "Yellow Peril." This fever culminated in 1882 when Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, excluding new immigrants but not expelling those already here.

The great supporter of Chinese labor in the vine-

yard and cellar was Agoston Haraszthy. His great Buena Vista enterprise welcomed Chinese workers, particularly when the vines needed pruning and, of course, at vintage time. Visitors' comments after 1857 never failed to remark of the orderly conditions on the estate and the obvious contributions of the Chinese workers. By the early sixties a few of these men were permanent employees, often as supervisors in the field or as skilled workers in the cellar, particularly in the production of sparkling wine.

Most, however, were seasonal workers, brought up from San Francisco by contractors. The total number of these crews at Buena Vista alone regularly exceeded a hundred. Then, when the season was over, the contract workers "vanished into San Francisco and obligingly reappeared when required..."⁶

Seasonal Chinese labor became a regular part of the Sonoma Valley wine industry, and not just among large-scale producers. Growers with ten to twenty acres of vines were as dependent as the

larger ones for seasonal labor. There was virtually no organized anti-Chinese agitation in the Sonoma Valley during the 1870s, much unlike what was common throughout much of the Bay Area, particularly in San Jose, Santa Rosa and Petaluma, even Napa.⁷

The 1882 Exclusion Act took some fire out of the anti-Chinese agitation in California. The census figures indicate that the state's Chinese population remained fairly stable into the 1890s. However, the census figures for Sonoma are misleading. Only 42 Chinese farm laborers were counted in 1870, 202 in 1880. In other words, the huge seasonal population in the county was never counted.⁸

Chinese could not own farm land but they could lease it, and many did in Sonoma. Almost all of these had one thing in common, they raised hops, not

grapes. By 1890 the census counted 576 Sonoma acres leased to Chinese tenants. The tenuous nature of their life in California discouraged Chinese with capital from leasing land where the crop came from vines or trees. Professor Chan, cited above, also indicates that there was more money in Sonoma hops than grapes. But there were a few who had vineyards. By far the most important was the Chinese tenant on



"GRAPE CULTURE IN THE SONOMA VALLEY" [Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 12/25/1880] INSET: Ho Po, a San Francisco labor contractor who furnished Chinese workmen for Haraszthy at his Buena Vista Winery, Sonoma.

the Stuart estate at Glen Ellen, the lease covering 212 acres, which included one of Ellen Stuart's vineyards.⁹

It is difficult to discover where in the Sonoma Valley other permanent Chinese workers tended vineyards and worked in wine cellars. A passing glance by a traveler informs us Joshua Chauvet's brandy still in Glen Ellen was run by a trusted Chinese worker. Another dropped in to get a look at Kate Warfield's nearby wine operation. She was out, and only the Chinese foreman was available to show him around.

When Buena Vista went out of business after 1881 numerous experienced Chinese workers were obviously on the local labor market. Since it was just after that date that Dresel and Gundlach began replanting their vineyards onto resistant rootstock, several of the Buena Vista workers found work at

Rhinefarm. Experts at the difficult and delicate task of field grafting, which gave the grower a crop a year earlier than vines grafted in the nursery, they found ready employment here and later, as others followed Julius Dresel's powerful advice and example. California's leading wine trade publication made much of the special skills possessed by such Chinese workers with "the best hands in the grape field ... very supple-fingered."¹⁰

After the 1890s Chinese workers were rarely seen in Sonoma vineyards. By then most such agricultural workers in the Bay Area had settled in the huge Sacramento-Delta area, where a large and fairly stable region of farm communities had developed, inhabited by Chinese lessees and their workers. Professor Chan devotes an entire chapter to this remarkable history, which survives to some extent today around the towns of Walnut Grove and Locke.¹¹

1880s' Development

Much of the most significant development in the Sonoma wine industry in the 1880s can be seen in the work of producers whose operations date from the two previous decades. These were mostly located in the Sonoma Valley, whose early history I have already discussed (e.g. Rhinefarm, Carriger, Hill, Chauvet).



MOUNT PISGAH WINERY, ca 1947. Built in 1886, it was one of the most beautiful of Sonoma County's 19th century stone wine cellars.

South of Glen Ellen **George F. Hooper** had bought a huge expanse of valley and foothill land in 1872. This banker and Mexican War veteran caught the wine bug in 1879 after a trip to the East Coast. He had already planted a few acres of Riesling and Gutedel on his 870-acre *Sobre Vista* estate, but within a few years he had 85 acres and by the late eighties was said to have developed a "world-wide reputation" for his white wines.¹²

East of Hooper's estate was a far more permanent and historic winery, constructed in 1885-1886 and financed by **Benjamin Dreyfus**, whose earlier years were part of our Anaheim story. Dreyfus died before the winery was finished in 1886. A partner in the Dreyfus firm, **Emanuel Goldstein**, took over the new operation, located high on the eastern foothills of the valley. The fine stone winery was soon producing excellent Zinfandels and Rieslings from the new 200-acre vineyard. But for some reason Goldstein apparently was not concerned about phylloxera, at a time when many followers of Julius Dresel were replanting on resistant rootstock. Perhaps Goldstein thought his vineyard high above the valley floor was immune. If so, he was mistaken. When he died in 1892, his Mt. Pisgah Vineyard was collapsing. Viticultural Commissioner De Turk wrote that year that only half of Goldstein's vines were "good for more than one more crop." He regretted the ultimate death of these vines which had "made a fine record until attacked by phylloxera."

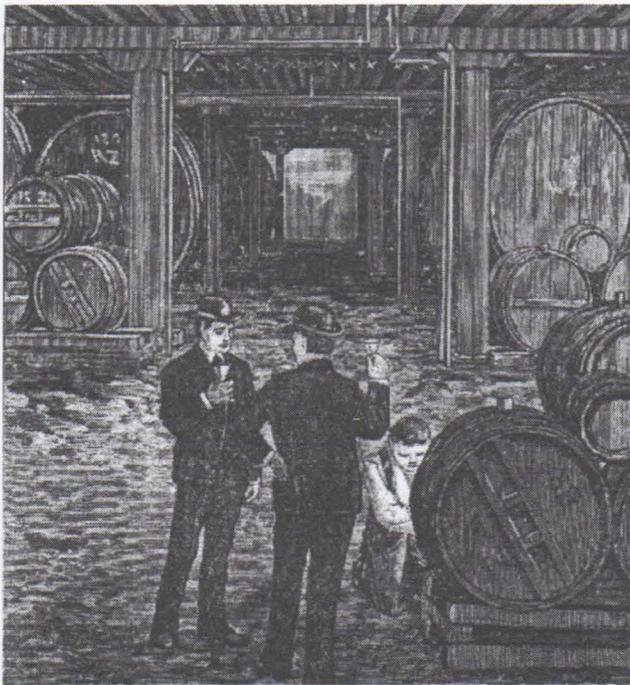
Years later the property was taken over by the California Wine Association and developed another reputation for high quality grapes, which Louis M. Martini recognized after Prohibition. After he bought the estate in 1938 he changed the name to Monte Rosso. Within two years Frank Schoonmaker proclaimed the property "by far the most remarkable in all of Sonoma County." The old winery has survived as a handsome ruin.¹³

Around **Glen Ellen** itself several well-established operations thrived and expanded in the eighties. Chief among these was **Joshua Chauvet's**, who had settled here in 1856 and began commercial winemaking in the 1870s. In 1881 he built a substantial stone winery in town and soon had an annual production of well over 100,000 gallons. Small-scale vineyardists had a ready customer in the cheerful Frenchman. We get a remarkably detailed description of Chauvet's operation after a famous

visitor stopped by. Thomas Hardy, often called the "Father of Australian wine," toured numerous California wineries in 1883, and dropped in at Chauvet's. He recalled his experiences in his travel book two years later.

Hardy described Chauvet's cellar as "the best designed" he had yet seen in Napa and Sonoma. He praised Chauvet's red wines highly, noting that his host sold all his wine to a leading San Francisco firm noted for its reputation of excellence. This was probably C. Schilling & Co. Hardy lavished praise on the entire Glen Ellen wine scene and on the natural beauty of the area.¹⁴

Chauvet's great neighbor, the **Kohler & Frohling** firm, was now well-established in Sonoma by the 1880s. Their Tokay Vineyard covered about 350 acres in the mid-eighties; there was also a 250,000-gallon stone winery, a distillery and sherry house. The winery was noted for its spotless cleanliness in which, "a lady could walk through during crushing wearing a silk dress without fear of soiling it."¹⁵ After Kohler & Frohling joined the California Wine Association in 1894, Joshua Chauvet bought the huge vineyard, but the C.W.A. kept the winery, which was a major customer of local grapes until damaged by the 1906 earthquake. Four years later Jack London bought a large portion of the property, which is today the Jack London Historic Park, on which several of the old Kohler structures have survived.¹⁶



"IN THE CELLARS OF KOHLER & FROHLING" [Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 12/24/1887]

Winegrowing Ladies of Glen Ellen

I introduced the Warfield, Stuart and Hood families in an earlier section, but promised to take up the wives' interesting history here. Colonel Charles Stuart died in 1880, but **Ellen Mary Stuart** continued managing the huge estate and began replanting some of its vineyards onto resistant rootstock.¹⁷ According to Glen Ellen local tradition she personally supervised the vintage and crush for several seasons. The Stuart home and several buildings at the Glen Oaks Ranch have been preserved and are on the National Register of Historic Landmarks. In 1896 the depression forced the Stuart family to sell the estate, whose surviving vineyards were later converted to orchards.

The Stuarts' neighbors, Jacob and Catherine (Kate) Warfield, had a few Mission vines after 1860, but production did not gain force until after Jacob's death in 1878. By the mid-eighties **Kate Warfield** was one of the best known winegrowers in California. She hired a French winemaker and transformed her vineyard into a diversified mixture of both world class and somewhat exotic varieties, such as St. Macaire and Tannat.

Much of her fame came from the high marks gained for her wines at national expositions and the California State Fair. At the Louisville and New Orleans Expos in 1885 her Riesling moved the state's leading trade journal to name her "one of the best vineyardists in the state." Her grape collection of 48 varieties at the 1886 San Francisco Mechanics Fair was praised as "the finest collection ever seen at the Fair."¹⁸

The Warfield neighbor a few miles up the road was a true pioneer of the upper Glen Ellen area. Before coming to California in 1849 **William Hood** had worked in Peru as a carpenter. There he made friends with Australian **James Shaw**, with whom he traveled to California.

Hood quickly acquired a large section of the Rancho Los Guilicos just north of Glen Ellen. Shaw took charge of Hood's stock ranch. Later, in 1857, Hood built a grand mansion from bricks produced on the spot. It survives today as State Historic Landmark #692. He built the home for Eliza Ann Shaw, James's teenage sister and Hood's new bride. At the same time he also planted a small vineyard of Mission vines, which grew to forty acres by 1861, the year he built a three-story sandstone winery. From then on Hood's operation became a regular topic in the Alta California. He was able to finance his expansion with funds from the sale of vast chunks of his Los Guilicos land.¹⁹

It was the distillery which really made the Hood name well known. It also appears to have been involved with Hood's personal downfall. By 1877 his

alcoholism got the best of him, at just about the time the government charged him with illegal distillation.²⁰ By then **Eliza Hood**, in her early thirties, had taken over active control of the estate. Contemporary sources have politely avoided mention of her husband's fate; some even had him dying in the early eighties. In fact, he died in 1903 at the state asylum in Ukiah (Mendocino County).

One of Eliza Hood's first moves was to hire an experienced French wine man who was something of a specialist on phylloxera control. August Drioton supervised the conversion of the Hood vineyard to world class vines, including Cabernet Sauvignon and Semillon. Frederic Pohndorff, the European wine expert, later loved Mrs. Hood's Cabernet and Zinfandel. It is also clear that the famed Hood brandy kept improving.²¹

Before Julius Dresel had sparked the planting of resistant rootstock in the Sonoma Valley, Drioton had written a pamphlet on phylloxera, published in San Francisco. He had everything right on protection, and echoed Hilgard on the illusion of actually curing infected vines. By the mid-eighties the three Glen Ellen lady vintners were replanting their vineyards onto *V. riparia* rootstock.²²

The financial troubles of the 1890s forced Mrs. Hood to sell the estate and move to San Francisco, where she died in 1908. But for many years the Italian Swiss Colony was still selling brandy under the Hood Los Guilicos label.²³

Real public fame came to this female vinicultural triumvirate in 1885 when all three made sizable entries at the Louisville and New Orleans national expositions. Their names were closely tied in the eastern press to that of their neighbor J. H. Drummond, and to that of Glen Ellen, as the source of a small flood of truly excellent table wine and brandy.

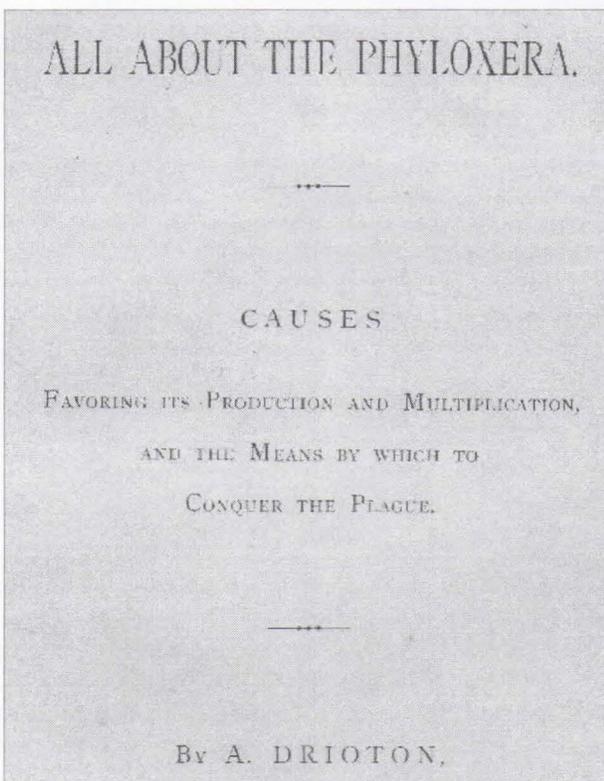
Louisville was particularly important and was well covered by the eastern press. There Frederic Pohndorff was in charge of the California wines on display. In the actual competition the Warfield Riesling won the top prize in its category and in the claret section Drummond took the gold for his Zinfandel. The Rieslings of all four Glen Ellen producers won praise in the Kentucky press for their light, delicate, yet full flavor. Hood and Warfield also won awards in the brandy competition.²⁴

The New Orleans Exposition took place shortly after Louisville closed. Again Glen Ellen and its producers won applause from the press. Jacob Gundlach's Rhinefarm Riesling also won an award. Drummond knew that New Orleans was a good market for California's standard, and even substandard, red wines, particularly clarets. His Zinfandel arrived in the barrel and won special acclaim for its high quality. The thirsty crowds enjoyed being served this excellent wine from pitchers filled on the spot from the barrel.²⁵

To this day the winegrowing ladies of Glen Ellen are remembered as a special part of Sonoma County history for something more than wine. For wine their names are really just part of wine history. "The ladies are not a whit behind the lords in their success as vinticulturists." But the three of them were friends, neighbors and associates in a very special way. In the early eighties they combined successfully in petitioning the Sonoma Superior Court to confirm their right to operate their wineries as "sole traders." Thus they secured their perfect legal right to manage their wineries strictly in their own names.²⁶

Of the celebrity Glen Ellen wine producers mentioned above, I had not previously

introduced Capt. **John H. Drummond**, because he did not buy his huge tract of Hood's land until 1878. Born in Ireland in 1850, Drummond was well-known as an officer in the 34th British Border Regiment before coming to California.²⁷ From a prosperous Scottish family of Dublin businessmen, well-traveled and educated, young Drummond quickly became one of California's best authorities on viticulture and winemaking, and is known to have had an extensive library on the subject. By 1883 he had a vineyard with 115 acres of the very best wine grape varieties, most having been shipped directly to him from European vineyards. There was Cabernet



August Drioton, born in Burgundy 1834, was the cellar master and vineyard manager at the Hood Ranch in northern Sonoma Valley. In 1877 he published a 22-page pamphlet, *Phylloxera* [sic], one of California's earliest on the subject.

Sauvignon from Châteaux Lafite and Margaux, Merlot from Brane-Cantenac and Syrah from Hermitage. At the Louisville Exposition his collection of 119 varieties was a winner. His white wines were headed by a blend of Semillon and Sauvignon blanc from Château d'Yquem. In the entire state only H. W. Crabb's nursery and vineyard in Napa Valley had greater diversity. By 1885 his nursery was the most important source for world class winegrape cuttings in the county.²⁸ A trade journal praised Drummond that year for not being so "wedded to Zinfandel." But espoused he was to California's favorite red wine, for at Louisville he took the gold for his Zinfandel Claret.

Professor Hilgard visited Capt. Drummond at his Dunfillan Vineyard in 1885. He had been surprised at "the general excel-

lence of the Drummond wines at that year's State Viticultural Convention. But he came away from Glen Ellen convinced that the gritty Scotsman had "proved how far good management and scrupulous care" could overcome the youth and small size of his facility.²⁹

Drummond had tested his wines' ability to travel by sending a few cases to his friends in England. Over the next four years he sent large shipments to the East Coast and Europe. Then suddenly, just before Christmas 1889, he died from heart disease.³⁰

There is a mystery associated with Drummond's will. Before coming to California he had married Mrs. Frances Bioletti, on whom he settled a large inheritance. But there was a stipulation that at no time could she allow her son Frederic Bioletti to reside in any house in which the Drummond children were living. Bioletti went on to serve as Hilgard's assistant at the university until 1906, when that great scholar retired. From then on until 1935 Bioletti was in charge of the university's wine and research, first at Berkeley and then at Davis.³¹

North of Dunfillan was the **Wildwood Ranch** of **James Shaw**, William Hood's friend from their days in Peru. After helping run Hood's livestock operations, Shaw bought 265 acres from his boss's huge Los

Guilicos holding and established a diversified ranch, which included 125 acres of vines by the mid-eighties and 200 acres by 1890. Like his sister, Eliza Ann Hood, Shaw was dedicated to planting the best wine grape varieties. It is almost sure that he was privy to the sound viticultural advice of her learned cellar master, August Drioton. In 1891, for his three grapes listed in the Viticultural Commission's directory, he chose St. Macaire, Cabernet, Pinot noir and "etc."³²

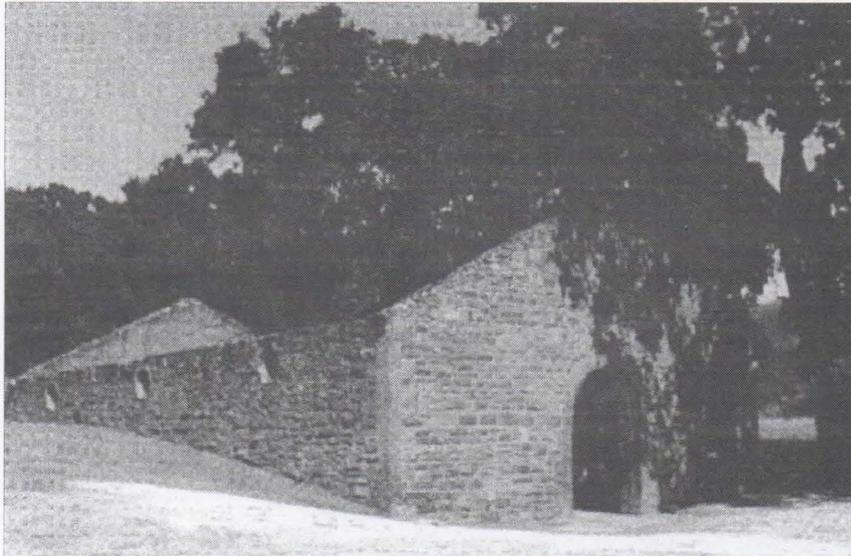
Also like his sister, Shaw had begun planting his Wildwood Ranch on resistant stock in 1885. Some of these old Zinfandels have survived and are probably the oldest in the county. The Shaw family sold the 650-acre Wildwood Ranch in 1904 to Louis Kunde, who had been growing wine grapes in the Windsor area, north of Santa Rosa, since 1884. Expanding the Shaw operations, the Kunde family continued to

grow wine grapes and revived the winery in 1990.³³

Beyond the Kenwood area, on the road to Santa Rosa, the winegrowing boom of the 1880s was minor in comparison to the area near the Bennett Valley Road. It too leads northwest from Glen Ellen to Santa Rosa and attracted several winegrowers before and during the boom.³⁴

Isaac De Turk was the most important of these, having planted sixteen acres on his Yulupa Ranch in 1862. By 1867 he had a large cellar, which he outgrew in the 1870s. His 1878 Santa Rosa winery was the largest in the county by the mid-eighties. By the end of the decade it was second only to Leland Stanford's Vina in the state. Covering an entire city block, the operation was a huge and efficient wine factory, turning out hundreds of thousands of gallons of mostly red table wine by 1889. For Thomas Pinney, De Turk was "the king of Sonoma County."³⁵

Nevertheless, De Turk's fame and fortune derived not from the size of his winery but for the high quality



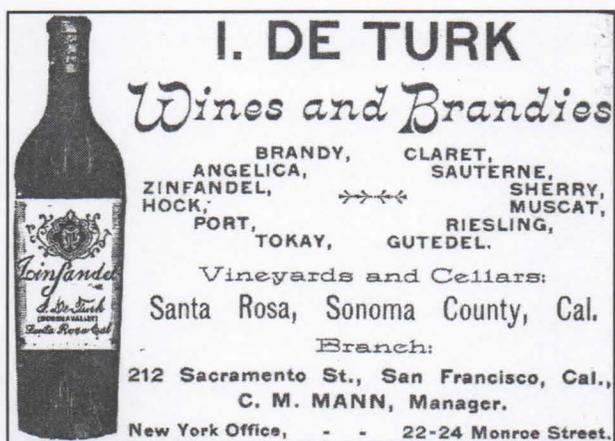
A 20th century view of the now-roofless 19th century classic stone winery, DUNFILLAN, where J. H. Drummond produced his highly regarded premium wines.



ISAAC DE TURK [1834-1896]

of his wine. By 1886 his wine, much of it sold by the bottle under the De Turk label, had become solidly established in several eastern markets. The De Turk brand, after his death in 1896, still flowed under other owners. In 1921 the Grace Bros. brewery bought the plant and before Repeal put the old winery back into working order. Grace produced and sold wine, in bulk and by the case, the latter labeled "De Turk Winery," until 1943. In that year Grace sold the plant and almost 420,000 gallons of wine to the Paul Garrett Co. The great brick structure survives today, part of Santa Rosa's Railroad Square restoration.³⁶

Historically, De Turk's greatest achievement was his work as the commissioner of the Sonoma Viticultural District from 1880 to 1895. Performing his job



San Francisco's *PW&SR* carried weekly ads for De Turk's Sonoma County wines. Some featured scenes of the giant winery in Santa Rosa, others, like this March 15, 1891 ad, highlighted the bottled product.

to collect information on the growth and needs of the district's burgeoning wine industry, his reports and surveys give us a detailed picture of the 1880s and the wine boom in Sonoma County, the likes of which are available in no other area. It is no wonder Thomas Pinney, using these data in his *History of Wine in America*, has chosen to concentrate on Sonoma as a "sample" of the northern coastal counties' wine-growing efforts in these years.

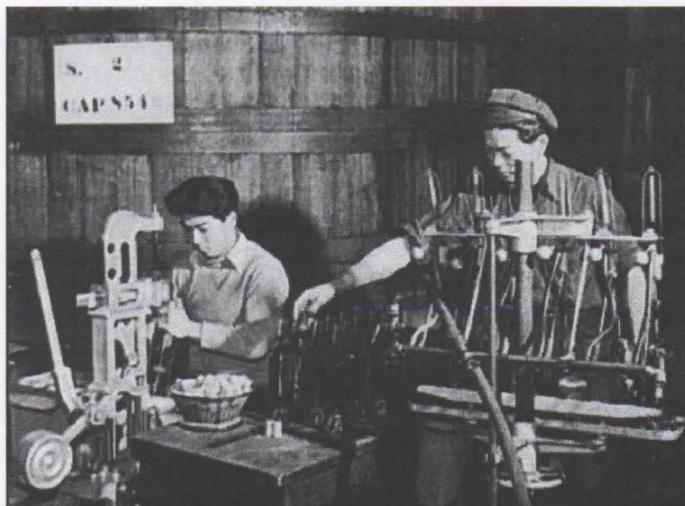
But in his lifetime De Turk was most famous for his wine. In addition to his case goods he sold large amounts in bulk to several of the San Francisco wine houses noted for their high quality. His Zinfandel and Cabernet were understood to be his best wines. He was noted for often labeling his reds by varietal name. His prize-winning "Claret" at the 1893 Columbian Exposition was boldly labeled "Zinfandel" at a time when that word was hardly known outside of California wine circles. In the "Medoc" division his entry was an "1891 Cabernet," which a noted English expert described as "a beautiful soft wine...in perfect condition."³⁷

De Turk died a bachelor in 1896, an honest, intense man, probably more passionately devoted to breeding horses than to winegrowing. Charles Wetmore eulogized him as "enterprising, without the faintest shadow of greed." No one claimed it at the time, but I think it true that, year in and year out in the 1880s and 1890s, he produced more really good wine than any other person in California.³⁸

In 1875, when land prices were actually dirt cheap, an English-born religious mystic bought 400 acres north of Santa Rosa. **Thomas Lake Harris** had settled a theosophical colony at Brocton, New York, on Lake Erie, in 1867. One of his followers, Edward B. Hyde, understood winegrowing, and planted vines and produced small amounts of wine there. Harris and Hyde were only looking for good agricultural land when they came to the Golden State in 1875. Dairying was the dominant activity at **Fountaingrove** at first. But the founder soon picked up the scent of the coming wine boom and by 1880 Hyde was planting vines. In this he was assisted by a young Japanese colonist Harris had met in Scotland in 1867.

Kanaye Nagasawa had been impressed by Harris's communal philosophy and went to work at Brocton learning horticulture and winegrowing under Hyde. The young man was soon in charge of the Fountaingrove vineyards, and after Harris returned to the East Coast permanently in 1902, he was in charge of the entire estate.

Between 1883 and 1886 Fountaingrove developed into one of Sonoma's foremost premium wineries. A stone cellar went up in 1883 and was expanded almost annually until it had a capacity of 630,000 gallons in 1893. By the end of the eighties production was fairly steady at about 250,000 gallons. Harris took almost no part in this growing commercial operation. Hyde and Nagasawa handled production,



At FOUNTAININGROVE, Nagasawa brought young men, including several nephews, from Japan to work in the winery.

while the center of the business and marketing end of the operation was located in New York City under Lay, Clark & Co., whom Harris had known years earlier.³⁹

Historian Ernest Peninou observed that when Nagasawa took over operations at the estate in 1892 "the mood at Fountaingrove changed." Throughout the 1890s the press was kept well informed of the winery's prosperous eastern and European markets, and of the awards won by its wines at fairs and expositions. Nagasawa later admitted that "upon the peculiar merits of Zinfandel" the winery acquired its reputation for quality. He would have been correct to have made the same claim for his Cabernet.⁴⁰

There were not many producers of premium California table wines who bridged the enormous and parched time gap of the Prohibition years. Kanaye Nagasawa was one of them. He died in 1936, but the new owners of Fountaingrove continued producing excellent wine. Nevertheless, by the 1950s the vineyards were decrepit and the land was gradually becoming part of urban Santa Rosa. The last vines were pulled in 1954. The ruins of the great winery survive, well out of plain sight. But travelers heading out of town can still see Nagasawa's great Red Barn just east of Highway 101.

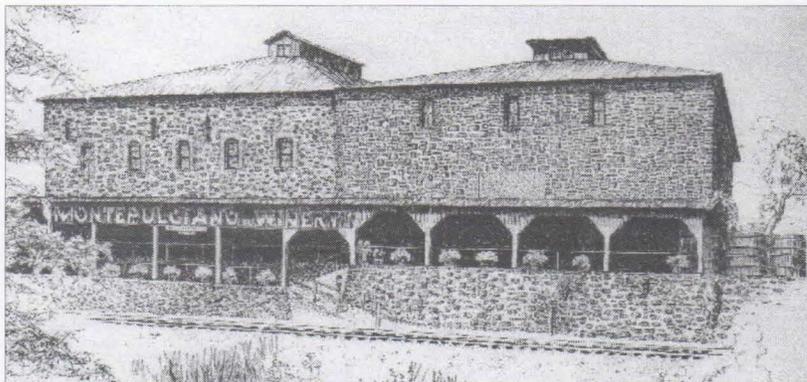
The Russian River flows south out of the Alexander Valley and suddenly heads west to the sea just below Windsor. This area around Guerneville and Occidental was first lumber country but gradually turned to winegrowing in the late 1870s. By the end of the 1880s there were 29 growers with about 750 acres of vines. Fully 30% of those vines belonged to **Korbel Bros.** of Guerneville. The three Korbels, from the Czech portion of the Austrian Empire, came to Sonoma in the 1860s. Francis Korbel moved the company to winegrowing in 1880, planting forty acres of vines near the river east of Guerneville. The *Sonoma Democrat* headlined its story, "Vineyards on Timber Lands." Francis soon announced the future construction of a large stone winery (1886). Within a few years it was a "magnificent wine cellar" with "an elegant brandy tower." It stands today as the finest physical survivor of Sonoma County's 19th century wine history.⁴¹

Korbel became famous in the 1890s for its wine awards at the expositions and for its sparkling wines under the Viking and Grand Pacific labels. The company's ability to bridge the fine wine gap of Prohibition was particularly impressive. Jan Hanuska, the "champagne" master since 1907, developed Korbel Brut after 1939, for years a standard in the industry.⁴²

Just north of Healdsburg today is a great old stone

winery built in the late 1880s by **Pietro and Giuseppe Simi**. They became part of the wine boom in 1884 by planting a 128-acre vineyard, and when the vines came to bearing three years later, the brothers began building their formidable winery. They had come to California from the Tuscan village of **Montepulciano**, the name they gave to their 200,000-gallon facility. By the mid-nineties they had more than doubled their capacity.⁴³

The brothers died within weeks of each other in 1904. Family members ran the winery, but much of its success before 1910 derived from the leadership of foreman Antonio Perelli-Minetti, who would become a titanic leader of the California wine industry. In the



For a number of years, SIMI WINERY bottlings held the distinction of being the featured wines, with special labels, at the famous Hotel del Monte in Monterey. The elegant hotel, established in 1880, was one of California's most exclusive resorts, and long known for its spectacular wine list.

later years Giuseppe's daughter Isabelle ran the winery until 1970. Many visitors remember her colorful presence in the retail sales / tasting room she had set up in an old 25,000-gallon redwood tank.⁴⁴

The main road out of Healdsburg heads into the Alexander Valley, but another road out of town to the northwest runs directly into the **Dry Creek Valley**, whose infant steps into winegrowing in the 1870s I previously discussed.⁴⁵ By the early eighties the valley had more than fifty vineyards and almost 1,000 acres of vines. Charles Dunze's **Laurel Hill Winery** was the largest of the valley's real cellars. In 1887 **John Paxton** hired the famed H. W. McIntyre to plan the valley's first grand winery. It was badly damaged in the 1906 earthquake and never served as a winery again. By the end of the eighties Dry Creek had eleven wineries with a combined capacity of 350,000 gallons. Today the valley is considered one of Sonoma's finest wine areas, particularly noted for its Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon.⁴⁶

It took a while for the great **Alexander Valley** to open up to winegrowing in the 1880s. For a while there were simply not enough wineries to take care of the growing grape yield. In 1884 the owners of the

grapes from the 800 or so new bearing acres had only Isaac De Turk's Cloverdale winery to buy their grapes. Otherwise they had to be shipped south to Healdsburg. The situation did not improve much as more and more vines came to bear. By 1886 there were now six wineries of very modest size in the valley crushing about 1300 tons of grapes and producing about 200,000 gallons of wine.⁴⁷ There was still a problem, but relief was on the way.

In 1881 a San Francisco group led by banker **Andrea Sbarboro** decided to establish what they hoped would be a winegrowing colony for Italian immigrant freeholders in northern Sonoma County. They named the operation **Italian-Swiss Agricultural Colony (ISC)**. That plan didn't work out and the enterprise developed as a corporation with sixty original stockholders. They bought a 1393-acre piece of land south of Cloverdale and Sbarboro renamed the local whistlestop "Asti."⁴⁸

Vineyard planting began in the 1881-82 winter, mostly to red varieties, headed by Zinfandel. After the spring of 1885 there were 600 acres in the ground. The big crop in 1886 yielded 465 tons, almost all sold to wineries in Glen Ellen and Windsor. But as grape prices began fading all over the state as a result of new plantings coming to bear, the Asti leaders decided it was time to build a winery. It was up in time for the 1887 vintage.

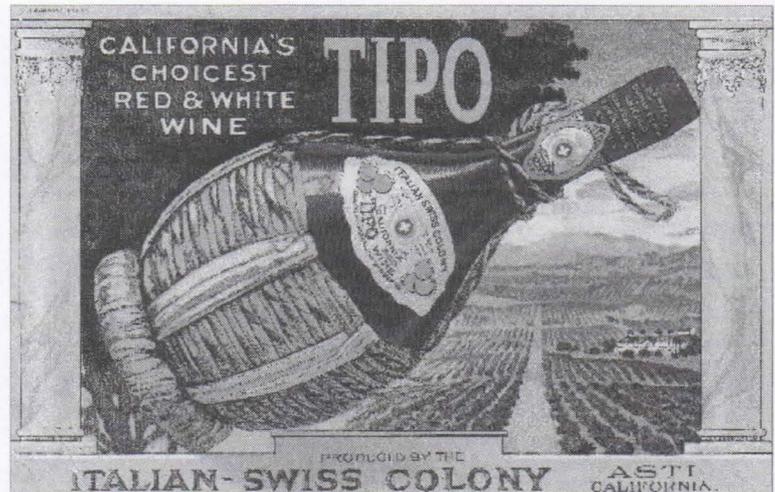
The first crush at ISC's new 300,000-gallon facility was a disaster. Scorching fall weather sent sugars soaring; fermentations were out of control. Most of the resulting wine was "milk sour," soon on its way to the brandy vats. The PWSR moaned that perhaps sixteen million gallons were ruined statewide.⁴⁹

Sbarboro was convinced that the problem at ISC was not completely weather related. Old-country methods, learned in regions where fall temperatures were often frigid, were not up to handling California's long and often very hot Cape Verde/Mediterranean climate. He hired a San Francisco pharmacist with a degree in agricultural chemistry to supervise ISC wine production. For the next twenty-three years **Pietro Rossi** insured there were no more fermentation disasters at ISC.⁵⁰

The 1888 vintage was a 130,000-gallon success, and the cellar was immediately expanded. By the nineties ISC vineyards were producing up to 4000 tons of grapes, but the huge facility was now taking up the slack in valley capacity, buying thousands of tons of Alexander Valley grape surpluses. A local newspaper soon gloated that "there are not enough grapes in the vicinity to keep this immense winery up to capacity, and grape are now being shipped in from Geyserville and Healdsburg."⁵¹

In the 1890s ISC had about 1000 acres of vines which included many of the best Italian varieties, such as Nebbiolo, Barbera and Sangiovese. The latter became the base for ISC's nationally popular Tipo Chianti. In 1896, in a depression year, no less, the company expanded into the Central Valley for sweet-wine production. In a later chapter we shall see ISC as a part of the muscle flexed by the state's wine producers in the late nineties, during the so-called "wine war."

Good management helps explain ISC's steady success during Sonoma's rough years from 1888 to 1892, but its strong capital position from the monthly



This beautifully lithographed c1910 postcard advertised Italian-Swiss Colony's "CHOICEST RED & WHITE WINE - TIPO." The immense winery facility at Asti, with its "world's largest wine tank (underground)," vast vineyards, church shaped like a wine barrel, and friendly, generous tasting room, was a huge tourist attraction. From early on, ISC issued massive amounts of promotional materials, including almost 150 different postcard views that today provide an important historical record.

paid-in assessments of stockholders offers the most important explanation. It was only in 1896, fifteen years after their original investment, that holders of shares finally received a dividend. After that they were richly rewarded in dividends and the accelerated value of their shares.

At Geyserville another operation also helped ease the pressure of Alexander Valley's grape over-supply. In 1880 **Augustus Quitzow** had put up a small wooden winery near the little village. Five years later it was owned by the local bank. In 1887 **Edward Walden**, a New York brandy importer, bought the place and by 1890 was running one of the largest brandy production facilities in the world.⁵² Walden's important markets were developed on the East Coast and Europe, particularly in Germany and Holland. His best "cognac" earned an excellent reputation and took top honors at the 1893 Columbian Exposition. After 1904 the facility's operations turned mostly to wine production as the **Geysers Peak Winery**, under

the control of local vineyardists.⁵³

The beginning of the great hurt to the wine industry came in 1889, when a huge crop that year came on top of the full cellars from the carryover from the equally large 1888 crop. In the spring of 1888 Isaac De Turk complained that it was difficult to sell high quality wine at a decent price because of the large inventories on hand. Sonoma suffered a bit less than many other regions, but not by much. The situation resulted in poor prices for all wines. The president of the State Agricultural Society spoke at the organization's annual convention and laid the blame on producers in general for "foisting upon the market an inferior article." Sonoma newspapers blamed the situation on the San Francisco merchants, who in collusion were manipulating the market in their favor. There were other explanations aplenty, in an era when no one really understood how the national business cycle worked.⁵⁴

Livermore Valley's Clarence Wetmore's analysis, however, was right on target. The problem was over-production from the wave of planting in the eighties before 1887. Inferior wine had nothing to do with the situation. He proved his credentials as the valedictorian of his class at the University of California by noting, quite correctly, that there was more inferior wine on the market in 1884 than in 1889. Were he an agricultural economist today he might have said that the basic problem was "over expansion of productive capacity in relationship to demand for a product not part of the basic food supply." When national consumer buying power later collapsed, we shall see a real depression.

The 1889 vintage changed from orderly to chaotic in Sonoma County when a series of late September and October rainstorms clobbered the red wine crop. The result was large amounts of dried grapes and grape syrup, particularly in the Alexander Valley. The county's brandy stills were humming day and night, as they were all over the state. The state's total brandy production was just under a million gallons; the average since 1885 had been about half that. Many vineyards afflicted by phylloxera, particularly in the Sonoma Valley, were simply left unpicked, soon to die.⁵⁵

When the 1890 vintage was fairly short, the press put on a smiley face and avoided stories on poor market conditions. But the great boom was over, even though for the moment everyone avoided using the unhappy "D" word. And the northern march of phylloxera in Sonoma was unabated, and as the vines died, there was no attempt to replant.

Sonoma County Neighbors

Mendocino County is Sonoma's great northern winegrowing neighbor today. The county line is but a few miles north of Cloverdale and the

Alexander Valley. Today it is the home of almost 18,000 acres of wine grapes, mostly red varieties. Its red leaders are Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot noir and Zinfandel. It is a mighty neighbor, ranking number three in acreage among the Bay Area's premium wine counties. But it has not long been so.

At the beginning of the wine boom in the late 1870s, Mendocino County had 31 acres in vines, 26 more than the Alta California had counted in 1858. In 1871 the county assessor had reported that "the grape does not succeed well here...." At the end of the wine boom the railroad finally made it to Ukiah, but the county still had only 204 acres of wine grapes. Why Mendocino County lagged far behind the much more isolated Lake County to the east is something of a mystery.⁵⁶

All this changed when Italian Swiss Colony brought serious winegrowing to Mendocino's Ukiah area and later to the Anderson Valley. By 1909 the county had almost 3500 acres of wine grapes and had become part of the Bay Area winegrowing region.

Marin County, Sonoma's neighbor to the south, has a winegrowing story very much different than Mendocino's. In 1890 it had 503 acres of vineyards and today it has 176 acres, which is well above the eleven it counted in 1980.

Ernest Peninou has put together stories of the wine ventures of numerous Marin County families. Two of these developed resorts, Herman Zapf near San Rafael and the Escalle family north of Larkspur. More rural were the estates of Galen Burdell and Francis De Long near Novato. Peninou wondered why Marin's numerous viticultural efforts could "dwindle to nothing" over the years. He guessed that the cool Marin climate did not favor wines from Zinfandel, the most numerous variety in early Marin vineyards.⁵⁷ Statistics for the few Marin County vineyards today, almost all planted between 1995 and 2006, tend to support Peninou's suggestion. More than 80% are planted to Pinot noir, which favors such a cool climate.

[Next installment, we will continue our historical "Boom & Bust" wine journey in *The East Bay*.]

NOTES _____

1. WTQ, April 2013 (v.23 #2), 28-30.
2. Thomas Pinney, *History of Wine in America. From the Beginnings to Prohibition*, Berkeley, 1989, 336-340. The author's detailed picture of Sonoma's winemaking personalities is particularly useful.
3. Viticultural Commission, *Directory of the Grape Growers, Wine Makers ...*, Sacramento, 1891, 161-182.
4. Santa Rosa Democrat, 5/12/1879; PWSR, 6/18/1886.
5. Alta, 5/4/1867, 9/1/1867.
6. Sucheng Chan, *This Bitter-Sweet Soil*, Berkeley, 1986,

- 67-68, 240-243, 248, 304-306, 319-321, 344. The author was the Director of Asian-American Studies at UC Santa Barbara. Her remarkable work cited here gives special focus on the Sonoma story, even though the number of Chinese agricultural workers there was small compared to Santa Clara and Alameda Counties.
7. Alta, 5/30/1871; S. F. Chronicle, 10/14/1883; Lloyd H. Fisher, *Harvest Labor Market in California...*, Harvard, 1953, 23-25.
 8. Chan, 304-307, 319.
 9. Chan, 148-149; Charles L. Sullivan, *Sonoma Wine and the Story of Buena Vista*, San Francisco, 2013, 151-152.
 10. Chan, 242-248; PWSR, 3/4/1887.
 11. Chan, 159-190, 346-57.
 12. Isaac De Turk, *The Vineyards of Sonoma County*, Sacramento, 1893, 15; Peninou, *Sonoma*, 87-89.
 13. De Turk, op.cit., 14; Peninou, *California Wine Association*, 142-144; Schoonmaker, *American Wines*, New York, 1941, 103.
 14. Thomas Hardy, *Notes on Vineyards in America and Europe*, Adelaide, 1885. See pages 20-22 of Thomas Pinney's *The Vineyards and Wine Cellars of California*, San Francisco, 1994, reprinted from Hardy's superb narrative; Sullivan, *Sonoma Wine*, 149-150.
 15. PWSR, 1/17/1887; Sonoma Democrat, 12/4/1886.
 16. Peninou, *Sonoma*, 94-98.
 17. Col. Stuart's memorable opposition to anti-Chinese legislation before his death is the center point of his long biographical note in Wikipedia. Sonoma Democrat, 8/21/1880.
 18. PWSR, 3/27/1885, 3/16/1888; Sonoma Index Tribune, 11/27/1887; Peninou, *Sonoma*, 100-101.
 19. Alta, 9/29/1861, 12/13/1862, 9/12/1866, 5/20/1870; Sonoma Democrat, 4/18/1868.
 20. Alta, 1/25/1877.
 21. PWSR, 8/15/1884, 9/25/1885.
 22. A. Drioton, *All About Phylloxera*, San Francisco, 1877; Sullivan, *Sonoma Wine*, 214-215.
 23. PWSR, 2/28/1899.
 24. PWSR, 10/9/1885, 10/23/1885, 11/6/1885.
 25. PWSR, 1/25/1886, 2/12/1886.
 26. Edith Sparks, *Capital Intentions*, Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2006, 254; Sullivan, *Sonoma Wine*, 151-152.
 27. The date of Drummond's birth has long been recorded in wine histories as 1830; recent research has established the date as 1850.
 28. PWSR, 4/13/1883, 7/31/1885, 10/9/1885; Peninou, *Sonoma*, 102 has his 1885 ad for "Important Vine Stocks" for sale.
 29. PWSR, 1/30/, 5/22 and 11/20/1885. While born in Dublin, Drummond's heritage was Scottish.
 30. PWSR, 12/23/1889, 1/8/1890; Sonoma Index, 12/29/1889, 1/4/1890.
 31. Sonoma Index 1/4/1890; PWSR 1/8/1890; Sullivan, *Sonoma Wine*, 190-192. Maynard Amerine, who knew Bioletti well, once told me that he was aware of the will but had never heard anything to explain the bitter attack on Bioletti. As an aside he said he wasn't surprised, because of Drummond's reputation as a cranky Scotsman.
 32. Sonoma Democrat, 10/12/1883; PWSR, 1/1/1885.
 33. Sonoma Index Tribune, 10/4/1904; Sullivan, *Sonoma Wine*, 176-177.
 34. Peninou, *Sonoma*, 109-112 is unique in its focus on this area.
 35. Pinney, *History*, 336; Sonoma Democrat 7/3/1879; PWSR 11/7/1884, 11/20/1885.
 36. Wines & Vines, 5/1/1943; San Jose News, 9/26/ 1941; Gail Unzelman, *Sonoma County Wineries*, Arcadia Postcard History Series, 2006, 40; The details of the Grace/De Turk operation can be found in *U. S. Tax Court, Grace Bros. v. I.R.S.* (10T.c.158), 1/27/1948.
 37. PWSR, 11/20/1893.
 38. PWSR, 3/23/ and 4/7/1896.
 39. PWSR, 8/17/1888, 12/20/1893.
 40. PWSR, 3/20/1894, 8/21/1895; Sonoma Democrat, 6/4/ 1892; American Wine Press, 5/1898.
 41. Sonoma Democrat, 8/2/1883, 10/10/1891.
 42. Sullivan, *Companion* (second printing), 173-174.
 43. PWSR, 1/30/1885, 12/1/1890; Santa Rosa Republican, 12/16/1891.
 44. PWSR, 3/1/1907; Sullivan, *Companion*, 331.
 45. WTQ, op.cit. 28.
 46. Healdsburg Enterprise, 9/1/1887, 1/20/1888, 5/9/1891; Jack W. Florence, *A Noble Heritage*, Geyserville, 1993, 36-41.
 47. Alta California, 12/9/1886.
 48. Charles Sullivan, "Italian Swiss Colony; the First Half Century," 1980, 4-5. This heavily documented in-house history is available at several regional wine libraries; Jack W. Florence, *Legacy of a Village*, Phoenix, 2004, 41-46; Andrea Sbarboro, "Life of Andrea Sbarboro," 1911 typescript, Bancroft Library, 120-124; Sonoma Democrat, 9/19/1883.
 49. PWSR, 3/16/1888; Alta, 12/27/1897.
 50. Florence, *Legacy*, 53-54; *Edmund Rossi Oral History*, Bancroft Library, 1969, 6, 10.
 51. Sonoma Democrat, 10/24/1891.
 52. Sonoma Democrat, 8/13/1887.
 53. PWSR, 5/10/1889, 11/6/1893, 8/31/1904, 12/31/1911; *Viticultural Commission Report, 1891-1892, Appendix A*, Edward Walden, "Brandy Distillation," 49-50.
 54. *Agri. Soc.*, 1889, 19-20; Sonoma Democrat, 5/11/1889; Santa Rosa Press Democrat, 5/4/1889.
 55. PWSR, 8/22/1889.
 56. Alta, 8/16/1858; *Agri. Soc.*, 1871; PWSR, 10/15/1890.
 57. Peninou, *Sonoma*, 204-214.

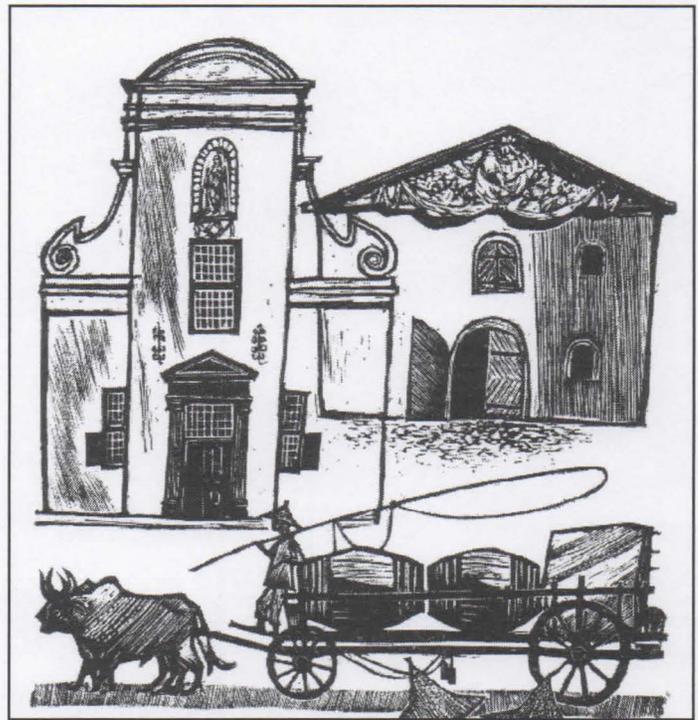


Wine Books of South Africa

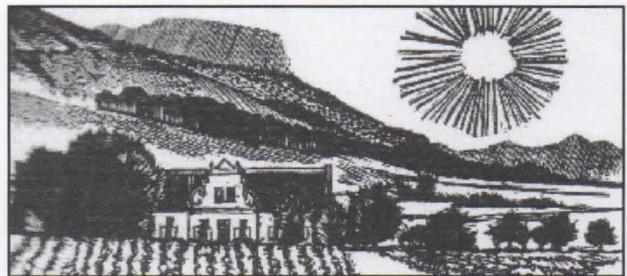
by
Gail Unzelman

AS AN INTRODUCTION to a future article on South African wine books and as a welcome to new WT member Hennie Taljaard of So. Africa, let us present a volume from the South African bookshelf. Hennie notes in an email that the earliest book he has found on the country's wines is *Memorandum on Cape Wines*, 1846, by H. H. Gird, while A. Perold's *Treatise on Viticulture*, 1927 (published in Afrikaans in 1926), is the first book on viticulture. We look forward to the full story from him. Until then, enjoy a brief glimpse of *Wines of South Africa* by Gordon Bagnall (Paarl, South Africa: KWV, 1961).

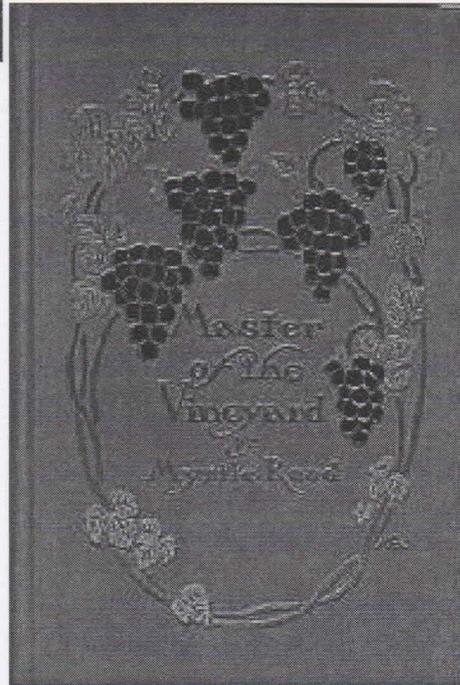
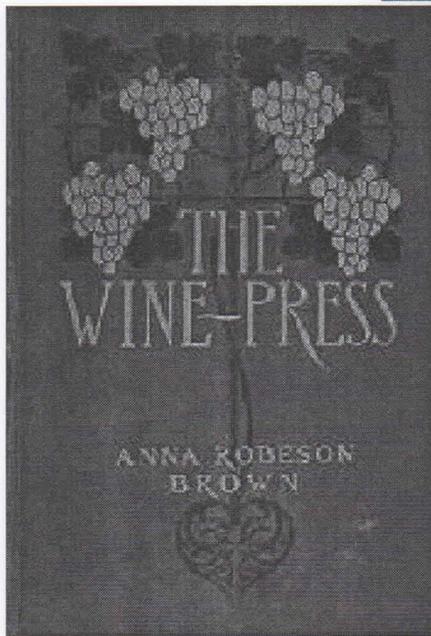
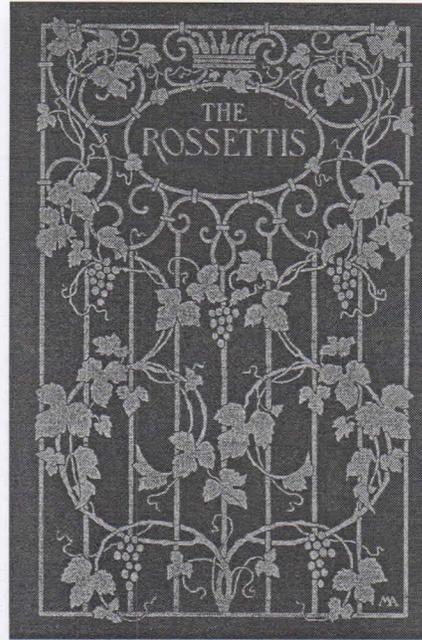
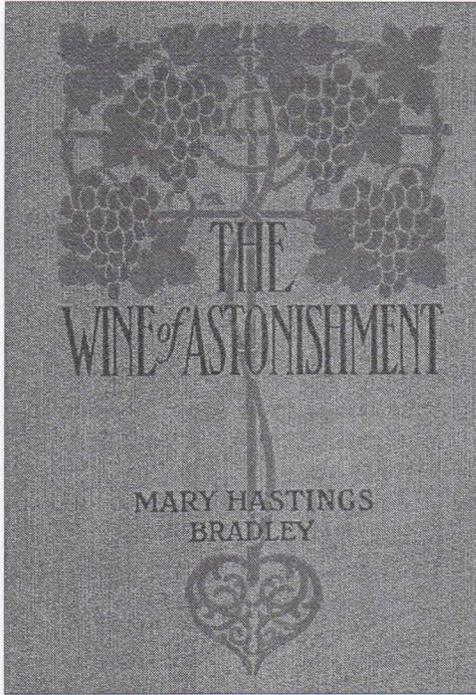
The subtitle of this slim, 95-page book defines its contents: *An Account of Their History, Their Production and Their Nature*. Divided into chapters headed "Wine and Man," "Wines and the Cape," "Sherry," "Natural Red Wines," "Dessert Wines," and "Brandy," the descriptive account unfolds. It is a handsome volume, bound in dark blue leather, and illustrated with eight full-page wood-engravings especially made for the book by noted graphic artist Roman Waher.



"On the wine farm originally established by Van der Stel, van Riebeeck's successor. Van der Stel planted the Cape's Constantia Valley with 100,000 vines. Others settled in the valleys of Stellenbosch, French Hoek, and Paarl, which are still dotted with wine farms."



Seven years after Jan van Riebeeck landed in 1652, the first wine was pressed at the Cape from trial vine stock from France and Spain. He wrote in his diary: "Today, praised be the Lord, wine was made for the first time from Cape grapes." In the background, the first fort of the Dutch settlement is depicted.



VINACEOUS COVERS BY MARGARET ARMSTRONG