

the WAYWARD TENDRILS Newsletter

Vol.4 No.2

A WINE BOOK COLLECTOR'S CLUB

April 1994

CORNERS BUMPED AND WORN by Ruth Walker

"When I get a little money, I buy books: and if any is left, I buy food and clothes."

Desiderius Erasmus (1465-1536)



Books and their collectors . . . well, yes. There was the professor I knew who had so many books in his house that he eventually slept in his car. We admire the San Francisco collector who cleverly devised narrow pathways through the tottering piles of books in every room of his apartment. And, the stories go on.

These little vignettes are not about the great buys, the impressive collection with bibliographical notes and carefully kept books, shelved and properly looked after. They are about how truly unique people relate to their books.

In this way we might gain a bit of perspective concerning our own endeavors. Hopefully, we'll take a deep breath as we scan our shelves and remark quietly to ourselves some words of joy and solace that we are not quite as crazed as we thought. You know: that certain conversation that we all have with ourselves about how we're **not** overbuying, frantic for space, or depressed about those rare wine titles that we keep looking for year after year and never find.

SOME BIBLIOTYPES

These definitions and sketches are from *Books* by Gerald Donaldson, published by Oxford Press in 1981 and now out of print. It is a very entertaining potpourri of bookishness.

- *Bibliobibli* -- those who read too much.
- *Bibliocharylodis* -- a dangerous whirlpool of books likely to drown unwary readers.
- *Biblioclast* -- one who tears pages from books.
- *Bibliodemon* -- a book-fiend or demon.
- *Bibliognoste* -- one knowing in title pages, colophons, editions, dates and place printed, printers and all the *minutiae* of books.
- *Bibliographe* -- a describer of books and other

literary arrangements.

- *Bibliolater* -- a worshipper of books.
- *Biblioklept* -- one who occasionally steals a book.
- *Bibliokleptomaniac* -- an inveterate book thief.
- *Bibliolestes* -- a book-robber or plunderer.
- *Biblioloigos* -- a book pest or plague.
- *Bibliomane* -- an indiscriminate accumulator of books.
- *Bibliomaniac* -- a book lover gone mad.
- *Bibliophage* -- one who eats or devours books.
- *Bibliophile* -- a lover of books.
- *Bibliophobe* -- one who fears books.
- *Bibliophthor* -- a book destroyer, ravager or waster.
- *Bibliotaphe* -- one who buries books or hides them.
- *Biblioriptos* -- one who throws books around.
- *Bibliosopher* -- one who gains wisdom from books.

WHY SOME BOOKS ARE RARE -- BIBLIOCLASTS

The memory of John Bagford (1675-1716), an antiquarian shoemaker, is held in very low esteem by bibliophiles. He spent his life collecting materials for a history of printing which he never wrote. His materials were title-pages which he **tore out** and mounted with others in a book. He collected about 25,000 title-pages in all.

His collection in sixty folio volumes is deposited in the British Museum. It is said that this arch-mutilator regretted that he was unable to discover [and destroy] a book printed by Caxton, England's first printer. This was only because title-pages were unknown in Caxton's day.

BEFORE PHOTO-COPYING

Thomas DeQuincey, best known for his *Confessions of an Opium Eater*, did not take reading notes. He just tore out the pages that interested him.

The poet Wordsworth used a greasy butter knife to cut open the pages of books. And, George Santayana, the 20th century philosopher, would take a book completely apart before reading it.

AND AS FOR BIBLIOMANIA

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

Bibliomaniacs are not all alike. After all, there are uncut copies, illustrated copies, every known edition, first editions, miniatures, curious bindings, mono-color bindings, etc. and etc.

ON THE FAR SIDE OF EXTREME

There was the wealthy English collector who long believed that a certain rare book in his collection was a unique copy. After learning that there was another copy in Paris, he finally managed to purchase the second copy for an outrageous 25,000 francs. He then tossed the copy into the fireplace of the previous owner. "Are you crazy?" cried the Parisian, stooping to rescue it. "No," said the bibliomaniac, detaining his arm. "I am quite in my right mind. I, too, possess a copy of that book. I deemed it to be a unique copy. I was mistaken. Now, however, thanks to your courtesy, I know it is!"

WHAT ABOUT BIBLIOPHTHORS?

Charles Lamb's ideas of book-marking are found in his correspondence with the poet Coleridge: "A book reads the better which is our own and has been so long known to us that we know the topography of its blots and dog's-ears, and can trace the dirt in it to having read it at tea with buttered muffins, or over a pipe, . . .".

Whenever the poet Edward Young (1683-1765) came to a striking passage in his reading he folded the leaf; at his death his library was full of books that would not close.

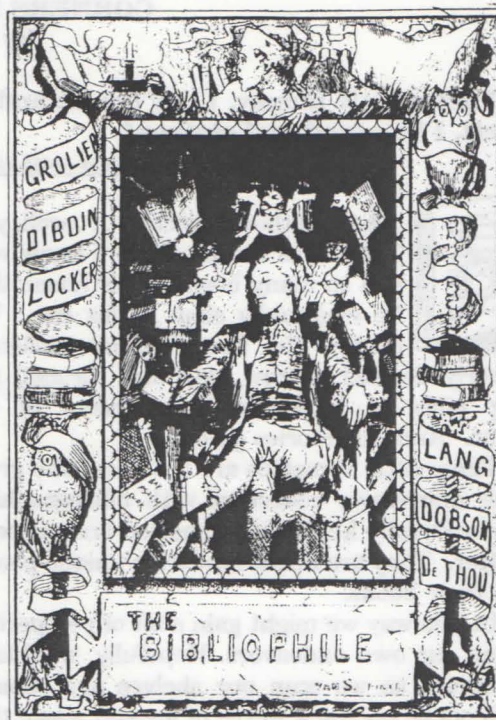
When Montaigne (1553-1592), the French essayist and one-time mayor of Bordeaux, got to the end of a volume which he considered not worth re-reading, it was his custom to jot down in it the time he had read it, as well as his considerations of its merit.

The philosopher Voltaire critiqued the books he read. A friend of his complained that any works he lent him were always disfigured by his margin notes.

John Selden, one of the most learned men of

the 17th century, used his glasses as markers -- and evidently left them there. When his important library, which he bequeathed to Oxford, was inventoried, spectacles were found by the dozens.

I once had the opportunity to assess a library of Henry Miller first editions that had all been underlined in a bold manner. The collector was very fond of Miller. The library was extensive and included several letters from Miller. First edition literature points of value revolve around the designations of mint and pristine . . .



** A little library, growing larger every year, is an honourable part of a man's history. It is a man's duty to have books. A library is not a luxury, but one of the necessities of life. -- Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887) *Sermons.* ***



--THE WAYWARD TENDRILS is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1990 for Wine Book Collectors. Yearly membership dues are \$10 and include subscription to THE WAYWARD TENDRILS NEWSLETTER, published quarterly. Permission to reprint is requested. Please address all correspondence to THE WAYWARD TENDRILS, P.O. Box 9023, Santa Rosa, CA 95405 USA. Editor: Gail Unzelman. Asst Editor: Bo Simons.--

NEWS & NOTES

Vintage thanks to the Tendrils who responded with quick payment of their annual dues (\$10). We squeak by with our dues barely covering our expenses (printing and mailing the Newsletter), so all are very much needed. Late dues payments accepted...

And, the kind words sent along are welcomed with opened-arms -- keep them coming!

John Roberts, England, encourages: "Keep up the good work with the Tendrils. The Newsletter is very informative. I found the recent Fine Press Checklist and the list of bibliographies particularly useful."

Robert Fraker (Savoy Books, Mass.) sends "Congratulations on a fine job - the articles are interesting, really good bibliographical substance."

Our Tendril in Denmark, **Erik Skovenborg**, writes "I find many interesting and useful bits of information in the Wayward Tendrils and I am happy to be a member." He has been keeping very busy writing for medical periodicals on wine/alcohol and health, but looks forward to giving us an article on bookplates, hopefully in the Fall when a "more quiet time" arrives.

INDEXES WANTED!! Researcher historian lecturer wine taster **Fred McMillin** can always use any index to any wine book (from Henderson to Heintz) that fellow Tendrils might have generated to supply these rudely published books with their needed indexes. If any of you have put together a wine book index, let us know and we will spread the word.

Earl Way (Vamberry's Books) has managed to resurface after "too many family and job commitments" and has dusted off the books and put together a catalogue of books on wine and gastronomy. His Membership Roster could easily be still buried somewhere, so if you did not receive a copy of his Catalogue No.1, write him at 21 Mountainbrook Road, Wilbraham, MA 01095.

A VIZETELLY TRADE: Member **Loyde Hartley** (Pennsylvania) would like to trade his copy of Vizetelly's *Facts about Champagne* (1879) for a copy of Vizetelly's *Facts about Port and Madeira* (1880) or *History of Champagne* (1882). Contact him for further details.

Valmai Hankel, our indefatigable librarian of Rare Books/Special Collections at the State Library of South Australia, has written another fine piece on the wine book collections there. [See her excellent article "Oenotypophily" in our March 1992 Newsletter]. Published as a supplement to the *South Australian Year Book for 1994*, *Oenography: Words on Wine in the State Library of South Australia* (1994) is a lovely, 26 page booklet, illustrated with color reproductions of

many of the library's rare books. *Oenography* can be purchased from the State Library of South Australia, GPO Box 419, Adelaide, S.A. 5001. Telephone 08-207-7200, FAX 08-207-7247. Cost is A\$5.95, plus surface mail A\$1.40 and air mail A\$2.50. Surface mail A\$1.40 UK; air mail A\$3.00 UK. [Note: Your editor also loves Indexes, so although not a "necessary" tool for this small book, she has made one, and will be happy to forward a copy to all who are interested.]

One of our new members, Canadian **Dennis Bosa**, writes that he is "in the process of compiling a list of corkscrew related publications, and when ready, I would be pleased to share it with the Tendril members. If any member is interested in corkscrew collecting, write me and I will send them information on the Canadian Corkscrew Collector's Club."



PULIGNY - MONTRACHET REVISITED A Letter to the Editor

Dear Gail,

Simon Loftus, author of the *Puligny-Montrachet* book you covered [Vol.4 No.1, p.17], has sent me the enclosed comment on the review, so I'm passing it on.

Yours, *Hugo Dunn-Meynell*

Dear Hugo,

Thanks for sending me the photocopy of the review in the Wayward Tendrils Newsletter.

I think it worth commenting on one remark in that review to the effect that I back away from discussing anti-Semitism in the village.

The facts are these. I found in fact very little evidence of anti-Semitism -- it is a subject which simply did not raise its head except on one particular occasion when I discovered that there was a mezuzah beside a doorway of a house in the village, but it happened to be at the same time as one of those periodic outbreaks of anti-Semitism again in France when some louts had desecrated a grave yard. This was all far away from Puligny, but the woman of the mezuzah felt afraid and most specifically asked that she should not be identified. I felt that I should comply with her wishes, more particularly as this was the only time during the course of several years of visiting Puligny that I had any cause to consider the problem. It is of course a national disgrace for France that incidents of anti-Semitism take place quite regularly and that anti-Semitic views are openly expressed by politicians, without legal redress. But I do think it is a problem which rarely touches Puligny in any way that I could see.

Yours sincerely, *Simon Loftus*



**BOOKS &
BOTTLES**
by
Fred McMillin

"QUE SYRAH, SIRRAH, SIRAH?"

■ "The French...Petite Syrah [synonym: Syrah] has nothing to do with California's Petite Sirah which is the little-known Durif of the Midi." -- Jancis Robinson, *Vines, Grapes and Wines*.

■ "The California Petite Sirah...is not the Duriff [sic]." -- Bob Thompson, *The Wine Atlas of California*.

I am looking forward to the day when some ampelographer proudly reveals the complete lineage of California's Petite Sirah. To hasten that day, I've recorded below the results of a quick literature scan which might prove useful. But first, let's define the grapes involved, since we have both the same name applied to different varietals and different names applied to the same varietal.

THE GRAPES

Grape #1 - The French Petite Syrah, more commonly called simply Syrah, came to the Rhone from the Middle East many centuries ago. Produces the great Hermitage Rhone red.

Grape #2 - The French Grosse Syrah; synonym, Mondeuse. Produces high-yield inferior wine.

Grape #3 - California Syrah. Same as #1.

Grape #4 - Early California Petite Sirah (also spelled Petit, and Sirrah). Arrived in California 1880 to 1910.

Grape #5 - Current California Petite Sirah.

Grape #6 - The Durif, also spelled Duriff, promulgated in the Rhone Valley starting about 1880 by botanist Dr. Francois Durif. Produces an inferior wine, and is disappearing in France.

THE BOOKS

André Simon in *Bottlescrew Days* (London, 1926) tells us the Hermitage reds of Grape #1 were "greatly prized by English connoisseurs" in the 18th century and lists imports by the first Earl of Bristol in

1710. That reputation attracted Thomas Jefferson to the Hermitage hill in March 1787, where he noted that the last hermit died in 1751.

Moving on to the early 1800s, we hear of Grape #2. Dr. Alexander Henderson in his 1824 *History of Ancient and Modern Wines* says the red wine grapes in the Hermitage hill are made from the "great and small siras," i.e. Grapes #1 and #2. In 1851 Cyrus Redding (*History and Description of Modern Wines*) tells us "red Hermitage is produced from the two varieties of the scyras [sic] plant." In 1872 Drs. Thudichum and Dupré say "the wines grown in the [Hermitage] district are the 'grosse Sirrah' and 'petite Sirrah'...the grosse Sirrah produces a common wine and therefore gradually is driven out of the [hill] vineyards and grown in the plain." There follows a detailed description of the appearance of the petite Sirrah (*Treatise on the Origin, Nature, and Varieties of Wine*, p.410). So, Grape #2 is losing favor in the Rhone Valley.

From 1872 we move to 1880. Dr. Durif is introducing the Durif around the Rhone -- Grape #6. Seven years later, Prof. George Husmann in the Napa Valley writes "The Petit Sirrah [sic], although of recent introduction, seems to succeed very well here, and fine wines have been made from it [Grape #4]. The Mondeuse, Gros Sirah [sic] is closely related to the foregoing, almost identical in growth and leaf, but...is said to make a somewhat coarser wine." On page 156 Husmann describes the Petit Sirrah/Sirah in detail (*Grape Culture and Wine Making in California*, 1888).

Observation: Prof. Husmann in 1887 indicates the early California Petite Sirah (Grape #4) had been in the State long enough to establish that it grew well in the Napa Valley, and produced fine wines. This implies the early California Petite Sirah had been in the Napa Valley at least 10 years, and so arrived before the Durif was available in the Rhone, meaning Grape #4 and #6 were different varietals.

In the 1880s Charles Krug also wrote that Napa Valley growers were "grafting Petit Sirah, Mondeuse, etc....to improve the character of their clarets." (Grapes #4 and #2) (Hugh Johnson, *Vintage: The Story of Wine*, p.369). About the same time, in Sonoma County, the first Hermitage cuttings in Sonoma County were introduced by Capt. J.H. Drummond, who called them Petite Sirrah. In this case, Grape #4 was Grape #1. (F.E. Wait, *Wines & Vines of California*, 1889 - with photo of Petite Sirrah by Drummond).

On to 1896 -- Professor Husmann now refers to the "Petit Syrah" or Serine varietal and to the Gros Syrah or Mondeuse. Sirah has changed to Syrah. (*American Grape Growing and Wine Making*). The implication is that the California Petit Syrah is Grape

#1, the French Syrah. So, in 1941 Schoonmaker and Marvel in *American Wines* upset the apple-cart by saying, "One does not have to be an ampelographer to know that California Petit Sirah [Grape #5] is not the [French] Petit Sirah. Many believe it to be Duriff [sic]."

Over 40 years passed, and Alexis Bespaloff summarized the 1988 situation as follows: "The California Petite Sirah [Grape #5] was presumed to be the Syrah of France [Grape #1], but which has now been identified as the Durif." Alas, it's not that simple. We'll give Bob Thompson the final say: "The [California] Petite Sirah was long thought to be the Durif. Genetic tests have proved that it is not, without proving what it is."

Conclusion: From this superficial review, my best guess is that the California Petite Sirah changed after its arrival over a century ago. In the 1880s California Petite Syrah probably was the French Syrah: Grape #4 was Grape #1. Subsequently, Grape #4 underwent genetic modifications and became Grape #5, a different varietal. The Durif may have participated in those changes.

Now, from the books to the bottles.

THE BOTTLES

My tasting panel has encountered a number of very appealing California Petite Sirahs in the past six months -- here are their top picks.

Best Buys:

- 4th - \$8.75 '90 Roudon-Smith
- 3rd - \$9.75 '91 Concannon [Note: In 1961 made first Petite Sirah varietal wine.]
- 2nd - \$9.00 '91 Fetzer Bonterra (blend with Zinfandel)
- Winner - \$9.00 '90 Mirassou

Best at Any Price:

- 6th - \$10.50 '91 Foppiano
- 5th - \$25.00 '91 Foppiano Reserve
- 4th - \$16.00 '90 Field Stone
- 3rd - \$12.00 '90 Fetzer
- 2nd - \$12.00 '91 David Bruce
- Winner - \$18. '89 Ridge York Creek

Postscript: Send any contradictory and/or supplementary Petite Sirah opinions and data to the Newsletter and we will feature them with full credit in a later article. 🍇



TO ROME -- IN REVERSE

by Warren Johnson

"Books on what?"

"Wine."

"Rather esoteric. Who buys those?"

"I'm not sure yet, but that's part of the fun. I'm going to find out."

Such has been a typical conversation I have had of late with both friends and fellow book dealers. The implication, of course, is that any significant involvement with books on wine is quite specialized and not likely to be very appealing. I'm not convinced.

Our editor has asked if I would write a word or two on how a general used book dealer comes to specialize in wine books. I do not fully understand how that happened. Some friends, other than those above, are convinced that this was somehow pre-ordained.

I entered the book trade only a year ago upon finding some very inexpensive books which I thought should have sold for more. I couldn't resist these purchases, and my living room began to fill up to the point where I even disallowed members of my mystery book club to meet there anymore. This was getting serious.

So I told myself that I should also get serious and declare myself "in business." I now had lots of books in a number of fields and began quoting to other dealers. They bought. I was on my way. However, I knew I needed a business name. Coming up with a name has been the toughest challenge to date. I wanted something generic -- I wanted the name to imply my books were not new -- and to allow me to be a store, a mail-order business, a search firm with no stock and/or whatever would develop. Finally, a name came which would satisfy these options and which I liked (the hardest part): Second Harvest Books. So, I got a small office and started working from there and from my home.

Prior to having even thought about selling books, I had determined that I was going to move to the wine country of Northern California, specifically to southern Lake County, as soon as I could swing it. So, I kept buying books, selling a few. Each month's purchases were a result of the current plan that month -- have a store, work at home, etc. I began buying recent Northern Californiana thinking "when in Rome...". One day, I looked at those particular stacks of books in my living room and realized that about half of them dealt with wine.

I had recently returned from the AB Bookman's Weekly "Denver" course where the big word was specialize. I wasn't interested, as I love all literature. Living in San Francisco, as I currently do, I have discovered that there are about half as many

book dealers as there are restaurants. Could I make it without specializing? Why can't I have my cake and eat it, too?

Here were all these wine books, I was already planning to move to the wine country, and I had a name of Second Harvest. Pre-ordained, as my friends said? I don't know. But the move will happen in June and my business goes with me.

I've done some investigation into being a secondhand wine book dealer and have met with nothing but support and encouragement. I'll keep some of my other book interests going -- general fiction, some mysteries, the South Pacific (anyone have an extra first Butler?), and other Northern Californiana -- while specializing in books on wine. If I can move a few wine books around into the right hands, I'll be happy. 🍷

[Many thanks to Warren Johnson, a new Tendril and a new book dealer, for sending us his story. His Second Harvest Books is at 601 Van Ness, E-3823, San Francisco, CA 94102; telephone 415-552-9215 -- until he makes that move to the wine country.]

IN PRAISE OF WINE by Gail Unzelman

Otto, our Golden Retriever/Labrador "bear" rarely barks. But, the other night he jolted me from sleep with one of his best. After investigating, I could only surmise that he just wanted me to enjoy the full moon with him. Now awake, I chose Joni McNutt's new book *In Praise of Wine* instead. Having read several notices of the book as being a superb collection of quotations, proverbs, poetry, witticisms, and toasts - from the earliest times to the present - we added it to our bookshelf: books like this are always fun and handy to have. A pleasant surprise was in store -- this book was more than a collection of winey sayings: Joni McNutt had done extensive research and study of the literature of wine. In her 14-page Introduction, she masterfully traces the history of wine literature and its writers, from the first papyrus and clay tablets to Hemingway and Hugh Johnson. From lyrical poetry to practical treatises to wine appreciation -- it is a lovely journey. The book is arranged chronologically, and each chapter is blessed with a short history of wine and the vine for the period covered. Illustrations of black and white reproductions of various works of wine art (but sadly unidentified) add to the enjoyment. An appreciated 10-page listing of Works Consulted and an Author Index are provided at the end. *In Praise of Wine* (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1993, 236 pp. \$12.95) is a ready reference to the world's wine literature, offering us much pleasure and knowledge. *In vino veritas*. Cheers! 🍷

THE STORY OF A VISION FULFILLED A Review by Bo Simons

The Heartbreak Grape: A California Winemaker's Search for the Perfect Pinot Noir, by Marq De Villers. San Francisco: Harper Collins West, 1993. \$23.

Marq De Villers, a South African native now living in Canada, has written a book about Josh Jensen of Calera Vineyards, a California native who learned his winemaking skills in Burgundy at Domaine de la Romanée-Conti. This inspiring tale of a man pursuing a vision single-mindedly hits notes that echo and resonate. De Villers touches many themes: the international nature of wine, its history and culture, the role of chance -- but the big motif of the book is the power of will pitted against all comers: the vagaries of government, the fickle consumer, market forces, the weather and numerous other obstacles.

Jensen discovered wine and especially Burgundy during two and a half years at Oxford studying anthropology. He decided not to become an anthropologist but to devote his life to wine. He went straight to the Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, perhaps the greatest of the great Burgundy domaines, knocked on the door, and asked if he could help pick grapes. He worked his way from the fields into the cellars, working the '69 and '70 vintages. He learned from the great maître de chai André Noublet, but soon ran afoul of one of the owners, Madame Lalou Bize-Leroy, and was asked to leave.

He had picked up enough. Noublet had stressed the importance of soil, particularly limestone soil, in the production of great Burgundy. This became Jensen's quest. He returned to California, got soil survey maps, got in his Volkswagen camper and tooled around the state looking for any property that had the right soil. He took a bottle of Hydrochloric acid and an eyedropper and put a few drops of acid on likely rocks to see if they fizzed. If they did they contained calcium carbonate (limestone). He went from the Trinity Alps to Big Sur and further before finding a piece of property that suited his vision in San Benito County, inland from Monterey.

How he struggled for years to put in his vineyards, build his winery, secure his water rights, establish financing, and market his wines takes up the bulk of the book. De Villers writes a good story and in Jensen has an interesting subject, a man of vision and edges. Jensen comes off as verging on paranoid when going over the saga of his water rights on his property. The State of California, his downstream neighbors and God in the form of the seven-year drought all conspire against him.

I wish De Villers would have broadened his range. Jensen makes a good Pinot Noir. So do a lot of

others. Jensen may have been a pioneer, but there were others. Tom Rochioli, Mssr Burt Selyem and Ed Williams (of William-Selyem), George Davis of Porter Creek, Gary Farrell, Robert Stemmler, Davis Bynum, DeLoach and Tom Dehlinger are just a few of the Russian River Pinot Noir producers around here (Sonoma County) whose products consistently rate as well as Calera. De Villers could have compared Jensen and his Calera wines to some of the locals and some of the Carneros and Oregon Pinot producers and made a more rounded book. ☞

===== SOME NEW RELEASES =====

The Wines of Long Island: Birth of a Region, by Philip F. Palmedo and Edward Beltrami, Great Falls, VA: Waterline Books, \$16.95 - history, grapes grown and wines made, profiles of the area's wineries: "This book is worth adding to any library on Eastern wines." (Hudson Cattell, *Wine East*). Available from the publisher at 438 River Bend Rd, Great Falls, VA 22066 - include \$2 postage.

Two recent publications of the American Wine Society: *The Complete Handbook of Winemaking*, with articles by Emile Peynaud, Philip Jackisch, Vernon Singleton, G.H. Mowbray, and others (\$17.50); and *Growing Wine Grapes* (\$12.50) with authors J.R. McGrew, T. Zabadel, J. Loenholdt. The focus of these books is the dedicated amateur winemaker and grape grower, and combines into two volumes many previously published manuals and articles of the AWS. Issued in paperback, they are available from AWS, 3006 Latta Rd, Rochester, NY 14612.

The Book of Wine Antiques, by Robin Butler and Gillian Walkling, first published in hardback in 1986, has just been reissued in a large format, glossy paperback by the Antique Collectors' Club Ltd. (Wappinger Falls, New York 12590, \$39.50, 236 pp). Lavishly illustrated with both color and black & white photographs, printed on heavy coated stock, it is a beautiful guide for the collector of wine drinking history. Bottles, bin labels, corkscrews, decanters, drinking glasses, wine tasters, funnels and coasters each have a chapter - plus others. Informative appendixes, along with a good glossary, bibliography and index are added bonuses.

The new text book of the wine trade in Britain, *Exploring Wines & Spirits*, is authored by Wayward Tendril Christopher Fielden, and published by The Wine & Spirit Education Trust. Hugh Johnson in his Foreword commends the "lucid, precise and pithy textbook" as "it sets out clearly, but always with humour and humanity, the ground-rules by which a modern wine-merchant must operate -- both legally and commercially." The 390 page paperback covers

viticulture, vinification and tasting technique, then has individual chapters on each wine and spirit producing region of the world. Packed with information and well-illustrated with full color maps, photographs, and charts; with glossary, bibliography, and index, this book is a well put together, easy to use, valuable reference for the trade, and the consumer.

Available from the Book Hunter Press is a set of U.S. regional guides called The Used Book Lover's Guide Series: *New England Guide* (337 pp lists over 600 dealers from Maine to Connecticut, \$14.95); *Mid-Atlantic Guide* (367 pp lists 900 dealers in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware, \$15.95); and *South Atlantic Guide* (316 pp with over 600 dealers from Maryland to Florida, \$14.95). Authors David and Susan Siegel visited every one of the more than 2000 book shops (some one has to do it!) and provide descriptions of the dealer's stock, shop location (with maps), hours, specialty, etc. A useful Specialty Index is included. Dealers who issue catalogs and accept want lists are specified. "Updates" are sent to *Guide* purchasers every six months. These guides are a welcome reference for the book collector - whether travelling or shopping by catalog or phone from home. Write Book Hunter Press, P.O. Box 193, Yorktown Heights, New York 10598. Telephone 914-245-6608.

And, courtesy of Hugo Dunn-Meynell and the International Wine & Food Society, here are some recent British releases of note:

Chateau Latour: The History of a Great Vineyard, 1331-1992, translated by Edmund Penning-Rowsell. Segrave Foulkes, 572 pp, £145 (first published in French in 1974). Although the title states 1992, the book actually takes us to 1993, and is based on the Chateau's meticulous archives, which go back to the 14th century. The translator gives us a further 18 years of Latour history. £145 is a lot of money for a book, but this is a lot of book. It is superbly half-bound in maroon leather and cloth, with many illustrations, some in full colour.

1994 Sunday Telegraph Good Wine Guide, Robert Joseph, 272 pp, £7.99. This excellently researched publication claims to be the most comprehensive annual on the UK market, and certainly it's hard to find anything missing.

Best Wine Buys in the High Street, Judy Ridgeway. Foulsham, 208 pp, £4.99. An invaluable and up-to-date guide to everyday wine buying.

Grapevine 1994, by Anthony Rose and Tim Atkin. Headline, 472 pp, £5.99. An extremely relevant wine buyer's handbook for south-Britain shoppers.

Wine Wisdom by Hubrecht Duijker. Mitchell Beazley, 127 pp, £4.99. The sort of thing that, at Christmas, is described as a "stocking filler." Frankly, we'd rather have an orange. The book, however, is a lemon. ☞

~ ~ ~ WINE IN AMERICA:
TWELVE HISTORIC TEXTS ~ ~ ~
by Thomas Pinney

Part IV

[This is the final installment of Tendril Pinney's historic series, originally published in the American Wine Society Journal, Winter 1988 - Fall 1989. Once again, our sincerest thanks to Tom and the Journal for allowing us to reprint these excellent articles.]

10. A. De Caradeuc, *Grape Culture and Wine Making in the South, With a Description of the Best Varieties of Grapes for the Vineyard* . . . Published by the "Aiken Vine Association", Augusta, Georgia, D. Redmond, 1858.

Though the southern states did not succeed in establishing a wine making industry, it was not for lack of enthusiastic winemakers, nor for lack of grapes. Many of the best known native varieties of grapes for wine came out of the south, including Catawba, Isabella, Lenoir, Herbemont, and Norton's Virginia Seedling. As for winemakers, there was Thomas McCall of Georgia, who made wine for many years from 1815 but made no converts to his work. In South Carolina, Nicholas Herbemont, beginning as early as 1811, carried on successful viticulture near Columbia and wrote widely for the agricultural press of the nation about his experience. These are only the most prominent of a numerous roll of amateurs all over the Southeast. In the decade before the Civil War, something like a wine boom developed in the cotton states, where farmers were eager to find an alternative to the monoculture on which so many depended. Grapes seemed a likely possibility. At the same time, the ravages of mildew in European vineyards (a blight imported from America) made it easy to imagine a time when the world would have to depend on America for its wine. In these circumstances, the Aiken Wine Growing Association was formed at Aiken, South Carolina, in 1858. One of its first actions was to appoint a committee to prepare instructions on grape growing and winemaking, and the result was De Caradeuc's *Grape Culture*, presented to the Society for its approval scarcely three months after it had been commissioned. The pamphlet confirmed the faith that had led to the formation of the Association, asserting at the beginning that "with all the facilities we possess at the South, with our soil, climate, and more particularly our slaves, nothing can prevent ours from becoming the greatest wine country that ever was."

Not much is known of De Caradeuc; he may have been from one of the Huguenot families who already had a long history in South Carolina. What is known is that he had begun growing grapes for wine at Aiken some time before 1851, when he produced his first vintage from Warren grapes (a Southern variety, perhaps identical with Herbemont). His example stimulated others in the area, and over the border in Georgia as well, where D. Redmond, editor of the *Southern Cultivator*, joined the Aiken association. Redmond, it will be noticed, was the publisher of De Caradeuc's pamphlet.

Grape Culture and Wine Making in the South is faithful to its title: De Caradeuc makes little use of the recommendations and practices of his predecessors in other parts of the country but concentrates on southern conditions. He therefore pays particular attention to the choice of varieties suited to the southeastern climate. Growers, he urges, should not confine themselves to one variety but should try a fairly wide selection, including the Warren, Isabella, Catawba, Pauline and Black July. In this way, and only in this way, will a body of experience be built up that will allow confident recommendations to be made. He also urges experiment with seedling grapes, so that new varieties suited to the country may be found. Whatever variety is grown, De Caradeuc says, it should be pruned short, for quality is always better than quantity. His instructions on winemaking are brief and elementary enough. Even more laconic are some of his remarks about dealing with pests. Here, for example, is the entire entry on the subject of birds: "Nearly all birds are fond of grapes. A gun is the only remedy."

It is clear that De Caradeuc is addressing himself to an audience not very easy with the subject. He is at pains to keep the terms simple and the explanations brief. He avoids all discussion of the finer technicalities in both viticulture and winemaking, for, as he says, "a baker may make good bread, and yet be ignorant of the principles by which the leaven will act upon his bread and cause it to rise."

Aiken vinegrowing never came to anything. (At least one commercial winery, Benson and Merrier, operated in the 1850s. Merrier was a Frenchman.) Perhaps it might have, if the war had not suddenly intervened. And one can see how attractive the prospect of a decent domestic wine must have seemed by contrast with the locally available tipples. If only, De Caradeuc concluded, the poor farmer of the south would turn to growing his own grapes, as he easily might on no matter how poor a soil, he could have not only a "handsome income" but "a pleasant beverage more wholesome and agreeable than Peach Mobby or Persimmon Beer, and more conducive to his and his children's morals than Whiskey, that bane of our

country, which (wine) will finally drive out of use."

11. Agoston Haraszthy, "Report on Grapes and Wine of California," *Transactions of the California State Agricultural Society, 1858, Sacramento, 1859*, pp.311-329.

By the late 1850s, a dozen years after the American annexation of California, and a decade after the Gold Rush, grape growing and winemaking in the state had grown far beyond their origins in the Franciscan missions. Indeed, a few years after the Gold Rush, when men had found that not all fortunes were to be made in the mines and that the state had many other opportunities, vineyards began to flourish: an estimated 1,500 acres of grapes throughout the state in 1856 had jumped to nearly 4,000 in 1858. The trade, however, was still dominated by Los Angeles and the Mission grape, which meant that the standard product was likely to be sweet wine rather than dry, and that the center of production was far from the center of population. Not much had been done in experimenting with new varieties and new methods. Nor had anybody yet had the time or confidence to publish any guidance for the growers and winemakers in the state.

To do something about this need, the gentlemen of the California State Agricultural Society approached Colonel Agoston Haraszthy to ask him to write a treatise on cultivating the vine and making wine. They had come to the right man. Haraszthy (c1812-1869), who had arrived in California from Hungary via Wisconsin in 1849, was a flamboyant and energetic personality, full of enterprise, resourceful in self-advertisement, and an enthusiastic champion of the future of California as a source of wine for the world. His Buena Vista ranch in Sonoma was already the site of a furious activity in planting and building -- it would be called the "largest vineyard in the world" by 1863 -- and it was no trouble to Haraszthy, in the midst of his multifarious activities as agriculturist, politician, businessman, and promoter, to oblige the Society. By February 1858 he had written his "Report on Grapes and Wine of California," which the Society then published both as part of its annual *Transactions* for 1858 and as a separate pamphlet for distribution throughout the state. (So at least Haraszthy said [*Harper's Magazine*, 1864, 29:24]; but the scarcity, not to say invisibility, of copies casts a doubt on the statement. I have not succeeded in finding a copy of the separate pamphlet form of the essay. It was not, of course, meant to be preserved, but if it was widely distributed, it is, at the least, curious that no specimen seems to be in any of the standard collections.) It was thus not merely the first work about California wine for Californians by someone who knew the facts from

his own experience, it was widely advertised and readily available. Haraszthy's later and far better-known work, the book called *Grape Culture, Wines and Wine-Making*, published in New York in 1862, did much to advertise California wine to a larger public, but from the point of view of California itself the earlier, more modest "Report" is the more significant work.

REPORT ON GRAPES AND WINE OF CALIFORNIA,

BY

COL. A. HARASZTHY, OF BUENA VISTA, SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.

O. C. Wheeler, Corresponding Secretary California Agricultural Society:
DEAR SIR:--To your request to give the early history of California vine culture, the mode of cultivating the grape-vine, the making of the wine, etc., I will comply with pleasure, but I am apprehensive that my limited abilities will not do justice to the case. Holding, nevertheless, the doctrine that it is the duty of every good citizen to communicate all information in his possession to promote the interest of this Union, and particularly of this State, I will give all the information which during a series of years I did gather in my native land, (Hungary,) California, and in my travels in the European vine-growing countries, by practical observations.

I must be pardoned if there should be any error in dates of the early history of the vine-culture in California, as there are no reliable statistical works of that period.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

A. HARASZTHY.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE VINE-CULTURE IN CALIFORNIA.

The grape-vine was brought to California by the Catholic priests, in the year one thousand seven hundred and forty, or thereabout, and was planted at the Mission San Diego, and Mission Viejo, situated about sixty miles from San Diego, in Lower California. Tradition says that said grape-vines and olive-trees were brought at one and the same time from Spain. Our modern California-grapes were, to all appearances, multiplied from these vines, set out originally in the above-named places. It is certain that no other quality than this can be discovered among the native-vines at the present age, and it is almost impossible that, if several

The "Report" itself, like the man, is a mixture of the sensible, the fanciful, the extravagant, and the naive. Haraszthy gives a quick and inexact sketch of early vinegrowing and winemaking in California, and notes the traditions that the wines of the Sonoma Mission, near his own Buena Vista, were the most highly regarded of all Mission wines -- a tradition he had from his Sonoma neighbor General Vallejo but which no one else seems to have head of. The marks of his Hungarian origins come out in his instructions for making a California Tokay -- that "noble wine" as he calls it -- by the slow, costly, authentic, and utterly impracticable method of pressing the juice of raisined berries by their own weight. He also includes instructions for the making of champagne by the traditional *methode champenoise*, though admitting that conditions in California are not yet ready for such specialized and labor-intensive winemaking. The costly effort to produce a California champagne at Buena Vista was later to contribute to Haraszthy's downfall in that enterprise. One sometimes encounters a rather

charming grandiosity in Haraszthy's instructions, suggesting the character of the man, as when he observes that cellars tunnelled into mountainsides are the best kind -- "if the planter has a mountain convenient." And there is a strange credulity as well. Superior French brandy, he says, is aged by secret methods, one of which he possesses but cannot disclose, having pledged his word of honor to his teacher to keep the secret.

Personality aside, the "Report" has other strong points. The instructions are typically brisk and sensible: "I need not waste room here to say how to lay out the rows," he writes; "every man knows that, and has his own mode for it." When he recommends a practice, he does so confidently, as one having authority. Cane and spur pruning, for example, he maintains to be best for California, its superiority being "a well-established fact." He pays attention to California conditions, as in his recommendation that growers should prune their vines so as to shade the clusters. Newcomers from Northern Europe, he observes, often make the mistake of exposing the grapes as they had been accustomed to do in the old country. And he is emphatic on the need both for better and different varieties than those currently used, and for the practice of blending. Though California in 1858 relied almost totally on the Mission grape,

"It is nevertheless certain that grapes of different kinds, well assorted, will make a far superior wine of the same soil. To illustrate this more to every man's mind, I will compare the wine-making with the cooking of a vegetable soup, but it will be a poor one; but add to it also potatoes, carrots, onions, cabbage, etc., and you will have a fine soup, delicately flavored. So it will be with your wine.
.."

If, he argued, the United States consuls living in countries around the world were to collect all the varieties of grape that they could find and ship them to Washington for distribution throughout the Union, a new day would arrive: "California, with such aid, would not only produce as noble a wine as any country on the face of the globe, but it would export more dollars' worth of wine, brandy, and raisins, than it now does of gold." This sounds like the visionary boasting for which California is notorious: but he was not wrong.

12. George Husmann, *An Essay on the Culture of the Grape in the Great West*, Chas. W. Kielmann, Hermann, Missouri, 1863.

The Germans who migrated to the region of St. Louis in the 1830s were, many of them, a very superior lot, men of education and even of high professional standing before they left their native country in order to find liberty in the new state of Missouri. One such group established the town of Hermann, some 60 miles up the Missouri River from St. Louis, hoping to make it a center of high German culture on the frontier. But first they needed to make a living, and when they found that their lands were not fit for the grain farming they had supposed would be their business, they began to experiment with the grape. Most of them were Northern Germans, unfamiliar with viticulture, but that perhaps was an advantage: they were observant and open to experience, and by intelligent trial and error they soon created a successful industry. The first grape vine fruited at Hermann in 1845; the first commercial vintage was made in 1848; and by the time of the Civil War there were more than 500 acres of vineyards surrounding the little town.

George Husmann (1827-1902) was a boy of 11 when he was taken to Hermann by his father, one of the original organizers of the town. He grew up with the wine industry and was an eager contributor to its development. He planted vineyards, opened a winery, and took a leading part in the search for suitable grape varieties, and for the best methods of growing them. He also wrote about wine making at Hermann in order to advertise the good work and to attract others to it. *An Essay on the Culture of the Grape* is his first separate publication on the subject, and, though it was written and published at the very height of the Civil War, it is filled with a kind of evangelical faith in the future of wine growing in the West, as Missouri then was.

He needed faith, for conditions in Missouri were tough. The Catawba grape, which the Germans had naturally planted following the example of Longworth's success at Cincinnati, produced wildly fluctuating harvests depending on the extent to which the diseases that affect it prevailed in a given season: an acre might produce 500 gallons in one year, in another, five. There were killing winter frosts; hail might wipe out a crop in one hour; mildew was an annual devastation. Gradually, the Germans learned how to meet these conditions. They adopted sulphur against the mildew; they studied techniques of winter covering against the frosts; and they experimented with other varieties to replace the too-susceptible Catawba. Before long, they had learned that the variety called variously Norton, or Norton's Seedling, or Cynthiana, flourished while the Catawba sickened and died. And though the revered Longworth had declared that it was worthless for wine, they learned to make not only a passable but a good wine from it.

All of this had been accomplished by the time that Husmann, newly-returned from soldiering in the war, sat down to write his *Essay*, and one can readily sympathize with his introductory flourish:

Often, when I look back on the first feeble beginnings of a grape culture here, the struggle with poverty, ignorance and all other serious impediments, my heart throbs with satisfaction at the results already gained and with glorious hopes for the future.

The note of satisfaction and the theme of glorious hope run through the *Essay*, but they do not prevent Husmann from giving instruction to the novice planter that is notable for detail, clarity and precision. Everything that he says derives directly from his own experience as a vinegrower and winemaker, and is addressed to readers who can think for themselves. He stresses the crucial importance of making the right selection of varieties, and the equal importance of consulting local conditions and one's own experience rather than that of remote oracles -- just what the Hermannites had done when they disregarded Longworth and found their success in the despised Norton grape:

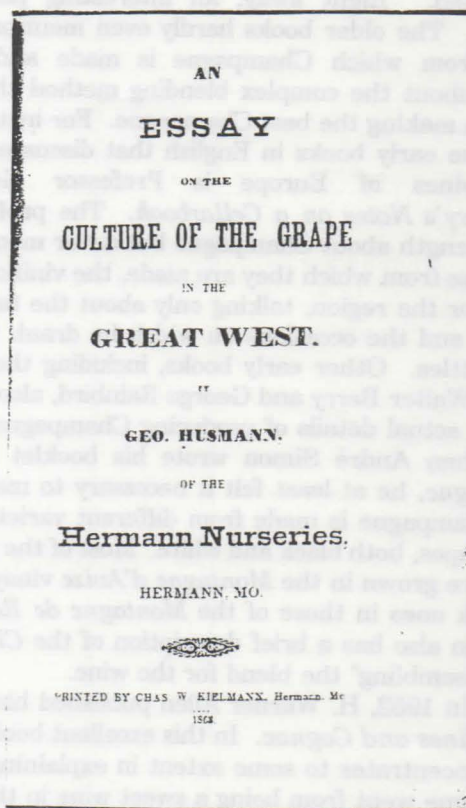
I would warn against being guided by the experience of men who live a thousand miles off, have a different climate, a different soil, and other obstacles to contend with, than we have here. Let us experiment ourselves, try them all and retain only those suited to our soil and climate.

It seems fair to say that Husmann's was a true love affair with the grape. Certainly he devoted his life to it. In 1867 he founded the Mississippi Grape Growers Association; two years later he began publishing a magazine called the "Grape Culturist," a work almost single-handedly his, at a time when viticulture in the region was rather more a promise than a fact. Some years later Husmann became the first professor of horticulture at the University of Missouri, where he operated an experimental cellar. In 1881 he left Missouri for the Napa Valley of California, where he continued to manage vineyards, to make wine and to write on his favorite subject. Before he left Missouri he had published *The Cultivation of the Native Grape* (1866), which went through several editions. In 1880 he published *American Grape Growing and Wine Making*, which remained in print for nearly half a century; and in his

California years he published *Grape Culture and Wine-Making in California*, a book filled with just as much enthusiasm and concern for the future of the industry in California as he had ever shown for that of the Midwest nearly thirty years before. One may add that Husmann's son, also named George, became an expert on viticulture with the United States Department of Agriculture.

It is fitting to close this brief survey of the pioneer literature of wine in America with Husmann's valediction to his *Essay*, written just at the moment when the great expansion of American wine-growing was about to begin:

It has been a labor of love, not toil, for I love the noble grape; and to all who are engaged in its culture, would I extend the hand of good fellowship, for it is truly a great and noble work, in which we are engaged.



-- Courtesy of State Historical Society of Missouri --



A FEW DAYS IN CHAMPAGNE

by Dennis Foley

[The following is excerpted from Dennis Foley's recent article in *The Underground Wine Journal* (Vol.XV, No.3&4). His article pleased your editor because of the many references to wine books, and how they were utilized in planning this visit of "a few days in Champagne" and writing the "fairly comprehensive annual report on Champagne." Foley interestingly points out how wine books have evolved over the years to give us more technical information. We thank *The Journal* and Dennis Foley for their permission to reprint -- and, for their new Tendrils membership! Subscription information for this excellent monthly publication is available from Wine Journal Enterprises, P.O. Box 3567, South Pasadena, CA 91031.]

We immediately set about reading (or rereading) all the books about Champagne that we could find. Right away, an interesting pattern emerged. The older books hardly even mention the grapes from which Champagne is made and say nothing about the complex blending method that is critical in making the best Champagne. For instance, one of the early books in English that discusses the great wines of Europe is Professor George Saintsbury's *Notes on a Cellarbook*. The professor talks at length about Champagne but never mentions the grapes from which they are made, the vinification method or the region, talking only about the famous vintages and the occasions on which he drank these great bottles. Other early books, including those of Charles Walter Berry and George Rainbird, also skim over the actual details of producing Champagne. By 1949, when André Simon wrote his booklet titled *Champagne*, he at least felt it necessary to mention that "Champagne is made from different varieties of Pinot grapes, both black and white. Most of the white Pinots are grown in the *Montagne d'Avize* vineyards; the black ones in those of the *Montagne de Reims*." M. Simon also has a brief description of the *Chef de Cave* "assembling" the blend for the wine.

In 1952, H. Warner Allen published his book *White Wines and Cognac*. In this excellent book, Mr. Allen concentrates to some extent in explaining how Champagne went from being a sweet wine in the last century to being an almost entirely dry wine by the early years of this century. On the vineyards and making of Champagne there is very little. In fact, on the subject of the vineyards, the word "Chardonnay" is not even mentioned in the book -- he speaks instead of "the white wine." The only grape mentioned by name is Pinot Noir, and its distribution around the Champagne region is briefly outlined. By 1962, André

Simon had published a more thorough work also titled *Champagne* (which is not to be confused with his earlier booklet of the same name). In this new book, M. Simon gives a somewhat fuller description of the grapes used in making champagne. He first points out that 80% of the grapes are black. M. Simon then mentions that the best black variety is Pinot Noir, and he goes on to list several individual clones of Pinot Noir by the names the locals use to distinguish them. This is important to note, as in a region as big as Champagne it would be very likely that the vines in widely separated areas would tend to drift apart genetically.

We now come to the first really comprehensive book written in modern times in English on this subject, *Champagne: the Wine, the Land and the People* by Patrick Forbes, published in 1967 and updated several times. Mr. Forbes states, "the law allows champagne to be made from the grapes of four of the species of *Vitis vinifera*: the Pinot, the Chardonnay, the Arbanne and the Petit Meslier. However, less than 1 percent of the wine field is planted with Arbanne and Petit Meslier vines. Champagne's life-blood is the juice of the Pinot and Chardonnay." Now at least we're getting closer to the truth. In fact, this would be exactly correct except that, as you will see, Gamay and Pinot Blanc are also legal grape varieties in certain limited circumstances. Mr. Forbes also had detailed information on all aspects of the history, vineyard practices and production of Champagne.

Finally, we have Jancis Robinson's wonderful book *Vines, Grapes and Wines*, published in 1986. She points out what is still true, that Pinot Meunier still accounts for nearly 50% of the plantings in Champagne, with Chardonnay and Pinot Noir split almost evenly in the remaining half. Mrs. Robinson also gives us the following excellent overview: "The general principal on which varieties have been chosen by the vignerons of Champagne, however, is that the most capricious vine of the three, Pinot Noir, is planted wherever there is more than half a chance of its ripening properly. The Meunier is planted wherever the land is so vulnerable to spring frosts that Chardonnay would be at risk and Pinot Noir impossible..."

After reviewing these books and many others (including Serena Sutcliffe's comprehensive and extremely valuable book, *Champagne*, published in 1988) in some detail, we resolved our mission would be to look mostly at some of the lesser known parts of the Champagne-making process, concentrating on the vines and the individual wines made from each variety.

[And so continues Foley's well-researched report on Champagne...]