

the



# WAYWARD TENDRILS

## Newsletter

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### LONGWORTH

#### Read Between the Lines

by Linda Walker Stevens

*[Since being transplanted from Napa Valley, California, to Hermann, Missouri, Tendril Linda Stevens has pursued the wine history of mid-America, contributing significant articles on the subject to a number of historical journals. We are pleased to have her contribute once again to our Newsletter. — Ed.]*



There are other aspects of his public life, Nicholas Longworth's career as winegrower, winemaker, and wine writer is a collection of incongruities. He was equally an eccentric dilettante and a determined titan. He was part philan-

thropist, total opportunist, at once lucky and shrewd, self-effacing and arrogant, candid and sly, naive and manipulative. By all accounts, the enigmatic millionaire proved no less a riddle to his contemporaries than to historians.

Born at the close of the American Revolution, Longworth was the third son of a New Jersey family of dispossessed and ostracized Loyalists. His background surely influenced his adult leanings toward underdogs. "My charities are for the Devil's poor," he said, "because I am the only man in the city imprudent enough to help them." This penchant for lost causes may best explain his forty-year romance with the disobliging Catawba grapevine.

"Old Longworth," as he habitually referred to himself, was less a direct contributor to wine literature than a constant manipulator of its content. Wooing editors with gifts of wine and frequent letters, in the form of progress reports on his wine business, became a Longworth specialty. Apparently, these overtures afforded him the opportunity to "plant" the colorful (sometimes fanciful) anecdotes that reflected well on his wine acumen or general

character. An item in *Cozzens Wine Press* in 1858 concerning "The Last Words of John James Dufour," a founder of the Vevay wine colony and author of *THE AMERICAN VINE DRESSER'S GUIDE* smacks of this brand of manufactured promotion. The story holds that after disputing the merits of Longworth's Catawba, as against his Cape wine, Dufour performed a final taste test on his deathbed in 1827 and capitulated: "'Ah, doctor,' said he, his countenance brightening up, 'Longworth was right ... It is a good wine — a very good wine.'" The credibility of this tale is undermined by the fact that Longworth made his first Catawba wine in 1828. Such were Old Nick's contributions to wine mythology.

Indeed, Longworth had few peers as a promoter. The five-foot-one-inch giant, known for his peculiar disposition and rag-picker's apparel, met public relations challenges with the finesse of a Madison Avenue adman. A few of his fabrications have boldly entered history cloaked as fact. Old Nick showed a genius for identifying himself with popular causes and personalities. Abraham Lincoln was drafted into a supporting role in one of Longworth's yarns, and the imaginative millionaire further claimed to have performed an act of mercy for a runaway slave that inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe's scene of Eliza fleeing from the hounds in *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*.

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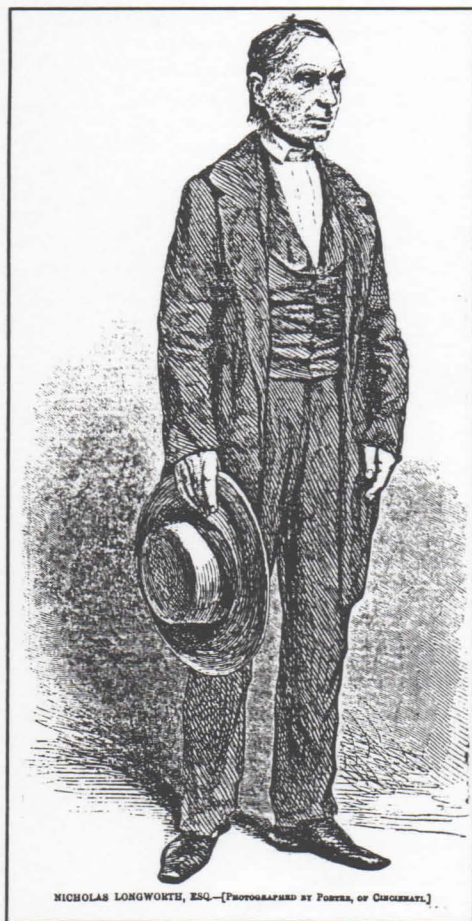


With all respect to Mrs. Stowe, few literary figures captured the romantic imagination of antebellum American readers better than poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Legend has it that Long-



fellow, a friend of Longworth's son, spontaneously penned his 1854 blandishment, "Ode to Catawba Wine," in response to a gift of Sparkling Catawba sent by Old Nick. However, the poem's contrasting of America's pure wines against the "drugged" juice, the "Devil's Elixir," imported from Europe, suggests input from an American wine industry spokesman. It's tempting to ponder whether a more persuasive sweetener than merely the "dulcet, delicious and dreamy" drink may have elicited such a facile tribute.

The self-made millionaire excelled at giving the impression that he was skilled and knowledgeable in grape growing and winemaking, whereas, in fact, he relied on the expertise of his German tenant viniculturists and others in his winery employ at Cincinnati. This cat jumps out of its bag repeatedly in Longworth's own writings.



NICHOLAS LONGWORTH, ESQ.—[PHOTOGRAPHED BY FORTER, OF CINCINNATI.]

[From HARPER'S WEEKLY, July 24, 1858]

search, Old Longworth noted the proven marketability of grapes. A 1799 vineyard, located midtown in Cincinnati, had failed when its unacclimated European vinifera promptly died, but the effort tantalized Cincinnati's horticulturists. The relative success a few years later of the Swiss-born vine

growers at Vevay, Indiana, forty-five miles downriver, implied bright prospects.

Longworth began his serious acquaintance with viticulture in 1823, when he contracted with a German immigrant named Ammen who was an experienced vinedresser. In an arrangement destined to become a trademark, Old Nick provided the land, a house, and planting stock for Ammen, in exchange for half of the fruit produced. Ammen surveyed the success with the native Cape variety at Vevay and planted four acres of these American vines on Baldface Creek. The endeavor agreed with Longworth's fascination with botany, and he soon transformed grape culture in Ohio from a gentleman's hobby into a commercial enterprise. But not by the sweat of his own brow, nor by his own brain power.

Since unsophisticated, sugar-loving American palates rejected Longworth's dry still wines — a hamper he would eventually overcome by developing his sweet, spritzy Catawba — he depended on the German population as his market. Failure to heed their tastes would have been fatal to the budding industry. "We had not been accustomed to the celebrated dry Hock wines, and should have pronounced them hard cider. Our German immigrants learned us better," Longworth explained, in one of his typically ungrammatical revelations. He recommended his tenant farmer system to all would-be wine barons; yet he failed to extract, by closer examination of his tenants' skills, information that would fill some of the obvious gaps in his own vinicultural knowledge.

A case in point is Longworth's lease-tenant John Mottier, a Swiss viniculturist who began planting Isabella and Catawba in 1829. By 1840 his vineyard techniques and winemaking skill attracted numerous visitors to his plantation, seeking advice on vineyard start-up in their home areas. Mottier's local admirers proclaimed him the most prominent viticulturist in the Cincinnati area, and, in 1843 and 1844, his Catawba wine swept the top awards from the Cincinnati Horticultural Society wine competitions. Mottier and others accomplished what their landlord could only talk, write, and theorize about.

Longworth did engage in an endless series of experiments, naively searching for the one ideal grapevine for North America, soliciting aid from the readers of various farm and horticultural publications. In 1825 he received cuttings from Major John Adlum of Maryland, who believed he had discovered the elusive ideal in the form of the native Catawba variety. In his quest for a dependable grape, Longworth's strong critical faculty, and his generally acerbic wit, tandemly deserted him. He lauded Adlum's find over-zealously in periodicals of the time,



even seconding the major's fatuous assertion that by bringing the Catawba to notice, he had done a greater service for America than if he had paid the national debt.

To his credit, the Cincinnati experimenter with the Catawba for nearly five years before advocating its widespread cultivation. Longer experience, however, would confirm the vine's sickly nature and limited lifespan. Pleased with his first Catawba wine, after 1828 Longworth took on additional German tenant farmers, expanding his vineyards to between ninety and one hundred acres of grapes.

Still, the budding champion of native vines could not resist the challenge of fostering European vinifera on American soil. He ordered more than one hundred varieties of French and German vines from Alphonse Loubat's New York nursery. Soon he augmented this chimerical scheme by importing six thousand vines of the best varieties from Madeira. Finally, he invested in five thousand plants, representing twenty-two varieties from the mountainous Jura district in France. In the *Horticulturist and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste* in 1848 Longworth acknowledged his defeat. He bemoaned expending \$200 and lavishing extraordinary care in his garden, only to be rewarded with a solitary living vine.

During the 1840s Longworth, by his reckoning, grafted more than 120 kinds of native grapes, which were sent to him by eager hybridizers hoping to claim the \$500 premium he offered for a grape that could surpass the qualities of the Catawba. One example, the Cigar Box (later recognized as Norton's Virginia Seedling), gained its tag from the packaging in which the cuttings arrived at Old Longworth's estate. Then, as throughout his vinicultural career,

Longworth's opinions on the cultivars presented were flawed by his failure to recognize vine sensitivity to specific climates and locales, and by his incorrigible knack for backing a loser.

In 1846 another lion of the local industry, Dr. Melzer Flagg, wrote an eighteen-page report on viticulture, *Remarks on the Culture of the Grape, and the Manufacture of Wine in Western States*, which soberly admonished against relying on the Germans as the winemakers' only consumers. New markets were needed, he warned, to absorb the potential wine output of Cincinnati's 250 acres of vineyard. Longworth himself interpreted the consequences of increased grape production in an 1846 monograph, *The Cultivation of the Grape, and the Manufacture of Wine*, a nineteen-page pamphlet printed at the order of the Cincinnati Horticultural Society. Curious and contradictory insights emerged from it.

"It is now twenty-five years since I made my first wine," Longworth revealed, "yet it was not till the present season that I was fully aware of the great importance" of clean casks, careful fruit selection, timely crushing, and well-guided fermentation. He hinted, without directly affirming it, that he came by this surprisingly late illumination through contact with one of his tenants, Mr. Schneike. Longworth then described his accidental production, five years prior, of a "Champagne wine from the Catawba grape." The confessed bumbler had never duplicated the process, not understanding its technique, but had now imported a skillful *chef de cave* from the Champagne district of France to ensure future success.

He left the purpose for which he had gone to such expensive lengths temporarily unclear: after minutely describing vineyard cultivation, manufacturing processes, the labor market, and the outlook for wine prices, Old Nick averred near the



MR. LONGWORTH'S WINE-CELLARS—THE WINE-PRESS.



end of his essay that he had never given the subject the necessary attention — and, "I am now too old to undertake it." The self-effacing author capped off this disclaimer by detailing the requirements for a large-scale wine operation such as he did, in fact, undertake, immediately on the heels of this publication.

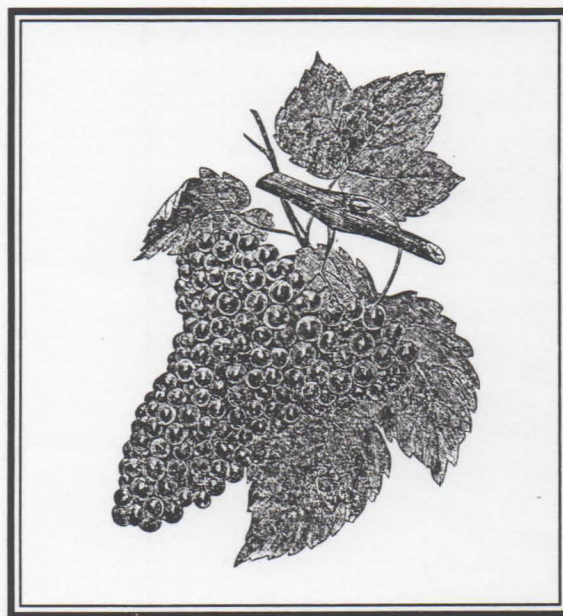
Longworth's constant disavowal of any serious attention to the wine industry, which marked his published correspondence with editors throughout his career, is puzzling, though perhaps it indicates a fear of failure in this field to which he had committed vast resources of time and money. His renown as a vinicultural expert owed a heavy debt to the knowledge and accomplishments of others. The safety of Longworth's reputation depended on professing dilettantism. Eventually, his ruse became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

One way and another, the wine business fostered by Longworth flourished for a time. In 1850 his cellar produced sixty thousand bottles of Sparkling Catawba. By 1854 this number had escalated to two hundred thousand. The area around Cincinnati, billed as the American Rhineland, boasted fifteen hundred acres of grapes, and portions of Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky comprised an additional five hundred acres. But, when the decade opened, unmanageable grape rot already had begun to ravage the Cincinnati harvests. Longworth, desperate to fill his growing orders, commissioned John Zimmermann, son of his wine house associate, to approach the German growers of Hermann, Missouri, in the summer of 1852. A mutually satisfactory deal was struck for the export of Hermann Catawba grapes to Cincinnati.

A less satisfactory Longworth communiqué also reached Hermann in 1852. His strident rejection of a grapevine nurtured at Hermann since 1843, and grown commercially there since 1850, dismayed Missouri horticulturists. Though he ardently bemoaned the lack of a native red grape capable of producing wine to rival the pleasing burgundies and clarets of France, Old Nick denounced the Missouri Germans' pet cultivar, flatly proclaiming the Norton's Virginia Seedling "worthless" for wine. His ill-informed yet influential opinion nearly dealt a deathblow to the hardy Norton. Fortunately, a few independent thinkers among the German vine-dressers at Hermann chose to believe the evidence of their own palates. "We thought Mr. Longworth was human, and might be mistaken," wrote George Husmann.

No greater mistake is logged in the annals of American wine. Thanks to a handful of persistent admirers, the Norton was preserved long enough to prove its worth and to persuade nervous growers to

reinstate it in their vineyards. Eventually, even its original detractor sheepishly sent to Husmann's Hermann nursery for Norton cuttings, having destroyed his own vines. The scope of Longworth's error is reflected in the fact that the Hermanners' Norton achieved world-class status in the last century, repeatedly edging out French competitors in European tastings, and it remains America's premier native red wine grape today.



NORTON'S VIRGINIA [From Husmann, 1866]

Longworth's wishful vision of himself as a scientific authority surfaced elsewhere, as well. Robert Buchanan, a successful merchant and fellow member of the Cincinnati Horticultural Society, shared Old Nick's predilection for botanical science and at least a few of his friend's puzzling propensities. Like the eccentric millionaire, he occasionally espoused feeble causes — such as Longworth's treatise on sterile strawberries, which, though flatteringly touted, afforded little new scholarship on the topic. When Buchanan's book, *THE CULTURE OF THE VINE*, was published in 1852, it included in its appendix Longworth's strawberry tract.


Old Longworth did early come to believe that American growers should depend on native grapes, a conclusion that was valid until the California vineyards were successfully developed with vinifera vines. At the same time, his familiarity with the German population of Cincinnati taught him the wisdom of producing natural, unadulterated dry wines in preference to the brandy-fortified and artificially sweetened brew he had concocted early in his winemaking experiments, in an attempt to imitate European wines like Madeira. On these twin



epiphanies, and his elevation of viniculture to a commercial enterprise, rests his claim to recognition as "the father of American grape culture" — a title first conferred on him in 1857 by Cincinnati horticulturist E. J. Hooper. Longworth showed that an industry could be founded on native grape stock and pure, healthy wines.

The doughty Longworth died of cancer on February 10, 1863. His ailing vineyards followed not far behind in their demise. William Flagg recorded his father-in-law's last words: "he wanted to tell [me], he said, of a new vine that would neither mildew nor rot. He never found it in this world." As a Longworth heir, Flagg remarked wistfully that the half-million dollars invested in the Cincinnati wine house "has sunk and gives no account of itself."

By force of personality, Nicholas Longworth had commanded the wine industry at Cincinnati. Relying on his social and financial strengths, and an overly-trumpeted reputation, he had called on his comrades to be guided by his assessment of the Catawba grape and to plant it in preference to all others. Like lemmings scenting the sea, the growers along the "beautiful river" followed on Longworth's heels, even after viticulturists in other areas began to discard the irksome Catawba. Failure to diversify the grape crop sowed the seeds of ruin for the Cincinnati industry.

Nicholas Longworth had functioned as the great oracle of American grape culture, yet his knowledge and intuition had remained flawed by hasty judgments and blind arrogance. As much as Old Nick pretended to the role of scientist, he lacked the disposition for it. He remained at the end of his career only a fabulously invested dabbler in the wine industry. 

[For Old Nick fans, a longer version of this article appeared in the March/April issue of *Timeline* (Ohio Historical Society publication) under the title, "Old Nick: Cincinnati Winemaker." ■ Longworth's monograph was reprinted in the U.S. Patent Office Report for 1847, with the title, "On the Culture of the Grape, and the Manufacture of Wine." See entries in *GABLER* and *BORG/AMERINE* for further bibliographic notes. — Ed.]

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## NEWS & NOTES



### Welcome to the Ninth Edition of our Newsletter!

And, welcome to our new members: Owners of a Berkeley, CA., bookshop, **Ellen Anderson** and **Linda Harrison**, have a special interest in the social history of wine. Their address is Anderson Harrison Books, P.O. Box 2734, Berkeley, CA 94702 (510-548-6132; e-mail: ahbooks@msn.com). Joining us in late December, we welcome **Monika Heine** (Campden Hill Court, Flat 78, London W8 7HN, England).

### PENNSYLVANIA WINE GRAPES

■ **Tendril Howard Miller** writes for our help. He is looking for a copy of *American Farmer*, Volume #5 (1825 - 1830 era?), which "contains information on wine grape varieties in early Pennsylvania history." He is also interested in "any other publications that deal with the early history of Pennsylvania grapes," and can be reached at ☎ 717-291-1130, Fax 717-291-2042, or e-mail: hjmhma@redrose.net.

### Historic CALIFORNIA WINE ASSN. Poster

■ Do not miss this one! See **Bob Foster's** review (with ordering information) in this issue. The poster is reproduced (alas, not in its gloriously rich color) on our back cover.

### WINE LABEL COLLECTION

■ The extraordinary collection of wine labels amassed over a fifty-year period by **Roy Brady** is now at the University of California at Davis. Numbering somewhere near 60,000 labels — organized by wine growing region (then by winery or chateau chronologically by vintage date), mounted under protective sheets housed in 4-inch three-ring binders (126 in all), completely annotated with historical information about the wine producer (and/or the wines) — this collection will be valuable to researchers in many fields, enjoyed by wine lovers, and appreciated by all collectors. Brady's extensive collection of wine ephemera (merchants' catalogs, wine lists, menus, newsletters, periodicals) has also been sent to Davis for the benefit of all scholars. (We will have more on Brady and his collection in future issues.)

### CUNEIFORMS and COMPUTERS

■ One would hardly imagine a history of reference sources a "good read." But **Bill Katz**, with his *Cuneiform to Computer: A History of Reference Sources* (Lanham, MD / London: Scarecrow Press, 1998, 415 pp, \$50), has done it. It is a fascinating and scholarly story arranged by type of reference



book—encyclopedia, dictionary, almanac, handbook, travel guide, biography, bibliography, etc.—and chronologically within each division. Did you know, beginning with the early 16th century, the most popular type of book, aside from the inevitable Bible, was the agriculture handbook or manual? Whatever else you might want to know about the 5,000-year history of the reference book is here.

#### DISSERTATIONS AVAILABLE

■ With appreciation, our attention has been called to the services of U.M.I. — University Microfilms International (300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106; 1-800-521-0600 or 313-761-4700; also a British address: St. John's Road, Tyler's Green, High Wycombe, Bucks, England HP10 8HR). U.M.I. provides authorized facsimiles of doctoral dissertations and masters theses made from the microfilm master copy of the original. Their Dissertation Abstracts database is "the only central source for accessing almost every doctoral dissertation accepted in North America since 1861." This is a valuable source for many unpublished historical wine studies.

#### WINE MYSTERY NOVELS

■ In past issues of the *Newsletter* we have reviewed a number of mystery novels with a wine theme ... always a good Saturday afternoon entertainment. While vacationing recently in Seattle, a bonanza of new, and unknown, titles piled forth from the Seattle Mystery Bookshop. Signed copies were available of local Seattle author Michael Dibdin's just-released latest novel, *A Long Finish*, featuring Italian Criminalpol officer Aurelio Zen (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998, 261 pp, hardcover, \$24). The setting is Alba and the vineyards of Piedmont where, "though murder here is rare, it is complex," officer Zen is grateful for the fine wines, pasta, and white truffles. Next, we picked up the third adventure of "the Gourmet Detective" by Peter King, *Dying on the Vine* (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1998, 234 pp, hardcover, \$23). Do not attempt to read this caper without a glass of your favorite red wine and your most delicious snack at hand. While investigating "a shadowy business deal between two vineyards" in Provence, our detective samples the delights of Provençal cuisine and describes every tasty dish, and every accompanying bottle of wine — if not properly prepared, the reader must take time out for a visit to the kitchen. Mystery writer Janet Smith takes us to the Yakima Valley wine country of Washington for *A Vintage Murder* (New York: Ivy Books, 1995, 240 pp, paperback edition of the 1994 hardcover edition). A bowl of popcorn and a glass of white wine will do for this one. British author Martin Sylvester has created a hero-sleuth, London

wine merchant and *bon viveur*, William Warner, whose first mystery, *A Dangerous Age*, was published in England in 1986, the American edition in 1988 (New York: Villard Books, cloth, 291 pp). This was followed by *A Lethal Vintage* (1988) and *Rough Red* (1989).

#### CHILDREN'S BOOKS: An UPDATE

■ In our January 1998 issue (Vol.8 No.1), we reviewed a wonderfully produced book on grape growing and wine making written for children, *The Grapes Grow Sweet*; we noted at the time only one other known title in the same category (*The First Book of Wine* by Torres Wines). In issue No.2 we learned of Aunt Laura's *A Bunch of Grapes* (1863). We can now add one more title to our list: *Grapes*, compiled by workers of the War Services Project of the W.P.A. in Pennsylvania, and written by Maena Sussane, 1945, the "thirty-ninth book in the Easy Science Series." Its forty-six pages, printed in large type and illustrated with drawings in color and black and white ("These are called vineyards"), introduce the young reader to the growing of grapes and their many uses. One wonders: are there other children's books on grape growing and wine making?

#### VEUVE-CLICQUOT WINE BOOK of the YEAR

■ Considered by many to be the finest book ever written on Burgundy, Clive Coate's masterful *Côte d'Or* (Berkeley: U.C. Press, 1997), is this year's winner of the prestigious Veuve-Clicquot Wine Book of the Year Award. See Vol.8 No.1 for Bob Foster's review of this "massive book celebrating the wines from the center of Burgundy." See also Vol.6 No.3 for a list of the previous award winners, including works by Tendrils Jim Gabler, Hugh Johnson and Kermit Lynch.

#### Bibliographies Available

■ In celebration of the New Year, Gail Unzelman is happy to offer Wayward Tendril members copies of her bibliography, *Wine and Gastronomy ... based on the Bibliothecas of André Simon*, at a discount price of \$65 (regular price \$85). Also available are a few copies of André Simon's *Bibliotheca Vinaria* (1979 reprint edition, as new in glassine wraps, but unnumbered) at the same New Year's price of \$65.

1999 MEMBERSHIP ROSTER TO BE MAILED IN APRIL  
SEND IN ALL ADDITIONS, CORRECTIONS, UPDATES,  
E-MAIL ADDRESSES, ETC.



# REHOBOAM or NEBUCHADNEZZAR? Just Who were these Guys and How did They Wind Up as Champagne Bottles?

by Bo Simons



hen, some months ago, a sparkling wine producer asked us at the Sonoma County Wine Library how and when large bottles of champagne got their Old Testament names, I cringed. I had been asked this question years ago, and had never found a good answer. Although I had looked and looked and had even asked Roy Brady, and he did not know, I was not satisfied that I had done as much as I could, that I had turned over every Biblical, enological and etymological rock in an attempt to nail this question.

The names are in most wine dictionaries:

JEROBOAM: capacity, 4 bottles (3 liters)

REHOBOAM: 6 bottles (4.5 liters)

METHUSELAH: 8 bottles (6 liters)

SALMANAZAR: 12 bottles (9 liters)

BALTHAZAR: 16 bottles (12 liters)

NEBUCHADNEZZAR: 20 bottles (15 liters)

How did these names from the Old Testament come to be applied to wine bottles? Why these? What had they in common? In the first part of this investigation, I will examine the Biblical persons behind the names, and later I will look at lexicographic, etymological, and wine clues.

## JEROBOAM

was the name of two Biblical kings. Jeroboam I became the first king of the Northern Kingdom, who reigned from 922 to 901 B.C.E. There are conflicting Biblical accounts of his rise to power. Once Solomon favored him, and later sought to kill him. Jeroboam was forced to flee into Egypt. After Solomon died, he returned and helped in the secession of the Northern Tribes. Jeroboam II, the son of Joash, was King of Israel from 786-746 B.C.E. and presided over a prosperous and expanding Jewish state, but his social policy that favored the rich and his countenance of Baal worship drew sharp rebukes from the prophet Amos.

## REHOBOAM

was the son of Solomon by Naamah, an Ammonite princess. He succeeded his father and was the last

king of the United Monarchy, and the first king of Judah after the northern tribes revolted under Jerobaum I. Early in his reign Rehoboam received a delegation of the Northern nobles who complained about the heavy taxation imposed by Solomon to support the growing court. The wise old advisers counseled the new king to be kind to these vassals, but Rehoboam, influenced by a group of young men he had grown up with, promised a yoke even heavier than his father's and lashing with scorpions to keep them in line (Thomas Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews*, New York: Doubleday, 1998).

## METHUSELAH

was the 8th member of the Sethite line from Adam to Noah. Ten patriarchs comprise the genealogy delineated in Genesis 5. Of these, three seem to be especially godly. They "walked with God." Methuselah was not among them. His claim to fame is that he is the longest lived person in the Bible, having lived 969 years.

## SALMANAZAR

is not even in the Bible spelled this way. The Oxford English Dictionary shows that Salmanazar is a variant spelling of Shalmaneser. Steven W. Holoway, in a recent article in *English Language Notes* (September 1997), explains:

The Biblical name Salmanazar removes us both from the sphere of the kings of Israel and Judah, and from the linguistic milieu of the King James Version. Shalmaneser V of Assyria laid siege to Samaria, the capital city of Israel (2 Kings 17:3; 18:9) and is credited by the author of 2 Esdras with the exile of nine of the tribes of Israel (2 Esdras 13:40). Unlike the KJV Shalmaneser, Salmanasar is the form of the name in the Latin Vulgate translation, and we must seek the origin of British Salmanazar in a country whose popular Biblical translations are based on the Vulgate and not the Hebrew Masoretic text. Catholic France, whose vineyards historically have sustained the British wine industry, is in all probability the source of the concept and orthography of the salmanazar, a wine bottle twelve times larger than the normal *bouteille*.

Shalmaneser, as Holoway notes above, laid siege to Samaria, and after two years, took it. He died shortly thereafter. According to the *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996), he died before he could exact punishment, and did not exile the Israelites. The "King of Assyria" mentioned in 2 Kings 17:6 who did the exiling is Sargon II who recaptured the city in 720 B.C.E.



### BALTHAZAR

probably is a variant spelling of Belshazzar. He was a Babylonian King, the son of Nebuchadnezzar. He is the only one of these Biblical names who is associated with wine. While ordering up a banquet for a thousand of his close friends and supporters, wives and concubines, he specified using the gold and silver drinking vessels his father had looted from the temple in Jerusalem. While the king and his princes and concubines drank wine from the holy vessels, the fingers of a human hand appeared and began to write on the palace walls. None of the nobles could read the message, but Daniel is brought forth, and says that Belshazzar has been measured and weighed by God for his drunken boastfulness, and found wanting, and will not be king much longer. That night Belshazzar is murdered.

### NEBUCHADNEZZAR

is the name of four kings of ancient Mesopotamia, and it is Nebuchadnezzar II, as he is known by modern scholars, who is the king mentioned in the Bible. He destroyed Judea, conquered Jerusalem and torched the Temple of Solomon and exiled the Jews to Babylon. Jeremiah, the great prophet who witnessed the destruction of the temple, counseled submission to Nebuchadnezzar, whom he viewed as a vessel of God's wrath.

So, you have three Jews, one Assyrian, two Babylonians. Methuselah was a patriarch who lived to a very old age, and the rest were kings. None had anything to do with wine, except Belshazzar. Nothing seems to hold these names together, unless it is that they were all rulers. The article by Holoway mentioned above contains a clue: some of the spellings of the Biblical names suggests that they came to the English language through France and popular Biblical translations are based on the Vulgate and not the Hebrew Masoretic text as was the King James Version of the Bible.

We will follow up this clue as we examine the enological and etymological evidence in the next installment.



[Bo Simons, founding member of the Tendrils and wine librarian extraordinaire, invites all members to participate in this winy etymological investigation and send their clues to the *Newsletter*. — Ed.]



## In the WINE LIBRARY

with

Bob Foster

A Poster ■ A Companion ■  
and A Guide

■ **California Wine Association Poster.** Nomis Press, 149 Gray Court, Santa Rosa, CA. 95404; 707-546-1184. 23" high by 34" wide, five colors. \$30 (plus \$2.25 CA sales tax and \$4.50 shipping).

Finding art work with a wine topic is always difficult and finding wine art work with a turn of the century motif is nearly impossible. But this superb poster is the finest example of pre-Prohibition California wine art I have ever seen.

In 1894, seven of California's largest and most powerful wine firms incorporated as the California Wine Association. The organization grew to the point that it controlled the production of 80% of the wine made in California. It owned vineyards in every major wine producing area in the state.

The association had its main cellars in San Francisco. When the 1906 earthquake and fire destroyed this facility, the organization constructed a ten million-gallon showplace wine depot called Winehaven on the shores of San Francisco Bay near the town of Point Richmond. This poster was created by Nomis Press by combining a California Wine Association promotional painting of Winehaven with reproductions of labels from the major members of the group around the sides. The poster ties in with an upcoming book on the association by noted wine writer Ernest Peninou.

The poster is beautiful, with rich warm colors and a turn of the century feel. With clusters of grapes hanging from the edges and ships docking at the facility, the poster has a sense of both agriculture and commerce of the boom days before Prohibition. The labels are fascinating and presented in crisp detail and contain many of the names of the major wine pioneers in California. This poster is a must for any wine lover. Very highly recommended. [See *Newsletter* rear cover.]

■ **A Companion to California Wine: An Encyclopedia of Wine and Winemaking from the Mission Period to the Present** by Charles L. Sullivan. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA., 1998. 441 pages, hardback, \$39.95.

Charles Sullivan is one of the very best of the California wine historians. His three prior works on various California wine regions have been top notch. In this work Sullivan pulls together materials



covering the entire state from the earliest days until modern times. Done in an encyclopedia format there are scores of entries covering the individuals, the wineries, the grapes and the regions that make up California's wine industry. The work is fascinating and well written with seventy-five black and white photos, fourteen maps and thirty-five tables.

My only hesitation about the work comes when Sullivan reaches modern wine writers. Of those currently writing about wine only Robert Parker and Jancis Robinson have entries. Including Parker was almost a given. No question but that the world's most influential wine writer should have been there. But Jancis Robinson? Huh? I don't get it. She mentions California in two of her fine works but that is it. Sullivan leaves out Hugh Johnson, who has written about California in nearly all of his works, and Bob Thompson who I believe is the most insightful California wine writer of our generation and has written numerous books on California wine. There is an entry for Robert Mayock who wrote a wine column for four years in San Jose in the 1940s but no mention of long-time wine columnists Nathan Chroman, Dan Berger, or Jerry Mead. I don't understand what selection criteria were used.

Additionally, the index is truncated and fails to cover many of the detailed materials within the work. A larger index would have made this an even more useful reference work.

Regardless of these issues, the work is a superb collection of fascinating historical material, and is an invaluable source for information on the history of wine and winemaking in California. Highly recommended.

■ ***Pauillac: The Wines and Estates of a Renowned Bordeaux Commune*** by Stephen Brook. Mitchell Beazley, London, 1998. 192 pages, hardback, \$45. Distributed in the U.S. by Antique Collectors' Club, Wappinger Falls, NY.

Bordeaux lovers have another gem for their libraries. Brook, the author of two earlier wine books, has produced a first rate work. He goes through the area, not by location, but by classification. He begins with the three first-growth estates and goes down through the thirteen fifth-growths. In addition, there is a separate chapter on nearly twenty of the other producers in the region.

The introduction covers such diverse topics as the history and topography of the region, the classification of 1855 and its impact on the producers, winegrowing, traditional winemaking and modern winemaking. I particularly liked a small section with suggestions for readers planning to visit the region.

The core of the work is comprised of short chapters on each of the major producers. The

chapters run as long as ten pages for the first-growths to short, one paragraph entries for some of the unclassified producers. The material covers the history of the property, any recent changes in ownership, its current winemaking style and philosophy. A small block of data at the end of each entry covers such things as the number of hectares under cultivation, the grape varieties (by percentage), the average age of the vines, the names of the winemaker(s), and any second or third wines made on the property. The text is well written, opinionated and informative. There are scores of tasting notes for each of the producers but these are all collected in a chapter in the back rather than integrated with the other text material. The tasting notes are generally favorable for most of the producers which gives me pause. Not all wines from all years are praiseworthy.

One disappointment comes from the map used for the book. There is but a single map for the entire book and it looks like it was taken directly from the files of Mitchell Beazley's other work, *The World Atlas of Wine*. A work with this much information cries out for much more detail than one map covering the entire region. Someone made a bad decision in this regard.

The book is jammed with wonderful photos of the producers taken by Michael Busselle. He manages to find fresh, new approaches to things as familiar as the tower at Ch. Latour. Bordeaux lovers will find this an indispensable work for their wine libraries. Highly recommended.

[Bob Foster, a founding member of the Wayward Tendrils, writes a regular wine book review column for the *California Grapevine*. Their gracious permission to reprint Bob's reviews is much appreciated. — Ed.]



[Tendril Joe Lynch sent us the following book review written by Jerry Gough and published in *Isis: An International Review devoted to the History of Science and its Cultural Influences* (March 1998). — Ed.]

■ ***Science, Vine, and Wine in Modern France*** by Harry W. Paul. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 135 pp. illus., tables, bibliography, index. \$64.95.

Most wine connoisseurs are probably well aware of the validity of the central thesis of Harry W. Paul's superb new work on science and wine: that



modern wine is to a large extent the product of a scientifically constructed viticulture and oenology. Rarely does one encounter nowadays the ill-made wines — acid, mousy, rancid, or reeking of brimstone — that were all too common in the not-so-distant past. Because of modern science and technology, winemakers can carefully control the essential conditions of vinification to assure clean, healthy, well-balanced wines. Without modern viti- and vinicultural techniques (largely, in Paul's view, the product of the research institutions associated with the universities of Montpellier and Bordeaux), it is inconceivable that wines of the highest quality could have been developed so quickly in the new wine-growing regions of North America.

Science first entered the vineyard in a concerted fashion toward the end of the nineteenth century, when a series of devastating diseases (most notably phylloxera) threatened to wipe out the vineyards of France. Paul devotes the first third of his book to a richly detailed account of the French response to this national disaster. The story of the ultimate triumph of the "grafters" (supported by the French government and "official science," centered at Montpellier) over the hybridists (represented in large part by practical plant breeders and lesser winegrowers) turns out to be much more complex than is commonly believed. Fearful that foreign rootstocks would vitiate the quality of their wines and (justifiably) wary of the caliber of hybrids, the great estates of the Médoc relied on chemical poisons to deal with the phylloxera until the exigencies resulting from the First World War forced them to choose. The "hybrid empire," as Paul terms it, fell finally in the 1930s and 1940s, not only as a result of demonstrations of the fact that high-quality wines could be made from *vinifera* grapes grafted onto American rootstock, but also because of government regulation that discouraged hybrid production.

The second section of the book recounts the history of chaptalization and the practical consequences of Pasteur's microbial theories of fermentation and spoilage; the third section deals with the influence of science (or lack of it) in the development of the wines of Champagne, Languedoc-Roussillon, and Burgundy. Although Pasteur's research led to a much better understanding of the processes of alcoholic fermentation, the practical applications of his theories were of limited use. Heat sterilization has sometimes proved useful but not usually for wines of quality. Pasteur and his followers, convinced that bacterial activity was invariably deleterious to wine, failed to comprehend the essential processes of malolactic fermentation.

The great 20th century revolution in oenology is the theme of the last (and, to me, most interesting)

section of Paul's treatise. Modern oenology was finally born at Bordeaux, thanks largely to the efforts of an extraordinary trio of imaginative researchers, Louis Genevois, Jean Ribéreau-Gayon, and Emile Peynaud, who, by introducing new and more accurate methods of analysis from physical chemistry, revealed that wine is a complex liquid in dynamic equilibrium, composed of innumerable substances, many of which are in ionic states that traditional methods of chemical analysis could not identify. The Bordeaux school is well known to serious wine fanciers, but Paul makes the remarkable achievements of its members comprehensible even to those with a limited scientific background.

The Bordeaux school also stands at the center of a complex web of social, political, and economic interactions involving not only winegrowers, merchants, technicians, and bureaucrats but also consumers, a group that had usually been ignored by traditional oenologists. The perfection of wine depends ultimately on the intractably subjective judgment of the human palate, an easily suggestible, often fashion-governed instrument that remains stubbornly indifferent to the assessments of gas chromatograms or volumetric titrations. In deference to actual consumers, the researchers at Bordeaux used specially selected tasting panels, a procedure that has become standard at schools of oenology almost everywhere.

Paul displays an intimate familiarity with French culture and language, a solid background in the history of the sciences, and a wide experience of and deep appreciation for the fine wines of which he speaks so authoritatively. He writes well and has a keen eye for the apposite quotation. This book is indispensable to anyone concerned with the history of wine. It will also be of interest to those who deal with the relations among government, science, technology, and industry. Much of Paul's story has been told before, in bits and pieces, here and there, but nowhere has it been told all together and in such rich and engaging detail. — JERRY B. GOUGH



*"Blot out every book in which wine is praised and you blot out the world's great literature, from the Bible and Shakespeare to the latest best-seller. Blot out the wine-drinkers of the world and you blot out history, including saints, philosophers, statesmen, soldiers, scientists, and artists."*

— JULIAN STREET, *Table Topics*, 1959.



## ABOUT DECANTING

by  
André L. Simon

[One of the many fascinations of the literature of wine is its multifarious nature, a never-ending supply of information and enjoyment. Our appreciation to the Wine & Food Society for permission to reprint this piece, first published in the Summer 1963 issue of *Wine & Food*. — Ed.]



*ecant* and *decanting* were words coined by the alchemists, in England, during the second and third quarters of the seventeenth century, to describe the transfer of a liquid from one vessel to another. Being technical

terms and not in common usage, they did not appear in any of the 17th century English dictionaries. Decanting was most likely done at first without decanters, the name which was presently given to jugs and bottles used for serving wine, as distinct from kegs and glass vessels used to keep wine.

The earliest mention of a decanter is on a pottery advertisement of 1690, in the Douce Collection now in the Ashmolean Museum, over a picture of a jug with a lip-spout and handle and 'Decantor' over it. We do know, however, that Ravenscroft, who made the first 'flint' wine glasses in 1675, also made 'flint' wine decanters from 1677, that is bottles of clear glass with a glass handle and a glass stopper, with a short neck and a spout: they were quite different from the heavy dark-green or black wine bottles which were filled from the cask in the taverns and used to keep wine in one's house. Although Ravenscroft did not call his 'flint' glass bottles 'decanters,' he might well have done so: they were decanters and they were called by that name in the *Tarif* of 6 September 1701, when Colbert taxed English 'flint' drinking glasses and decanters. There were none like them in France: they were heavier than the bottles of Venetian glass, and not nearly so fragile.

... but Samuel Johnson gave to "decanter" a different meaning...

In John Kersey's *New English Dictionary* first published in 1702, the definition of the decanter was: "a bottle made of clear flint glass for the holding of wine, etc., to be poured off into a drinking glass," and it was adopted almost word for word by Defoe in his *New English Dictionary* in 1737 and later editions up to 1757. But Samuel Johnson gave to

'decanter' a different meaning in his *Dictionary* in 1755, i.e. "A glass vessel for receiving liquor clear from the lees." It was the first time that any mention had been made that a decanter was made for a 'decanted' wine.

What had happened?

An anonymous benefactor of humanity had invented the corkscrew (or bottlescrew as it was originally called) and it had become possible for the first time in history to drive a cork right home and tight into the neck of a wine bottle, with the certainty that it could be removed at will: this brought in the cylindrical bottle which could be binned away, row upon row, with a great saving of space; it replaced the spherical or bulbous bottle that stood up on the shelf with the smaller end of a cork in and the fatter end out, ready to be pulled off with thumb and index.

It also happened that, just at about the same time, at the beginning of the 18th century, the people of England were urged by their rulers to drink the wine of Portugal, the old ally, instead of the wines of France, penalized as they were by very heavy duties or prohibited altogether. But the English, much as they might love the Portuguese in those days, did not like their wine, until it occurred to the Portuguese to lace it with brandy: it was then that port was born. Port, however, must be given a chance to 'come together' and grow mellow and gracious in the peace of a good cellar, casting off any bits and pieces — mucilage and tartrates — the 'lees' as Johnson called them in his dictionary.


Decanters were, of course, of greater use than ever when there were wines which really needed decanting, but they continued to be used to show off and serve wines without any sediment, with such names as 'White wine' or 'Sherry,' for instance, engraved in their 'panels.' For fully a hundred years, from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, decanters of many sizes and designs, and most of them of great beauty and fine craftsmanship, were made in Bristol, London, Stourbridge, Waterford and elsewhere in the British Isles, the like of which do not exist anywhere else. Strange as it may seem, there never was a word coined in France for 'decanter.' They have the verb *décanter* for 'to decant,' but nothing better than *carafe* for a decanter, and *carafe* has to do for both wine and water.

Is decanting really necessary? There would probably be a unanimous 'Yes' in the case of vintage port, not only because vintage port is likely to have a fair amount of loose sediment, besides its crust, but also because of the time-honoured tradition of 'passing the port' from left to right at the dinner table. There would not be any such unanimity, however, in the case of old clarets and burgundies; there might well be a 75% vote in favour of decanting



them in the British Isles, and a 90% vote against on the Continent. There are many connoisseurs who claim that fresh air (oxygen) will do more harm to an old wine than a little sediment. The late Baron Cartier de Marchienne, who was for many years Belgian Ambassador to the Court of St. James, and one of the original members of the Saintsbury Club, used to have his wonderful old red burgundies poured by his butler from the original old Belgian bottles into the glass of each of his guests; each bottle was fitted with a silver spout which made it easier to control the pouring out of the wine, but, of course, did not stop the flow of the wine's sediment. I did not like the look of that silver tap or spout, but never failed to enjoy every glass of the Baron's old burgundies.

I once had a friend who always decanted his old clarets and burgundies although he never had a decanter: he had carafes, of course, but they were for young wines only. His name was Henry Hollis; he was a New Hampshire American, a lawyer by profession, a politician by chance, a Senator who voted for Prohibition, then returned to legal practice in Paris, where he specialized in divorce cases of rich Americans. Henry Hollis taught me how to decant old wines without a decanter. His dinner parties were always small, usually four, sometimes five and never more than six. On the sideboard, in the dining-room, there would be the bottles which were to be served, each with the cork removed, and each in the usual wicker wine-basket in which they had been brought from the cellar. There were also six large 'Colcombet' wine glasses for each bottle and a lighted candle. At the right time, when the course was served which was to be partnered with the old wine, Hollis would get up, take the bottle out of its cradle very gently, and very gently decant its contents into the six large glasses in a row, and then there was no wine that was fit to drink left in the bottle. If we were only four at table, we shared the wine in the two extra glasses in due course. This is the way I have 'decanted' old clarets and old burgundies many times since, using decanters only for vintage port, which must always be decanted, and also for Madeira and sherry which look so nice in a decanter.

Another of my old friends, Marcel Boulestin, insisted that all wines, be they young or old, red or white, must be served in a decanter. He was a born artist and he never liked the shape and colour of wine bottles standing on the table; they were of the greatest use, of course, but their right place was the cellar or pantry, not the dining-room table. And he was right. 

For further reading, we mention a few selected works on decanters . . .

*Collecting Decanters* by Jane Hollingworth (New York: Mayflower Books / Christie's International Collectors Series, 1980), "the first comprehensive and authoritative book to deal specifically with the subject of the decanter," is lavishly illustrated and "an indispensable handbook for the collector."

*The Book of Wine Antiques* by noted antiques experts Robin Butler and Gillian Walkling (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 1986) includes a chapter on decanters and a useful bibliography.

A very pleasing little volume, *English Glass*, "with 8 plates in colour and 26 illustrations in black & white," was written by W. B. Honey (London: Collins, 1946), curator of ceramics at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Of a slightly older vintage is the 1933 catalogue of the *Wine Trade Loan Exhibition of Drinking Vessels, also Books & Documents, &c* (Held at Vintners' Hall, London, June - July, 1933). With Ian M. Campbell as chairman and Francis Berry "Hon. Organiser," the Exhibition Committee included André Simon, who organised the Books & Documents section. One hundred and thirty-five black and white photographic plates accompany the ninety-one-page description of the exhibits.



[FROM *Wine Trade Exhibition* — ENGLISH DECANTERS, c 1760. Lent by Francis Berry, Esq.]



# EARLY U.S. TITLES and the WINE BOOK COLLECTOR

by  
Gail Unzelman



Some time ago fellow-Tendrill Mannie Berk, a very knowledgeable and always inquisitive collector, called to discuss early wine growing works of the United States. We are all familiar with the highly-recognized collectible titles — Adlum, Dufour, Lou-

bat, perhaps Antill, Deane and McMahon — but, are there other titles not always advertised as "wine books" that we should consider, and seek, for our collections? Agricultural and horticultural works, States' histories, domestic encyclopedias, grocers' guides?

A survey, using a cut-off date of 1830 for "early," would not be limited to American imprints, as several 18th century titles of substantial interest and importance to U.S. wine growing were published in England; but, only English-language books would be considered. (Certainly, there are several early American-published German-language books that are worthy of inclusion—with the help of some of our German-speaking members, this should be a future study.) In an effort to review the known wine titles and explore some others, we invite all Tendrills to consider the following and join the dialogue. The *Newsletter* looks forward to your comments on the titles included, and those that should have been.

## Reference Sources

The guiding, and what I consider among the most authoritative, references used in my search for early U.S. grape and wine literature are: L. H. BAILEY, *Sketch of the Evolution of our Native Fruits* (1898) and his *Standard Cyclopaedia of Horticulture* (1935, new, enlarged edition); two works by U. P. HEDRICK (who, it appears, made great use of Bailey's writings), *The Grapes of New York* (1908) and *A History of Horticulture in America to 1860* (1950); MARCUS CRAHAN, *One Hundred Sixteen Uncommon Books on Food and Drink* (1975); ELISABETH WOODBURN, *U.S. Alcoholic Beverage & Grape Collection: A Historic Collection, 1771-1919* (1981); THOMAS PINNEY, "Wine in America: Twelve Historic Texts" (*Wayward Tendrils Newsletter*, Vol.3 No.3, 4; Vol.4 No.1, 2) and *History of Wine in America, From the Beginnings to Prohibition* (1989); JAMES GABLER, *Wine into Words* (1985); and by AXEL BORG and MAYNARD AMERINE, *A*

*Bibliography on Grapes, Wines, ... Works Published in the U.S. before 1901* (1996).

LIBERTY HYDE BAILEY (1858-1954), dedicated horticulturist and author of numerous works on the subject, including practical handbooks, histories, and encyclopedias, proves to be a valuable reference source. His *Evolution*, in addition to its many in-depth historical sketches of pioneer wine growers, with accompanying illustrations, contains an eight-page "catalogue of the volumes of American grape literature which are in the author's library" affording "the best illustration of the high part which the grape has played in the industrial development of the country .... Probably no less than a hundred books, counting the various editions, have been published in this country on the grape." Perhaps equally valuable is the information found in Bailey's three-volume *Standard Cyclopaedia of Horticulture* (originally published in 1900, but several subsequent editions), which includes a brief history of horticultural literature, followed by what HEDRICK calls "the single best listing of American horticultural publications" up to the year 1914. Listed are individual works, by author (with a subject index listing seventy-eight books on grapes), periodicals (extant and extinct), and reports of horticultural societies.

ULYSSES P. HEDRICK (1870-1951) enjoyed a "life-long experience in viticulture" and a similar interest in the history of horticulture in the U.S. He was chief horticulturist with the New York Agricultural Experiment Station when he wrote *Grapes of New York*, a comprehensive ampelography of American grapes enhanced with biographical sketches of early wine growers and a "complete bibliography of grape literature in the United States." His *History of Horticulture in America to 1860* (which was updated by ELISABETH WOODBURN in 1988 "With an Addendum of Books Published from 1861 to 1920") contains much on the early history of U.S. grape culture and its literature. Hedrick sums up what he considered to be the important contributions to early U.S. grape literature: "In the history of the amelioration of the American grapes we can skip the period from the early settlement of the country ... to the first years of the U.S. as a lapse of time in which there were no steps forward and in which even information concerning grapes was scarcely increased. The evolution of American grapes began with the opening of the 19th century; about the only accounts of grapes during the 18th century worthy of note being those of John Lawson, 1714; Robert Beverly, 1722; Robert Bolling, 1765; Edward Antill, 1769; and Peter Legaux, 1800. All of these writers, excepting Lawson, were concerned with European grapes" (*Grapes of New York*, p.36).

During the mid-20th-century years, MARCUS



CRAHAN gathered together a most distinguished collection of books on gastronomy and wine (sold at the infamous auction in 1984). On the occasion of an exhibit at the Bancroft Library of some of his library treasures, the learned Dr. Crahan put together a fine, illustrated catalogue. It has become an often-cited reference.

At the time of the publication of her *Historic Collection* catalog, ELISABETH WOODBURN (1912-1990) had been a bookseller specializing in food, drink, and gardening books for thirty-five years. Realizing the need for an historical perspective on the "long, but neglected" history of U.S. grape growing and wine making, she gathered the collection over a period of ten years. The catalog material, presented chronologically and alphabetically, is thoroughly annotated.

Modern-day wine historian THOMAS PINNEY has studied, in his usual scholarly manner, the early literature of the grape, and his essay on twelve historic books, each "title with a significant place, either as a first contribution to the subject with which it deals, or as a special authority on it, or a major influence, or a representative indication of interest and activity in American wine growing at the time," defines the cornerstones of American wine literature. He explains "the limitation to twelve titles may seem arbitrary, but no really key text is omitted," as he begins his series with a 1622 London-published work by John Bonoeil and concludes with George Husmann's 1863 *Essay on the Culture of the Grape in the Great West*. His *History* thoroughly covers early titles and authors not in his "Twelve."

Of special interest in JIM GABLER's familiar survey of English-language wine books is the very useful chronological index provided at the rear of the book. Here one can see, year by year, the published works on wine.

Compilers BORG and AMERINE can safely state "the monographic entries relating to wine and grapes [published in the U.S. before 1901] are fairly comprehensive" in their attempt "to bring a wide-ranging perspective to these subjects, going beyond the bibliographies that focus on narrow, more specific aspects of wine making, grape growing ...."

With these authorities as a guide, a chronological listing of early American grape and wine literature is presented for consideration, beginning with ...

**... the first work ever written for American wine growers ...**

1622 — John Bonoeil. *His Maiesties Gracious Letter to the Earle of South Hampton, Treasurer, and to the Councell and Company of Virginia heere: commanding the present setting up of Silke works, and Planting of Vines in Virginia ...* (London, 88 p.)

This very early treatise is the first work ever written for American wine growers. Bonoeil was a Frenchman from the Languedoc, appointed by King James I to "recruit French *vignerons* to be sent out to Virginia ... to develop model vineyards for the English colonists to imitate," and to write a treatise on the art of wine growing to be distributed throughout the colony. PINNEY informs us, the book, "far ahead of any possibility of use," was scorned by the prosperous tobacco-growing Virginia colonists who did not see themselves as wine growers. BAILEY credits the London Company, under the direction of the Earl of Southampton, as being the "first concerted attempt to cultivate the European wine grape in North America" (at Virginia), but mentions Bonoeil's treatise only in relation to growing silk-worms. This is the earliest U.S. work listed (without annotation but with complete, lengthy title) in GABLER's bibliography.

**... second earliest book listed in Gabler pertaining to American wine ...**

1650 — Edward Williams. *Virginia's Discovery of Silk-worms ... Implanting of Mulberry Trees ... Dressing and Keeping of Vines, for the rich trade of making Wines there ... the Making of the Saw-mill, very useful in Virginia.* (London, 75 p.)

Williams, although he had never been to Virginia, was an "enthusiast, fired by the old vision of wine and silk," who proposed the colony import Greek vines and winegrowers instead of French, since Virginia lay on a Mediterranean latitude. His practical guide, in support of this argument, contains thirty pages on grape growing "drawn exclusively from French sources and has no authentic reference to Virginian conditions." (PINNEY, *History*) This is the second earliest book pertaining to American wine in GABLER'S bibliography. BORG notes a reprint in a four-volume series, 1836-1848 (62 p. in vol.3).

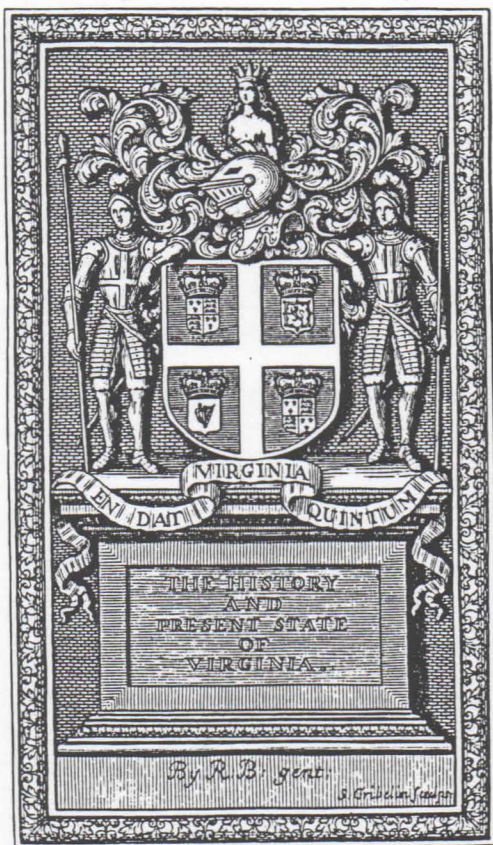
**... the best account of grape culture in colonial Virginia ...**

1705 — Robert Beverly. *The History and Present State of Virginia.* (London, 1705; also an 1855 Richmond reprint, with an Introduction by Charles Campbell who relates Beverly made 400 gallons of wine in 1715 from his three-acre vineyard planted to native and French varieties.)

HEDRICK credits historian Beverly (c 1673-1722) with giving "the best account of grape culture in Virginia in later colonial times."



Beverly reported, "Grapes grow there in an incredible Plenty and Variety ... I have seen great Trees covered with single Vines, and those Vines almost hid with the Grapes." BAILEY points out Beverly's early description of the "foxy" character of the grapes, and, while he quotes extensively from Beverly's text "on the vine," he does not include the title in his catalogue of wine literature. CRAHAN appreciated this "first historian of Virginia and avid enthusiast of viticulture" who wagered, successfully, with his neighbors that within seven years he could produce 700 gallons of wine in a single vintage. Not in BORG, GABLER, or PINNEY "Twelve," but PINNEY (*History*) gives a very thorough coverage of Beverly.



[Engraved title page of Beverly's *History*, from PINNEY]

**... might have hastened the establishment of viticulture in America ...**

1709 — John Lawson. *History of Carolina, containing the Description and Natural History of the Country ....* (London)

Both BAILEY and HEDRICK cite Lawson's history, where "the grapes of the region are several times described," written after

Lawson had spent some eight years exploring and surveying the State. HEDRICK applauds the work of this "energetic pioneer, accurate historian, one of the first American naturalists, and early vineyardist" who, alas, "was burned to death by the Indians in the prime of his career, cutting short experiments which might have materially hastened the establishment of viticulture in America." PINNEY tells us Lawson "calls the grape the most important of the native fruits and describes six varieties," while his "account makes clear how tantalizingly close the vision of winemaking was to all the early settlers" and "how utterly without guidance the aspiring vine grower was in the New World." PINNEY cites a 1967 reprint, *A New Voyage to South Carolina* (H.T. Lefler, ed., University of North Carolina Press). Our other sources do not list this work.

**... directed to the vine-growers of the colonies of Georgia and Carolina ...**

1766 — John Locke. *Observations upon the Growth and Culture of Vines & Olives.* (London, 73 p.)

Originally written in 1679 for the 1st Earl of Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, the unpublished manuscript remained in the family until 1766 when it was published by the "Present" Earl of Shaftesbury, a trustee of the Colony of Georgia and a property owner in Carolina. A fifteen-page introduction was added, directed to the vine-growers of the American colonies of Georgia and Carolina, where "it will be of far more extensive use both to that country and to Britain." (Under Shaftesbury's direction, Locke also wrote the plan of government and constitution for the Province of Carolina.) This work was not located in any of our reference sources, except GABLER. PINNEY reports the early efforts of Cooper/Shaftesbury in the Carolina colony (*History*).

**... first American treatise on the vine ...**

1771 — Edward Antill. "An Essay on the Cultivation of the Vine, and the Making and Preserving of Wine, suited to the Different Climates of North-America." *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* (Vol.I, pp.117-197).

The first American treatise on the vine (by an American, in America, for America) was written by a New Jersey vineyardist and wine-maker who explained, "When I first undertook a vineyard, I can without the least spark of vanity say, I did it for the good of my



country, and from a principle of love to mankind." Antill (1701-1770) fervently felt the people of America should drink wine, not distilled spirits. As were the majority of 18th century U.S. writings on wine culture, Antill's essay is largely a compilation from European sources, but it gives explicit directions for grape growing and wine making and was, until the publication of Adlum's *Cultivation of the Vine* in 1823, the chief authority on the grape in America. In *Grapes of New York*, HEDRICK is quite critical of Antill's "rambling discussion" and deeply regretted that this "second American treatise on the cultivation of the grape ... which was to be quoted for fifty years could not have been more meritorious." Yet, in his *History of Horticulture*, HEDRICK is kinder with his criticism and credits the essay with being "the first printed treatise on any fruit published in the United States." All of our reference sources give this title and its author good coverage.

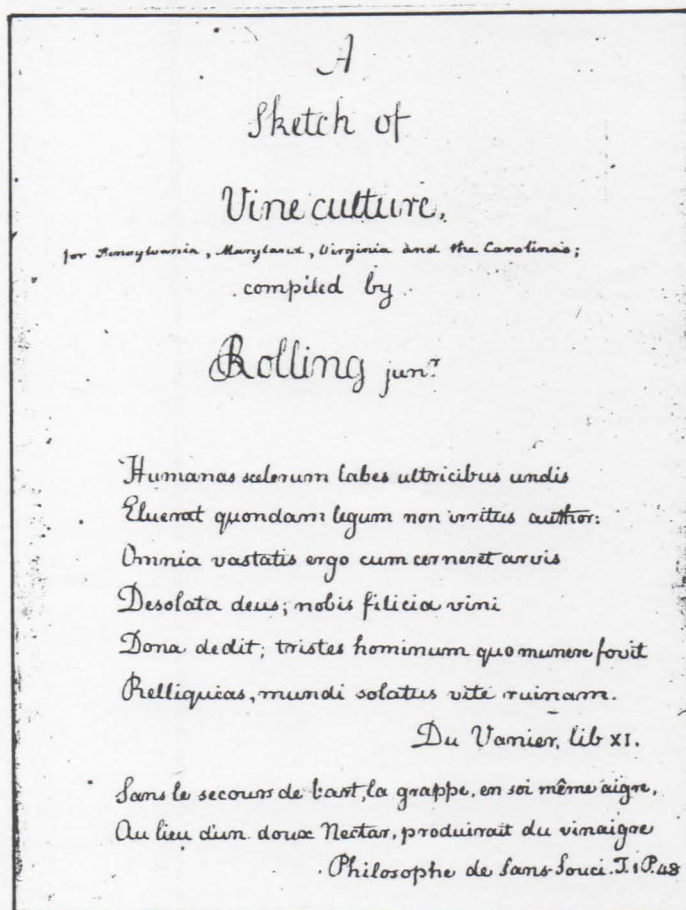
**... a wholly serious effort, written  
by a serious believer ...**

1772 — Louis de Saint Pierre. *Art of Planting and Cultivating the Vine ... also of Making, Fining and Preserving Wines ... for the Use ... in America and particularly for that Colony at New Bordeaux.* (London, 244 p., two folding plates of wine presses)

Interestingly, neither BAILEY or HEDRICK mention Saint Pierre and the viticultural efforts of the Huguenots in South Carolina. Saint Pierre, himself a vineyardist in France for many years before coming to America, wrote this promotional work to generate support (British funds) for the new wine-growing enterprise. PINNEY appraised the book as "a work of missionary exhortation rather than of practical instruction ... a wholly serious effort, written by a fervent believer" and a book that "illustrates one of the significant patterns in early American efforts to domesticate wine growing." Sir Edward Barry, in his *Observations on the Wines of the Ancients ... and Modern Wines* (London, 1775), the first book in English to discuss modern wines, found the New-World trial worth mentioning and included a paragraph on Captain St. Pierre (d.1776) and his "great colony of vigneron in South Carolina" which "must be of infinite service to this country." GABLER and WOODBURN likewise give the title and its author a respected entry.

**... a significant document in the  
history of American wine growing ...**

1775 — Robert Bolling. *A Sketch of Vine Culture [for Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas]*. (manuscript, 108 p.)



Colonel Bolling (1737-1775), who cultivated a four-acre vineyard of European grapes in Buckingham County, was the chief patron of grape growing in Virginia in the 18th century. At the time of his sudden death in 1775, he had ready for publication a manuscript on grape-growing — "a significant document in the history of American wine growing, for it shows how the idea of making good wine persisted among Virginia gentlemen and testifies to an increasing interest in the matter on the eve of the Revolution" (PINNEY). It has never been published in its entirety, although extracts were published in the *Virginia Gazette*, in the *Bolling Memoirs*, and in the *American Farmer* between 1828 and 1830. BORG suggests William Prince [q.v.] may have used the manuscript in writing his 1830 *Treatise of the Vine*. Mistakenly, HEDRICK gives



Bolling "the honor of being the first American writer on wine" (*Grapes of New York*), although he later corrects himself and does not repeat this accolade in his *History of Horticulture*. Two copies of the manuscript are known to exist, one at the Huntington Library in California, the other in the National Agricultural Library, Washington, D.C. [Shouldn't we encourage the publication of this rarity?]

**... the first American  
agricultural encyclopedia ...**

1790 — Samuel Deane. *The New England Farmer, or Georgical Dictionary*. (Worcester, MA., 335 p.)

The Rev. Samuel Deane (1733-1814) was a noted clergyman in Portland, Maine, a practical farmer, and a learned student of agriculture. While serving as vice-president of Bowdoin College, Deane published his book, the first American agricultural encyclopedia, based on his own practical experience and on the classic English horticultural works. He discusses wines (their making and preservation), the wine cellar, vines (describing the native vines of Boston and the eastern states), and includes an extensive excerpt from an unidentified source on French wine making methods. By 1822 three editions had been published. "In short, it is a book which does honor to the ingenuity and industry of its author, and deserves to be read by every person who wishes well to the best interest of this country." (BAILEY, *Cyclopedia*, p.1510, quoting a 1790 review of Deane's book). HEDRICK, BORG, and GABLER also include a mention of this book.

**... chief disseminator of America's  
first variety of commercial value ...**

1800 — Peter Legaux. "Petition on the Vineyards, May 19, 1794." *The True American* (March 24, 1800).

To quote HEDRICK: "Of Legaux's life, little is known, other than he was a French vine-grower with an experimental vineyard at Spring Mill, thirteen miles northwest of Philadelphia. S. W. Johnson [q.v.] speaks of Legaux as a philanthropist, McMahon [q.v.] calls him a "gentleman of Worth and Science," while Rafinesque [q.v.] accuses him of fraud and deception in the matter of calling the native grapes Bland and Alexander, *Madeira* and *Cape*. Judging the man from his article in *The True American* and from the words of his contemporaries, he

was a capable, enthusiastic and intelligent grape-grower. His philanthropy is more doubtful. It is true that he distributed many grape plants but as he himself says to 'fellow citizens possessing pecuniary means.' That he practiced deceit in the matter of the introduction of the Alexander as the Cape is probable. However, his deceit, if such it were, may be forgotten and he should be remembered as the chief disseminator of the Alexander, the first distinctive American variety of commercial value." (*Grapes*, p.16) Legaux's two thousand-word article relates his experiences in growing grapes in America, with the main part of the article being "A Statement of the Expense and Income of a Vineyard, made on Four Acres of Land, situated in Pennsylvania." HEDRICK dubs the article "of little value." GABLER does not include the work; BORG lists it, along with two other one-page items by Legaux. Not one of PINNEY's "Twelve" but, in his *History*, he devotes nearly ten pages to Legaux (1748-1827) and the Pennsylvania Vine Company's "first notable post-revolutionary attempt to establish a successful viticulture."

**... first rational discussion of the  
culture of the grape in America ...**

1804 — William Bartram. "Description of the Species and Varieties of Vines in North America." Published in A. F. M. Willich, *Domestic Encyclopedia, or A Dictionary of Facts and Useful Knowledge*, James Mease, M.D., Editor. (5 vols., Philadelphia)

This entry is actually a dual citation of Bartram and Mease. William Bartram (1739-1823) was a gifted horticulturist and the son of John Bartram, noted botanist and naturalist who founded the famous Bartram Botanic Garden in Philadelphia. In 1802, at the request of Editor Mease, Bartram wrote this short essay describing the native grape species which, although "seriously incomplete," was "the first published attempt to bring some order to the subject in the country." In the *Encyclopedia*, forty pages is given to "The Vine" by James Mease (1771-1846) who "extended Bartram's article by summarizing various authorities on viticulture and wine-making ... citing Legaux [q.v.] and Antill [q.v.] ... as well as the more usual 18th century French and English writers" (PINNEY). HEDRICK praised this substantial discussion of the vine that "merits special attention ... [as] it may justly be considered the first rational discussion of

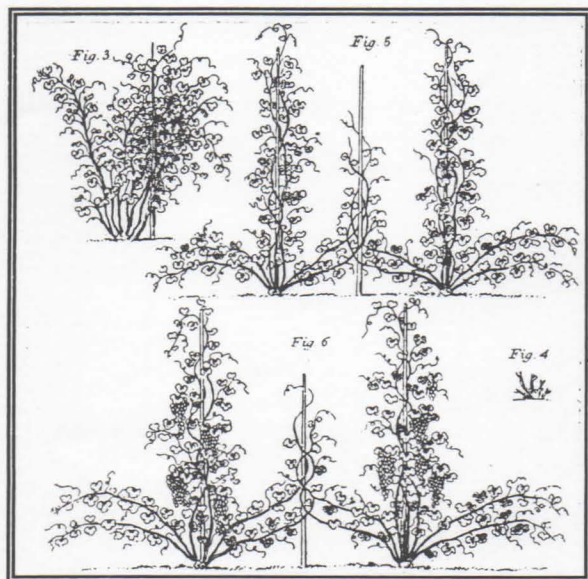


the culture of the grape in America." Bartram's paper was later republished, in a shortened version, in the 1830 *Treatise on the Vine* of William Robert Prince [q.v.]. BORG lists this work under Willich, BAILEY gives Bartram a brief mention; GABLER does not list it.

... *second popular treatise on the vine* ...

1806 — S. W. [Stephen William] Johnson. *Rural Economy: containing a Treatise on Pisé Building ... on the Culture of the Vine ... and on Turnpike Roads*. (New Brunswick, NJ, 246 p.)

HEDRICK introduces Johnson's work as an "early book to devote some space to the grape" (forty-two pages) and contains "an excellent picture of training the grape." Johnson mentions only three native grapes, and recommends the culture of European varieties. BAILEY calls Johnson's "book" the "second popular treatise on the vine which has come down to us," whose author "drew heavily from the experiences and writings of Antill [q.v.]." In addition to complimenting Johnson's "interesting pictures of grape-training," he suggests the chief interest of Johnson's account is his praise of "the philanthropic" vine-grower, Peter Legaux [q.v.], near Philadelphia. BORG and GABLER cite this work, but give no annotative information; PINNEY gives the author and his work a brief mention; WOODBURN notes the engraved illustration is an early U.S. example on the subject of grape culture.



[S. W. Johnson's 1806 grape-training illustration, from BAILEY]

... *the first to advocate hybridization and grafting European grapes to native stock* ...  
1806 — Bernard M'Mahon. *The American Gardener's Calendar*. (Philadelphia, 648 p.)

"Bernard M'Mahon [1775-1818] was no common man." So states the introduction to the 11th edition of M'Mahon's book which remained the standard authority in America for fifty years. In addition to being the country's first great horticultural work, the chapter on the vineyard brings forth two firsts in grape growing: hybridization as a means of improving the grape, and the grafting of "some of the best European kinds on our most vigorous vines, which, no doubt, would answer a good purpose." M'Mahon, who was involved with Legaux [q.v.] and the Pennsylvania Vine Company, fully describes fifty-five varieties of European grapes and discusses four native species. It has often been said that the monumental expedition of Lewis and Clark in the early 19th century was planned in the Philadelphia house of this nurseryman/horticulturist and friend of Thomas Jefferson. HEDRICK (*History of Horticulture*) devotes some nine pages to this "first really serviceable book for all branches of horticulture published in America." CRAHAN, BORG, WOODBURN, PINNEY and GABLER all provide annotated entries and information on this standard classic.

... *how to make "Lafet & Ch. Margo"* ...

1815 — Joseph Coppinger. *The American Practical Brewer and Tanner*. (New York, 246 p. and three plates showing plans and equipment)

A very early work with an interesting description of "the Bordeaux method of making and preparing Claret Wine ... which may be successfully applied to the wines of this country, particularly those of Kaskaskias." While this is mainly a book of brewing, "by a practical brewer," there are instructions for proper cellar care, recipes for wine, and a short chapter on making Claret. WOODBURN, GABLER, and BORG include the title, our other sources do not.

[We will conclude our survey in the April *Newsletter* with twelve titles dating from 1818 to 1830. Your comments, corrections or additions are most welcome. Please send them for inclusion in the April issue. — Ed.]







**BOOKS &  
BOTTLES**  
by  
Fred McMillin

**SIPPING WITH PLEASURE**

**The Book:** *Sip by Sip. An Insider's Guide to Learning All about Wine* by Michael Bonadies. New York: Main Street Books / Doubleday, 1998. \$12.95.

"There are no shortcuts when it comes to learning about wine. You sit down with a bottle and a glass and learn one sip at a time. It is hard work, but then again you could be studying organic chemistry."

Michael Bonadies is a partner in the Myriad Restaurant Group, which includes the Montrachet in New York and the Rubicon in San Francisco. His impressive, affordable volume contradicts the above caveat ... he takes the hard work out of wine learning by sprinkling much good humor among much good sense.

**Good Humor**

- ☺ Viognier is the best white wine you've never heard of.
- ☺ Wine originated when one of our ancestors discovered that [naturally] fermented grape juice took the edge off a rough day of being chased by wooly mammoths.
- ☺ Sparkling wine is all about fruit and generosity of flavor. The French would kill to be able to work with the exuberant fruit of California.

**Good Sense**

- ♦ "Winegrower" is replacing the title "Winemaker" on many business cards, as the paramount importance of the vineyard in determining wine quality is gaining recognition in California.
- ♦ I am an unabashed California wine chauvinist, since some of the world's greatest wine is being made there right now. Incidentally, I was born in California but grew up in Connecticut. I have never forgiven my parents for moving.

- ♦ We're waving the flag proud and high, totally seduced by how good our home-grown Pinot Noir from California has become.
- ♦ Traitors and scoundrels! A number of California wineries are committing vinous treason while pulling a fast one on the consumer. Confronted with a wine shortage caused by rising demand, these turncoat wineries are importing bulk wine from Chile, Argentina and France, and selling it with California-sounding brand names and California-style labels.
- ♦ My cellar is 95% red: 60% Pinot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and the rest mostly Zinfandel. The whites include Riesling and Alsatian Pinot Gris.
- ♦ Responsible Consumption: Where there's alcohol, there's drunkenness. Where there's drunkenness, there's disapproval. And that's basically what happened to the three-martini lunch.

**Conclusion**

Other strong features of Bonadies' book are: the quizzes with answers, this insider's look at wine & food pairings and wine lists, a thoughtful tribute to the genius of Andre Tchelistcheff, and the final page. It reads:

"The goal is ease and comfort with wine in order to make it an integral part of your daily life. Good luck, good sipping, and thanks for reading this book."

**The Bottles:** Bonadies' list of wineries consistently offering good values includes Bogle, Bonny Doon, Estancia, Fetzer, Forest Glen, Raymond and R. H. Phillips.



**Epitaph of a Prolific Author**

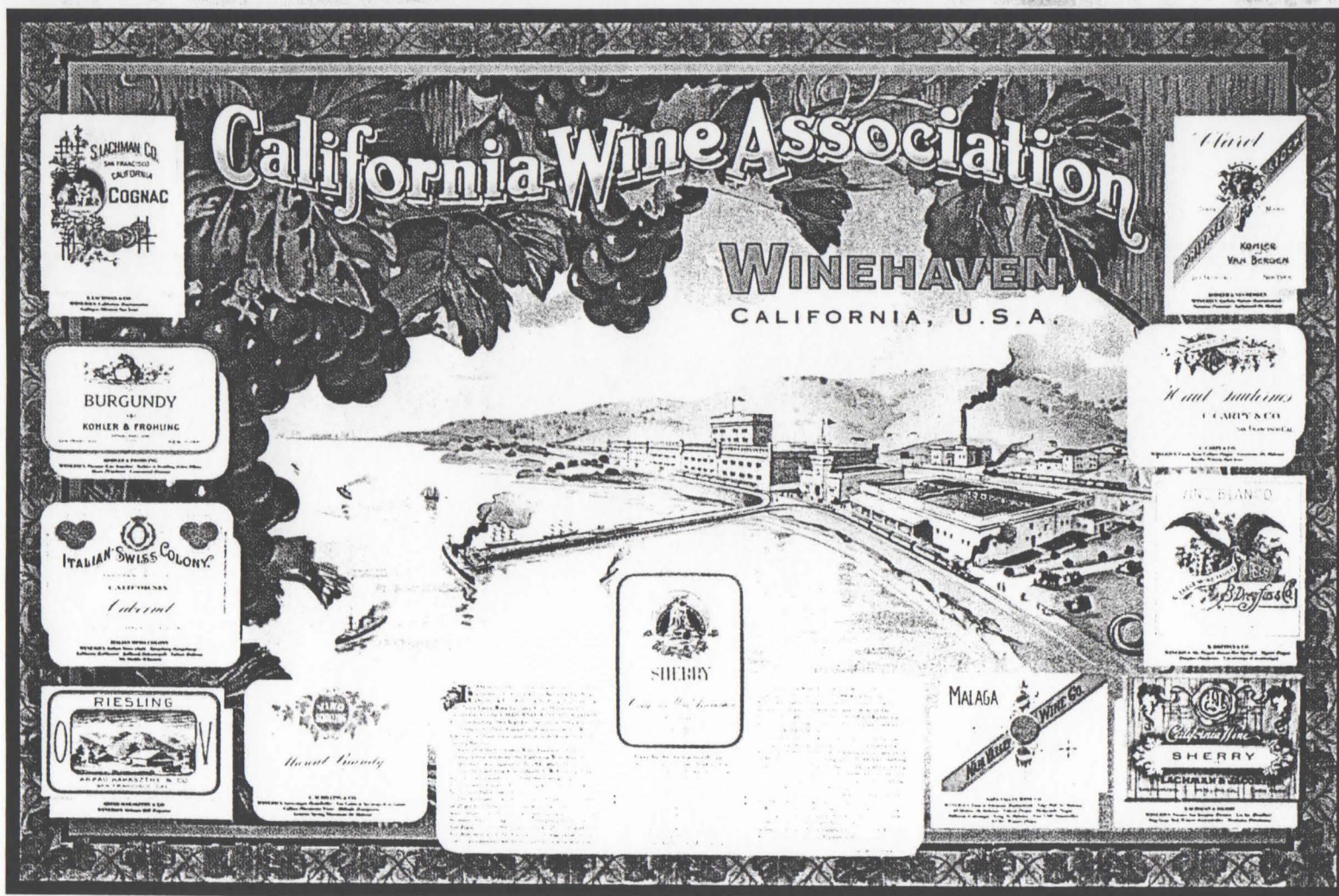
Andrew Toraqueau, a teetotaler, is said to have produced a book and a child each year for twenty years ...

Here lies a man, who, drinking only water,  
Wrote twenty books, with each had a son or daughter.  
Had he but used the juice of generous vats,  
The world would scarce have held his books and brats.

— *Book Verse*, 1896.



# HISTORICAL WINE POSTER



California Wine Association