

Petition for Establishment
of
Knights Valley
as a
Viticultural Area

by
the Knights Valley Wine Growers Committee



"Mount St. Helens from Knights Valley"
Thomas Hill (1829-1908)
Oil, 1872

February 12, 1982

Director
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Federal Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20226

Dear Sir:

The undersigned Knights Valley wine growers hereby petition for establishment of the viticultural area to be known as Knights Valley in accordance with the provisions of Title 27, CFR, Part 40. Please refer to the following attachments in support of the petition:

1. Introduction
2. Evidence that Knights Valley viticultural area is locally and nationally known.
3. Current and historical evidence of boundaries of the viticultural area as stated.
4. Evidence that distinguishes Knights Valley by elevation, soil, rainfall and physical features from the surrounding area.
5. A U.S. Geological Survey map marked with the proposed boundaries as described by this petition.

We, the petitioners for a Knights Valley viticultural area, believe that it is in the best interest of the public, wine growers and wineries that the watershed be designated as the official boundary, since, in our opinion, the watershed meets the specifications of the BATF for a viticultural boundary. However, we are also aware that this boundary overlaps the boundary requested by petitioning committees for Alexander Valley and Sonoma Chalk Hill appellations. Yet, since there is in neither case any current vineyard planting in the areas in dispute, we feel that the issue is not nearly as crucial as the far greater one confronting us: our mutual desire to establish these viticultural areas. Therefore, we wish to settle amicably and as quickly as possible with our neighbors any dispute which hinders our united endeavor.


We, the petitioners, believe the enclosed documentation is sufficient for adoption by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms of a Knights Valley viticultural area. Therefore, your favorable and early consideration of our petition will be greatly appreciated.

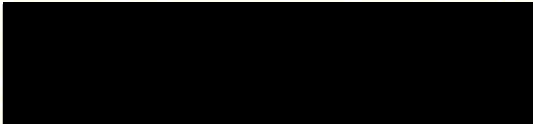
February 12, 1982


Page 2


Please address any questions or correspondence to Mrs. Douglas Clegg, 16905 Highway 128, Calistoga, CA 94515, or Mr. Robert Steinbauer, Beringer Vineyards, P.O. Box 111, St. Helena, CA 94574.


Sincerely,



Mrs. Douglas Clegg - Chairperson
Vintage Valley Vineyard



R. L. Maher
President - Beringer Vineyards



Mr. Douglas Clegg
Vintage Valley Vineyard



R. E. Steinbauer
Vice President - Beringer Vineyards

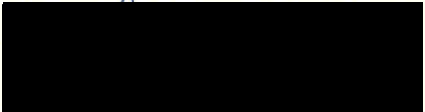

Mary A. Warner
Pineyhill - West Vineyards


Gary L. Tom Linson
Home Vineyard



Edith C. Hasson
Managing Partner, Vineyard Associates



John J. Rygiel
Oak Creek Vineyards

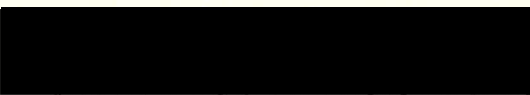

Robert C. Echart
Poliahu Vineyard



Peter Newman
Newman Vineyards


Howard M. Kaplan
Blau/Bishop & Assoc., Agent


James W. Stusser
Knights Valley Ranch


Ray Fechter Jr.
Owner


Charles R. Blakeley
Franz Valley Vineyards



Kenneth V. Parr
Franz Creek Vineyards



Myron S. Nightingale
Winemaster - Beringer Vineyards

DC:bp

Enc.

cc: G. Neis, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms

1. The Knights Valley Viticultural Area, Introduction:

The Knights Valley, located on the east side of Sonoma County, California, is one of the coastal intermountain valleys that surround the San Francisco Bay depression. The boundary line for the Knights Valley viticultural area is delineated as the watershed, an area of approximately 39,258 acres. The valley floor is approximately 5.3 miles long and 1.8 miles wide at the widest point. Included in the petition is a branch of Knights Valley, locally known as Franz Valley. Waters flowing through Franz Valley and southern Knights Valley are confluent in the western portion of Knights Valley, where they flow westerly toward the Russian River.

The watershed was chosen to delineate Knights Valley because it is not an incongruous definer of a "valley" and is, in fact, commonly understood. Further, the watershed line is the basis for the Napa, Lake and Sonoma County boundaries adjacent to Knights Valley, a fact which exhibits that this interpretation is well-defined and understood. It is also desirable to have a common boundary between the Napa Valley viticultural area which is a line delineating the two watersheds.

Knights Valley is a geographic entity surrounded by mountains on all sides. The mountainous area of the watershed of Knights Valley includes many small areas capable of quality grape production; some mountain areas are currently being developed into vineyards. Current acreage devoted to grapes in the watershed of Knights Valley is approximately 1,000 acres.

The unique combination of soil and climatic conditions, as described in the accompanying evidence, has proven to produce wines of quality with distinctly different characteristics. Myron Nightingale, Winemaker at Beringer Vineyards, and George Buonaccorsi, Assistant to the President, Allied Grape Growers, along with other knowledgeable enologists and viticulturalists, have experienced these differences in wine quality (Appendix A).

The Knights Valley viticultural area, as proposed, would be bounded by the Napa Valley appellation on the east, with Alexander Valley and Sonoma Chalk Hill petitions on the west. The geographic characteristics along with the viticultural differences and distinct viticultural history merit a separate viticultural designation.

2. Evidence that the Knights Valley viticultural area is locally and nationally known.

The area of Knights Valley is well known locally. The name "Knights Valley" appears on U. S. Geological Survey maps of the Mount St. Helena Quadrangle and the Mark West Springs Quadrangle, California, 7.5 minute series, as well as on other local maps, such as Metsker's map of Sonoma County.

Wine grapes and wine production have existed in Knights Valley for well over 100 years. The Beringer winery used the Knights Valley designation in 1974 with a celebrated release of its 1973 Johannisberg Riesling Auslese. In 1978 Knights Valley again appeared on a Beringer label, with the release of the 1976 Knights Valley Cabernet Sauvignon. This wine has since earned many medals in international competition and has been the subject of numerous articles (Appendix B).

Wine writers throughout the United States have touted the unique contribution Knights Valley has made to the wine world by comparing Beringer's Knights Valley Cabernets and Fume Blancs with other bottlings. The attached articles (Appendix B) illustrate their belief that Knights Valley produces distinct, world class wines that stand out in tastings against other highly respected North Coast appellations. The fact that nationally renown members of the wine community recognize the significant differences between the wines from Knights Valley and those from other locations, combined with Beringer's national and international marketing, make the Knights Valley name familiar not only locally, but throughout the entire United States.

3. Current and historical evidence of boundaries of the viticultural area as stated.

Please refer to the report by William F. Heintz, historian, marked Appendix C, which provides current and historical evidence of the proposed boundaries for the Knights Valley viticultural area.

4. Evidence that distinguishes Knights Valley by elevation, soil, rainfall and physical features from the surrounding area.

Elevation

The elevation of Knights Valley on the valley floor ranges from approximately 360 feet elevation to 600 feet elevation; plantings of vineyards are within this range. The elevations classify Knights Valley as a low-lying mountain valley of the coastal range. The area within the watershed ranges from the 360 feet elevation to a high elevation at the north end of the watershed with 3672 feet at Pine Mountain, and culminates with Mount St. Helena's 4343 feet elevation. There are numerous tillable hill "islands" and peninsulas within the upper elevations. Knights Valley elevations currently used for wine grape production are consistently higher than those of the Alexander Valley, Russian River Valley and Napa Valley appellations.

Soils

The geographical formation of Knights Valley is classified by Bouguer Gravity Map of California, Santa Rosa Sheet (2) as alluvium; the mountainous area of the southern portion of the valley is Pleistocene Volcanic, while the mountainous area to the north is predominantly Franciscan formation. The Napa Valley, southeast of Knights Valley, is mostly surrounded by Pleistocene Volcanic formations, whereas the Alexander and Dry Creek areas to the north of Knights Valley are surrounded by both Franciscan formations and Lower Cretaceous marine. These parent material differences between the surrounding viticultural areas and Knights Valley are the origins of differences in basic soil complexity. The soils of Knights Valley as defined by the Soil Survey, Sonoma County (5), are the Yolo-Contina-Pleasanton Association; this soils association is defined as "...well-drained to excessively drained, nearly level to moderately sloping very gravelly sandy loams to clay loams on flood plains, alluvial fans, and low terraces." The Knights Valley soils of the high terraces, foothills and mountains are mostly Goulding-Toomes-Guenoc Association: "...well-drained, gently sloping to very steep clay loams to loams; on uplands." Much of the Dry Creek and Alexander Valley areas have the same soils associations, however, the soils adjacent to the Russian River in Alexander Valley are deep, fertile soils not generally represented in Knights Valley. The Sonoma Valley viticultural area and the Napa Valley viticultural area both have different soil associations as defined by the Sonoma and Napa County Soil Surveys (4,5).

The Knights Valley soils used for grape production are, in general, characterized by low fertility; many of the soils are very rock and gravelly, and others exhibit low pH. These soil conditions affect the low production of high quality wine grapes.

Climate

The climate of the Knights Valley is typically Mediterranean, characterized by warm, dry summers and mild, but cool, moist winters. The climate is moderated by Knights Valley's proximity to the Pacific Ocean, its isolation from large valleys and its low mountain elevation.

Average rainfall in Knights Valley as recorded in Climate of Sonoma County (3), is 44 inches. This average is similar to but slightly higher than Alexander Valley, however, it is much higher than the Sonoma Valley and portions of Napa Valley. Like most coastal valleys, most precipitation occurs during the winter and early spring, with little or none during the summer and early autumn.

The temperatures in Knights Valley are markedly different than those in surrounding viticultural areas. Winter mean temperatures are reported to be approximately 2°F colder than the Santa Rosa/Healdsburg/Cloverdale areas (3).

Spring temperatures are generally colder in Knights Valley when compared to Alexander Valley, Sonoma Valley and Napa Valley. The National Weather Service records (1) indicate that, in general, Knights Valley has longer hours of temperatures below 32°F. Pope Valley, a part of the Napa Valley viticultural area, is traditionally colder in the spring when compared to Knights Valley.

The growing season is shorter by twenty to sixty days in Knights Valley when compared to other viticultural areas of Sonoma County; the average growing season of days above 32°F is reported (3) to be approximately 220 days for Knights Valley.

The summer temperatures of Knights Valley are generally warmer when compared to portions of Napa Valley and Sonoma Valley. July mean maximum temperature is reported (3) to be some 4° warmer than Santa Rosa, 2° cooler than Cloverdale, but very similar to Alexander Valley. The Knights Valley is considered a Region III* by A. J. Winkler (6), which compares to the northern portions of the Napa

*Region III is equal to 3,001 to 3,500 degree days. Degree day may be defined as the sum of the mean daily temperatures above 50°F for the period concerned; in vineyards April 1 to October 31 is the usual period.

Valley and Alexander Valley. Thermograph records from equipment stationed at Beringer's Knights Valley vineyard during the 1980 and 1981 seasons designate a Region III total heat summation. However, this was achieved by slightly warmer summer temperatures offsetting the cooler springtime temperatures.

There is no question that the climatic conditions, moderated by Knights Valley's isolation and low mountain elevations, are unique and distinguish themselves from any other growing areas in the North Coast.

5. A U. S. Geological Survey map marked with the proposed boundaries as described by this petition.

The following pages contain the description of the boundaries of the proposed Knights Valley viticultural area. The boundary description was done by Joseph C. Smith, Civil Engineer, and can be identified on U. S. Geological Survey maps, 7.5 minute series, of the Jimtown, Detert Reservoir, Mark West Springs, Mount St. Helena, Healdsburg and Calistoga Quadrangles.

The actual appropriate U. S. G. S. maps, prominently marked with the boundaries of the Knights Valley viticultural area, have been sent under separate cover due to their large size. A composite copy of the appropriate maps is enclosed in Appendix D.

A site map, Appendix E, is enclosed for reference to the Knights Valley viticultural area.

JOSEPH C. SMITH
Civil Engineer
408 Calle De Caballo
SUISUN, CALIFORNIA 94585

April 6, 1982

KNIGHTS VALLEY VITICULTURAL AREA
BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point where the Sonoma County, Lake County lines intersect the northly line of Section 11, T10N, R8W; thence westerly along the northerly line of Sections 11, 10 and 9 to the corner common to Sections 4, 5, 8 and 9, T10N, R8W; thence southerly along the west line of Sections 9, 16, 21, 28 and 33 to the corner common to Sections 32 and 33, T10N, R8W and Sections 4 and 5, T9N, R8W; thence southerly along the west line of Section 4 to the corner common to Sections 4, 5, 8 and 9, T9N, R8W; thence easterly along the north line of Section 9 to the northeast corner of Section 9; thence southerly along the east lines of Sections 9, 16 and 21 to the intersection of the easterly line of Section 21, T9N, R8W, with the thread of Franz Creek; thence easterly along the thread of Franz Creek approximately 14,000 feet to the centerline of Franz Valley Road; thence along the centerline of Franz Valley Road southerly through Section 25, T9N, R8W and through Sections 30 and 31, T9N, R7W to the north line of Section 6, T8N, R7W; thence continuing along the centerline of Franz Valley Road to the west line of Section 6, T8N, R7W; thence southerly along the west line of said Section 6 to the southwest corner of said Section 6; thence easterly along the north line of Sections 7, 8 and 9, T8N, R7W to the corner common to Sections 3, 4, 9 and 10, T8N, R7W; thence northerly along the line common to Sections 3 and 4 to the intersection with the Sonoma County, Napa County line; thence northerly along the Sonoma County, Napa County line to the point of intersection of the Sonoma County, Napa County, Lake County lines; thence northerly along the Sonoma County, Lake County line to the point of beginning, containing 37,068 acres, more or less.

Beringer Vineyards

2000 MAIN STREET (BOX 111) • ST. HELENA, CA 94574 • (707) 963-7115

April 8, 1982


Mr. Jim Whitley
ATF Specialist
Research and Regulations Board
Department of the Treasury
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Washington, D.C. 20226

Dear Mr. Whitley:

Enclosed are the amendments to the boundaries of the Knights Valley Viticultural Area as requested by you in the letter referenced R:R:R:JRW-5120. These amendments are submitted in an effort to meet all criteria for the establishment of the Knights Valley Viticultural Area.

If more information is necessary, please advise at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,


Robert E. Steinhauer
Vice President - Vineyard/
Grower Relations

RES:bp

Enc.

JOSEPH C. SMITH
Civil Engineer
408 Calle De Caballo
SUISUN, CALIFORNIA 94585

April 7, 1982

Mr. Robert Steinhauer
Knights Valley Wine Growers Committee
Post Office Box 111
St. Helena, California 94574


Subject: Knights Valley Viticultural Area

Dear Sir:

Attached please find an amended description for the Knights Valley watershed, dated April 6, 1982.

Appropriate 7.5' USGS Maps with which to trace this boundary description are "JIMTOWN", "DETERT RESERVOIR", "MARK WEST SPRINGS" and "MT. ST. HELENA".

Yours very truly,


Joseph C. Smith

JCS/a
encl

JOSEPH C. SMITH
Civil Engineer
408 Calle De Caballo
SUISUN, CALIFORNIA 94585

February 9, 1982

Mr. Robert Steinhauer
Knights Valley Wine Growers Committee
Post Office Box 111
St. Helena, California 94574

Dear Sir:

Attached please find a boundary description for the Knights Valley Watershed.

Only minimum effort and discussion was necessary.

The natural boundaries are apparent, with the summits to the east and south forming the county boundaries. Chalk Hills and Bald Hills to the southwest. Two narrow canyons of Franz and Maacama Creeks cutting the ridge separating Knights Valley and Alexander Valley, and finally, the high wall to the west and north, with summits above 2000 feet.

Appropriate 7.5' USGS Maps are listed on page 3 of the description.

Yours very truly,


Joseph C. Smith

JCS/a
encl

JOSEPH C. SMITH
Civil Engineer
408 Calle De Caballo
SUISUN, CALIFORNIA 94585

KNIGHTS VALLEY VITICULTURAL AREA
BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
2-9-82

Beginning at the common intersection of the Lake County, Napa County, Sonoma county borders in Section 34, T 10 N, R 7 W, MDM, as shown on that USGS map entitled "Mt. St. Helena"; thence southerly along the Sonoma County, Napa County line to the crest of a 1320 foot watershed in Section 3, T 8 N, R 7 W; thence along the various courses of the crest of the watershed southeasterly across Mountain Home Ranch Road into Section 10, T 8 N, R 7 W, and continuing along the various courses of the crest of said watershed southwesterly over a 1240 foot ridge into Section 9, T 8 N, R 7 W; thence southwesterly along said watershed to a 1200 foot elevation in Section 9, T 8 N, R 7 W; thence westerly along the crest of said watershed through Sections 8 and 7, T 8 N, R 7 W along said watershed crest entitled "Chalk Mountain" to a 1440 foot summit in the southwest portion of Section 6, T 8 N, R 7 W; thence westerly along said watershed across Franz Valley Road near a benchmark labeled "1055"; thence continuing along said watershed northwesterly through Section 1, T 8 N, R 8 W to the Township Line dividing T 8 N and T 9 N; thence continuing along the crest of said watershed northwesterly through the west one-half of Section 36, T 9 N, R 8 W; thence continuing along the crest of said watershed through the southwesterly

JOSEPH C. SMITH
Civil Engineer
408 Calle De Caballo
SUISUN, CALIFORNIA 94585

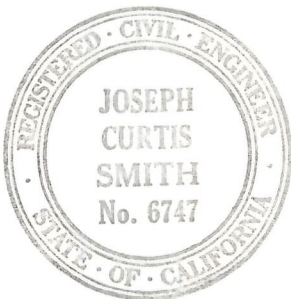
portion of Section 25, T 9 N, R 8 W; thence following the crest of said watershed northwesterly along said watershed crest entitled "Bald Hills" to the north line of Section 26, T 9 N, R 8 W; thence along the western boundary of the watershed on a direct line northwesterly to the corner common to Sections 14, 15, 22 and 23, T 9 N, R 8 W; thence along a direct line northwesterly to the corner common to Sections 9, 10, 15 and 16, T 9 N, R 8 W; thence westerly along the section line between Sections 9 and 16, 1000 feet; thence northerly to the 680 foot crest of the watershed that intersects the section line between Sections 4 and 9, approximately 11000 feet westerly of the corner common to Sections 3, 4, 9 and 10, T 9 N, R 8 W; thence along the various courses of said watershed northerly and northwesterly through Section 4 to a point labeled "1499" in Section 5, T 9 N, R 8 W; thence along the crest of said watershed in Section 32, T 10 N, R 8 W, to a point labeled "1730"; thence along the crest of said watershed northerly through Sections 32 and 29, to a point labeled "1795"; thence northerly along the crest of said watershed through Sections 29 and 20 to a point labeled "1207"; thence northerly along the crest of

JOSEPH C. SMITH
Civil Engineer
408 Calle De Caballo
SUISUN, CALIFORNIA 94585

said watershed, through Sections 20, 17 and 8, to a point labeled "1970"; thence northeasterly along the crest of said watershed through a point labeled "2527" in Section 9; thence along the crest of said watershed northeasterly across Pine Flat Road; thence along various courses of the crest of said watershed easterly through Sections 9, 3, 10, 11 and 2, T 10 N, R 8 W, to the Sonoma County, Lake County boundary in Section 2; thence southeasterly along the Sonoma County, Lake County boundary to the point of beginning.

Appropriate 7.5' USGS maps for this boundary description are as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. JIMTOWN | 2. MT. ST. HELENA |
| 3. DETERT RESERVOIR | 4. HEALDSBURG |
| 5. MARK WEST SPRINGS | 6. CALISTOGA |




Joseph C. Smith

REFERENCES

- (1) Annual Report for Napa and Sonoma County of California. Washington: U. S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Weather Service, 1964 - 1981.
- (2) Bishop, Charles C. and Chapmen, Rödger H. Bouguer Gravity Map of California, Santa Rosa Sheet. Sacramento: California Division of Mines and Geology, 1974.
- (3) Elfand, C. Robert. Climate of Sonoma County. Washington: U. S. Department of Commerce, Weather Bureau, January 1964.
- (4) Lambert, G. and Kashiwagi, J. Soil Survey of Napa County, California. Washington: U. S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, August 1978.
- (5) Miller, Vernon C. Soil Survey of Sonoma County, California. Washington: U. S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, May 1972.
- (6) Winkler, A. J. General Viticulture. Berkeley: University of California Press 1962.



2000 MAIN STREET (BOX 111) • ST. HELENA, CA 94574 • (707) 963-7115

January 25, 1982

KNIGHTS VALLEY WINES

For the last eleven years, we have made a very careful comparative study of the wines from the Napa Valley and Knights Valley in Sonoma County.

We feel that the wines produced, particularly from Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc in Knights Valley, have different characteristics than their Napa Valley counterparts. These qualities or traits make them very distinct wines. For example, the Knights Valley Cabernet Sauvignon is distinguished by not only a strong varietal character but one that is not overly herbaceous. In addition, the wine, although sturdy enough for long oak ageing, are generally more soft on the palate. This is quite noticeable in the Cabernets produced in 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, and 1980. Furthermore, the Cabernets are of a medium body which is often seen in some of the French Cabernets.

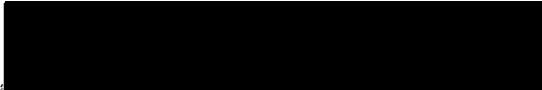
The Sauvignon Blanc produced from the grapes of Knights Valley are reminiscent of the great Sauvignon Blancs of the Livermore Valley twenty-five to thirty-five years ago. Here again, the wines are very flavorful and full bodied and yet not marked by a grassy, herbaceous flavor which in some areas is reason for blending down with other varieties, i.e. Semillon.

We might further add that not only are the above differences noted from a technical point but also from a consumer's standpoint. Time after time in tastings in various parts of the United States people have noted and, in many incidents, preference has been given to the Knights Valley wines.

Not only are there distinct wines produced from the Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc of Knights Valley but differences to some extent have appeared in the Johannisberg Riesling variety. We feel the latter has come about because of unique climatic conditions. We were able to produce in 1973 and 1975 a naturally botrytized wine from these grapes which commanded raves in the wine press. In contrast, we have not been able to make such wine from the same grapes grown in our vineyards in the Napa Valley.

Of further interest in the wines of the Knights Valley area is the Pinot Noir variety. The Pinot Noirs of California have been subject of serious debate as to their potential for making fine wines. We must acknowledge that the Knights Valley Pinot Noir grapes yield a wine which year in and year out is noted for the flavor, color, and particular softness which gives a feel of fullness and roundness in the mouth.

In summary, the wines produced from fruit grown in Knights Valley have demonstrated over a time a very high quality and distinctive flavor and aromas.



Myron S. Nightingale
Winemaster

MSN/rk



Allied Grape Growers

A California Wine Grape Growers Cooperative Serving California

Executive Office: 1495 W. Shaw Ave. • Fresno, CA 93711 • Fresno 222-5476 Madera 673-1471
North Coast Offices: 1367 Main St. • St. Helena, CA 94574 • (707) 963-7515

February 4, 1982

Director
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco
and Firearms
1200 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D. C. 20226


Dear Sir:

This letter is to recommend the approval of the "Appellations of origin" for Knights Valley, California.

I have purchased about 1300 tons of grapes per year from Knights Valley during the last nine years. It is my opinion that Knights Valley has unique characteristics in both grapes and wines produced from this valley. The soils and growing conditions differ from the other valleys that surround Knights Valley.

If I can be of further assistance on this matter, please do not hesitate to call upon me.

Sincerely,


George Buonaccorsi
Assistant to the President

GB/jb

February 18, 1982

Mr. Robert Steinhauer
Knight's Valley Appellation Committee
P. O. Box 111
St. Helena, CA 94574

Dear Sir,

I was very happy to hear that the Knight's Valley grape growers were intent on applying for a viticultural area designation. In my position of viticulture at Santa Rosa Junior College and as a viticultural consultant in the North Coast, I completely agree that this is the kind of an area that truly fits all of the legal requirements.

My personal experiences in working with many of the growers in the valley indicate that this area is truly distinctive in both soils and climate. The soils are all very well drained and a large majority of them are very gravelly to extremely rocky. My management programs for Knight's Valley include higher recommendations for irrigation and fertilization than generally any other area in Sonoma County. I have also found a general high acid (low pH) condition to exist in most of the vineyards thereby mandating lime applications. Careful monitoring of soil moisture levels as well as fertility levels is absolutely necessary to maintain quality production.

The climate is also extremely unique for the North Coast. This area is generally considered to have the coldest spring temperatures in the North Coast and mandates yearly frost protection. Due to these consistent late frosts the growing season is noticeably shorter. On the other hand it is well documented that this area is also warmer in the summer than most other areas in Sonoma County.

Having worked in the area for several years, and therefore having had the opportunity to taste wines from the area, I believe I can honestly say the wines are of excellent quality and truly distinctive in varietal character.

February 18, 1982
Page 2

In conclusion I can honestly say that I feel extremely comfortable in recommending a viticultural area designation for Knight's Valley, Sonoma County, California.

Respectfully submitted,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Richard L. Thomas.

Richard L. Thomas

APPENDIX A

Historic Spots in
CALIFORNIA

THIRD EDITION

By

Mildred Brooke Hoover

Hero Eugene Rensch

Ethel Grace Rensch

Revised by William N. Abeloe

Stanford University Press

Stanford, California

1966

SONOMA COUNTY

535

named the Annaly Ranch. (The spelling of the township name was corrupted to Anally.) Their home was an adobe dwelling erected at the foot of Jonive Hill near Freestone by the former owner. It was built about 1848 of adobe and wood. Later turned into a store, it fell in 1906.

This rancho lay to the east of the Estero Americano and originally contained two and one-half square leagues. Patent for it was issued to Jasper O'Farrell, the man who laid out the streets of San Francisco, in 1858.

Rancho Bodega

Rancho Bodega, consisting of eight square leagues on the coast between Estero Americano and the Russian River, was granted to Stephen Smith by Governor Micheltorena on September 12, 1844. When the land was confirmed in 1859 and patented to the heirs of the grantee, the more than 35,000 acres claimed were accepted by the court as being "the same land described in the grant to Stephen Smith (now deceased)."

Smith, a native of Maryland who visited California in 1841, came from Peru, where he had spent a little time. On this visit, he made plans to return to California after a trip East and to set up a sawmill. This he did. The mill machinery was brought from Baltimore and set up in the redwood region east of Bodega Head. Although confident that the country would eventually belong to the United States, he obtained Mexican citizenship in order to become a landowner. Within two years after receiving the grant of Rancho Bodega, he had the pleasure of raising the United States flag over his property. The eastern boundary line of his rancho lay a little way to the east of his mill, which was placed to the north of Salmon Creek. His house was erected near to Salmon Creek and north of the Estero Americano, the boundary between Ranchos Bodega and Blucher. To both of these tracts he laid claim, and both were awarded to his descendants on that claim.

After the death of Stephen Smith in 1855, his widow married another southern gentleman, Tyler Curtis, in 1856. Squatters caused trouble, resulting in what is called the "Bodega War"; and Curtis was forced to sell land including the part known as the Homestead Tract. Upon it is the site of the settlement by the Russians in 1811. Captain Smith's adobe mansion, built in 1851, stood on the site of this outpost. The house was oblong in shape with a row of five dormer windows opening from the upper story on the balcony at the front.

The Curtis family moved to San Francisco in 1872. In the 1890's a fire burned the inflammable part of the old dwelling, leaving only the adobe walls standing, and even these have now disappeared. The adobe stood about a mile northwest of Bodega. In the little town itself is St. Teresa's Catholic Church built about 1860, a much-photographed white-painted frame building high on a hill.

Adjoining Rancho Bodega on the north was Rancho Muniz, of 17,760 acres, bounded on the west by the Pacific Ocean. It was granted in 1845

to Manuel Torres, a brother of the wife of Stephen Smith.

Rancho Mallacomes, or Maristal y Plan de Agua Caliente

This rancho, lying in the upper part of Knight's Valley, consisted of 17,742 acres granted October 14, 1843, to José de los Santos Berryessa (Berrelles, Berreyesa) by Governor Micheltorena. The grantee, a son of José Reyes Berryessa of Rancho San Vicente (in Santa Clara County), was a soldier at Sonoma from 1840 to 1842 and alcalde there in 1846.

Knight's Valley, in which this grant lay, received its name from Thomas P. Knight, a native of Maine, who came to California in 1845. After he reached the Sierra on his overland journey, an explosion of a keg of powder under his wagon destroyed all of his possessions, including a stock of goods which he had expected to sell. He took part in the Bear Flag Revolt and then went to the mines before settling down to be a farmer in Napa and Sonoma counties.

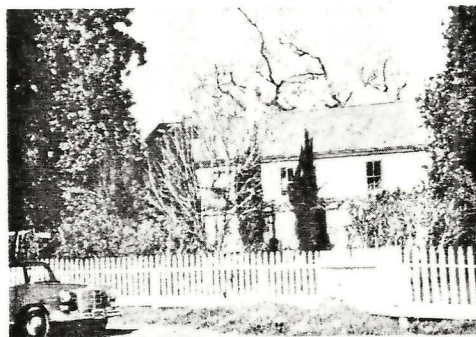
Knight lived in the two-story adobe built by Berryessa and made additions to it. A part of the house still stands in Knight's Valley west of Mount St. Helena. The ground level is constructed of stone. It is about seven and one-half miles northwest of Calistoga on Highway 128, on the east side of the highway three-tenths of a mile south of the intersection of Franz Valley Road.

Among many other settlers on this rancho were Calvin Holmes, Rockwell, Woodshire, Martin E. Cook, and Rufus Ingalls.

Rancho Los Guilicos

John Wilson, who reached California in 1837 and married Ramona Carrillo, was the grantee of Rancho Los Guilicos, containing 18,833 acres and given by Governor Alvarado. It was patented in the name of William Hood in 1866. Afterward it was owned jointly by Mrs. Wilson and William Hood, who had purchased a part of it. Hood's old home (*SRL 692*), built of fired brick in 1858, still stands, now within the grounds of the Los Guilicos State School for Girls, some nine miles east of Santa Rosa off Highway 12. It is open annually on the first Sunday of May at the "open house" held by the school.

This rancho lies between Santa Rosa and



Berryessa-Knight Adobe, Knight's Valley

31
2/17
1533

APPENDIX A

THE
CALIFORNIA
WINE BOOK

Bob Thompson & Hugh Johnson

III
V
663.220
1771
C.1

WILLIAM MORROW AND COMPANY, INC.

New York 1976

The Napa Valley

Along with some judicious renovating, Nestlé has made substantial additions to both vineyards and winery.

The total acreage owned by Beringer now approaches 2,500. Divided among twenty-eight separate parcels, the vines fall into every microclimate the valley has to offer. Far the greatest proportion is in the southern half of the valley, from Rutherford down to Napa city and in the separate Carneros district. However, sizable blocks are north of Rutherford. Also, the old holding in Knights Valley, in Sonoma County, has been enlarged. Each parcel is planted in conformance with the U.C. climate recommendations, or almost so.

In addition the company buys grapes and wine for its secondary label, Los Hermanos. These materials come from as far away as Santa Barbara County.

To accommodate the enlarged vineyards, the company has built a sizable installation across the highway from the original Beringer winery. It is to do all of the crushing and fermenting and some of the aging. The new installation is all in stainless steel tanks, leaving the old winery as the wood-aging cellar. In time there will be a wood-aging cellar adjacent to the new winery to supplement the original cellars.

In the old runnels, the new proprietors have replaced all of the outworn barrels and tanks with new cooperage, much of it oak puncheons from Europe.

The man in charge of winemaking is Myron Nightingale, whose name might ring a bell for veteran observers of California wine. He is the man who developed a controlled environment for Botrytis—the Noble Mold—and used it to make a superior sweet wine called Premier Semillon for the old Cresta Blanca label in Livermore. At Beringer, he quickly demonstrated an ability to produce a wide range of agreeable wines priced in the middle range of vintage-dated varietals. As the new vineyards mature, he will have an increasing opportunity to make single-vineyard wines. The first one released, appropriately, was a well-developed *auslese*-type Johannisberg Riesling from Knights Valley, vintage of 1973.

A word about the names Beringer and Los Hermanos. The winery was originally named Beringer Brothers; its main vineyard was called Los Hermanos. The new owners retained Beringer as the name for the first-line label, and revived Los Hermanos as the name for less costly wines, mostly packaged in jugs.

The Christian Brothers

Although family ownerships have tended to disappear among the larger Napa Valley wineries, The Christian Brothers run very little risk of running out of family, being a teaching order of the Roman Catholic Church.

From very limited beginnings as sacramental winemakers, the Brothers have grown in all directions until they now have 2,400 acres of vines divided between the Napa and San Joaquin valleys, three major winery buildings in the Napa Valley and two more near Fresno, a grand total of 24 million gallons of fermenting and storage capacity, and annual sales estimated at 2 million cases in recent years.

The Brothers first came to the Napa Valley toward the end of Prohibition, when they bought the vineyards and stone cellars of the old Theodore Gier estate and renamed the property Mont LaSalle. On this site, carved into a redwood forest several hundred feet above the valley floor in the Mayacamas Mountains west of

The wine ratings and descriptions in this book are based substantially on evaluations that appear in *Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine*, the leading publication covering the California wine scene. The symbols and their meanings are as follows:

- *** An exceptional wine, worth a special search.
- ** A distinctive wine, likely to be memorable.
- * A fine example of a given type or style.
- ☐ A wine of average quality. The accompanying tasting note provides further description.
- ⊖ Below average. A wine to avoid.
- ⚡ A wine regarded as a "best buy," based on price and quality.

The Connoisseurs' Handbook of California Wines



by Charles E. Olken and Earl G. Singer

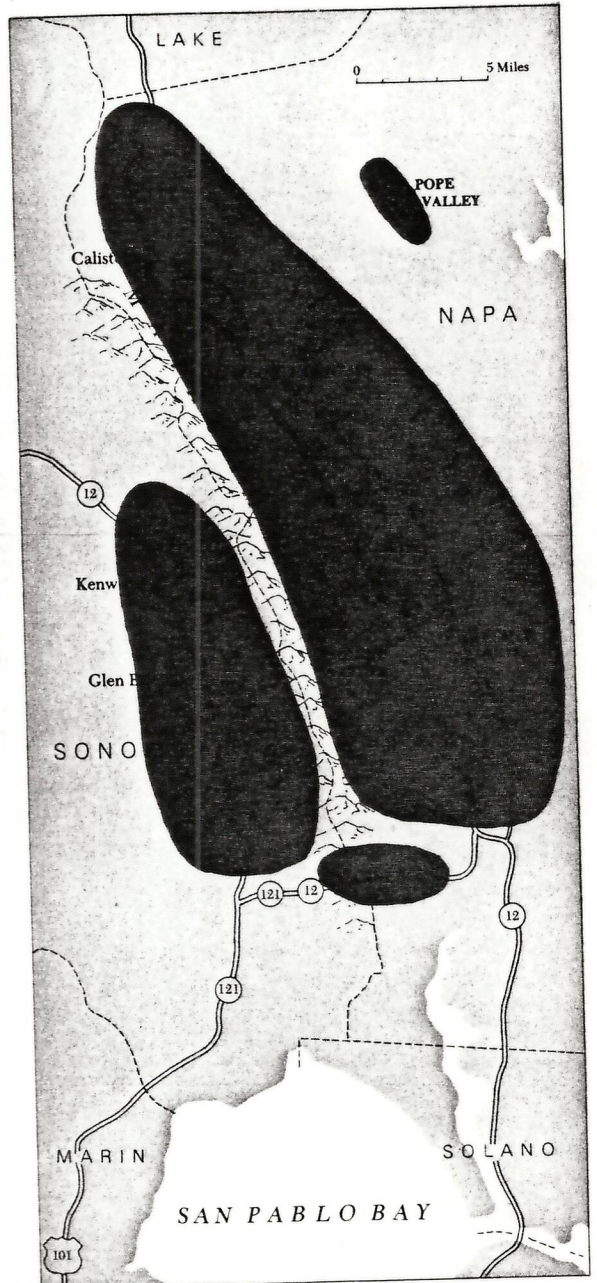
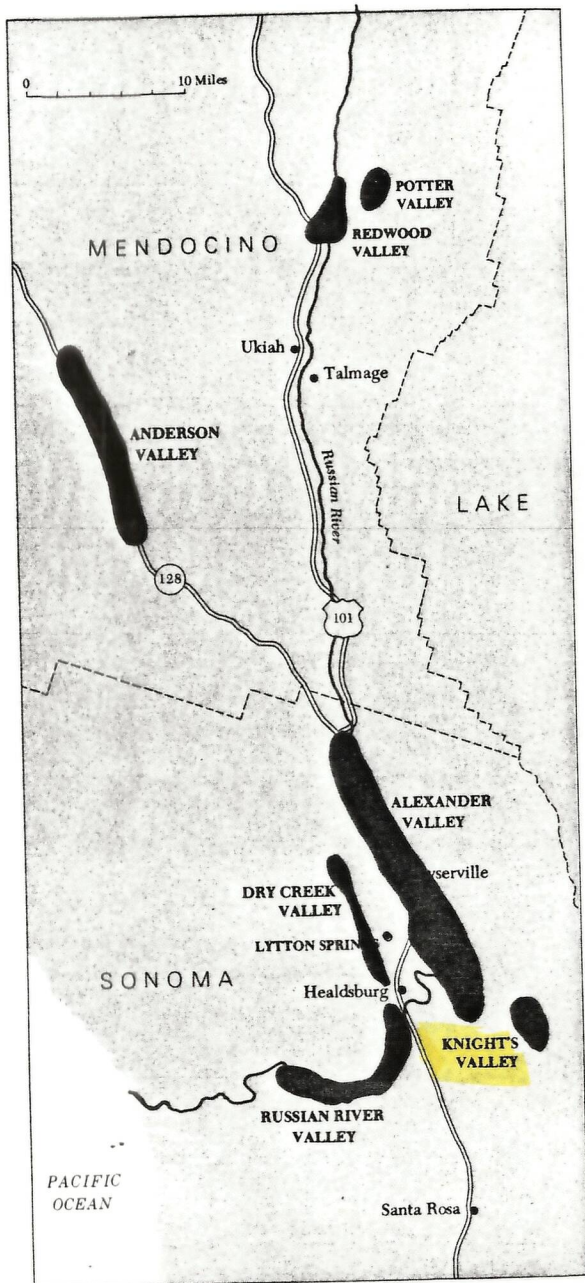
Editors of *Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine*

and Norman S. Roby



ALFRED A. KNOPF NEW YORK

1980



Wine Geography

GONZALES (Monterey) In the northern end of the Salinas Valley, this small community boasts 1 winery, the Monterey Vineyard, and a host of plantings in what is surely one of the windiest and coolest vineyard locations in California. At the time they were planted, virtually all of the grapes in the Gonzales area were destined for the town's single winery. When the winery did not grow as fast as expected, the grapes lost their intended home. Much of the output from Gonzales now ends up in jug wines, often from Central Valley producers who desire the high-acid grapes of Gonzales for blending with their own low-acid varieties.

GRAND TRAVERSE REGION Michigan Located in the northwest corner of the state, the region includes the Leelanau Peninsula and the Old Mission Peninsula, both running into Lake Michigan. The "lake effect" provides cooler summers and warmer winters than elsewhere in the state. The first vineyards were established here in the mid-1960s, and total acreage now exceeds 100. The predominant grapes are French hybrids; Chardonnay and Johannisberg Riesling are the only vinifera varieties of consequence. 5 wineries.

GREENFIELD (Monterey) A town in the northern Salinas Valley, Greenfield received heavy plantings of red and white varieties during the early 1970s. The first results in this cool growing area suggest that the whites will prosper, but reds may not. J. Lohr is the most visible producer and has already decided to convert much of its red grape acreage to whites. A new winery, Jekel Vineyards, has also enjoyed early success with white wines. Greenfield is capable of producing fruity, high-acid Pinot Blancs and floral, delicate Rieslings in good years. Arroyo Seco is immediately adjacent to Greenfield.

HEALDSBURG (Sonoma) About 20 miles north of Santa Rosa, the Healdsburg area is home to some 2 dozen wineries. 3 unique and important vineyard districts are nearby: the Alexander Valley to the east and north; the Dry Creek Valley to the northwest; and the Russian River Valley to the south and southwest.

HECKER PASS (Santa Clara) The Coast Range Mountains to the west of Gilroy open up ever so slightly to the coastal plain. This area, called Hecker Pass, is the location of a dozen wineries, most of which produce fair to indifferent jug wines and an occasional heavy red wine of interest.

HUDSON RIVER VALLEY New York This valley claims to be "America's oldest wine region." Attempts to grow vinifera

Lake County

in 1677 failed here; and until the 1950s, *labrusca* varieties were the rule. Today it has over 1,500 acres planted to French hybrids, mainly along the west bank of the Hudson River about 75 miles north of New York City. Concord still predominates, but is decreasing in acreage. Seyval Blanc and Baco Noir are the most successful varieties. Presently home to 10 wineries.

KENWOOD (Sonoma) Midway between the cities of Sonoma and Santa Rosa in the Sonoma Valley is the whistle-stop town of Kenwood. It is the home of Kenwood Vineyards and Chateau St. Jean, but is not the major source of their grapes. However, both wineries have made white wines from the cooler vineyards lying at the lowest, least sunny section of the valley floor.

KERN COUNTY 37,000 acres of grapes located here in the hottest, driest part of the Central Valley are oriented toward jug and dessert wines. Some vineyards are planted in the foothills above the valley floor, where the climate is thought to be more moderate. But one can scarcely detect the difference in Kern County wines that claim hillside provenance. The vineyards have the typical Central Valley mix: Ruby Cabernet (4,700 acres), French Colombard (4,700 acres), Chenin Blanc (4,300 acres), and Barbera (3,600 acres). Surprisingly, there are also 1,200 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon.

KING CITY (Monterey) Toward the southern end of the Salinas Valley, the temperatures become more hospitable for the medium-heat varieties that fail to ripen adequately farther north. The most enjoyable Petite Sirahs and Cabernet Sauvignons from Monterey County have been grown in the King City area.

KNIGHT'S VALLEY (Sonoma) Occupying its own bowl midway between the southern end of the Alexander Valley and the northern end of the Napa Valley is the small but increasingly vineyarded Knight's Valley. The area is cooled by tenacious morning fogs and afternoon breezes. Knight's Valley appears as the appellation of some Beringer wines.

LAKE COUNTY A northern coastal county lying inland from Mendocino County and north of Napa County, Lake County had about 100 acres of wine grapes 10 years ago; now, the total is close to 2,500. The expansion occurred in 1973 and 1974 with moderate growth after that. Over half the acreage is planted to Cabernet Sauvignon with another 30% split between Zinfandel, Napa Gamay, and Sauvi-

Big is better

New ownership helps Beringer

I never have made a secret of the fact that I am a devoted fan of Beringer Vineyards.

Partly, it is a nostalgic feeling about the place with its beautiful old Rhine House in the Napa Valley and extensive caves dug back into the hills many years ago. We used to picnic on the front lawn of the house in the 1960s when the place still was owned by the last remaining members of the Beringer family.

About 1970, the winery was purchased by Nestle' and there were lots of jokes about the appearance of chocolate wine. And, of course, there was many a nasty comment made about big corporations sweeping into the valley. It was at this point, however, that Beringer departed from the usual pattern. Rather than being another example of a small, privately owned winery being corrupted and expanded by big money, it was quite the opposite.

Frankly, the Beringer wines, in the waning days of family ownership, had been going downhill steadily. Several years after Nestle' took over and installed Myron Nightingale as the winemaker, the wines began to make a dramatic sweep upward.

Assisted ably by Ed Sbragia, Nightingale not only consistently produces fine table wines, but lately has been experimenting with barrel-fermented Chardonnays and (with wife, Alice) botrytis-induced Semillon.

Today, I would like to offer some tasting notes on a number of Beringer's latest releases which I believe offer extremely high quality for a reasonable price. You will find them at most shops and supermarkets with good wine sections.

WINE



TOM STOCKLEY

Times columnist

Dry French Colombard 1980: I wanted to start with something brand new for Beringer, a *really* d-r-r-r-y French Colombard as opposed to the usual versions that have a little sweetness. Besides being bone dry, the wine picks up added interest by its short aging in American oak. The result is a wine that is fresh with good fruit showing, high enough acid to give it some backbone and a clean finish. It is a real "poor man's Chardonnay" at \$4.80.

Sonoma Fume' Blanc 1980: Here is one step up in breeding and style (but still only about \$6.50 on the local market). The grapes came from both the Knights Valley vineyards north of the winery and Stang Vineyards in Alexander Valley. Portions of the wine found their way into several types of oak for three months. The wine is, again, bone dry with fairly high alcohol (13.8 per cent) and possesses a good, strong herbal quality: A perfect seafood wine.

Napa Valley (estate) Chardonnay 1980: Made entirely from Beringer's own vineyards in Napa Valley, it is an example of the fine 1980 growing season. According to Myron, it gave the wine proper sugar-and-acid ratio, exactly what one hopes for in a good Chardonnay. The wine also has rich fruit flavor welling up in the glass which fortunately is not masked by oak (but it's evident in subtle tones). The wine shows what can be done with a decent vintage in the hands of a competent winemaker.

Private Reserve Chardonnay 1979: Here is where Myron and Ed really show their stuff. Myron often has referred to Beringer as "four boutique wineries all under one roof," which has a great deal of truth to it. The plant is designed so that small lots of wine can be isolated and singled out for private-reserve bottlings. This excellent Chardonnay was produced from grapes grown entirely on their estate vineyards in the southern region of the valley.

Myron says it best: "This wine is exactly the style I prefer to make ... elegant and complex, with a full varietal nose." It's about \$12 and easily would be far more from some neighboring wineries.



Beringer

on wine

Beringer offers an excellent value



By Robert Schoolsky

Meeting Myron Nightingale for the first time is a little like discovering the real life personification of the "Little Ole Winemaker." Resembling everyone's favorite grandfather, he is a quiet and soft-spoken man ready to let his wines speak for themselves. He quickly impresses you with his knowledge of winemaking in general, California in particular. In an industry filled with self-appointed "experts," Nightingale, a graduate of the University of California's famed 1940 vintage class, is universally recognized as one of the deans of his profession.

A strong believer in quality and tradition, nurtured through 30 years of experience at Italian Swiss Colony and Cresta Blanca, Nightingale found an ideal climate for his methods when he became winemaker of the century-old Beringer Winery in 1971.

Beringer's main operation is located in St. Helena at the northern tip of the Napa Valley. The property is readily identifiable by the Rhinehouse built by Frederick Beringer in 1883. A duplicate of the family home in Germany, the building appears on all of the winery labels.

In addition to the St. Helena property, Nightingale oversees the 2,000 acres of prime growing land that extends from Knights Valley in the north to Napa in the south. All of the great varieties are cultivated, producing a line of high-range quality wines with extremely reasonable mid-range prices. Beringer's facilities offer a combination of the original aging cellars, carved from stone by Frederick and Jacob, and a modern winery with refrigerated stainless steel fermenters and sophisticated controls permitting the development of small batches of wine.

This provides the background for Nightingale, a noted experimenter, who developed the first practical use of *Botrytis Cinerea* in California. Botrytis or "noble rot," had previously been limited to the Sauternes and Rhineland regions of Europe. Its effect on the grapes produces intensely sweet dessert wines. Today, he is fermenting interesting Pinot Noir wines without the introduction of cultivated yeast strains. Utilizing the natural yeasts on the skins of the grapes, he also uses the old European method of "hand-punching," the cap of wine which rises to the top of the vat.

Any bread-maker who prefers to knead dough by hand instead of utilizing electric mixers will appreciate the difference hand-punching makes. This experimental wine is available on the retail market from time to time in limited quantities, as are the Special Reserve and Barrel Fermented Chardonnays. If you're fortunate enough to spot some in your local store, they are well worth the premium price. However it's in the regular Beringer production lines that real values are to be found.

The 1978 Sonoma Fume Blanc, for instance, is an ideal companion for spicy foods and would compliment a Chinese dinner or a picnic basket. The wine is extremely dry with a higher-than-average 13.8 per cent alcohol content. The \$5.89 retail tag belies the oak aging, which should call for a higher price.

A similar bargain can be found in the 1978 Napa Valley Estate Chardonnay at \$7.49. Nightingale has blended this wine with perfect fruit and oak. He feels that the body and acidity will allow for a long life. I am sure that he is right, but if I had a case of this in my cellar it wouldn't last very long. Compared to some of the Chardonnays from California commanding prices above \$12.00, this is a steal. It's been oak-aged for up to seven months and the bouquet in the glass remained constant.

A valid criticism levelled at many California vintners is the release of red wines, particularly Cabernet Sauvignon, before they are mature. Beringer can't be accused of this practice. The pricing structure of their reds is very reasonable when you consider the high cost of storing these wines until ready for release.

The 1975 Mendocino Pinot Noir comes from grapes purchased from an old friend of Nightingale located in Calpella, California. The vines are 30 years old, producing grapes with intense fruit. After six months aging in French oak casks, the wine was bottled and allowed to continue to age at the winery until it was considered ready for release. Beringer is to be complimented for this procedure and for the \$6.50 retail price.

Zinfandel is one of the most interesting grapes cultivated in California today. I personally feel that eventually it will be recognized as that state's "great red." This is the title often bestowed on the Pinot Noir, but in my opinion, yet to be achieved by that varietal. Beringer's 1977 Napa Zinfandel, at \$4.29, is an example of the state of the art. The wine is round, full-bodied and very drinkable. It was aged for 19 months in redwood vats and then put into small casks of American oak for an additional five months of aging.

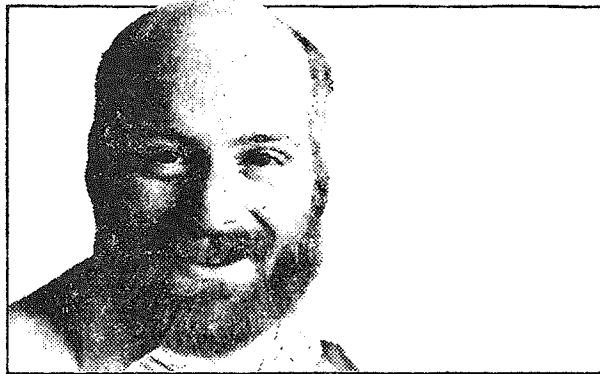
1976 was the beginning of a two-year drought in Knights Valley. Lack of rain forces the vine roots to reach down deep in the soil for needed moisture. This "stressing" of the vines limits the harvest but can often produce a great wine. The Beringer 1976 Knights Valley Cabernet Sauvignon is such a wine. It received up to 17 months aging in American and French oak barrels until each lot reached the proper balance of fruit and oak. The wine will remind you of some of the Medoc's second and third great growths. A prime shell steak, hot off the grill will go perfectly with this wine. It sells for \$8.75. ■

REPRINTED FROM:

The SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

July 23rd, 1980

Harvey Steiman / On Wine



Cabernet marathon

Imagine more than 10 dozen wines arranged around the ballroom of the St. Francis Hotel and only two hours to sample the most promising of them. You don't know whether to laugh or cry. There's no way to taste them all, and you have no way of knowing whether you're missing something great by narrowing your scope to one type.

I did approach with a plan. Since there were 43 Cabernet Sauvignons, probably the largest collection of Cabernets ever assembled in one place for public tasting, I decided to sample all of them for relative merits. Since there was a rather impressive collection of new or relatively new wineries (those whose wines have been on the market less than, say, three years), I also decided to sample all of their wines so I could tip you off on some of the more impressive of the more impressive of the newcomers.

Then, if there was time, I thought I'd try anything else that seemed interesting. Given the circumstances, I am amazed I can still read my notes.

Of the new wineries, I was most impressed with three: Sierra Vista 1978 El Dorado Zinfandel (\$4.75), R. & J. Cook 1978 Clarksburg Cabernet Sauvignon (\$4.25) and Pellgrini 1977 Clos du Merle (\$4).

The Zinfandel, from the Mother Lode Country in the Sierra foothills, has the typical berry-like aroma of neighboring Amador County wines, which have long been regarded among the state's better Zins. This is a rich, full-bodied wine, soft and drinkable and with an intense aftertaste.

The Cabernet comes from Clarksburg region some 15 miles south of Sacramento on the river, heretofore best known for producing the grapes used in a series of stunning Chenin Blancs made by various wineries throughout the state (most of them in Napa and Sonoma a few mountain ranges away). The Cabernet is fruity, easy-drinking, yet with firm acidity and complexity from oak aging. It's a steal at the price.

The Clos du Merle is made from grapes produced in a 45-year-old vineyard of five different grape varieties on a hillside overlooking the Russian River in Sonoma County. All five varieties are harvested together. This produces an automatic blend with a unique aroma and flavor. The style is rich and mouthfilling. The winery is in South San Francisco.

Not surprisingly, the best Cabernets came from familiar wineries, although several of the new wineries offered respectable alternatives. The Robert Mondavi 1975 Reserve stood out as the best. At \$30, however, it is not *that* much better than the other fine Cabernets at roughly one-fourth to one-third the price, such as:

✓ Beringer 1976 Knights Valley (Sonoma County) is a wine of depth showing the maturity of a vineyard planted in the early 1960s, before the big spurt of planting in 1969-70. It has appealing fruit, currant-like rather than herbaceous. At \$7.50 it offers a remarkable value.

✓ Carey Cellars 1978, a Santa Barbara County vineyard near Solvang, produced a first effort with soft fruit, intense flavor and good aftertaste.

✓ Richert Cellars is the label chosen for the new dry table wines from Richert & Sons, known for its excellent sherries and ports. Richert's 1978 Cabernet is a light-bodied wine with a classic herbaceous aroma underpinned with considerable fruit. An outstanding value at \$6.

✓ Mill Creek 1977 is another good value at \$7, a Dry Creek Valley Cabernet with flowery aroma, ripe flavors and firm acidity. Not to be released until September.

✓ Kenwood 1978 Jack London Vineyard carries a \$10 price tag but the rich, ripe flavors and aromas are the epitome of Sonoma Valley Cabernet. This is an elegant wine that justifies the price.

Several wines produced in the burgeoning region south of Monterey County rated only a notch below these, but still eminently recommendable. Among them were the Hoffman Mountain Ranch 1976 Paso Robles (extraordinarily fruity, almost like a great Zinfandel), the Sunrise 1978 San Luis Obispo (less fruity, more depth), and the Santa Ynez Valley Winery 1978 (light and soft, appealing and ready to drink).

Too, several wineries known for their fine Cabernet Sauvignons in the past offered samples of new releases that maintain the level of quality. These included Buena Vista 1977 (Cask 34), Clos du Val 1977, Cuvaision 1976 and Rutherford Hill 1976.

Two Pinot Noirs also caught my attention — the 1978 Davis Bynum (Sonoma County), at \$7 an impressive realization of this temperamental grape, and the as-yet unreleased 1977 Santa Cruz Mountain Vineyard, a worthy successor to the much-heralded 1976 debut wine from this tiny winery, more typically varietal and a little less assertively fruity than its predecessor.

And finally, two Zinfandels deserve mention. The 1977 Grgich Hills carries a Sonoma County appellation and offers flowery, minty aromas and lively flavors, a wine of considerable distinction. The 1978 Sutter Home with the Amador County appellation is the best from this winery since 1972. The intervening wines never lived up to the promise of the great Sutter Home Zinfandels of the early 1970s, but this one does, a spicy wine of muscular intensity and depth of flavor.

THE WINE INVESTOR

6430 SUNSET BLVD.

LOS ANGELES, CA 90028

(213) 461-9437

Line Tasting:SOME SUPER-GOODIES FROM MYRON THE MAGNIFICENT'S
BERINGER BOUTIQUE

by Paul Gillette

People don't give Dick Maher enough credit. When he took over Beringer, it was a winery with a glorious history and a rather lackluster recent past. He brought in winemaker Myron Nightingale (one of the last of Calif's living legends) and set to work turning the operation around. Big bucks were spent for hi-tech equipment that produced the highly-praised inexpensive Los Hermanos varietals--one of the great values on the market in recent years. And lately he has turned Myron loose on a line of boutique-sized quantities of vineyard- or county-appellation top varietals. WINV staffers tasted the new line several times: twice at the office (blind against other examples of these varietals, most selling for much higher prices), again with the owner of a California boutique winery, and again with L.A. restaurateur Ardisan (The Studio Grill) and VALLEY NEWS wine/restaurant maven Larry Lipson. Herewith, some opinions:

BERINGER 77 NAPA VALLEY CHARDONNAY, \$6.50--It was a WINV Best Buy on 10Oct79, and, if you taste it, you'll probably see why very quickly. Varietal character is intense; there's just the right amount of oak. Alcohol is 13.8%, TA .63. Balance is superb.

BERINGER 78 NAPA VALLEY FUME BLANC, 78 SONOMA FUME BLANC, each \$5--The two are very close but yet distinctively different (rather like the voices of Joan Sutherland and Renata Tebaldi?). WINV tasters were slightly more enthusiastic about the Napa (13.3% alc, TA .61), but only slightly. The Sonoma (13.8% alc, TA .62) is a most worthy wine. The pair should prove intriguing to aficionados who like to conduct comparative blind tastings.

BERINGER 76 NAPA VALLEY CABERNET SAUVIGNON (12% alc, TA .62), \$5.50, and 76 KNIGHTS VALLEY CABERNET SAUVIGNON (12.6% alc, TA .67), \$5.50--Here's another pair for your next comparative tasting. WINV favors the Knights Valley (from Sonoma County), which promises (at least to WINV palates) greater longevity and complexity. But neither wine is to be taken lightly, and both are priced well below most competing entries of comparable character.

Tasted along with the above were several entries not yet released. Watch for:

BERINGER 77 LEMON RANCH CABERNET SAUVIGNON (13.3% alc, Ta .6), price not yet set--Here is a real powerhouse with unusual varietal intensity and promise of great longevity. It could be Myron's all-time #1 Cabernet.

BERINGER 78 BF CHARDONNAY/BIG RANCH ROAD (13.5% alc, TA .6), price not yet set--This one was oak barrel-fermented and promises extraordinary complexity. Tasting barrel samples is, of course, always risky for people accustomed to tasting only released wines; but we'll wager that this one, when ready for market, will offer at least a bit of complexity and may be a Nightingale Chardonnay milestone.

BERINGER 78 PINOT NOIR SPECIAL, price not yet set--This could be the most exciting Pinot Noir ever produced in Napa. It speaks much more loudly of Bourgogne than of Calif, thanks probably to a gamble Nightingale took that most Calif winemakers won't risk (sorry, I'm not at liberty just yet to disclose what he did). But watch for it; I daresay you won't be unimpressed.

BERINGER 77 CABERNET PORT, price not yet set--And here's one that speaks more loudly of the Douro than of the Silverado, although the Cabernet character is pronounced. I served it blind to several aficionados who all but went mad over it.

California Wine Experience

— Best Festival

APPENDIX

By Anthony Dias Blue
THE burgeoning nationwide interest in wine has spawned a crop of ancillary industries. There are artisans grinding out wine racks and jewelry, manufacturing companies trying to come out with the perfect corkscrew and, yes, writers churning out barrels of verbiage. The fruit of the vine has provided employment for many.

One phenomenon of the wine boom is the festival. This sociological outcropping of the late 20th century undoubtedly has its roots in the harvest celebrations of a long-gone, far less complicated time. This was when the peasantry would come together under the harvest moon to sing and dance, to feast and drink young wine.

Today, the singing and dancing are not included — at least not as part of the organized activities of the festival program. But the feasting and the drinking are very much still on hand. In addition, to assuage the consciences of those attending, there are instructive talks by experts. The influences of our Puritan background demand that we do penance for eating and drinking, which must be wicked since it's so much fun.

The recent rush to celebrate the glories of wine has resulted in several different kinds of events but they all have one feature in common: they always center upon a wine tasting. This curious modern rite has no obvious cultural

antecedents. It is an exercise that allows people of differing purposes to all enjoy themselves at a single event. Those who want to taste seriously can; those who want to drink can.

These wine festivals can be simple, one-horse operations or big, elaborate, three-ring circuses. They can be skillfully organized and efficiently run, or they can be chaotic.

The California Wine Experience, which took place in mid-October, certainly was one of the best wine festivals that has ever been held. It was conceived by the energetic Robert Lawrence Balzer and executed with skill and taste by the Golden Gate Restaurant Association of San Francisco, headed by Don Dianda, owner of Doro's restaurant. Committee member Richard Swig, president of the Fairmont Hotel Company, provided the location and 94 California wineries provided the wine.

The event, which took place over a weekend, provided two morning seminars, two lavish Fairmont luncheons and three magnificently organized tastings. Participants were regaled by Robert Mondavi, Warren Winiarski of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, actor Burgess Meredith, Marshall Ream of Zaca Mesa, Dick Maher of Beringer, Rod Truong of Sonoma Vineyards, Balzer and yours truly, among others.

But the tastings were the main attraction and it took the full three

sessions for me to make my way from Alexander Valley Vineyards to Zaca Mesa. Here are some of my finds and observations:

BALVERNE WINERY & VINEYARDS is a new Sonoma operation that makes very stylish

Blue On Wine

white wines. Most impressive were the 1980 Sauvignon Blanc and the 1980 Chardonnay.

* **BERINGER** continues to make first-rate wines and their 1977 Knight's Valley Cabernet Sauvignon is particularly attractive.

CONCANNON'S 1980 Semillon Blanc is charming, dry white wine at a good price (\$5.50).

DRY CREEK has made a splendid 1979 Zinfandel, fruit-rich and woody, but completely under control.

FIRESTONE'S 1977 Vintage Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon is marvelous — rich and firm with ripe fruit and nice tarry notes.

FISHER VINEYARDS, another new Sonoma winery, is releasing a lovely 1980 Chardonnay with enormous finesse and breeding.

FRITZ CELLARS, yet another new Sonoma operation, has a delightful 1979 Pinot Noir for just \$5.50.

HAYWOOD WINERY of So-

nomma has made a small quantity of very elegant and complex 1980 White Riesling.

IRON HORSE, which is fast making a reputation as one of Sonoma's best, has a simple but delicious 1979 Pinot Noir and well-balanced and likable 1980 Chardonnay.

JEKEL has made a nice 1980 Pinot Blanc and a crisp and clean 1980 Chardonnay that is soon to be released.

KENWOOD'S 1980 Sauvignon Blanc is a knockout, a real lip smacker.

LANDMARK'S 1979 Sonoma Cutner Chardonnay is wonderful — a seamless marriage of wood and fruit.

RUTHERFORD HILL'S 1978 Merlot is still one of the finest examples of that variety around.

SANTINO WINES, a new winery in Plymouth in the Sierra foothills, has produced a delightfully fruity 1979 Fiddletown Zinfandel.

STEVENOT WINERY, also from the Sierra, makes a fine, dry and tangy 1980 Calaveras County Chain Blanc.

TURNER WINERY, a big new operation with a winery in the Central Valley and vineyards in Lake County, has made a delightful, soft and appealing 1979 Cabernet Sauvignon that will sell for the

almost unbelievable price of \$3.75 a bottle. Surely, the biggest bargain I tasted.

VILLA MT. EDEN'S 1978 Cabernet was just about my favorite wine at the tasting. It is a stunning wine that is rich, complex and very classy.

ZACA MESA'S fine track record continues to build. Their Association, P.O. Box 7432, San Francisco, California 94120.

The Wine Calendar

The California Wine Academy's class, "Sharpening Your Wine Skills," will begin this week in San Francisco. Call 346-2399.

A two-day wine, health and society symposium will be held at the Medical Sciences Building, University of California, San Francisco, November 13 and 14. It is for physicians, nurses, medical students and other health practitioners. Call 666-2894.

Degustation, San Francisco, offers a tasting of unblended malt Scotch November 10, 1979 Zinfandel from Shafer Vineyards November 12, 1978 Bordeaux November 17, 1971 Domaine de La Romanee Conti Red Burgundies November 19 and 1979 Chardonnays from Long Vineyards December 1. Call 285-8019.

Narsai's, Kensington, wine tastings include Spring Mountain November 6 and 7, new arrivals November 13 and 14, a selection of wines recommended for Thanksgiving/November 20 and 21 and customer's choice November 27 and 28. Call 527-3737.

from eight of California's premier vineyards will be tasted at a benefit to save the Old Mill Valley Post Office and for the Mill Valley Center for the Performing Arts. November 12 at Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building to benefit Richard T. Torkelson Journalism \$200 or 383-6664.

Is it the soil, the climate or the teamwork?

ASK several winemakers what is the most important determinant of a wine's character. Winemaker A will tell you that "nothing is more important than soil. Winemaker B will credit climate. Winemaker C will say that winemaking techniques are paramount.

Look behind the answers and you probably will find that Wine A is from a production district that is highly reputed, Wine B from a lower-ranked district with similar or better climate, and Wine C from a district which can't claim either distinction.

For years Americans looked to the French as the ultimate authorities on winemaking. The French stressed the importance of soil. Of course, they owned the soil on which the grapes for the world's highest-priced wines were grown, so their commercial interest was served by the argument that the wine's uniqueness was a result of geography.

Enologists at the University of California in Davis theorized that climate was paramount. They divided the state into grape-growing regions that had climate similar to that of the most renowned European wine regions. Lo, the wines from these regions (some of the wines, anyway) bore remarkable similarity to their European counterparts.

As California wines gained international acclaim, European winemakers came to concede that soil might not be as important as they once had maintained. (More than a few of these European winemakers journeyed to California to study enology and viticulture.) Meanwhile, California enologists recently have taken new interest in soils' contribution to wine character. Many California wineries now offer bottlings from individual vineyards.

Of course, no one ever said that neither soil nor climate is important. For proof of the importance of climate, one need only compare vineyards from the same vineyard (the climate varies from year to year; the soil remains the same). For proof of the importance of soil, one need only compare the same year's wines from different vineyards with more or less the same climatic conditions (for example, one of the first-growth Bordeaux and a wine from a lower-ranked contiguous chateau).

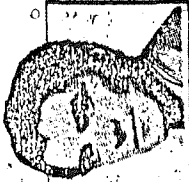
Let us not, of course, overlook the importance of

Wine Of The Week

JEKEL VINEYARDS 1977 CABERNET SAUVIGNON, \$8.75 — Though pricey, this wine impresses me as having a bright turtur, both organoleptically and financially. Varietal character is rich, tannin is not overpowering, and fruit flavors are strong. Adding to the complexity is a touch — but just a touch — of oakiness; the wine was aged in new 55-gallon barrels. Look for 2 to 5 years' improvement and a 3 to 5 year plateau, with annual price gains of 15 to 20 percent.

Enjoying Wine

Paul Gillette



the winemaker in all this. In "bad" years (i.e., those with poor climate) a great deal of oenological wizardry may be necessary to make even a barely palatable wine. In good years, the wine (as the saying goes) "makes itself," i.e., the winemaker has relatively little to do. However, even in the best years, the winemaker's decisions — about when to pick the grapes, how long to ferment them and at what temperatures, what vessels to age them in and for how long, etc. etc. — are crucial.

Two pairs of recent releases from Beringer, the historic Napa Valley winery, offer an unusual opportunity to assess soil-related character differences in California wines. One pair is white, the other red.

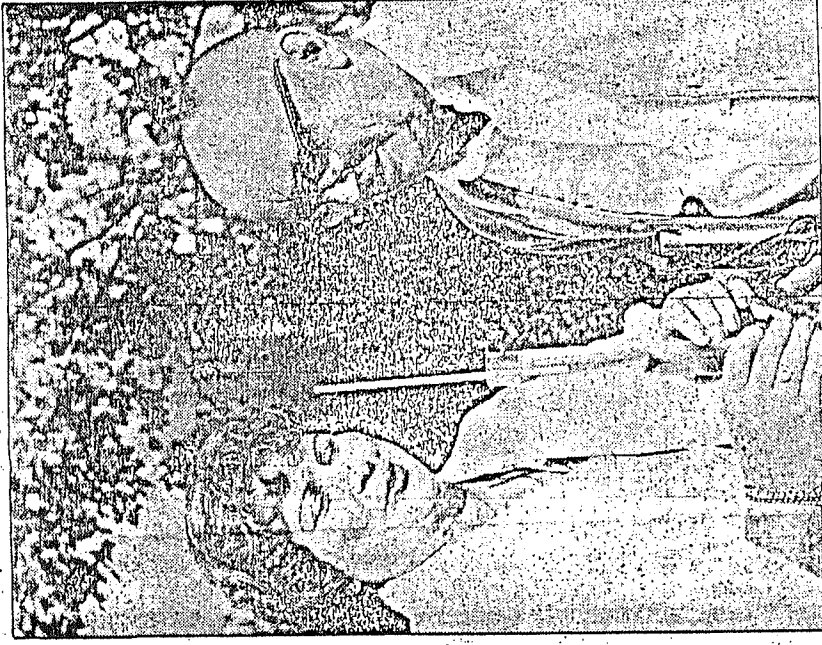
1979 NAPA VALLEY FUME BLANC and **1979 SONOMA FUME BLANC**, each \$5, derive from grapes grown under virtually identical climatic conditions. The Napa grapes came from Yountville Vineyard, the Sonoma grapes from Knights Valley and Stang vineyards. "Degree days" of heat (i.e., the sum of the average daily temperatures in the vineyards throughout the growing season) were not significantly different. The Napa grapes were picked at 22.5 degrees brix (a measure of sugar content), the Sonoma grapes at 22.9 degrees brix — not a significant variance. Fermentation temperatures averaged 56 degrees Fahrenheit for the Napa grapes and 57 degrees Fahrenheit for the Sonoma grapes — again not a significant variance. Other details — varietal composition, circumstances of aging, etc. — were either identical or not significantly different.

Yet, the wines are significantly different. The differences are subtle (which is to say that experienced tasters probably would not fail to recognize the organoleptic kinship of the wine) but unmistakable (which is to say that I would be amazed if experienced tasters failed to recognize that these are indeed two different wines).

To my palate, the Sonoma wine is significantly more complex — and I have little choice but to credit soil as the crucial variable. Try both wines and assess how similar — and how different — they seem to you.

1977 NAPA VALLEY CABERNET SAUVIGNON and **1977 KNIGHTS VALLEY (SONOMA) CABERNET SAUVIGNON** also were made from grapes grown under virtually identical climatic conditions. Winemaking techniques were not significantly different. Yet, the wines are distinctly different — sufficiently so that Beringer charges \$8.50 for the Sonoma versus \$6 for the Napa. Again, the difference must be attributed to the soil.

Let us not, however, focus so intently on the wines' differences that we fail to note similarities. Unlikely though we are to confuse the wines with each other, we cannot help but recognize their brotherhood. That



Alice and Myron Nightingale, Beringer Winery, have worked together since the 1950s when at Cresta Blanca, they produced what probably was California's first botrytised wine

is attributable not so much to soil or climate as to the winemaking philosophy of Beringer winemaker Myron Nightingale and his team — wife Alice, a microbiologist; enologist Ed Sbragia, and vineyard manager Bob Steinhauer.

Myron Nightingale is one of the living legends of California winemaking. A native of West Virginia, he moved to California with his family during the 1920s and planned a career as a physician. At the University of California/Berkeley, he got interested in plant biology, and this led eventually to a career in winemaking. (Among his classmates at Berkeley were Louis Martini, whose own Napa winery is just a stone's throw from Beringer, and Charles Crawford, longtime winemaker at Gallo.)

Alice Nightingale has worked with her husband since the 1950s when, at Cresta Blanca, they produced what probably was California's first botrytised wine — i.e., a wine made from grapes attacked by a fungus which reduces grape volume and concentrates flavors. Bob Steinhauer, a third-generation viticulturist, holds a master's degree in plant science from Univer-

sity of California/Davis; he has studied also in France and Germany.

Ed Sbragia, a third generation winemaker, holds a bachelor's degree in enology from UC/Davis and a masters from California State University at Fresno; before joining Beringer he was a research chemist at Gallo and winemaker at Foppiano.

An oenophile lunching with the Nightingale team gets an unmistakable sense of the team's sense of mission and mutual respect. "When I was at Fresno," Sbragia says, "we were proud of our alumni who had made names for themselves as winemakers — Tom Ferrel at Inglenook and all the others. But Myron, as far as we were concerned, was Frank Sinatra. I never dreamed I'd one day be working with him."

Perhaps the milestone of the Beringer team's current efforts is 1978 PRIVATE RESERVE CHARDONNAY, \$12. The grapes are Napa, and the wine is 100 percent varietal, aged for six months in Limousin oak. I find the complexity extraordinary and the style more reminiscent of Le Montrachet than of California Chardonnay. The wine should improve for 4 to 6 years, and plateau for 5 to 8 more.



WASHINGTON, D.C.
 STAR
 D. 342,760—S. 313,860
 WASHINGTON D.C. METROPOLITAN AREA

JUN 10 1981

PURSGLOVE ON WINE By David Pursglove

APPENDIX B

Playing Favorites: A Case of Mood Over Mind

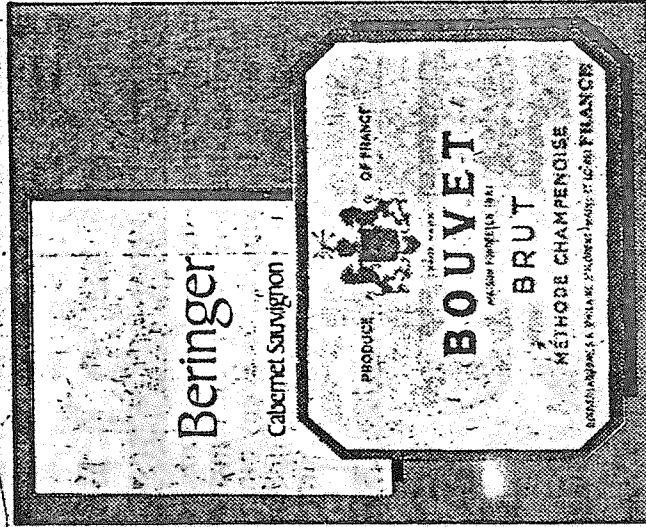
Long ago I gave up on the "What is your favorite wine?" question. All any serious, honest person can do is laugh, lie and name any wine that comes to mind.

After all, in Washington alone there are some 4,200 wines and their vintage variations, and some cities boast even more. Many can be favorite wines of the moment. There have been times when the best wine to drink with the food was retsina, and that certainly made retsina my favorite wine of the moment. I can imagine circumstances, foods and company when Lambrusco would be the most appropriate wine and that would make Lambrusco the favorite of the moment. There are evenings of good music and well ruined for the next partaker by cutting wedges when tawny port is the only and, therefore favorite, wine. Or....

So it goes with "What is your favorite winery?" The way the term is used in America, that almost always means California. Again, it depends on what one is looking for and the mood at the moment of being asked. However, given the option of naming my "favorite" 10 or dozen or score, I am sure that Beringer Vineyards would be there.

The wines are almost always good. They are seldom too intensely flavored for enjoyable drinking, especially with food at dinner, which is what wine should be all about. They are seldom so heavily oaked that you taste a lot of oak instead of oak-gentled wine flavor. Only occasionally do I find that California alcoholic hotness that characterizes so many of the state's red wines and almost never the treacle sweetness that smells and tastes of the San Joaquin Valley, yet often shows in wines from the better regions. They are never priced like an ego high and are thus exceptionally good values.

Beringer wine maker Myron Nightingale has been making wine longer than many of the glamorous wine makers have been alive. He made his mistakes long ago; long ago learned what would not work.



bodied, too high in alcohol to make that style of wine, and the Californians seem to carry the wine making farther along toward a finished wine to keep it alive on store shelves, while in Beaujolais the process is stopped short of a finished wine in order to be first in the race. The tradition in France is to drink up the last of the nouveau on New Year's eve, and certainly not to try to drink Beaujolais nouveau past early March. Much California "nouveau" is unchanged even a year after shipping.

Among the more interesting California nouveau last fall was Beringer's. It was very nice when it arrived here in November, and was still quite good the first of May.

● **GAMAY BEAUJOLAIS 1980, NOUVEAU, BERINGER VINEYARDS** - Full, still young and very fruity nose (in May 1981). A bit Burgundian. Moderate body. Fruity. Nice acid in the finish. Almost like a young Beaujolais, but very dry, very crisp. Still quite clean.

Too long I have awaited the appropriate column in which to mention Bouvet Brut. That is a French sparkling wine that comes perhaps closer than any of the other alternatives to tasting like a real Champagne. It hardly goes with a Beringer, col umn, but when I see some of the junk being offered as substitute for increasingly higher priced champagne, I can restrain myself no longer. The wine is from the Saumur region of the Loire Valley and is produced by the firm of Bouvet Ladbay. It is made in the traditional champagne method. And the price is low, around \$7.50 or so.

● **BOUVEY BRUT (LOIRE SPARKLING WINE)** - Initially a dry, austere, elegant Champagne blanc de blancs nose. Then it becomes a bit fruity with flowery hints of chenin blanc. Good body. Dr and quite champagne-like in the initial taste. Then, as with the nose, it becomes a bit fruity. The taste hints delicately of fruity chenin blanc. The mid-taste is just off-dry. The finish is a dry. A very good substitute for champagne.

shipment of the barely finished new, light wine from Beaujolais called Beaujolais nouveau. There are races to see who can get the first bottles from Beaujolais to Paris restaurants, or to London. Even to America in several recent years.

So the Californians decided to do the same thing a few years ago with the earliest bottlings of their gamay, a wine called gamay Beaujolais (although the grape really is more related to the pinot noir farther north in Burgundy, while the California grape that is the true gamay of Beaujolais at the southern end of Burgundy is the grape we call Napa gamay). Some of the California offerings are pleasant, but are never as successful as the fresh, young, light, acidic Beaujolais nouveau.

California climate results in wines too full-

...rvice, though, some of the boutique wine makers sell themselves as personalities, rather than their wines, and have built an image that prompts the public to believe their wines are good examples, when they are often failed experiments in over-ripe grapes, games playing with oak or self-indulgence in gadgetry.

Nightingale still experiments, even after years of learning. But his experiments are small lots and not offered on the market until they prove successful. The failed experiments go down the drain.

In the past several years he has been experimenting with the effects of chardonnay fermented in oak barrels rather than in stainless steel tanks. I have tasted early results and feel there is little difference, especially when the wine will later be aged for a while in oak. But Nightingale feels there is enough benefit from initial fermentation in oak to continue the experiment.

The chardonnay effort is Nightingale's pride of the moment, and the wines are good. He is also proud of a 1980 semillon artificially infected with the same noble mold that results in the great, rich, sweet Sauternes of Bordeaux. Although still a young tank sample, it is already a rich and luscious wine. But the high sugar is well balanced by good acid and the wine is not uncutous. It will not be on the market for quite some time yet. Nightingale is also one of the California wine makers who believe there is a future for pinot noir, some years ago the greatest of all California wines when it was fermented wild and hot in the manner of great reds in Burgundy.

But it is the output of more conventional wines that keeps me coming back to Beringer on the shelf. I recently tasted together two of Nightingale's cabernet sauvignon offerings. Both were good. Immediately upon opening, the 1977 from Napa Valley was more attractive than the 1976 from Sonoma County, which was very impressive or what it will become. But, as in the case of many good Bordeaux reds, the character changed after long breathing (don't take this to mean that all reds should be allowed to air before drinking; more often than not the character is diminished).

● **NAPA VALLEY CABERNET SAUVIGNON 1977, BERINGER VINEYARDS** - The nose is moderately full, fresh and flowery. Good body with considerable fruit. The tastes are developing well and it is quite drinkable now, but will develop further over a couple more years. Good cabernet flavors. Some tannin, but not puckery. Good acid. More akin to a Bordeaux than is the 1976, but the '76 is the wine to wait for and drink three or four years from now.

That is the note made when the wine was first opened. After several hours of breathing this note was made: Full, rich nose of good cabernet sauvignon aromas with a hint of ripe olives. Beginning to mature and show some elegance. Good body, full flavors of cabernet; much fruit. All nicely balanced with just a bit of oak. Good acid. A slight bit of alcoholic hotness in the fruity finish. A California wine, sure, but hinting toward Bordeaux. Don't serve this wine at too high a room temperature and you will not get that tinge of alcoholic hotness.

● **SONOMA CABERNET SAUVIGNON 1976, KNIGHTS VALLEY ESTATE, BERINGER VINEYARDS** - Dark red with a tinge of purple; very young and rich looking. Full, very fruity, berry-like cabernet nose. Full body. Big fruit; currants and that tarry flavor found in the best Rhones and Italians when they are young. Good acid. Considerable tannin. Excellent balance. A big mouthful with years to go for best drinkability.

After several hours of breathing, this wine mellowed and became elegant. While it still showed it had years to go to be at its best, it was quite drinkable and enjoyable. It offered a good nose of nicely melded aromas of cabernet and oak in good balance, beginning to show some maturity (effect of long breathing). Good body and good cabernet flavors. A little tar. Still some tannin, but not puckery. Mellowing fruit. Very nice and will become much nicer in about three years.

Perhaps what I like about Beringer as much as the wine and the generally moderate prices is the simplicity of sorting out the premium line from the low-priced, mass volume line. It is difficult at some wineries.

I do not appreciate Inglenook selling their cheapie line - "Inglenook Navalle" - under the Inglenook name and in the same ads with the awards so deservedly won by the fine Inglenook premium line that built the reputation over the years. The Navalle wines can be good or not so good, but should not be confused with the original Inglenooks. And Almaden went the other direction and upgraded considerably. Yet the new, higher quality and higher-priced wines are still called Almaden. People who felt over the years that Almaden was not premium quality now seem reluctant to try these often fine wines that still bear the name "Almaden."

Experimentation Upgrades Beringer

By Anthony Dias Blue

BERINGER always has been an enigma to me; I've had a hard time getting a handle on this winery. For a while, after this prime Napa property (established in 1876 by the Beringer brothers, Jacob and Frederick) was sold to multinational giant Nestle, it seemed that the aim of the new owners was to use it as a large producer of decent, low-priced and unremarkable wines. This certainly would appear to be true to all those whose only encounters with Beringer have been on airplanes and never have seen a Beringer bottle bigger than 6.3 ounces.

It also would appear that Nestle was primarily interested in developing a major tourist attraction in the Napa Valley considering the sizeable chunk of cash they threw at the gingerbread Rhine House to bring it from genteel neglect to a level of Victorian splendor unknown even at the height of the Beringer family's fortunes. Swiss-meticulous landscaping was part of the

Blue On Wine

package as was a complete cleanup and beautification of the sandstone tunnels burrowed into the hill behind the winery by Chinese laborers in the late 19th century. Across the highway from the Rhine House, which now contains offices and the tasting room, a functional, modern winery was built.

But Nestle demonstrated more serious intentions when, in 1971, they hired Myron Nightingale as Winemaker. Nightingale had made something of a name for himself when he did successful early experimentation with botrytised wines at the old Cresta Blanca operation in the Livermore Valley. It was certain he didn't come over to Beringer just to make *vin ordinaire*. One of the first important indications of this was the 1973 Cabernet Sauvignon released in 1976 as a "Centennial Cask Selection." This deep, dark, complex wine was very impressive when it first came out, and a recently tasted bottle

demonstrated that confidence in its aging potential was not misplaced.

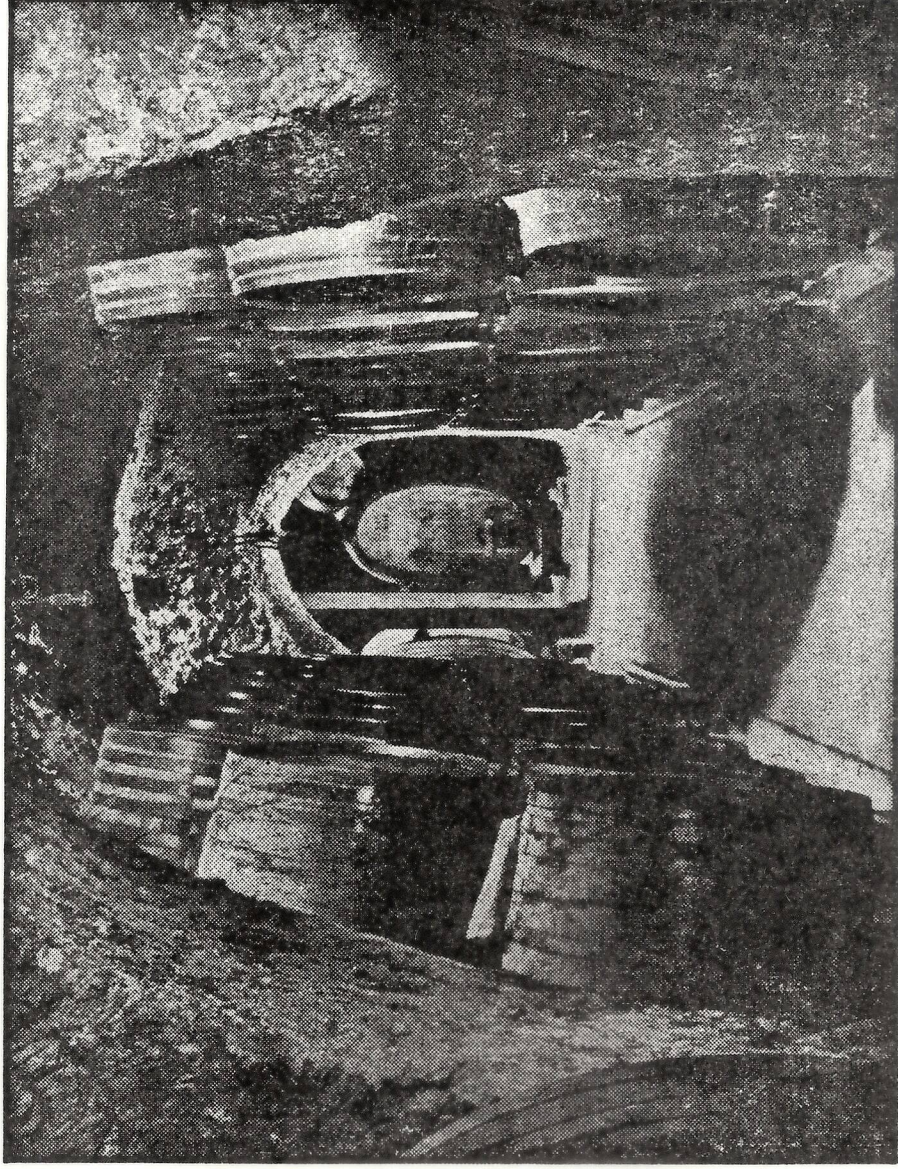
Myron Nightingale is what the French would call and *originale*. He is a small man who wears his hair in a crew cut and speaks with the countrified twang of a man of the soil. Yet, Nightingale is a bacteriologist and an enologist and, more important, he is the man chosen to preside over the transformation of Beringer into a serious premium winery.

This transformation seems to be well under way, judging by several recent wines produced by the winery. The 1979 Napa Fume Blanc (\$5) is attractively crisp with a soft grassiness and an up beat finish. The 1979 Sonoma Fume Blanc (\$5), grown on Beringer's vineyards in Sonoma's Knights Valley, is even more impressive. The wine is ripe and rich in assertive varietal character with an intoxicating aroma and smooth, lingering take out. Both of these wines represent exceptional values.

Myron Nightingale has been actively experimenting with barrel fermentation of Chardonnay since the 1977 vintage. In this process the wine is fermented in small French oak casks rather than in large temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks. For three years Beringer has produced a regular and a barrel-fermented Chardonnay as well as various other small experimental lots.

In 1979, for example, one batch of barrel-fermented Chardonnay was aged in new French Nevers oak for 13 months. The result, a big, woody wine, will influence the making of Beringer Chardonnay in years to come. The 1979 Barrel Fermented Chardonnay (\$10), which has just been released, is a lovely wine with bright clean fruit and oak flavors that flow together effortlessly. The winery also has a 1978 Private Reserve Chardonnay (\$12), which shows that you don't have to be a "boutique" operation to make a big, butter and vanilla Chardonnay.

Nightingale and his staff — most notably Bob Steinhauer, Beringer's vineyard manager — have



been experimenting with Pinot Noir for several years. Myron has made small lots of wine from Pinot Noir grapes grown in the Knights Valley that were totally fermented using "wild", naturally occurring yeasts. During the six days of fermentation the 1978 Pinot Noir was "punched down" by hand twice a day. The resulting wine is soft and silky with tremendous depth and breeding — a dazzling success. Unfortunately only 288 bottles of this wine were made and it will not be sold commercially. But the 1979, 1980 vintages, both made with the same techniques, eventually will come to market.

The winery's Los Hermanos line of inexpensive generic and varietal wines accounts for a million and a half case sales per year, but the Beringer line of premium varietals comes to only 300,000 cases — about the same size as Beaulieu or Korbel. This medium-sized, quality, winery-within-a-winery has a definite image problem, but if Myron Nightingale continues on the

road he seems to have chosen, it shouldn't be too long before a large segment of the wine-drinking public begins to take Beringer seriously.

HISTORY

—OF—

SONOMA COUNTY

—INCLUDING ITS—

Geology, Topography, Mountains, Valleys and Streams;

—TOGETHER WITH—

A Full and Particular Record of the Spanish Grants; Its Early History and Settlement, Compiled from the Most Authentic Sources; the Names of Original Spanish and American Pioneers; a full Political History, Comprising the Tabular Statements of Elections and Office-holders since the Formation of the County; Separate Histories of each Township, Showing the Advancement of Grape and Grain Growing Interests, and Pisciculture;

ALSO, INCIDENTS OF PIONEER LIFE; THE RAISING OF THE BEAR FLAG; AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF EARLY AND PROMINENT SETTLERS AND REPRESENTATIVE MEN;

—AND OF ITS—

Cities, Towns, Churches, Schools, Secret Societies, Etc., Etc.

ILLUSTRATED.

SAN FRANCISCO:
ALLEY, BOWEN & CO., PUBLISHERS.
1880.

KNIGHT'S VALLEY.

This township is situated on the north-east boundary of Sonoma, with Napa county at the foot of Mount St. Helena, one of the loftiest and most beautiful peaks of the Mayacmas range. It includes about thirteen thousand acres of valley land, covered by a Spanish grant, and is now partly owned by a company who maintain a Summer resort at Kellogg, and partly by Calvin H. Holmes, an old and most respected pioneer.

The scenery in Knight's Valley embraces the characteristic groves of oaks and other woods on the hills and in the hollows, which are to be found all over the county; walks and drives of rare beauty, excelling those which might be devised by man's handiwork, intersect the low-lying grounds and mountain slopes, while through its length passes one of the roads—that from Calistoga—leading to the far-famed Geysers, the most marvelous of Sonoma's romantic pictures. This thoroughfare was built by Sam. Brannan, W. Patterson, Calvin Holmes and others, in 1869-70, and though by no means so famous as the Hog's Back road, on account of its many hair-breadth escapes, still it combines all the beauties of scenery, and grandeur of hill and dale which the other made attractive.

The earliest settler in Knight's Valley was William McDonald, who came there from Napa county in the year 1850, and was the first to act as guide to the Geysers, visitors to the Springs being provided with saddle horses by him. Thomas Knight, from whom the valley takes its name, arrived in 1853, and purchased the property for the small sum of ten thousand dollars from Berryesa, a Spaniard, who had been located there for many years previous. A school was taught in the valley, on the land now owned by Calvin Holmes, by Charles Rushmore, in 1857, and is still used for that purpose, while service is occasionally held in it by a clergyman from Calistoga.

The principal industry of this township is wheat-growing and sheep-raising; there are, however, two mines located on Holmes' land, which are not now worked. The Great Western Quicksilver mine is also partly situated in Knight's Valley township, the workings running under the dividing line between Sonoma and Lake counties. Besides these industries, there are two saw-mills situated at the upper end of the valley, one now in disuse; that in operation is the property of Annesley and Davis, of Lake county. The one now working was built by Thomas Knight in 1856, and is the property of Steele Brothers.

The outlet for the productions of the township is the town of Calistoga.

in Napa county, to which there is an excellent road, and from whence there is communication with San Francisco by railroad.

Any account, however meagre, of Knight's Valley would be incomplete without mention being made of the fine estate of Calvin Holmes, a portion of the original Rancho de Malacomes. Here Mr. Holmes has erected a superb mansion, and magnificent farm houses, arranged with every design to insure the care and comfort of his stock. Adjoining this farm is the elegant residence and fine ranch of George Hood, of Santa Rosa.

KELLOGG.—This Summer resort is situated in Knight's Valley, at the foot St. Helena mountain, about seven miles from Calistoga, nineteen from the Geysers, and seventeen from Healdsburg. The original building (now remodeled as a hotel) was built by Berryesa and was constructed of adobe clay, to which he made additions of frame and stone; it next passed into the hands of Knight and Rockwell, who disposed of it to a man named Hasbrook, who in turn sold it with the Knight's Valley Ranch to one Stewart. He incorporated it into the Knight's Valley Land and Contract Company, from whom it passed into the hands of Steele Brothers, the present proprietors. It was first opened as a place of Summer resort by the aforesaid Stewart. The buildings consist of ten cottages besides the main hotel, while there is capacity for one hundred and twenty-five visitors.

FOSSVILLE.—This is a station between Kellogg and Calistoga named after and owned by Clark Foss, the proprietor of the stage-route to the Geysers, who came here in 1871 and opened a hotel. This hostelry is furnished with every convenience throughout, has twenty-five rooms and accommodation for a large number of guests. Mr. Foss has here several stables and coach-houses, and in the summer months the scene presented in front of these buildings is animated in the extreme.

OF SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA,

BY ROBERT A. THOMPSON.

the valley which now bears his name—once a portion of the grant. This valley is a part of the great Russian River valley, an arm of it extending to the eastward.

Knight's valley lies on the extreme eastern boundary of Sonoma county, at the foot of St. Helena mountain, one of the tallest and most beautiful peaks of the Mayacmas range. The valley includes about thirteen thousand acres, and was covered by a Spanish grant. It is now partly owned by a company, who keep a place of summer resort, and partly by Calvin Holmes, one of our oldest and most respected citizens. A view of his place can be seen on page 48 of this Atlas. The scenery in Knight's valley embraces all the features characteristic of the county—groves of oaks in picturesque irregularity on the plain and in the foot-hills, walks and drives of natural beauty, far excelling anything that could be achieved by artificial means, no matter how lavishly money might be expended. One of the main roads leading to the Geyser springs passes through this valley. It was built by the celebrated Clark Foss, and his stages still run on the road. He has made his home in the valley, (a view of which appears on page 12), in which every comfort has been provided for himself and guests, that good taste and a liberal expenditure of money can command. No one should leave this coast without making a trip to the Geysers with Foss, which includes a stop at his elegant caravanary.

Dry Creek valley lies west of Russian River and north of Healdsburg. Its location may be seen on the map. The valley is about sixteen miles long, with an average width of two miles. The soil is all alluvial bottom, and is of matchless fertility—for wheat, corn, and staple products it is not equaled on the coast: and the hill-land on the border of the valley produces all kinds of fruit, being especially adapted to grape culture. The fine fruit farm of D. D. Phillips is situated in the centre of the valley.

Bennett valley, another of the smaller valleys of Sonoma, worthy of mention, lies south of the town of Santa Rosa, and east of the Santa Rosa valley. It has a length of eight miles, and an average width of four miles. It possesses all the features peculiar to the other parts of the county we have described. If it has any specialty it is for fruit and grape culture. The fine farm of James Adams, in Santa Rosa township, lies just in the mouth of Bennett valley, of which an engraving appears on page 77; and also the beautiful home of Nelson Carr, (on same page), who lives at the head of the valley. Near the centre is the celebrated vineyard of Isaac DeTurk, where he has lived for many years, and been extensively engaged in the manufacture of wine.

The Guillicos valley is in fact the upper part of Sonoma valley proper. It is one of the most beautiful places in California. It was originally granted to the wife of Don Juan Wilson, a famous sea-captain on this coast under the Mexican regime. He married into one of the native California families, and, though an Englishman by birth, he became a Mexican citizen, and was granted the Guillicos valley. In 1850 it was purchased by William Hood, who subdivided and sold the greater part about ten years ago. He, however, retains his beautiful homestead at the foot of the Guillicos mountain, one of the most picturesque as well as one of the most valuable farms in California.

Green valley lies west of the Santa Rosa plains, on Green Valley creek, which flows north and empties into Russian river. The valley is twelve miles long, with an average width of three miles. The specialty of this valley is fruit culture—apples, pears, plums, prunes, peaches, cherries, table and raisin

creek rises in the same range and flows southerly through Sonoma valley into San Pablo bay.

The Valhalla, awkwardly spelled Gualala, is a stream on the western border of the county flowing due north, and parallel with the coast just inside a range of hills which rise up from the shore of the ocean. After a straight north course for almost twenty-five miles it turns and empties into the ocean. There was never a stream so well named,—great red-wood trees shade its limpid waters, the favorite haunt of the salmon and the trout; the hills are full of game, deer, elk and bear, and if ever there was a place where the "bear roasted every morning became whole at night," it was true, figuratively speaking, of our Sonoma Valhalla,—for the camp on its margin was never without its haunch of venison or creel of trout. May the fellow who tortured the name by trying to Peruvianize it, never taste the joys of the real Valhalla.

The course of these streams can be marked by referring to the map. We will say, in passing, that the land along the water courses described, and for some distance from them, is a rich alluvial of unsurpassed fertility.

MEANS OF ACCESS.

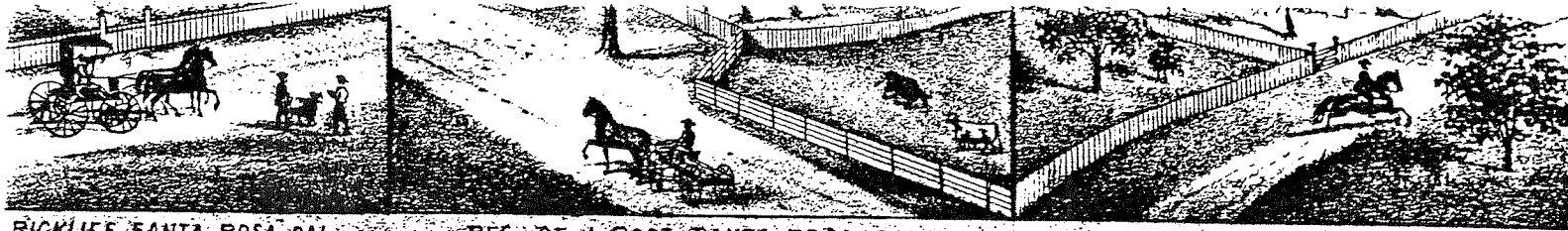
Sonoma county being, as we said elsewhere, off the great line of travel, some special reference to its means of access may not be out of place. The San Francisco and North Pacific Railroad runs through the great Central valley, starting from Cloverdale, its northern terminus, passing the principal towns, and terminating at a point on Petaluma creek, where it connects with a fast steamer for San Francisco.

The whole time occupied from the northern limit of Sonoma to San Francisco is about four hours. An extension of the road is now building through Marin county to a point on the bay not more than six miles from San Francisco, which will shorten the time of travel nearly one-half, to about two hours from Santa Rosa, and one hour and a half from Petaluma. Another railroad enters the western section of the county from Marin, the San Francisco and North Pacific Coast Railroad. This is a narrow-gauge road running into the coast lumber region, to which we have referred. Daily trips are made by this route to and from San Francisco. A steamer runs direct from San Francisco to Sonoma valley, where it connects with a prismoidal or one-rail railway for the town of Sonoma. In addition to the facilities of travel given, there are a number of small sailing vessels which ply back and forth between San Francisco and Petaluma.

EARLY HISTORY.

Sonoma is an Indian word which means "Valley of the Moon," and was the name originally given to the beautiful valley from which the county was afterwards called. The tribe of Indians inhabiting the valley were called the Chocuyens. On the arrival of the first expedition to establish a mission, the name Sonoma was given to the chief by Jose Altimira, the priest in charge, and after that the chief, the tribe and the valley they inhabited took the name Sonoma.

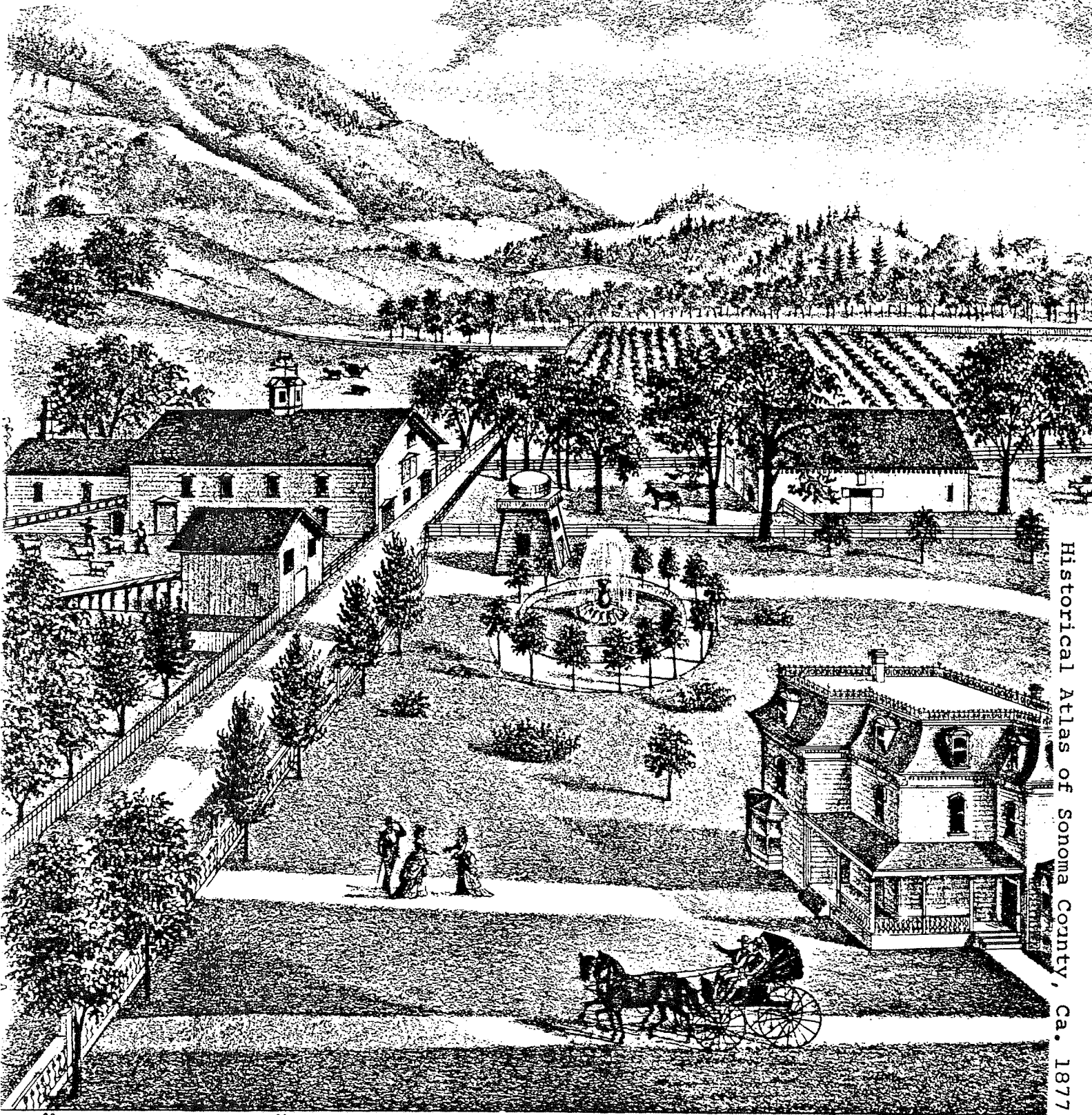
In 1775 Lieutenant Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, a distinguished navigator of the Spanish navy, in a vessel called the Sonora, entered and explored Bodega bay on his return from a voyage to the northwest coast. The port thenceforth took the name Bodega, from its discoverer. He was the first of the old navigators, as far as the record shows, who touched on the coast of



RICKLIF'S, SANTA ROSA, CAL.

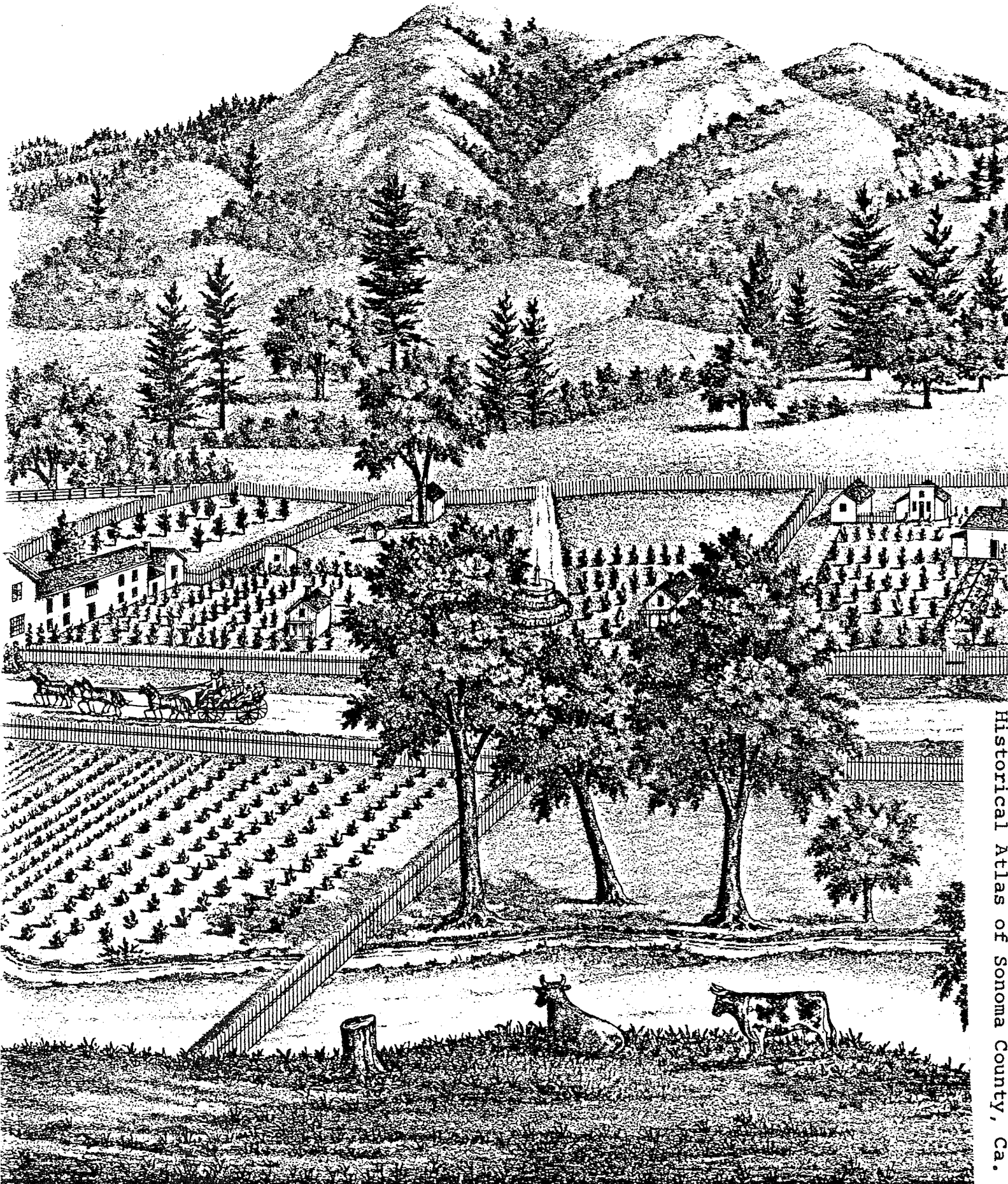
RES. OF J. ROOT, SANTA ROSA, CAL.

RES. OF J. D. HASSETT, HEALDSBURG, CAL.



Historical Atlas of Sonoma County, Ca. 1877

"MALACOMES RANCHO". RES. OF CALVIN H. HOLMES, KNIGHTS VALLEY, TP., SONOMA CO., CAL.



Historical Atlas of Sonoma County, Ca. 1877

"FOSSVILLE" RES. OF CLARK FOSS, KNIGHTS VALLEY, SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.
Mt Saint Helena.

SALT POINT TOWNSHIP.

NAME.	RESIDENCE.	BUSINESS.	NATIVITY.	When came to State	When came to Co.	POST-OFFICE.	No. of Acres.	NAME.	RESIDENCE.	I NATIVITY.	When came to State	When came to Co.	POST-OFFICE.
Irwin, L. C.	Timber Cove.	Bookkeeper.	Connecticut.	1870	1875	Timber Cove.	1,200	Helms, F.	Salt Point.	Merchant.	1851	1861	Fisk's Mill.
Irwin, J. C.	Stewart's Point.	Rancher.	Ireland.	1866	1869	Stewart's Point.	80	Irwin, N. C.	"	Stock raiser.	1850	1859	"
Irwin, Edw.	Fort Ross.	Wood dealer & grocer.	Indiana.	1873	1873	Fort Ross.	160	Jewell, D. H.	"	Farmer.	1860	1860	"
Irwin, Albert.	Salt Point.	Farmer and teamster.	Maine.	1864	1874	Salt Point.	150	Lancaster, A. J.	"	Stock raiser.	1853	1855	"
Irwin, B. F.	"	"	"	1856	1875	Fisk's Mill.	120	Leibig, Fred.	Timber Cove.	Merchant.	1868	1870	Timber Cove.
Irwin, John S.	Fort Ross.	Farmer and lumberman.	Massachusetts.	1852	1856	Timber Cove.	3,800	Lewis, S. F.	Salt Point.	Prop. Timber.	1869	1869	"
Irwin, G. W.	Salt Point.	Farmer.	Pennsylvania.	1852	1873	Fort Ross.	800	Lutinger, Joseph	Timber Cove.	Prop. Timber.	1861	1871	Fisk's Mill.
Irwin, O. F.	"	Stock raising.	Ireland and N. Carolina.	1847	1850	Stewart's Point.	257	McClellan, M. T.	"	Farmer.	1848	1860	Fisk's Mill.
Irwin, W. R.	"	Farmer and lumberman.	Vermont.	1845	1857	Timber Cove.	200	Miller, W. R.	Fort Ross.	Farmer.	1853	1853	Timber Cove.
Irwin, J. C.	Fisherman's Bay.	Farmer.	Maine.	1865	1865	Fisk's Mill.	360	Roesman, Thos. J.	Salt Point.	Dairyman.	1850	1850	Timber Cove.
Irwin, Charles F.	Stewart's Point.	Blacksmith.	Missouri.	1857	1857	Stewart's Point.		Ruoff, Francisco	Fort Ross.	Farmer.	1850	1853	Timber Cove.
Irwin, Henry	Salt Point.	Prop. Henry Hotel and farmer.				Timber Cove.		Schroyer, Aaron	Salt Point.	Farmer.	1860	1862	Salt Point.

KNIGHT'S VALLEY TOWNSHIP.

NAME.	RESIDENCE.	BUSINESS.	NATIVITY.	When came to State	When came to Co.	POST-OFFICE.	No. of Acres.	NAME.	RESIDENCE.	I NATIVITY.	When came to State	When came to Co.	POST-OFFICE.
Irwin, Wm. J.	Mark West Creek.	Farmer.	Ohio.	1863	1864	Santa Rosa.	160	Hood, James.	Knights Valley.	Farmer.	1853	1854	Santa Rosa.
Irwin, D.	McDonald Valley.	"	Connecticut.	1854	1872	Calistoga, Napa county.	320	Holmes, Calvin H.	"	Farmer.	1849	1852	Calistoga, Napa county.
Irwin, Clark	Fossville.	Prop. Hotel & stage line.	N. Hampshire.	1856	1857	Calistoga, Napa county.	50	Van Namee, C. T.	"	Hotel.	1868	1869	Kellogg.

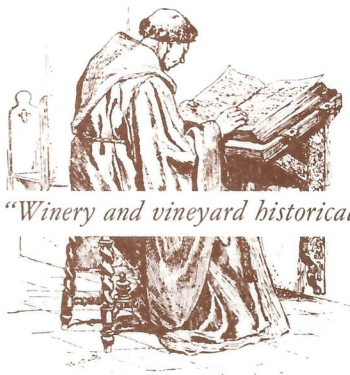
OCEAN TOWNSHIP.

NAME.	RESIDENCE.	BUSINESS.	NATIVITY.	When came to State	When came to Co.	POST-OFFICE.	No. of Acres.	NAME.	RESIDENCE.	I NATIVITY.	When came to State	When came to Co.	POST-OFFICE.
Irwin, A.	Duncan Mills.	Mill owner.	Ireland.	1850	1854	Duncan Mills.	5,000	Orr, John.	Ocean.	Farmer.	1850	1856	Duncan Mills.
Irwin, George	Ocean.	Farmer and stock raiser.	Switzerland.	1859	1860	"	612	Rein, Samuel	Duncan Mills.	Farmer.	1850	1853	"
Irwin, August	Duncan Mills.	Dairyman.	Germany.	1863	1870	"	1,000	Rute, Elizabeth	Ocean.	Stock raiser.	1852	1870	"

REDWOOD TOWNSHIP.

NAME.	RESIDENCE.	BUSINESS.	NATIVITY.	When came to State	When came to Co.	POST-OFFICE.	No. of Acres.	NAME.	RESIDENCE.	I NATIVITY.	When came to State	When came to Co.	POST-OFFICE.
Irwin, A.	Duncan Mills.	Mill owner.	Ireland.	1850	1854	Duncan Mills.	5,000	Orr, John.	Ocean.	Farmer.	1850	1856	Duncan Mills.
Irwin, George	Ocean.	Farmer and stock raiser.	Switzerland.	1859	1860	"	612	Rein, Samuel	Duncan Mills.	Farmer.	1850	1853	"
Irwin, August	Duncan Mills.	Dairyman.	Germany.	1863	1870	"	1,000	Rute, Elizabeth	Ocean.	Stock raiser.	1852	1870	"

William F. Heintz
post office box 418
Sonoma, ca. 95476



"Winery and vineyard historical research and business histories."

707 · 938 · 0827

THE VITICULTURE AND WINE MAKING HISTORY OF KNIGHT'S
VALLEY, SONOMA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

PART I

Knight's Valley, located in the northeastern portion of Sonoma County, California, originated as a distinct geographical area in the year 1843. This was five years before the great Gold Rush of '48-'49 in California and seven years before statehood was granted (September 1850).

This distinct geographical area was created on October 14, 1843 when J. de Los Berryessa was given a so-called "Mexican land-grant" by Alta California Governor Manuel Micheltoarena. The grant called "Rancho Malacomes" contained 17,000 acres of land. Mexican land grants in California came under frequent civil litigation for decades after statehood and have been the subject of many books as well as articles in newspapers and magazines. There are maps which show clearly and distinctly that portion of Sonoma County referred to as "Rancho Malacomes."

Title to Rancho Malacomes was transferred in large part in 1853 from Berryessa to Thomas Knight, who paid ten thousand dollars for the land. Within a short time, the name "Knight's Valley" was applied to ^{almost} the entire rancho.

That Rancho Malacomes or Knight's Valley was early on separate and distinct from nearby Napa Valley, is documented as far as 1852 in a book called Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California. . . . Written by John Russell Bartlett, the author and his companions rode horseback the length of Napa Valley in March 1852, leisurely visiting the widely scattered farms of John Osborn, George Yount and R. L. Kilburn.

On reaching the upper end of Napa Valley Bartlett wrote:

"The view here exhibited the finest alpine scenery I had yet seen in California, and showed that we were advancing northward as well as reaching a higher elevation.

"Reached Mr. Knight's, twelve miles from Kilburn's, at noon. Here the valley grew quite narrow, or rather terminated, it being intersected by a range of hills. At this place, another valley opened some two or three miles in width, and extended about ten miles farther to the north" (page 28).

Bartlett's book gives a detailed account of the Indians then living near Knight and even includes a half dozen sketches of Indian grass homes, and their way of living. Books on California were eagerly sought-after and read during the great Gold Rush period, and that small valley in which Knight lived is described in the most glowing of terms to catch the attention of any eastern reader.

There is yet another reason why Knight's Valley gained a very early notoriety, both statewide and nationally. It has to do with the Geysers of Sonoma County--easily one of the most famous tourist attractions in California in the nineteenth century.

The Geysers were discovered in 1847 and accounts of this freak of nature, whose medicinal waters were thought good for treating any ailment, attracted much national attention in the early 1850s. The first route to the Geysers was through Knight's Valley with the help of local guide William McDonald. At the Geysers one could stare in awe at the Devil's Inkwell, or Witch's Cauldron, as they bubbled and occasionally spit into the air. McDonald is often credited with being the first settler in Knight's Valley, although Berryessa really deserves that honor.

Between 1860 and 1864, Professor William H. Brewster of Yale toured California, recording in his journals all that he observed about the flora and fauna of the state. His book, Up and Down California in 1860-1864, shows that he followed somewhat the same path as Bartlett in crossing through Napa Valley but goes beyond Bartlett in clearly labeling the land in which Knight lived as "Knight's Valley":

"We passed up to the head of Napa Valley, then over a low divide toward the northwest and descended into Knight's Valley, a lovely valley watered by a tributary of the Russian River."

When Thomas Knight settled in the valley soon to be given his name, it was an absolute necessity to be self-sufficient.

Such farms raised all their own food, including grapes. Grapevine cuttings were generally obtained from a neighbor or from the old Mission at Sonoma. The Mission vines date from 1823-24.

The only documentation that Knight's Valley had grapevines possibly by the mid-1850s, is a story in the St. Helena, California Star of October 8, 1874. The newspaper devoted two full columns to a description of Knight's Valley, noting that Thomas Knight had sold out just five years previously. The Star reporter added:

"After cultivating and enjoying the ranch for a quarter of a century; living many years in the large and well-built adobe house referred to above; plucking the tender grapes, the luscious peaches and juicy apples that his own hand had planted and tended; and having disposed of about half the ranch from time to time, Mr. Knight sold the rest..."

Thomas Knight apparently had proven that the grape would grow quite successfully in his valley, for this same newspaper story, dated October 8, 1874, records that the present owners had seventeen acres in grapes:

"Their seventeen-acre vineyard will produce 25 tons of grapes this season, which will be shipped to Napa county."

A harvest of only 25 tons from seventeen acres indicates the vines were just coming into bearing. But the fact that someone would plant 17 acres in 1874 in California, given the state of the wine industry, is remarkable indeed. There were barely 30 to 40 thousand acres of grapes in the entire state. Nearby Napa had only a few thousand acres, a handful of wineries. The market for grapes or wine was so small that many

Knight's Valley.

What makes a rural spot attractive? Rough mountains, gentle slopes, broad lowlands, dancing streams of ever-living water, a climate neither hot nor cold; neither malarious nor debilitating; a place remote from the clattering noises of the city, and yet not entirely removed from its refining influences. Eureka! Knight's Valley is that spot. A fifteen mile drive from Healdsburg towards Calistoga takes you to the venerable adobe house, built by Berryessa, long before the American acquisition of California. Back of it to the north, three or four miles off—it seems scarcely half a mile—jagged and naked stands the triple-headed monarch of the mountains, St. Helena. Like Napoleon the Great, who died on another St. Helena, this one is "grand, gloomy and peculiar." To the south, east and west are irregular hills and ridges ornamented with a fringe of oaks and evergreens. You are now in Knight's Valley, a couple of miles east of the center.

The old Mexican grant covering this little valley and the adjacent slopes comprised seventeen thousand acres, and was bought about thirty years ago by Thomas Knight from whom the valley took its name. The bottom land is about five miles long and one mile wide. Three perennial streams flow through it: House Creek, Mill Creek and Franze Creek. Their waters enter Maucama Creek and pass on to the ocean *via* Russian River.

After cultivating and enjoying the ranch for a quarter of a century; living many years in the large and well-built adobe house referred to above; plucking the tender grapes, the luscious peaches and juicy apples that his own hand had planted and tended; and having disposed of about half the ranch from time to time, Mr. Knight

5

sold the rest, five years ago, to Josiah Hasbrouck, a gentleman of wealth and leisure from New York. The portion last sold includes the cream of the ranch, and consists of nine thousand acres. The price paid was sixty-thousand dollars. Mr. Hasbrouck afterwards expended many thousands of dollars in improving the property; but longing to return to the banks of the Hudson, he sold out last October to Stuart, Elder & Bartlett, of San Francisco.

The cinnabar discoveries, the erection of a thirty-ton furnace, and other contemplated projects have induced the three gentlemen named to enlarge their firm by the addition of three more, the new firm being called the "Knight's Valley Land and Contract Company." The members are as follows:

Elgar W. Steele, President Bank San Luis Obispo; G. P. Kellogg, late State Agent Cal. Grangers; Charles Laird, Salinas; Wm. A. Stuart, of Stuart & Elder, 204 Front street, San Francisco; Alex. Elder, of Stuart & Elder; W. S. Bartlett, Loan Teller National Gold Bank and Trust Company, San Francisco. The new company began operations last week.

Since Mr. Hasbrouck disposed of the ranch, the new proprietors have opened and developed two quick-silver mines two or three miles north of the adobe house; kept from 90 to 110 men at work; built six miles of road, nearly all on the mountain side; burnt sixty thousand brick for a furnace and two hundred and forty thousand for sale; erected a fifteen-thousand dollar furnace for the reduction of ore; constructed a dam on the south side of St. Helena and conducted the water from it about a mile to the furnace; built an ore house large enough to contain a five-months' supply of rock and adobes; brought water from

growers annually fed the grapes to their animals. Seventeen acres of grapes was a very large plot in that day and time.

There is one possible explanation. Knight had sold his last holdings to a group of investors who planned to develop Knight's Valley. In the spring of 1875 advertisements appeared in the St. Helena Star offering choice lots for sale in the new town of "Kellogg"--in the heart of Knight's Valley. There was even a new hotel, named "Alhambra," with its own post and telegraph office. The Star noted on April 22:

"The sale of town lots at this most favored point, has been postponed and will not take place until the 13th of May. The location of this new town is most important, being the point of intersection of the avenues or roads leading to the world renowned Geyser Springs, Pine Flat, Healdsburg, Great Western, Middletown, Harbin and Bartlett Springs, Lower Lake, Lakeport, Calistoga and Napa, and being but five hours ride from S.F. through the most picturesque country in the world."

The seventeen acres of vineyards may have been split up to give each lot in the new town of Kellogg its own vineyard. This would make it more attractive to potential buyers.

There were at least four vineyardists in Knight's Valley by the year 1877, although there is no record of the size of their vineyards. This is documented in the Historical Atlas of Sonoma County, California published in that year. Vineyards are clearly indicated on the various maps of this atlas with a strong, cross-hatched marking. The map of Sonoma Valley, known to contain several thousand acres of vines by 1877, is literally covered with this cross-hatching. The Knight's Valley maps, which appear on pages 31 and 39 (see following

pages), show vineyards at George Hood's farm, the Steele brothers ranch, F. McDonald (at the stage stop of Fossville) and possibly Mrs. Franze. (None are shown at or near the town of Kellogg, however?)

George Hood's vines were in sufficient number to warrant his building a winery the next year. Knight's Valley joined the California wine industry with the Hood Winery constructed in 1878! There is no published documentation relating to this founding date, but the stone ruins of that winery still exist on the ranch now belonging to the LaFranchi family. The ruins have the date "1878" carved into the stone.

Long time residents of the valley recall that it operated as a winery around the turn of the century, then was closed. Charles Laufenberg, born in the valley in 1897, went to school with the three Hood boys, George, Don and Charley, and recalls the old Hood Winery very well. (There is evidence of its operations in the 1890s to 1910 period which shall be presented subsequently.)

With the advent of the decade of the 1880s, California began a wine boom of unparalleled proportions. Over one hundred thousand acres of new grapevines were planted in the first four years of that decade. Charles Wetmore in the Second Annual Report of the Chief Executive Officer of the Board of State Viticultural Commissioners (published in 1884) estimated 35,000 acres of new vineyard each in California in 1882 and 1883. Annually about eight million gallons of wine was being produced. Napa Valley began that decade with 3,500 acres of vineyards and concluded it with 18,000 plus acres.

Call to all

MAP OF PINE FLAT.

SONOMA CO., CAL

SCALE 300 feet to an inch

8	52	59
	60	
	58	
	52	
	50	
	48	
	46	
	44	
	42	
	40	
	38	
	36	
	34	
	32	
	30	
	28	
	26	
	THO	
	24	
	22	
	20	
	18	
	16	
	14	
	12	
	10	
	8	



W
E
N
P



N 6 T

Historical Atlas

of Sonoma County, California 1877 p.39

04 39V4 33S

A mini-boom in vine planting also took place in Knight's Valley. The Calistoga, California Calistogan reported May 20, 1881 that George Hood now had 80 acres in vines; C. H. Holmes, 30 acres; F. McDonald, 12; S. Brooks, 2; "total-133 acres, of which 71 acres were set out this year."

George Hood's winery quite likely crushed most of the grapes from the valley but some went each year to Calistoga and the Kortum Winery. The St. Helena Star of October 23, 1881 records that Kortum took the grapes of Simmons, Jas. Horn, Bennett, Bently, Hoover and "McDonald (Knight's Valley)." A year later, the same journal stated Kortum "receives grapes from Knight's Valley, Alexander Valley and the vicinity of Mt. St. Helena."

Earlier in 1882, the deputy county assessor for Knight's Valley passed on more information of vineyard planting to the Russian River Flag, Healdsburg:

"We are informed by Mr. Henry Fewell, Assessor for Knight's Valley District, that the crop never looked better than it does this season in northern Sonoma. He reports the following new vineyards set out this year in his district, in addition to many acres reset: Malony, 2 acres; W. Y. Arnold, 7 acres; W. Mulligan, 60 acres; Mr. Faessler, 10 acres; Mrs. W. J. Trimble, 10 acres."

This new acreage gave Knight's Valley a total of about 225 acres in vines. In Isaac DeTurck's 1884 Annual Report of the Commissioner for the District of Sonoma, Board of State Viticultural Commissioners, he noted Sonoma County had 18,017 acres in vines of which "Knight's Valley has 250 acres."

The expanding agricultural industry of Knight's Valley, or at least its potential, began attracting the attention of the San Francisco press by 1886. Specifically the Bay Area newspapers were interested in the possibility of a railroad being built through Knight's Valley. The San Francisco Bulletin of November 13, 1886 carried a long, detailed account of the proposed route, noting:

"The natural connection by railroad with this section is out of Alexander Valley, and through the gorge of Knight's Valley canyon, thence through Knight's Valley to Calistoga...."

The Pacific Rural Press of San Francisco observed in its issue of December 12:

"Should the road be built, it will open up the fertile Knight's and Alexander Valleys, to closer communication with the outer world."

The Healdsburg, California Enterprise added its voice to the clamor for a railroad, in April of 1887:

"We...predict that another natural road to be built would be the extension from Calistoga to Healdsburg. There is no part of the State destined to become such a great fruit and wine center as Central and Northern Sonoma."

The railroad was never undertaken, of course, despite all the publicity in the San Francisco press and locally. It did help to publicize Knight's Valley.

Although New York lawyer R. S. H. Delafield settled in Knight's Valley before the railroad agitation broke into full bloom, it may have had some affect on his decision to build the valley's second winery. Ground was broken for the "Delafield

Winery" in June 1887 and it was ready for the fall crush in September. The winery is described at length in the Napa, California Register, November 4:

"R. S. H. Delafield has recently built on his 'La Feld' rancho, above Calistoga and at the entrance to Knight's Valley, a fine two-story stone wine cellar. The ground dimensions of the building are 40 x 66 feet, with an extension 16 x 26 feet. Its storage capacity is 75,000 gallons. Modern machinery is operated by power from a 15-horse power engine and a 20-horse power boiler. Enough wine, some 20,000 gallons, was made this season to test the equipments and get things in order. A tunnel back of the cellar runs into the hill 130 feet. This will accommodate 40,000 gallons in addition to the 75,000 noted above."

Any winery in California in the 1880s which was capable of holding over 100,000 gallons of wine was considered very large. Between the Hood Winery, Delafield and what the Kortum Winery crushed of local grapes, Knight's Valley was contributing 200,000 to 250,000 gallons of wine to the state's wine production by 1887! A. Grimm, just over the county line toward Calistoga, dug two very large tunnels 19 x 100 feet into the hillside and began making wine in 1888. Any Knight's Valley resident who did not have a home for his grapes, certainly would have found a buyer in Grimm. By 1892 there is documentation that he had cooperage for 100,000 gallons of wine. (See The Vineyards in Napa County, Report of E. C. Priber, Board of State Viticultural Commissioners, published in 1893, page 45. His winery is much closer to Knight's Valley than to the town of Calistoga and would logically serve grape growers who were nearby. Hauling grapes any distance in that period, over rough dirt roads by horse-drawn wagons, was no easy task!)

Before Grimm finished his two wine tunnels, yet another winery came into existence in Knight's Valley. J. H. A. Folker built his winery right in the center of what once was to be the town of Kellogg. It was of stone, one story, approximately 65 x 72 feet and the Pacific Wine & Spirit Review of San Francisco took note of this fact by stating on March 22, 1890: "A fine wine cellar has been constructed on the Kellogg vineyard in Knight's Valley. It has a capacity of 70,000 gallons."

There was a minimum of 425 tons of grapes being harvested in Knight's Valley by 1891. This is documented in a Directory of Grape Growers, Wine Makers and Distillers of California, published by the Board of State Viticultural Commissioners, page 170:

SONOMA COUNTY—Continued.

NAME OF OWNER.	Post Office and Name of Vineyard.	Total Acres in Grapes.....	Acres in Bearing.	Acres in Wine Grapes.....	Acres in Table Grapes.....	Acres in Raisin Grapes.....	Wine Maker.....	Product in 1889.	Varieties.
Whitcomb, J.	Healdsburg	30	30	30			No.	60 tons.	Zinfandel.
Wise, Captain E. E.	Healdsburg	70	70	70			Yes.	200 tons.	Mixed.
Young Bros.	Healdsburg	7	7	7			No.	15 tons.	Zinfandel.
Delafield, R. H.	Kellogg	35	35	25			Yes.	Mildewed.	Semillon and mixed.
Folker, J. H. A.	Kellogg	70	50	70			Yes.	20 tons.	Foreign varieties.
Hood, George	Kellogg	125	125	125			Yes.	375 tons.	Foreign varieties.
McDonald, Frank	Kellogg	12	12	12			No.	20 tons.	Chasselas, Mission.
Schwart, A.	Kellogg	5	5		5		No.	10 tons.	Tokay, Muscat.
Ahern, J. B.	Lakeville	13	13	13			No.	20 tons.	Zinfandel.
Bihler, Wm.	Lakeville	170	170	170			Yes.	510 tons.	Zinfandel, Malvoisie.
Eggelton, George	Lakeville	15	15	15			No.	40 tons.	Zinfandel, Malvoisie.
Fritz, John	Lakeville	40	40	40			No.	75 tons.	Zinfandel and mixed.
Hardin, Andrew	Lakeville	20	20	20			No.	35 tons.	Zinfandel.
Keenan, A.	Lakeville	20	20	20			No.	50 tons.	Mixed.
Mills, Mrs.	Lakeville	15	15	15			No.	30 tons.	Mixed.
White, J. H.	Lakeville	20	20	20			No.	50 tons.	Zinfandel, Malvoisie.
Wiswell, N.	Lakeville	7	7	7			No.	12 tons.	Mixed.
Donahue, J. M., estate of	Littons	150	150	150			No.	300 tons.	Zinfandel, Mission.
Haigh, E.	Littons	5	5	5			No.	10 tons.	Mission.
Long, G. W.	Littons	20	20	20			No.	40 tons.	Zinfandel.
Long, Isaac	Littons	20	20	20			No.	40 tons.	Zinfandel.
Marshall, Robert	Littons	15	15	15			No.	30 tons.	Zinfandel.
Perry, E. G.	Littons	40	40	40			No.	80 tons.	Zinfandel, Malvoisie.
Shriver, A.	Littons	10	10	10			No.	20 tons.	Zinfandel, Mission.
Anderson, A. J. F.	Los Guillicos	35	25	35			Yes.	50 tons.	Zinfandel, Riesling.
Box, J. A.	Los Guillicos	22	22	22			No.	58 tons.	Zinfandel, Gutedel.
Carpenter, H. B.	Los Guillicos	50	35	50			No.	60 tons.	Zinfandel.
Clark, Mrs. C.	Los Guillicos	100	75	100			No.	150 tons.	Zinfandel, Charbono.
Drummond, J. H., estate of.	Los Guillicos	150	130	150			No.	250 tons.	Zinfandel.
Hammond, Arthur	Los Guillicos	6			6		No.	Not bearing.	Tokay.
Hood, Mrs. E. A.	Los Guillicos	225	200	225			Yes.	800 tons.	Zinfandel, Mission, Chasselas.
Luttrell, J. K.	Los Guillicos	100	50	100			No.	150 tons.	Zinfandel, Chasselas.
Macartney, E. A.	Los Guillicos	100	100	100			No.	200 tons.	Zinfandel and mixed.

The report is probably within 10 to 20 percent of being accurate (this writer has discovered prominent names missing from the tabulations of other wine regions or valleys). The error factor may be much higher, however, if Knight's Valley farmers lived in Calistoga over the winter or maintained a Calistoga mailing address. When the Napa listing was completed, the fact that their vineyards were in Sonoma County meant they were dropped. But in Sonoma County, the fact that these owners had a mailing address in Calistoga, eliminated their name from the Sonoma tally.

The Directory of Grape Growers . . . for 1891 carries the notation that Delafield's "Product of 1889" could not be ascertained because it had "Mildewed." Sulphuring vines against this problem was common practice then and it seems rather peculiar that he would have lost all of his grapes. The report may be in error too, on this point.

This same problem, that of attaining an accurate picture of the grape industry in Knight's Valley, shows up again in the 1893 published report on phylloxera damage in Sonoma and Napa counties. This was carried out under the auspices of the Board of Viticultural Commissioners. The survey, vineyard by vineyard, in Sonoma County, covers fifty pages of small single-spaced print. Yet, there are only five grape growers listed for Knight's Valley! Newspaper stories and other sources quoted previously in this report, indicate at least a dozen growers in the valley. Phylloxera, incidentally,

had not yet reached Knight's Valley in the 1890s, so the vineyards would not have been pulled out on that account!

The phylloxera study published in 1893 carries these six names:

"Carter, M. M., Calistoga - Total, 18 acres; in wine grapes, 17 acres; in table grapes, 1 acres; soil red; mountain; exposure south and west; crop, 46 tons.

"Delafield, R. H., Calistoga - Total, 35 acres; all in bearing; soil red loam; mountain, northern exposure; crop, 80 tons. This vineyard is located on a range of mountains on the south side of Knight's Valley near the petrified forest. There is a good stone wine cellar at this vineyard.

"Folkers, J. H. A., Kellogg - Total, 60 acres; all in bearing; resistant, 40 acres; Riparia, 10 acres; Lenoir, 30 acres; grafted and in bearing, 40 acres; not yet grafted, 2 acres; varieties succeeding best: Semillon on Riparia, French on Lenoir; soil black loam interspersed with gravel and decomposed rock; upland and mountain side; southwest and south exposure, crop, 200 tons.

"Holmes, C. H., Kellogg - Total, 10 acres; all in bearing; soil gravelly loam; upland; crop, 30 tons.

"Hood, George, Santa Rosa - Vineyard in Knight's Valley, near Kellogg Post Office. Total, 93 acres; planted to resistant as an experiment, there being no phylloxera in the vineyard; soil red gravel and sandy loam; upland; rolling hills, facing all directions; crop in 1892 about 200 tons, from which 30,000 gallons of wine were made; stock of wine on hand, 35,000 gallons; cooperage 60,000 gallons, of which 40,000 gallons is oak and 20,000 gallons is redwood.

"McDonald, Frank, Calistoga - Total, 8 acres; in wine grapes, 5 acres; in table grapes, 2 acres; in raisin grapes, 1 acres; soil red hill land; on a sidehill; easterly exposure; crop, 6 tons."

The 1890s and early 1900s were the most active years in wine making for the Knight's Valley and local wines appear to have gained some state and, perhaps, even national recognition. (After about 1905, the phylloxera created so much havoc in the valley as to nearly ruin the industry.)

The Hood Winery was operating full tilt, so-to-speak, in the mid-1890s and must have doubled its capacity in those years. The Santa Rosa, California Sonoma Democrat of July 13, 1895 observed:

"The Hood Bros. of Knight's Valley are the owners of the famous Geyser Vineyard and wineries. They recently sold off some 200,000 gallons of wine."

Obviously the Hood Winery was more than a bulk operation, for it was using the brand name of "Geyser Vineyard and Winery." The word "wineries" is plural, so there may have actually been two separate facilities operating under one name. The Healdsburg Enterprise noted on January 16, 1904:

"Alex Hood of Kellogg was in town Monday.... He was arranging to operate the large Hood Winery next season. The winery has stood idle for several seasons."

The Delafield Winery was a strong rival to the Hood brother's wine cellar and probably exceeded it in the amount of publicity it garnered in various newspapers. DELAFIELD, UNLIKE HIS NEIGHBORING WINE MAKERS IN THE VALLEY, ENTERED WINE COMPETITIONS. AT THE SIXTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF VITICULTURISTS IN CALIFORNIA HELD IN MARCH 1888 IN SAN FRANCISCO, HIS "GRENACHE" WINE WON THE FIRST PLACE AWARD. HE WON A THIRD PLACE FOR "FRANKENRIESLING." THE WINE WAS NOT IDENTIFIED AS COMING FROM KNIGHT'S VALLEY BUT CALISTOGA--THE RESIDENCE OF DELAFIELD.

IN CHICAGO IN 1893 AT THE COLUMBIAN WORLD'S EXPOSITION, DELAFIELD PICKED UP THREE WINE AWARDS FOR: "MATERO, MUSCATEL, AND ANGELICA." THE LATTER WINE WAS DESCRIBED BY ONE OF THE JUDGES LATER, AS "VERY GOOD, NICE FLAVOR, ONE OF THE BEST" ON EXHIBIT.

No wonder the St. Helena Star of August 19, 1892 presented a long description of the winery including these comments:

"We found it to be a truly wonderful place, so arranged that the work of five men can be easily done by one. The cellar has a capacity of between 80,000 and 100,000 gallons of wine and a large quantity of first class wine is stored therein. No wine is put on the market until it is properly aged..."

There are half a dozen similar stories in the local newspapers of Sonoma and Napa County including this item in the Independent Calistogan of September 14, 1895:

"R. H. Delafield will run his winery this year under the management of Mr. Pratt, who has been the superintendent for eleven years. Mr. Delafield will return to New York to resume his law practice."

It is inconceivable that Delafield would not have taken wine with him back to New York. There are no shipping bills or other related documents to prove this conjecture, but if a New York lawyer produced 100,000 gallons of fine wines at his California "estate" in Sonoma County, then he must have shipped a goodly portion of it east and sold it to clubs where he had influence (membership) or other retail outlets.

Records on viticulture and wine making in Knight's Valley after 1900 are very difficult to find. California's only wine journal, the Pacific Wine & Spirit Review, published in San Francisco, noted in its issue of October 31, 1902:

"William F. Holmes, Knight's Valley has disposed of his grape crop for \$30 per ton. Some grapes in this section sold for as high as \$33 per ton."

Grapes were still a leading crop in the valley in 1912 according to the Santa Rosa Press Democrat, the leading daily

newspaper serving Sonoma and parts of Napa and Mendocino counties. In a Special Supplement published January 28, 1912, "Knight's Valley" is described:

"Lying east of Alexander valley from Healdsburg, and separated from the former by a low range of hills, is another rich and beautiful stretch of territory known as Knight's valley. Grape growing, dairying, fruit-raising and other kindred industries occupy attention here."

The story goes on to describe in more detail, the attractive scenery, the large ranches and other aspects of life in this valley. A photograph accompanying the story is noteworthy in its emphasis: "The Hood Vineyards, Knight's Valley." There were no photographs of dairying or fruit trees for example. (See copy of story next page.)

PART II

Viticulture From 1920 to the 1970s

With the advent of national Prohibition in the United States (wartime prohibition effecting wine began June 30, 1919, the Eighteenth Amendment took effect January 16, 1920), the established wine makers of Knight's Valley closed their doors. The Hood Winery probably did not operate after 1910 since such long time residents as Charles Laufenberg and Alfred LaFranchi insist they cannot recall wine being made there during their lifetimes. (Both were interviewed for this study.) Laufenberg was born in November 1897 in the valley and has lived here all his life. LaFranchi was born

KNIGHT'S VALLEY

Lying east of Alexander valley from Healdsburg, and separated from the former by a low range of hills, is another rich and beautiful stretch of territory known as Knight's valley. Grape growing, dairying, fruit-raising and other kindred industries occupy attention here; and all are attended with great success, for

the soil of Knight's valley is both fertile and rich. Knight's valley is also noted for its fine climate, which is partly attributable to its altitude and partly to the fact that the valley is almost entirely surrounded by hills and mountains, some of them of great altitude. Mount St. Helena, for instance, which forms the valley's northern boundary line, is the highest mountain in this immediate part of the State. It lies partially in Sonoma and partially in Napa and Lake counties, and is one of the best-known landmarks in this section of the country. Many large ranches are located in Knight's valley, among the best-known of which are the Holmes, Ney, Hood, Hopper and Folkers places. Some of these ranches consist of several thousand acres each, and one of them has been tentatively selected as the site for the new State Trades and Training School, where it is proposed to care for the State's dependent children after they leave the orphan asylums and until such time as they are in a position to look out for themselves.

the soil of Knight's valley is both fertile and rich.

• Knight's valley is also noted for its fine climate, which is partly attributable to its altitude and partly to the fact that the valley is almost entirely surrounded by hills and mountains, some of them of great altitude. Mount St. Helena, for instance, which forms the valley's northern boundary



THE HOOD VINEYARDS, KNIGHT'S VALLEY

line, is the highest mountain in this immediate part of the State. It lies partially in Sonoma and partially in Napa and Lake counties, and is one of the best-known landmarks in this section of the country.

Many large ranches are located in Knight's valley, among the best-known of which are the Holmes, Ney, Hood, Hopper and Folkers places. Some of these ranches consist of several thousand

Under the present law, the State makes no provision for the care of its dependent children after the age of fourteen. The proposed school will take them in hand at that age and fit them for some useful calling or occupation in life. There are some twelve hundred acres in the tract referred to. There are no towns in Knight's valley, although there is a postoffice known as Kellogg.

in the valley in the year 1915 and he too, has lived in Knight's Valley all his life. The LaFranchi family arrived in the valley in 1912.

Within weeks after wartime prohibition took effect in 1919, the price of wine grapes began climbing in California as home wine makers rushed to make the allowable 200 gallons annually. Grape prices went from \$30 a ton to \$60 and \$90 a ton by time the harvest was over. In 1920 the prices were above \$100 and by 1922 or 1923, such favorite varieties as Zinfandel or Alicante Bouschet, could command prices of \$200 a ton and much more. Charles Laufenberg recalls that his father was able to pay off the mortgage on the home ranch in those years--a rather common recollection now of descendants of vineyardists who lived through that period. Overproduction by 1925-26, caused the market to nearly collapse.

Alfred LaFranchi remembers that an Italian farmer named "Molinari" leased or purchased a part of the Hood ranch and raised "a lot of grapes . . . perhaps he had as much as 100 to 150 acres in grapes." He made wine from the grapes and sometimes, apparently, sold it illegally. "There were many people doing that in those years," says LaFranchi. (The Healdsburg Enterprise of November 20, 1924 carries a brief item about the winery of "Z. Molinari" being destroyed by fire with a loss of 14,000 gallons of wine. The location given is simply "north of the city.")

The Molinari vineyards were subsequently sold to a series of different individuals, the acreage in grapes declining each

time a new owner took title. LaFranchi believes some of the Molinari vineyards were still in tack and producing well into the 1950s.

Viticulture in Knight's Valley declined between 1920 and the 1960s to where there were perhaps less than one hundred acres in vines. This, of course, follows the pattern statewide. Not one of the wineries in the valley reopened after Prohibition ended in 1933.

With the advent of the most recent wine boom in California, newcomers to Knight's Valley as well as long time residents, took another look at growing grapes. The tradition of grape growing dates back well over a century, proving very conclusively that the grape finds a natural home in the valley. Since 1970 over a thousand acres have been planted into the finest wine grape varieties available.

PART III

The Boundaries of Knight's Valley

Some, if not many of the small valleys located in the coastal hills of California, have difficulty in drawing distinct boundary lines. This has never been the case with Knight's Valley. No one has ever confused the valley with Napa Valley to the east or Alexander Valley to the west.

The earliest historical evidence relating to boundaries is to be found in John Russell Bartlett's book, published 1852,

Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California. . . . Bartlett and company spent several days exploring the Napa Valley and records:

"Reached Mr. Knight's, twelve miles from Kilburns, at noon. Here the valley grew quite narrow, or rather terminated, it being intersected by a range of hills. At this place, another valley opened some two or three miles in width, and extended about ten miles farther to the north" (page 28).

Yale Professor William H. Brewster recorded the same observation about a decade later when he visited the Napa Valley. His notes, from the years 1860-1864 and published later as Up and Down California read:

"We passed up to the head of the Napa Valley, then over a low divide toward the northwest and descended into Knight's Valley, a lovely valley watered by a tributary of the Russian River. The divide between these valleys on the side of Mount St. Helena is very low, not over five or six hundred feet high. We passed down Knight's Valley a few miles, then across an obscure road, over low hills to McDonald's, on a creek of his name, a tributary of Knight's Creek. Here we camped" (page 226).

The editor of the Healdsburg Russian River Flag newspaper devoted two columns to a description of "Knight's Valley" on October 8, 1874 and stated:

"A fifteen mile drive from Healdsburg toward Calistoga takes you to the venerable adobe house built by Berryessa, long before the American acquisition of California. Back of it to the north, three or four miles off--it seems scarcely half a mile--jagged and naked stands the triple-headed monarch of the mountains, St. Helena. Like Napoleon the Great, who died on another St. Helena, this one is 'grand, gloomy and peculiar.' To the south, east and west are irregular hills and ridges ornamented with a fringe of oaks and evergreens. You are now in Knight's Valley, a couple of miles east of the center."

The first atlas dealing with Sonoma County, was published in 1877 by Thos. H. Thompson & Co. of Oakland, California. It

is a big book, 14½ inches wide by 17½ inches long. The maps on pages 31 and 39 marked "Knight's Valley" clearly take in the ridge lines and leave no question of the valley's relationship to Napa Valley, or Alexander Valley, for example.

The Healdsburg, California Enterprise devoted several pages of a special issue on August 16, 1980 to descriptions of the surrounding countryside. As to Knight's Valley, the newspaper explained:

"Knight's Valley has a position on the extreme eastern boundary of Sonoma County, running from the base of Mt. St. Helena to Alexander Valley, and having an area of about 13,000 acres. It is characterized by the most beautiful scenery; and, though sparsely settled, contains much valuable agricultural and grazing land."

The Santa Rosa, California Press Democrat of January 28, 1912 begins a descriptive piece on Knight's Valley by explaining its location first:

"Lying east of Alexander Valley from Healdsburg and separated from the former by a low range of hills, is another rich and beautiful stretch of terrain known as Knight's Valley. Grape growing, dairying, fruit-raising and other kindred industries occupy attention here..."

The key phrase is "and separated from the former by a low range of hills . . ." is Knight's Valley. Just as is the case on the east side of Knight's Valley, where "low hills" separate it from Napa Valley, the hills are sufficiently high to clearly mark a transition from one geographic region to another. There are no statements in historical literature which would indicate the traveler had difficulty in separating, in his own mind, Napa Valley or Alexander Valley from the lands which make up Knight's Valley.

Historically, the southern most portion of Knight's Valley is the only geographic area which has sometimes been ill-defined. On the U.S. Geological Survey Maps, the name "Franz Valley" is given to the southern most portion of Knight's Valley. Franz Valley also appears on some Sonoma County road maps. However, the 1877 Atlas of Sonoma County clearly shows Knight's Valley as including all that portion later called Franz Valley. In histories of Sonoma County, Franz Valley is seldom mentioned whereas Knight's Valley is described in detail. In the January 28, 1912 Special Supplement of the Santa Rosa Press Democrat, Franz Valley is not mentioned but Knight's Valley is described along with Sonoma Valley, Alexander Valley, Russian River Valley and other well-defined and well-known geographical areas. This pattern has been consistent over the past hundred years. Franz Valley, because of its sparse population, and probably because there is no clear separation from Knight's Valley (the much older "umbrella" designation) really is a non-valley within Knight's Valley.

William F. Heintz
February 17, 1982