

July 8, 1982

Research and Regulations Branch  
Department of the Treasury  
Bureau Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms  
Washington, D.C. 20226

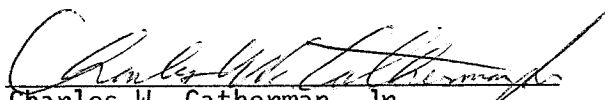
Gentlemen:


We hereby make application for designation of a viticultural area appellation of origin for wine pursuant to 27 CFR 4.25a(e)(2). The area which we feel should be entitled to an appellation is the area located in extreme southwestern Michigan known as "Lake Michigan Shore". In support of this petition the following appendices are included:

- Appendix A Evidence that the name of this area is locally and regionally known as referring to the area specified in Appendix D.
- Appendix B Historical and current evidence that the boundaries of this viticultural area are as specified.
- Appendix C Evidence relating to the numerous features which distinguish this area from surrounding areas.
- Appendix D Boundaries of this viticultural area.
- Appendix E U.S.G.S. maps of the area with the boundaries marked.

We respectfully request that you consider all aspects of our application and encourage you to accept the proposed as a new viticultural area.

Sincerely,

  
Charles W. Catherman, Jr.  
ST. JULIAN WINE CO., INC.

  
Michael Byrne  
WARNER VINEYARDS, INC.

Lake Michigan Shore Appellation:

Appendix E (U.S.G.S. maps of the area with the boundaries marked)  
will be sent under seperate cover.

#### A. "LAKE MICHIGAN SHORE" APPELLATION

The southwestern Michigan counties of Berrien, Van Buren and, to some extent, Cass, Kalamazoo and Allegan have long been known as a very successful fruit growing region to people throughout the midwestern states. This area has, over the decades, been known by more than one name, quite often simultaneously. Of all the various names two stand out and bear the test of historical as well as current reference on a broad scale. These two names, "Fruit Belt" and "Lake Michigan Shore", show up many times in various texts about Michigan.

Richard Sautern, in his Michigan - Heart of the Great Lakes, speaks of these counties as the most valuable fruit growing region respective to the lake. (16)

Milo Quaife in his work, Lake Michigan, notes the fruit belt along the Lake Michigan shore in the state of Michigan and goes on to explain how that belt changes in the types of fruit grown along the shore from north to south, with "two southern counties, Berrien and Van Buren, alone accounting for five-sixths of the state's grape production". (13)

Lawton Hermans in his 1923 book History of Michigan documents the importance of fruit growing to agriculture in the coastal counties of southern Michigan and calls this area the "Lake Michigan shore". He continues on, breaking down the "shore" area into further subdivisions by counties according to the major types of fruit crops of each and references Berrien and Van Buren to grapes as a crop "of much financial importance". (4)

George May in his book Pictorial History of Michigan/The Early Years states "Michigan's most famous specialized agricultural area . . . became a narrow band of land along the Lake Michigan shore of the lower peninsula". Mr. May continues on to explain how, due to the lake effect that the lake has on the shoreline climate of our state, different shoreline areas specialize in different crops. He also mentions, as do several other historical books on Michigan, the fact that the Benton Harbor fruit market was widely known for its fruits and that these fruits including grapes were routinely shipped by freighter across Lake Michigan to Chicago and other markets. Benton Harbor is the major port on the lake in Berrien County. (10)

Appendix A - Page 2

In addition to the widespread recognition that "Lake Michigan shore" has gained over the past century for its orchards and vineyards, this area has done equally well in its fame as a tourist area. Many thousands of people come annually to the shore of Lake Michigan in southwestern Michigan from surrounding states to vacation. It can safely be said that, without the many varied benefits that our area has as a direct result of being situated on the shore of Lake Michigan, we would not be the great agricultural and tourism area that we are today.

## B. "LAKE MICHIGAN SHORE" APPELLATION

The southwestern corner of Michigan, which is bordered on its western side and tremendously influenced by Lake Michigan, has, for over a century, been widely recognized as an important grape growing region.

It is believed that the first grapes grown in Michigan were planted in Van Buren County in 1867 by A. B. Jones in a small vineyard just outside the present village limits of Lawton. (6) Since that time grapes have consistently been a part of the agricultural profile of our area.

Bob Hollis, the historian of the Van Buren County Historical Society, has recently completed a work on grape growing and marketing in this area entitled Eighty Years of Marketing Grapes in Van Buren County. In this book Mr. Hollis details the various companies which have, since 1901, been formed and located here in the heart of the Lake Michigan shore grape region and verifies beyond doubt that this region has had significant importance as a viable and distinct viticultural area. He mentions that in 1901 and 1902 the first processing plants were being started here because "the tonnage of grapes has saturated the fresh fruit market which at that time was limited to about 200 miles because there were no refrigerator railroad cars available that would permit grapes to be sold on any market 500 to 800 miles distant. This practice would happen about five years later . . ." (6) Obviously, then, the region suitable for the growing of quality grapes was limited to the shore region in southwestern Michigan. Otherwise there would not have been a large market for the crop within a 200 mile or even 800 mile radius of this area.

There were many corporations formed in the early 1900's to process and market the grape crop produced in this region, most long since dismantled, even though several were of a large size. The October 1918 Lawton Leader gave the size of the J. Hungerford - Smith plant in Lawton as 700,000 gallons and as requiring 4,000 tons of grapes to fill. In that same year, 1918, the now largest grape juice processor in America came to Lawton in southwestern Michigan as they had expanded sales beyond what the grape growing regions of New York could supply. Since 1918 Welch's Grape Juice Company has made a significant portion of their products from southwestern Michigan grapes and today operates a plant here that consumes over 40,000 tons annually.

B. "Lake Michigan Shore" Appellation - Page 2

The first winery established in Van Buren County was founded in 1932 by William Houppert. Mr. Houppert selected this area for a winery because of experience gained from his father, Franz, a descendant of a several-generation winemaking family from France who had operated a winery in Indiana since 1850 and had, since 1889, purchased grapes from southwestern Michigan for his winery. William was so impressed by the quality of the grapes which he purchased from southwestern Michigan, that it was a logical choice to move his winery to the area.(6)

Since the repeal of Prohibition and the start of BW-MI-1 in Lawton, fifty wineries have been bonded in Michigan. Most of these have been or are currently located in the Lake Michigan shore area. Those that did not or do not have bonded premises physically located here have historically been and currently are dependent upon this area for a significant percentage of their annual production, as the "Lake Michigan Shore" area produces 97.7% of the grapes grown in the state of Michigan.(12)

Over the course of 116 years of ongoing viticultural experimentation and 46 years of continuous viniculture, the boundaries of "Lake Michigan Shore" have been tested and re-tested. The net result of these efforts has confined the economically feasible growing region to the proposed boundaries. As can be seen by Appendix F and Appendix G, "Lake Michigan Shore" is synonymous with grape growing in Michigan.

"Michigan's southwestern counties, behind the towering sand dunes of the Lake Michigan Shore and extending east and north to Kalamazoo, are one of the great fruit-producing sections of the earth." (1)

### C. "LAKE MICHIGAN SHORE" APPELLATION

As can be seen from the enclosed U.S.G.S. topographical maps, the elevations within the proposed viticultural area vary greatly due to the effect of receding ancient glaciers. The rolling hills which these glaciers left are, in part, responsible for the ability of this area to support diversified agriculture, specifically viticulture. The slope of these hills provides air and water drainage, both of which are beneficial to grape vines. (5,13,14,15) Increased soil aeration due to water drainage enables grape roots to spread widely and deeply into the soil to obtain nutrients necessary for growth. (13)

Cold air, being heavier than warm air, remains close to the ground and flows to surrounding lower elevations. The cold air leaving vineyards situated on hills is then replaced by the warmer air above it. This air drainage is necessary in temperate zone viticulture, to reduce the occurrence of vine damage from winter low temperatures and spring and fall frosts. (3,5,9,11,14,15)

Also due to the glacial action and the resultant varied terrain, the proposed area contains hundreds of small to moderately sized lakes and many rivers. These bodies of water enhance air circulation due to their heat retaining ability. (3,11,13,15) Warmed air rising from the water's surface pulls the cooler air from the surrounding land towards the water. Warmer air from above then replaces it. Since water has a high thermal capacity, specific heat, and heat of fusion, the temperature of a body of water changes much more slowly than that of the air (9); therefore, air temperature fluctuations local to bodies of water are reduced.(2)

Temperature fluctuations affect a grape vine more than any other climatic factor.(19) Reduction of temperature extremes is therefore most critical. Air drainage due to topography will minimize temperature extremes, but not nearly as much as the proximity of a large body of water.

If one had to single out the most significant factor contributing to the success of the century-old practice of viticulture in southwestern Michigan, it would undoubtedly be the effect of Lake Michigan on its climate. The "lake effect" of Lake Michigan has a moderating influence on the climate of the proposed viticultural area which otherwise would be more continental in character. (1,8,17,18,2) For the same reasons, most of the major viticultural areas of the world exist near and are greatly influenced by large bodies of water. (1)

C. "Lake Michigan Shore" Appellation - Page 2

Lake Michigan acts as a moderating thermal buffer to the climate otherwise typical of this ( $\pm 42^\circ$ ) latitude. (1,8,9,11,15,17,18,2) "The influence of Lake Michigan on the climate in this area is quite strong throughout most of the year (as noted at the Allegan, Benton Harbor, Bloomingdale, Dowagiac, Eau Claire, Holland, Kalamazoo, Paw Paw and South Haven weather stations). . . Kalamazoo is on the eastern edge of southwest Michigan's fruit producing area . . . which stretches along the southwestern shore of Lake Michigan. The prevailing westerly winds are warmed in the winter and cooled in the summer while crossing Lake Michigan, moderating the climate considerably." (17)

For the same reason the growing degree days and frost free days are increased, improving the climate for growing grapes as compared to the same latitudes to the east of the proposed area. Again, in winter, the lake, since it never completely freezes, serves to temper the minimum temperatures and prevent winter damage in the vineyards. (1,17,18) Also, because of lake effect, there is a belt of higher snow fall from the lake shore extending inland about 45 miles receiving a higher average snowfall which insulates the trunks of the grape vines, decreasing trunk damage. (5,17)

The soils of the proposed area are mostly sandy or sandy-loam which provide good water drainage and soil aeration. They are also usually deep, enabling the roots of the vines to grow far down into the soil and withstand the stress of any droughts. (13,17) Generally, the lower fertility of the soils of the area are beneficial to the quality of the resultant grapes and wines. (19) The poor soils to the north and northeast of Allegan are, concomitant with the variances in climatic and geographic features, a major factor for establishing the northern boundary of the proposed area. (17)



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D) Boundary Description:

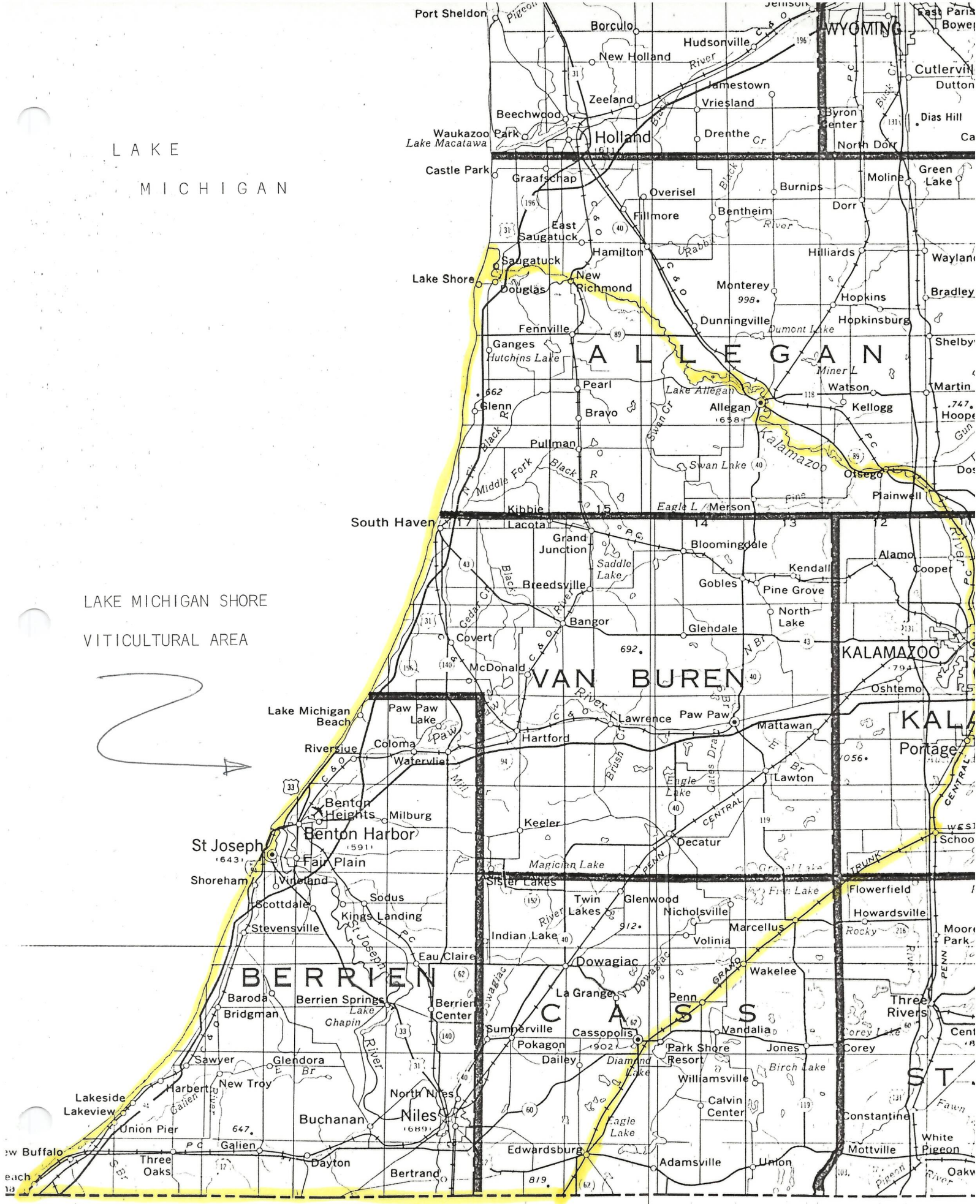
Beginning on the Fennville quadrangle map #1, the northwest corner of the proposed viticultural area is the intersection of the mouth of the Kalamazoo River with Lake Michigan. Proceeding east, the northern boundary is the Kalamazoo River across quadrangle maps Fennville #1, Allegan #2, Gobles #6, Otsego #7, and Kalamazoo North East #8 to the intersection of the Kalamazoo River and the Penn Central railroad line on map #8. The eastern boundary proceeds south along the Penn Central railroad line from its intersection with the Kalamazoo River across quadrangle maps Kalamazoo North East #8, Kalamazoo #10, Portage #16, Schoolcraft Northwest #15, and Schoolcraft #17 to the intersection of the Penn Central and the Grand Trunk western railroad lines. The eastern boundary then proceeds southwesterly along the Grand Trunk Western railroad line from its intersection with the Penn Central railroad line across quadrangle maps Schoolcraft #17, Marcellus #14, Vandalia #26, and Cassopolis #25 to its intersection with the southern border of the State of Michigan. From this point, the southern boundary proceeds west along the southern border of the State of Michigan to its intersection with Lake Michigan. From there, the western boundary proceeds north along the shore of Lake Michigan to its intersection with the mouth of the Kalamazoo River across quadrangle maps New Buffalo West #27, New Buffalo East #28, Bridgeman #22, Stevensville #19, Benton Heights #11, South Haven #4, and Fennville #1. The proposed viticultural area covers approximately 2,000 square miles, or 1,280,000 acres.

E. Quadrangle Maps:

#	NAME	MINUTES
1	Fennville	15
2	Allegan	15
4	South Haven	15
5	Bangor	15
6	Gobles	15
7	Otsego	7 1/2
8	Kalamazoo Northeast	7 1/2
9	Kalamazoo Southwest	7 1/2
10	Kalamazoo	7 1/2
11	Benton Heights	7 1/2
12	Coloma	7 1/2
13	Hartford	15
14	Marcellus	15
15	Schoolcraft Northwest	7 1/2
16	Portage	7 1/2
17	Schoolcraft	7 1/2
19	Stevensville	7 1/2
20	Benton Harbor	7 1/2
21	Sodus	7 1/2
22	Bridgeman	7 1/2
23	Baroda	7 1/2
24	Berrien Springs	7 1/2
25	Cassopolis	15
26	Vandalia	15
27	New Buffalo West	7 1/2
28	New Buffalo East	7 1/2
29	Three Oaks	7 1/2
30	Galien	7 1/2
31	Niles West	7 1/2

LAKE  
MICHIGAN

LAKE MICHIGAN SHORE  
VITICULTURAL AREA



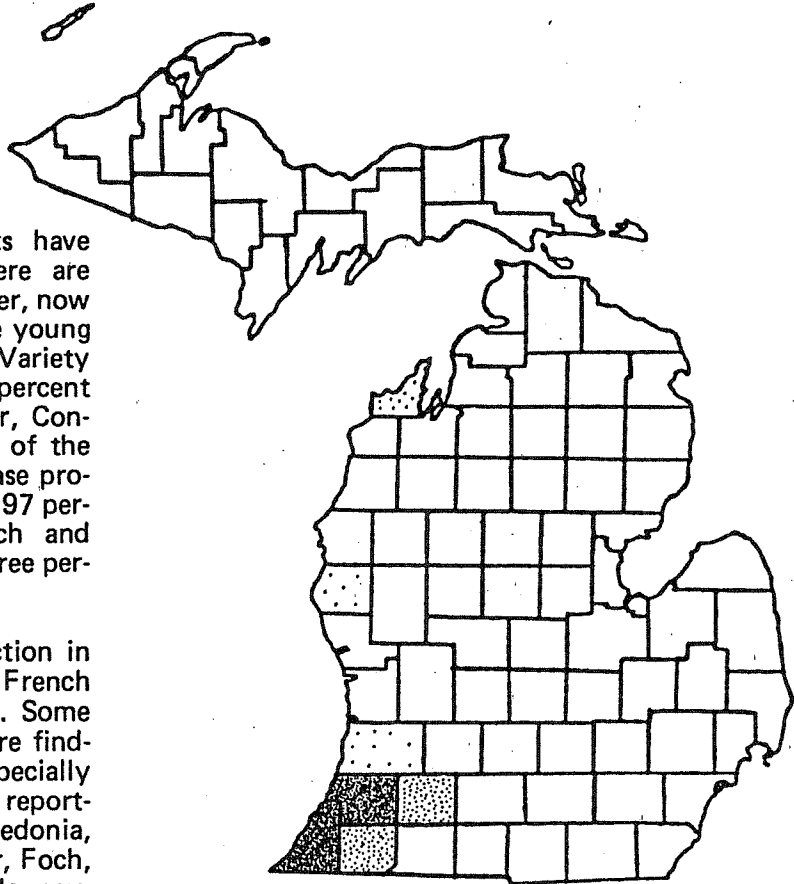
each  
13

F.

# GRAPES

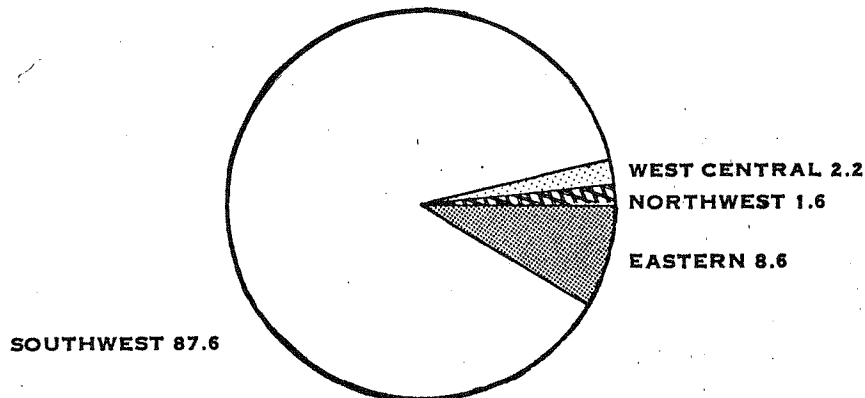
Michigan grape acreage has decreased by 12 percent during the last five years. While 98 percent of the grapes are grown in the Southwest area of the State, both the Northwest and West Central districts have increased their acreage since 1973. There are more young plantings, three years and under, now than five years ago. Almost 13 percent are young now compared to only 9 percent in 1973. Variety breakdown shows Concords losing about 2 percent of the total acreage in Michigan; however, Concords still account for almost 89 percent of the Michigan grape acreage. With the strong base provided by Concords, American varieties have 97 percent of the acreage in Michigan. French and Vinifera varieties make up the remaining three percent.

New and growing interest in wine production in the Northwest has spurred new plantings of French Hybrid and Vinifera varieties in this area. Some fruit growers in the West Central region are finding soils conducive to grape varieties, especially French Hybrids. Among the many varieties reported were American types, Cuyuga White, Fredonia, and Lakemont; French Hybrids, Chancellor, Foch, and Ravat 51; and Vinifera varieties, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and White Reisling.



1 DOT EQUALS 10 ACRES

NUMBER OF GROWERS BY DISTRICT  
PERCENT OF TOTAL



## Wines of Michigan

**A**LTHOUGH Michigan ranks fourth among the states in grape-growing and sixth in wine production, our connoisseur writers almost never write anything about Michigan wines. Yet I have tasted many Michigan wines and found them all clean and sound, and a few that I would rate as excellent. The fruit belt of Michigan is as capable, climatically speaking, of producing fine wines as most of the other viticultural districts east of the Rockies, including even the justly famous Finger Lakes region of New York. But until very recently, the Michigan wineries never tried.

Michigan's southwestern counties, behind the towering sand dunes of the Lake Michigan shore and extending east and north to Kalamazoo, are one of the great fruit-producing sections of the earth. The deep lake waters, which rarely freeze over, yield warmth for the vineyards and orchards in winter, and cool winds from the lake in spring usually retard the buds from opening until danger of killing frosts has passed.

This is grape, apple, blueberry, and peppermint country. Paw Paw, the seat of Van Buren County, is the vineyard center. At the end of September, when Paw Paw holds its week-long grape festival, you can sniff the fragrance of the grapes as you approach the town. In past years, tourists driving through on festival days were stopped at the main street intersection and handed baskets of freshly picked Concord. More than ten thousand acres in Van Buren, Berrien, Kalamazoo, and Allegan Counties are planted to grapes, mostly picked by the new mechanical harvester machines since 1968. All but a few hundred acres are Concord, because four fifths of Michigan's grape crop is used for juice and jelly or is sold fresh for table use. The other fifth goes into wine.

Six of the state's eight producing wineries are in the southwestern corner of the state. Some of them welcome visitors, and the

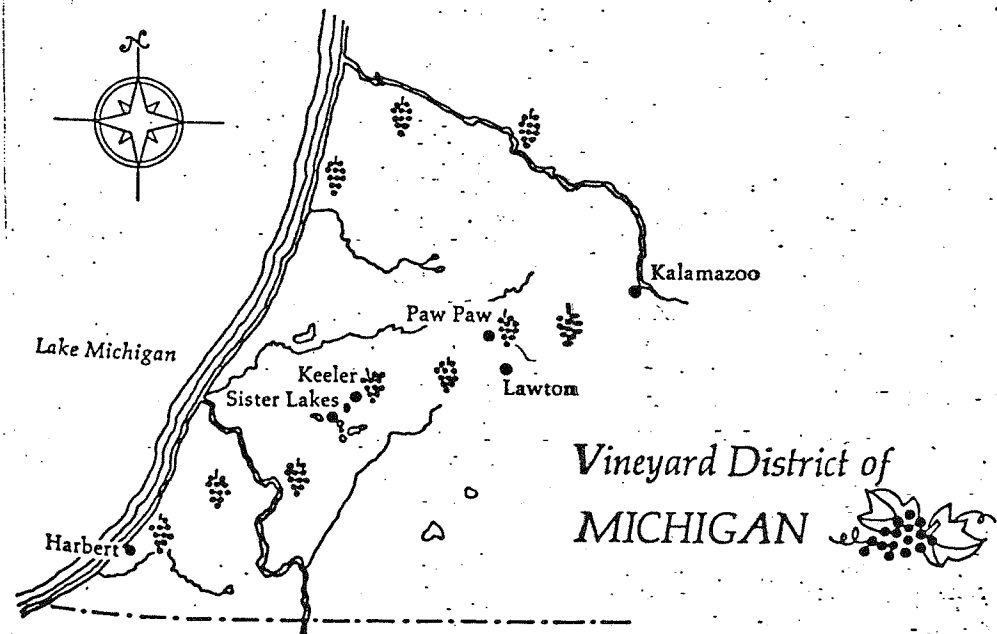
trip from Lansing, Ann Arbor, Detroit, or from Chicago (which is nearer) is well worthwhile.

• 2 •

The wineries of Michigan are still young. There were no famous wineries with castlelike cellars in the state before Prohibition, such as those in Ohio, Missouri, and New York. But actually, the growing of fruit, including grapes, began in southern Michigan in the mid-nineteenth century. By 1880, when the national wine-growing census was taken, there were 2266 acres of vineyards in the state, and Michigan wine production in that year was 62,361 gallons valued at \$75,617. At that time more wine was made in southeastern Michigan, along the Lake Erie shore, than on the Lake Michigan side. Philip Wagner, who grew up at Ann Arbor, recalls that before Prohibition there were many small wineries operated by German farmers in Monroe and Muskegon counties.

What started the massive vineyard plantings in southwestern Michigan was the grape juice boom. When the Welch Grape Juice Company, with its newly built plant at Westfield, New York, began about 1900 to buy Concord from neighboring states, the planting of Concord began in Van Buren and Berrien Counties.

The old Michigan wineries were closed by Wartime Prohibition



G. (1)

H.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE  
HORTICULTURE BUILDING

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824

May 26, 1982

Mr. Michael Byrne  
Enologist, Warner Vineyards  
Paw Paw, MI 49079

Dear Michael:

Enclosed is a copy of the material we collected after the 1976 freeze which clearly shows the effect of Lake Michigan on spring bud development. It also explains how the "lake effect" works.

Although delay per se was not our key interest in this evaluation, the difference in degree of advancement can be observed either as amount of frost kill or stage of development for non-damaged vines. I have used these data to develop the following table:

Location and Miles from Lake Michigan	Cultivar and Rank of Bud Advancement (1=least, 4=most)				
	Baco noir	DeChaunac	Concord	Aurore	Seyval
Tabor Hill (7)	1	-		1	1 ) - same
Sodus (10)	2	1	1	2	1 )
Bronte (18)	3	2	-	3	2
Lawton (25)	4	3	2	4	3

Although undocumented by us, there is a fall "lake effect" and a winter "lake effect" also. In the fall, land temperature declines more rapidly than lake temperature. The lake then gives up heat and serves to delay fall frosts and lengthen the growing season. The winter effect is documented. Winter minima get colder as one moves inland away from the lake. The reason is the same as the fall "effect." This will, of course, influence cultivar choice and vine and bud survival.

Lake effect also influences the summer growing season period by moderating heat through heat uptake and evaporative cooling. This will ultimately influence ripening dates and berry composition and quality. These latter are understood, but not well documented to date.

I hope that this is of help.

Sincerely,

Gordon S. Howell  
Professor of Horticulture

GSH:mmr

MAY 28 1982



I.

EIGHTY YEARS OF MARKETING GRAPES

in

Van Buren County

as remembered by

Robert ( Bob ) Hollis

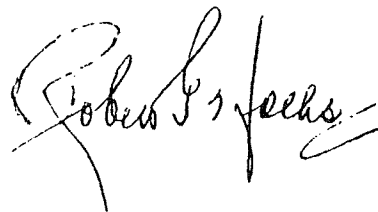
Historian of

Van Buren County Historical Society

Grape Juice      Fresh Grapes      Wines

Special Souvenir Edition to Commemorate the  
First 50 years of the Wineries

Copyright applied for  
March 1981  
by R. G. Hollis  
Mattawan, Mich 49071

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert G. Hollis", with a horizontal line underneath.

## EIGHTY YEARS of MARKETING GRAPES in Van Buren County

It was Dr. C. E. Welch, of Vineland, N. J., who in 1869 found that the serving of wines in the churches for sacramental purposes was contrary to his religious principles. The good doctor was an ardent prohibitionist. Having read of Pasteur's experiments of food sterilization, he tried it on fresh pressed grape juice; and bottled in his wife's kitchen a few bottles. It was sold to a few churches for sacramental purposes to be used in the place of wine. It was an instant success, and it wasn't long that he had a need of larger production. In his search for an area where enough concord grapes were grown to warrant a commercial production, he found the Westfield area in New York state most suitable; as to acreage, and quality of grapes.

This was the beginning of the Welch Grape Juice Company, now known as Welch Foods, Inc.

About 1897, he published an article in a medical journal about the health value of unfermented concord grape juice. About the same time a noted Chatauqua speaker, one William Jennings Bryan, who also was unsuccessful candidate, twice, for president of the United States; liked grape juice, and as a prohibitionist was pleased to endorse it as a wine substitute and a health drink.

It was Mr. Bryan's visit to the N. S. Phelps Sanatorium in Battle Creek, of getting Mr. Phelps interested in serving of grape juice that the writer likes to believe Mr. Bryan indirectly was responsible for the start of the manufacture of unfermented grape juice here.

Mr. Frank E. Bitely, was the first person to process concord grape juice in Michigan. He was at that time an owner of a large vineyard in Lawton and, because of the over supply of grapes at the time, had resulted in prices below production costs, became interested in the processing of grape juice. In a small way he selected the sweetest grapes, and was able to produce a fairly good product. As he seemed to have no great difficulty in selling it, and in fact it was good enough quality to interest Mr. Phelps, and therefore he was encouraged to enlarge his operation.

However, soon after Mr. Phelps visit to the Lawton area in 1901, he decided to get into the business of processing grape juice, and interested a number of his friends, in Battle Creek and Grand Rapids to join with him in organizing the Battle Creek Grape Juice Company. One Frank Morrill, of Lawton and Paw Paw owned the land on which the Welch plant is today, and he gave the land for stock.

The Battle Creek Grape Juice Company, was organized as a 20 year limited Association, on July 14, 1902, with authority to issue stock not to exceed \$ 400,000.

During the winter of 1901 and spring of 1902 there developed considerable interest in having a factory in Lawton to process grapes for grape juice. The tonnage of grapes had saturated the fresh fruit market which at that time was limited to about 200 miles because there were no refrigerator railroad cars available that would permit grapes to be sold on any market 500 to 800 miles distant. This would happen about five years later, and again for a few years the fresh

fruit market was profitable.

The people of Lawton knew of what Frank Bitely was doing and had knowledge of the visits of N. S. Phelps of the Battle Creek Sanatorium. Rumors had it that Grape juice interests in the east were interested in locating in the Lawton area. On Friday, June 6, 1902, a news item appeared on page one of C. E. Lewis' Lawton Leader, with bold headlines as follows:

" NEW FACTORY  
UNFERMENTED GRAPE JUICE FACTORY TO BE BUILT IN LAWTON  
IF SIX HUNDRED TONS OF GRAPES CAN BE CONTRACTED FOR

Martin V. Barker, F. S. Doud and H. E. Squire of Battle Creek were in town Wednesday ( June 4 ) in the interest of establishing an unfermented grape juice factory at Lawton. They wish to contract for 600 tons of grapes at \$ 15.00 a ton. Can only use Concords and Wordens. The grapes are not to be packed but carried directly from the vineyard to the factory in bushel baskets.

Mr. Squier, is now at Hotel Giddings and prepared to sign contracts, and if six hundred tons can be secured a factory representing a capital of from \$ 50,000 to \$ 75,000 will be erected. Mr. Squier, is well known here, having been clerk of Van Buren County."

It was in a short time, less than ten days, he had 600 tons contracted and declining a number of growers who were slow to sign contracts. However, afterwards the growers who were too late to contract were happy not to have done so. We read in the Lawton Leader newspaper of October 10, 1902, as follows: " The prices ( of grapes ) have been exceptionally good 12½ cents being about the lowest ( about \$ 22.00 a ton ) while 16 cents ( \$ 37.50 a ton ) and 18cents have not been uncommon figure. One grower was heard to say that 14 cents was the lowest price he had received so far."

After the signing with the growers contracts for grapes, Mr. Barker, Doud and Squire, returned to Battle Creek, and there organized the Battle Creek Grape Juice Company, Ltd., on July, 14, 1902, an association limited to 20 years. The Articles of Association were filed with the Calhoun County register of deeds, as the general offices were located at 89 West Main Street in Battle Creek, and the factory in Lawton. All officers of the association were not residents of Van Buren County; only Frank E. Morrill, and Mathew Murphy, whose addresses were listed as Lawton. Frank & Cora Morrill, at the time lived in a house just north of the railroad, south side of Main Street, and the factory was later built just in back of their house. ( West ) When Welch bought the factory building in 1918, they bought the house to have frontage on Main Street. George Lambert, who operated a lumber yard nearby bought and moved it across the street.

The officers listed were:

Neil S. Phelps,	Battle Creek,	Chairman
Fred A. Doud,	Battle Creek,	Secretary
Patrick H. Gilkey,	Richland,	Treasurer
Frank E. Morrill,	Lawton,	Manager
David E. Merrill,	Battle Creek,	Sales Manager

Of the authorized stock of \$ 400,000 only about \$ 16,000 was ever paid in cash, and in the meantime they had contracted to erect a factory building, 50 by 75 feet, two floors, basement, and a cellar storage to the west adjoining 80 by 100 feet, 10 feet high, 6 feet in the ground, and 4 feet above, with a 4 inch thick concrete ceiling, walls brick with concrete floor. On the south wall of the wood building, facing the railroad tracks, were painted in four foot black letters, under the gable, the words, DRINK, below, BLOOD OF THE GRAPE, and below, THE GREAT HEALTH DRINK. Over the office entrance door, facing Main Street, was the name of the company, Battle Creek Grape Juice Co., Ltd.

The contract price was \$ 5,950 which did not include the boiler, engine room and coal storage. The company had estimated the entire cost of buildings about \$ 6,500.

As to the progress, we read in the Lawton Leader newspaper for August 22, 1902:

" The juice factory is up and enclosed and the cement men have finished their work on the outside cellar. The roof on the main building is made of a new product called, " Paroid " a prepared roofing. Twenty-two men have been at work on the building this week."

Again, a news item from the Lawton Leader, dated September 26, 1902 as follows: ( headlines )

" NOW RUNNING  
GRAPE JUICE FACTORY STARTED LAST WEEK THIRTY HANDS  
ARE EMPLOYED-- TWENTY FIVE TONS OF GRAPES MADE INTO "BLOOD OF  
THE GRAPE- DAILY

The new grape juice factory started last week and is now employing a force of thirty hands. About 25 tons of grapes are converted into grape juice daily. With exception of the cellar and engine room, the factory is practically completed.

Besides the 55 horsepower engine, two hydraulic presses which are tested at 150 tons pressure each, have been installed, and also other modern machinery. The main building is lighted by 60 incandescent lights.

The grapes are first run thru a crusher, and then pressed, the juice going into large vats in the basement. ( juice and pulp ) It is then pumped to the process room and after undergoing a secret process to keep it from fermenting, it is returned to the basement where it is put into jugs. Ten carloads being on hand for

the purpose. Later the juice will be bottled. The juice is put up as a health drink and is called "Blood of the Grape". Frank E. Morrill, is the manager and Fred S. Doud, Secretary of the company have charge of the plant. With everything new and the grapes coming in large quantities, the management have experienced some difficulty in starting, but they are now getting things organized so that they can handle the business to better advantage. They have also been caused some trouble by fruit growers bringing in green grapes, particularly wordens, from which they cannot make as good juice as from the riper, better fruit.

" The members of the company are progressive business men and are already taking steps to get their products advertised. The new plant will be a great help to the grape growers and the institution makes a handsome addition to the business interests of our village."

In the news article describing the process, mention was made of the secret process to keep the juice from fermenting. There never was any secret process. That was a stock selling point used by promoters during the time to sell stock; everybody had a secret formula or process; and in the case of the Battle Creek Grape Juice Company they claimed it was patented. The process here after the juice was pumped into the so-called process room, it was put into kettles, and heated up to about 185 deg, Fh., and immediately filled into the jugs, or glass carboys, and sealed. No mention is made here of heating the pulp to about 130-140 deg Fh before pressing for good color.

The Battle Creek Grape Juice Company, Ltd., did however on January 13, 1903 receive a patent trade mark for their label, "Blood of the Grape", along with a picture of the Phelps Medical and Surgical Sanatorium building and the grounds surrounding them. For the label as trade mark it is Patent Number 39, 638. But no secret process or formula.

Grape juice made from grapes in September under the process methods used in 1903 to 1940 would not be ready to bottle for sale before March or April of the following year. It was therefore impossible to have any income during the next four months, unless the 300,000 shares of unsold stock, all or part, could be sold for cash. Apparently, only a few if any stock was sold during this time, so the Board of Managers met at the Company's offices on November 2, 1902 and voted to issue some 440 bonds, denominations each from \$ 50 to \$ 1000, secured by real estate, factory building, and personal property in Lawton. A mortgage was the filed with the Van Buren County Register of Deeds at Paw Paw.

We do not know if the Company had any success in selling the bonds or not, regardless of the attractive interest rate of seven per cent. But, about a year later, the Bond Trustee, Mr. Elias W. Bowman, a banker in Kalamazoo, asked the Circuit Court to appoint, Mr. Rall S. Wilson, as a Receiver.

He operated the Company for a few months and the sales and other income failed to meet the interest, and the Court ordered its sale at public auction on July 2, 1906.

Rell S. Wilson, the only bidder, bid the assets of the Battle Creek Grape Juice Company, Ltd., for the sum of \$ 20,000 and assumed the mortgage of \$ 60,000 plus accrued interest and court costs of \$ 4,942 as of March 28, 1906. In other words it cost him \$ 84, 942 to buy the land, factory building, machinery, other equipment, trade name " Blood of the Grape " and so-called secret process; also accounts due the Company, as well as grape juice in cellar storage and bottled goods in the warehouse. The formula, or secret process was supposed to be in a bank vault in Paw Paw.

The life of one of the first pioneers in the grape juice field lasted about four years. It is possible that a few tons of grapes were purchased in the fall of 1903 or 1904 but we are sure none were in 1905 because of the financial condition of the Company and sales.

According to people who knew Rell Wilson, none can remember but very few grapes being purchased by him after he bought the Battle Creek Grape Juice Company, Ltd., It seemed that he made apple cider and vinegar, and sauerkraut mostly rather than grape juice. However, he called his operation the Wilson Grape Juice Company. He filed for bankruptcy; and the small amount of machinery remaining, building and personal, was sold by the Sheriff, November 12, 1915; and Florence Matthes, of Chicago, Ill bid \$ 1,374.86 for the property to satisfy a claim of the Cumberland Glass Manufacturing Company, and was deeded the property.

She, in turn sold the property to Margaret Deegan, of Chicago on February 7, 1916 for \$ 1,500. Margaret Deegan sold it to John J. Wolf also of Chicago on May 31, 1918 for \$ 3,000. The Welch Grape Juice Company of Westfield, N. Y. paid Mr Wolf on July 1, 1918, the sum of \$ 4,200.00.

Apparently, there was more profit in the real estate deals than the grape juice manufacturing business.

However, during this time, Frank Bitely, without much publicity was in his quite way organizing a Company to be known as the Grape Juice Company of Lawton, Ltd., and building a factory on the Michigan Central Railroad in the northeast part of Lawton on Nursery Street whose operation was not a stock selling promotion. As we mentioned before, Frank E. Bitely, was the first person in Michigan to manufacture unfermented grape juice, about 1900. He was busy doing this in a small way in a building he owned on the present site of Warner's Vineyards Winery, southside of the railroad and its intersection with Nursery Street in the village of Lawton.

He was having good success, made a good product, which he found a ready sale. The visit of N. S. Phelps of the Phelps Medical and Surgical Sanatorium to his small factory in 1901 gave him the necessary desire to form a company; and during the months following talked it over with other Lawton business men. Probably he thought that Mr. Phelps would become part of the company, and no doubt was surprised when it was announced in the paper on June 6, 1902 that other Battle Creek interests would build a factory in Lawton, provided they could contract 600 tons of grapes.

Therefore, Mr. Bitely, along with Isiah Hamilton, Timothy W. Bean, Milton D. Lawton, Clyde W. Johnson, William P Belden and James L. Hamilton, agreed to form an association to be known as the Grape Juice Company of Lawton, Ltd., with authority to issue stock up to \$ 400,000. A sum of \$ 35,000 in cash was raised and Mr. Bitely took \$ 5,000 worth of stock for the land and building he owned including personal property listed as follows:

" A certain formula for the " aseptic method of preservation of grape juice"; 150 gallons of grape juice; eleven fifteen-gallon capacity carboys; 16 dozen quart bottles in wood cases; and other merchandise pertaining thereto."

Webster, says the word " aseptic " means free from putrefactive, or pus forming bacteria, or other harmful organisms". The New Universal Dictionary, simply says, " free from disease germs." However, in the light of history we know his process was just one of pasteurization, by heat of 180 degrees fh., for a period of time according to bottle size which would prevent the bacteria present turning sweet pressed juice into wine or vinegar.

They elected William P. Belden as Manager, Frank E Bitely, Secretary and J. E. Hamilton, Treasurer. Date of organization was March 28, 1902.

The Grape Juice Company of Lawton Ltd., never operated or did they buy any grapes, but on June 23, 1903 they merged with another association, Lawton Vineyards Company Ltd., that had been formed during 1902. We reprint herewith an article from the Lawton Leader of June 26, 1903:

" At Kalamazoo last Monday night ( June 22 ) at a meeting of the Board Of Directors of the Grape Juice Company of Lawton Ltd. and the Lawton Vineyards Company Ltd, it was decided to consolidate the two companies, using the name of the latter, and erect and equip one large grape juice factory at Lawton."

" The officers of the new company consist of a board of managers as follows: J. H. Hatfield, of Kalamazoo, Chairman; F. S. Abbey, Battle Creek, Sgretary; Dr. I. E. Hamilton, Lawton, Treasurer; C. W. Sellers, Battle Creek, General Manager; Hon. C. D. Lawton of Lawton, as a member of Board of Directors.

The Chairman, J. H. Hatfield is President of the Kalamazoo Corset Company, and is one of Kalamazoo's most successful business men. Mr. Abbey, is Secretary of the Malto-Too Food Company, of Battle Creek, and Mr. Sellers is the General manager of the same company. Dr. Hamilton and Hon. C. D. Lawton are too well known as successful business men to need any introduction to Lawton people"...

"Both organizations had previously secured sites but the consolidated company decided to use the site on North Nursery Street, south of the M. C. R. R. "

" The new factory will consist of a main building 50 by 100 feet, two stories and basement, with additional cellars. The basement and first story of the main building will be undressed field stone and the second story will be of brick."

" The contract for the building has been let to H. V. Snyder of Chicago who has already commenced work. The cellar is dug, and all the stone is on the ground, also 75,000 brick. Three carloads of cement are on the way."

" The name of the product of the factory will be " Non-Fermento Grape Juice."

" The new building will be rapidly pushed forward and when completed will have a capacity of from 150,000 to 200,000 gallons of grape juice during the season. It will be ready for business by the time grapes are ripe. This is a factory that any town might rejoice in securing. It will give employment to many hands and will be a big business addition to our thriving village."

The factory building was of very sound construction, in fact that when it burned a few years later, the Houppert Wine Company was able to use the original basement and foundations to build the present stone building on it, you see today.

We again read from the Lawton Leader of Friday, June 19, 1904: " Phil Deats, has been engaged as business manager of the Lawton Vineyards Company's grape juice plant, and has commenced work. Some new machinery is being installed, and arrangements made to begin bottling Monday ( June 13th )"

" On July 8, 1904 we read according to the Lawton Leader that a sample bottle of Non-Fermento grape juice was left at the Leader office by Phil Deats, Superintendent of the Lawton Vineyards Company Ltd., factory. All who sampled it pronounced it a very choice article."

Mr. Phil Deats, certainly knew how to make good grape juice and when Armour and Company , bought the American Fruit Juice



factory in Mattawan from Julius Desenberg in 1909 he became superintendent of the factory there on recommendation of Mr. Desenberg, plus the fact he knew how to make a bottle of grape juice fit to drink.

During the five years he was with the Lawton Vineyards Company they made a quality of product. We must remember at this time that grape juice was not on the shelves of many stores and up to this time it was considered sort of a medicine- a health drink and not as an enjoyable beverage as today. Pioneer selling was very difficult and expensive. The Lawton Vineyards Company, did not have a broker like C. C. Palmer of the Lawton Fruit Juice Company, nor a label of appeal as "Royal Purple"- and their competition caused the Lawton Vineyards, an operation loss every year; and in 1916 finding themselves out of money, and grape juice, so on January 14, 1916, Mr. James H. Hatfield, President of the Lawton Vineyards Company Ltd., by approval of its board of directors, sold to a Mr. George Lomax, the land, building, machinery, and other personal property for \$ 5,500, paying cash \$ 3,000 and giving a first mortgage for \$ 2,500. This was sold to the Kalamazoo National Bank to get cash to pay off the shareholders.

As to other competition, we might add that of Armour and Company in Mattawan was supplying some thirty branch houses thru west and southwest, and Welch had greatly increased their sales in the same territory from Westfield. After all "Non-Fermento" as well as the "Blood of the Grape" sure didn't have any appeal to people desiring a fruit juice drink, either for health or beverage reasons. Royal Purple did.

#### THE DAY GRAPE JUICE COMPANY

The Kalamazoo National Bank soon after buying the mortgage from Mr. Hatfield, paid Mr Lomax his \$ 3,000 and took possession. From about January 14, 1916 to February 22, 1922 they leased it to a Mr. J. I. Day, who operated a business there of manufacture of grape juice, made apple cider and vinegar. Also did custom pressing both grapes and apples

The noble experiment, the 18th amendment to the constitution of the United States forbidding the manufacture, the sales of any beverage, or drink containing more than one per cent alcohol by volume forbid same under severe penalties, was Mr. Day's undoing. It was a very unpopular law and was constantly being ignored. Before its repeal in the thirties, millions of dollars was spent; many people sent to prison, and it was a field day for organized crime, and "boot leggers". Millions were made by gangsters- Al Capone and company, etc.

However, you could make your own wine for personal use, but better not try to sell it. There sit a Federal Judge in

Grand Rapids who became noted for the severe sentences to violaters, and it was said that even the smell of liquor on one's breath if you faced him, the sentence was passed without a word spoken, ~~and~~ you were on the road to prison.

So, the custom pressing of grapes, apples and other fruits became a very profitable business, supplying the demand of home wine makers. for not only Mr Day but others who had the equipment; and this continued for ten years after he was out of business.

He did for a time retain some of the good will for the label of the Lawton Vineyards Company Ltd., and shipped a few carloads of grape juice. But as time went on, it was more profitable to custom press fruit for others to make their own wines, and he secretly installed a small still and made a good grade of grape and apple brandy the sales of which, even tho he was very careful, the Federal boys got "wind of it" and after a stake out, raided the place. They confiscated the still, presses, both wines and unfermented grape juice with result that Mr. Day faced the tough prohibitionist Federal judge in Grand Rapids and without much a do was speedily sent to prison. It was the Detroit House of Correction in Detroit. The government took title to the property, as they always did in cases of this kind and the Kalamazoo National Bank had a tax deduction.

The rumors was that Day who was a batchlor, considered a "ladies man" loved to have parties evenings in the factory and according to some very much a duplicate of the Roman bacc-hannalian orgies. However, the writer has made careful reasearch, talked with several people who used to work for Mr. Day, and they had no knowledge of these parties, but they agreed probably he did have a still and sold some of its product.

Mr. Day died in prison soon after being incarcerated, of cancer. Many who knew him felt that the Federal Agents, "set him up" that his arrest therefore not warrented. Personally, I knew him as a fine, honest person, and living thru the years of prohibition, I can't help but feel he got a "raw" deal, that these officers had a personal grudge.

It is my hope that we've learned that we cannot legislate morals. Local counties, and towns had adopted prohibition on a voluntary basis because they wanted it as a means of control, but when it was tried nationally, forcing it on people who did not want it; it became a costly experiment doomed to failure. It was a moral issue, and the educational work of a hundred years was wiped out over night. Had it not happened and we had continued the work, county by county and state by state, I doubt very much if we would have any liquor problem today.

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A news item in the November 15, 1923, Lawton Leader reported that Dr Hamilton and Clyde W. Johnson, DDS, had acquired the property from the Federal government and, now had a force of men at work putting a new roof on the building, painting it, etc. It was also reported that several people were interested in buying the property for fruit processing or light manufacturing purposes.

However, a brother-in-law of the writer, Graham W. Higley, about this time was getting machinery for a grape juice plant to be located on the present Red Arrow Highway, as he was then operating a roadside stand, selling fruit juices, and business was good. He heard that Mr. Johnson had a grape crusher, and called on him regarding its sale. Mr. Johnson, offered him a good deal if he would buy the building. But, Mr. Higley felt it would put him too far in debt, and his business at that time did not warrant the investment. However, he bought the only machinery left-- one that would stem and crush grapes. It is still in the Higley factory.

The building would remain vacant until Mr. Johnson sold it to William Houppert in 1932- to become a winery. More about Mr. Houppert later.

#### THE LAWTON FRUIT JUICE COMPANY

Sometime during 1902 and 1903, Pliny A. Hubbard, a grape vineyardist; N. W. Abbott, Lawton merchant; and Frank McKeyes, Lawton Banker, along with others, joined together and formed an association known as the Lawton Fruit Juice Company Ltd., For a factory location they purchased a parcel of land, north of Union Street and west of the business district in Lawton, the lots were numbers 1 thru 6 of Block 5, Original plat of Lawton. James Street was their access. About 65 feet south of James Street they dug a shallow cellar, and erected a small wood building and installed machinery necessary for the manufacture of grape juice. In about 1905 the business had expanded and they built a two story brick building with basement. ( Picture shown elsewhere ).

It was about this time that Mr. Hubbard gave a foods broker in Kansas City the license to represent the company in selling the grape juice bottled under the label, " Royal Purple" to one C. C. Palmer. He was at the time also a broker for J. Hungerford-Smith Company of New York state, manufactures of soda fountain syrups. He liked Royal Purple grape juice, both product and name. He was a very young, energetic man, and " a born salesman" so it wasn't long before he was selling the entire output of Pliny Hubbard's little factory. In an effort to keep production up with sales, Mr Hubbard, would always telegram him " too bad but right now we can't sell you any more grape juice as we have to take care of orders from our eastern trade."

and will be located directly west of the factory, being only 12 feet from the west end of the building." (18)

" On account of the increasing business of the company, the original power plant has proven inadequate, especially during the pressing season. The new improvement will be modern and up-to-date in every particular, and will be ready for use by the time pressing begins in September or October."

" The company has also lately acquired the Floyd Halstead residence property south of the factory, and the Charles Hayden property further west, but we are credibly informed that these lots are not to be used for extending the factory."

" The Hayden lots will be used that the factory may have a double siding, thus affording better facilities for loading and unloading and also giving more track room for coal."

" The Leader is glad to note the progress, not only because of the benefit to the factory, but because of the permanent improvement which results in a great benefit to the village and community."

The J. Hungerford-Smith Grape Juice Company was very successful company, making money for improvements, dividends to stock holders, and paying employees good wages.

A news item in the Lawton Leader of September 2, 1920 says: " Smith factory help to get a 10 % salary and wage bonus. They had been promised a 6% bonus but the company had made a nice profit the stockholders, so the employees shared an extra 4 %, "

The cellar storage capacity as reported in October 1918 Lawton Leader, gave the figures of 700,000 gallons, and that would require the purchase of about 4,000 tons of grapes, to fill. (19)

Just before the consolidation with the United Grape Products, on December 28, 1927, a fruit jelly and preserves operation was added, the product sold under both customer, labels and a factory label- Rosemary. The Rosemary label was also used on grape juice, as another factory label.

We should add here that probably 50 % of both juice and preserves were sold under private labels- as for example, A & P etc. In fact one jobber in conversation with the writer said that the factory was his only competition. He had license to sell Royal Purple, and another wholesaler in the same town was selling Rosemary. He had been to the factory and saw that when the bottled juice came from the filling machine, the production line divided- one going for Royal Purple label, the other Rosemary. This today is a common practise- private label on one line, and the factory label on the other. The private label always sells a few cents less than the factory label in most cases, but the juice is the same, all from the same place.

Another news item from the Leader says: " The J. Hungerford-Smith Grape Juice Company entertained their employees and their families a social gathering at the plant on Saturday evening of June 22, 1918. About 125 people were present. During the evening ice cream and cake were served, also candy and cigars. Victrola music was furnished and those who wished enjoyed dancing. The company has just closed a most successful bottling and shipping season, the largest in its history." (20)

When the employees went home from this party, there must have been some concern of the freezing temperatures before midnight. To date this was the latest freeze experienced in southwest Michigan. It got as low as 25 degrees in some places, only those vines on the high hills had any grapes the fall of 1918-- about 15 % of a normal crop. But there was a " second " setting of buds, and those grapes were harvested late in October with a low sugar content. Mr. Welch, who opened a plant in Lawton that year to make grape jam for the government had the right kind of grapes for his product.

The writer has always deplored the fact that in writing about any business or organizations the only people mentioned is management chiefs, but there is always some " indians " who also contributed to the success of the business. While, I wasn't acquainted with only a few of the Hungerford-Smith employees, therefore can only mention: Mr Edward Seivers, who in 1914 joined the company, as accountant, and rose to a position of general superintendent, and when it was consolidated with the United Grape Products in 1927 was General Manager of the Michigan operations of the United Grape Products. Mr Ralph Sheldon, who spent many years in a factory foreman capacity with Hungerford-Smith, United Grape Products and a few years ago retired from Welch Grape Juice Company. Mr Harry Reynolds, shipping clerk with J. Hungerford-Smith, United Grape Products, and with Welch, as growers relation man, and retired from Welch. George Stannard, who was in the accounting department of Hungerford-Smith, and afterwards operated a clothing store, and news agency in Lawton. He served a number of years on the Board of Supervisors, besides township offices and was a worthy and friendly opponent of mine for the office of Antwerp Township Supervisor. The Root brothers, Dan and Jim, kept the machinery going, and of course, Joe Slevatz, and Hamilton ( Ham ) Ewing. Ham as he was affectionately called by friends and neighbors, an honest man of high ideals, was the " growers relation man " with the grape growers, and assured J. Hungerford-Smith a good supply of the finest quality grapes each year-- a " truly right hand man " to both C. C. Palmer and Edward Seivers. All these men became personal friends of mine, of which today I have fond memories, I know there were many others whose loyalty and dedication to their jobs, contributed much to the success of the company, and my regrets that I never knew them. 21

## THE ( old ) PAW PAW GRAPE JUICE COMPANY

We title this article as " The Old Paw Paw Grape Juice Company to distinguish it from the present corporation operated by Warner's Vineyards, at the same location in Paw Paw. The present winery was built " over " the original building of the old Paw Paw Grape Juice Company completely hiding it from view.

It was Mr. Wm C. Wildey, a prominent grape grower and for years member as Supervisor representing Paw Paw township, on the County Board that was looking for a better market for his grapes that was a moving factor to securing a grape juice factory for Paw Paw. So securing the co-operation of Frank Morrill and Fred Doud, who had acquired some experience in the business( both at the time had an interest in the Battle Creek Grape Juice factory in Lawton ) together they organized on June 12, 1903 an company known as the Malto-Grape Company Ltd. The reason they called it Malto-Grape was to associate it with the health food cereal industry of Battle Creek. Referring to the record ( see Liber 105 Deeds, pages 558-559 ) we read that the original shareholders were:

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William J. Jaquess,	1000 shares
Arthur Miller,	2000 shares
Fred S. Doud,	77000 shares
Wm . C. Wildey,	2000 shares
Frank E. Morrill,	2000 shares

The authorized capital stock of the Association was \$ 400,000 with the value of the stock at a dollar a share. William Jaquess, Arthur Miller, Wm C. Wildey, and Frank Morrill paid part cash for their stock, total of \$ 7,000. Fred S. Doud's stock according to the record was to be paid as follows: \$ 2,000 cash, and the balance according to schedule attached. The schedule was never recorded so we do not know if any of the payments were made. We have reason to believe that only a few payments were made, as we understand a few years later Mr. Doud who had interests in the cereal industry as well as a Battle Creek merchant, had financial troubles.

However, most of the 77,0000 shares were assigned to him to be sold to the public, and as Secretary had the authority to sign stock to purchasers.

The charter of the Malto-Grape Company of Paw Paw Ltd, says that the purpose of the association was " the manufacture and sale of non-fermented grape juice and kindred products." Like the Lawton Vineyards Company and the Battle Creek Grape Juice Company, they too claimed to have a patented secret process; which of course was not true. But the so-called document was deposited in the vault of the First National Bank in Paw Paw, and what better place to close a stock sale then to take the prospect to the bank; have a bank employee get the document from the vault and let the prospect have a fast glance at it. The atmosphere of the bank always broke down any resistance that the prospect might still have. And, years later Mr. Morrill would relate to the writer, "in Mr. Doud's absence, there too in the bank was a supply of stock certificates in blank all signed by him, and all the salesman had to do was to write in the number of shares, and collect a dollar each share, depositing it in the bank in presence of the buyer; hand him the stock"

It is too bad that the document has not been preserved, as today it would be a valuable addition, framed and hung on the walls of James J. Warner's Wine Haus, along with many other objects of the grape juice and wine industry. The Wine Haus itself is the old water works pumping station building of the village of Paw Paw, which is located on the site of an ancient mineral spring. 24

However, probably \$ 25,000 in cash was paid in and this would cover the cost of building and machinery, including storage containers. As both Mr. Wildey and Morrill owned and operated large vineyards, they could sell the company their grapes in sufficient quantity for their needs at first to get started and receive pay for the grapes when the juice was sold.

As I recall the building a few years later. The main building had a "shallow" cellar not over six feet deep under the entire building, with three feet of concrete walls above ground level. The first floor of this two story brick building was of hard maple wood flooring. The second story had a pine board floor. It was about forty feet wide, east and west, one hundred twenty feet long, north and south. The cream colored wall bricks rested on a poured concrete basement walls. It had a concrete basement floor. The building was well constructed, and had the usual "flat" roof common to most commercial buildings. On the south side of the building was a twenty foot wide porch, forty feet long, east and west, one story with a shed type slanting roof. Grapes were received here, and any supplies of less than carloads. There was a rail siding on the east of the building, as today; where cars were loaded with grape juice and bottles in cases unloaded. It has the same use today.

At the north end was the engine and boiler room. Coal was stored outside. This was also of brick and concrete construction. One story, about 20 x 20 feet, with a concrete floor and a slanting to the north a "shed type roof." 25

The office space consisted of two rooms in the southeast corner on the first floor and had entrance from the twenty foot wide plank wood floor porch on the south side of the building. There was also a large door about six feet wide into the factory room itself from the porch. The office rooms were about 14 x 14 feet each and were heated same as the first floor by radiator steam heat supplied from the boiler in the engine room.

As to the 20 x 60 foot outside cellar addition from the northwest corner of the main building I don't believe it was built until the company had been in operation a few years, or until the need for more storage was needed, and I don't believe this happened until about the time of reorganization of the business as the Paw Paw Grape Juice Company, under the ownership and management of Mr. Arthur Miller. He called the product "Puritan Grape Juice." The label had a picture of one of our historical male puritians, full front view from knees up, with a solemn facial expression so common of them. Looking back on history I can't feature where it would help sell grape juice as a beverage, or even in those days as a health drink; only to

perhaps to sell the idea that the product was indeed pure fruit juice nothing added whatever. Too bad there are no labels available today; and perhaps this is my fault as at the time I visited the factory in 1923 there were hundreds of these labels around. But to a lad of 23- history is far from his thoughts. As far as I know the label was never registered.

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Today the entire building, with extensions, the original maple first floor removed, and raised about six feet to permit large storage casks in the cellar, and the west outside cellar extension with the original roof raised over which the present bottling room is built; the boiler and engine room, roof raised and enlarged, the original construction remains.

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The only part of the original in view today is the north brick wall of the former outside grape juice cellar.

Arthur Miller, became owner and manager of the Paw Paw Grape Juice Company Ltd., in about 1908. From what I remember of the machinery and equipment when I visited there in 1923 would lead me to believe that he probably employed about ten people on the bottling line with addition of two more in the cellar to open, and dump the juice into a tank to be bottled; also to wash and store the storage containers. During the pressing season, probably fifteen. The capacity of storage, to press grapes, I would estimate 2,500 tons. I doubt very much if the 2,500 tons were ever processed, probably on an average of about 800 to 1000 tons. O. W. Rowland in his History of 1912 says, "that 800 tons of grapes were received which made 100,000 gallons of grape juice during the season of 1911,"

Arthur Miller's, Paw Paw Grape Juice Company, would probably have year around employment for five or six people including the office. The bottling season usually was from March thru June and the grape pressing season about six weeks, in September and October.

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Mr. Miller was his own factory superintendent, grape buyer or growers relations, administrator, and sales manager. During the years from 1908 to 1922 or 23 he did a good business until he filed for bankruptcy. I am told because of poor health he could no longer continue. Also, the last few years business slumped because of competition both Armour And Company in Mattawan, and he was also in direct competition with J. Hungerford-Smith in the private label market. The profit margin after paying salaries and wages did not permit buying of modern automatic bottling equipment; as both Armour and J. Hungerford-Smith were using, and the "hand" operation simply could not bottle juice as cheap. I doubt whether he could bottle more than 300 cases of 12 pint bottles in a ten hour day. So, with no more working capital and bad health, he decided to quit business.



Mr. Tom Cavanagh, a prominent attorney of Paw Paw, for the sum of \$ 12,500 plus court costs, became the owner of the building, grape juice in storage, machinery and equipment in 1923.

The plant being vacant for more than a year, so about 1924 or 25, Mr. Graham Higley, made a deal with the Cavanaghs to bottle in the plant what grape juice was still in good condition, as about two thirds had frozen and the solids seperated; not to bottle for sale, and some containers had lost their seal, the juice had turned to vinegar. Because of average poor color it was blended with grape juice bought from the Armour plant in Mattawan.

27

During the years from 1924, it was leased to a concern manufacturing dehydrated fruits, and after they closed their business; the Paw Paw Basket factory made fruit baskets there for a year or two following the burning of their factory,...

#### ARMOUR'S GRAPE JUICE FACTORY in Mattawan

28

Armour and Company, meat packers, of Chicago, was at the time in several processing fields, as canning fruits and vegetables, operating creameries, and manufacturing soda fountain syrups in many parts of the country. In about 1902, they built a factory in Westfield, New York, to manufacture soda fountain syrups and produce unfermented grape juice. At the time they were in Hammond, Louisiana, buying and packing strawberries in barrels, to be stored frozen; at Paw Paw, they had a receiving station for potatoes, onions, and fruits to be shipped to a processing plant in Chicago. The receiving station was located on railroad ground, west side of Kalamazoo Street, where the St. Julian Winery is now located.

Business was very good, and about 1908 because their grape juice business had grown to a point where it was necessary to add space to the factory in Westfield, rather than to do this, why not consider Michigan? From here they could better serve the midwest and western markets. The freight would be less. Therefore, they surveyed all three grape growing areas; Paw Paw, Mattawan and Lawton. Lawton already had three grape juice factories, and Paw Paw had one; but they selected the Mattawan area, first because of the sandy soil would ripen grapes about a week to ten days earlier than the loamy soils west of Paw Paw. It was necessary to have a good deep cellar with good drainage for proper storage of grape juice in glass carboys; the site of the Kapp & DeSenberg factory in Mattawan was ideal. Also, we must remember that in 1909 there were no trucks to bring grapes to the factory. In an area of six miles around Mattawan there were enough acres of grapes to supply their needs, without too close competition with the other grape juice factories, and it had an excellent railroad for shipping purposes.

29

The American Fruit Juice Company, had in April 1903 bought from Bert W and Nellie Payne, Lots number 1 thru 4 of Kinnie's Addition to the Village of Mattawan, where today is located the factory building of Contech, Inc, manufactures of Ahesives. The American Fruit Juice built a small one story wood building on Lots one and two, fronting on Main Street and Concord Street. They crushed a few grapes in 1903 to bottle the juice in 1904, and continued the operation until they sold to Humphrey S. and Eleanor Gray, of Benton Harbor, September 12, 1905. 29

As to whether the Grays continued to operate the factory we do not know, it would have been possible they were in possession for from September 12, 1905 until April 8, 1908 when the plant was sold to Henry Kapp of Battle Creek and Julius Desenberg, a vineyardist and Lawton Merchant.

The fall of 1908, Kapp & Desenberg had good reasons to operate because Desenberg had a surplus of grapes and Kapp had some sales connections; so they pressed a few tons of grapes and were prepared to bottle juice in 1909. But on May 3, 1909 for \$ 5,000 they sold the real estate, building, machinery and grape juice in cellar, to J. Ogden Armour of Chicago. With the hiring of Phil Deats about a month later, they could have bottled the juice for Armour label while getting the plant ready to press grapes the fall of 1909. Mr. Deats, was the Plant Manager after hiring a few men went to work, cleaning and painting the building, installing better crushing and grape pressing machinery; in a general way they got ready to press grapes in October. The capacity for storage was small so only about 500 to 600 tons of grapes were pressed in the fall of 1910. 29 30

According to O. W. Rowland's History of Van Buren County, in 1911, Mr. Deats told him that Armour had processed 1,356 tons of grapes and stored in five gallon glass carboys, 300,000 gallons of grape juice to bottle during the season of 1912.

The wood frame building bought from Kapp & Desenberg now had become too small for their operation, so in 1913 and 14 two more lots were bought to the east of the building. Here a new deep cellar was dug, and a three story brick and concrete building constructed.

Again in 1920, the business had grown so that it was necessary to add more space; so the original wood frame building to the west of the brick three story building was torn down; the cellar deepened, and a more modern, glass, brick and concrete building erected; also a boiler and engine room with a coal storage added to the north facing the railroad, and side track extended to Main Street.

The Lawton Leader newspaper of May 20, 1920 had this to say: 3

"Armour and Company, are now at work on a new addition to their grape juice factory at Mattawan, which will be 187 feet long and 114 feet wide, with a 15 foot basement, and all the building except the power plant will be three stories above the basement." 30

" The new addition takes the place of the frame building which they have been using, adjoining their three story brick structure, and when it is completed, they will have a factory 301 feet long and 114 feet wide." 31

" The new building will be of steel and concrete, fire-proof, and well lighted and ventilated. It is stated that 6,000 yards of gravel will be used in its construction."

" The frame building has already been removed, a portion of the foundation taken away, and excavation is in progress, the contract having been let to H. L. Vander-Horst, of Kalamazoo, who expects to have the building completed by September first."

" Included in the construction will be a new power plant, which will consist of a boiler room, engine room, and coal room, with a brick chimney rising 80 feet above the ground."

" The entire factory will be equipped with most modern machinery, there will be greater storage than at present, and working conditions will be more convenient."

" When the building is completed the factory will have a capacity of 5,000 or more tons of grapes annually, and will have cellar room for a million gallons of juice."

" Armour and Company began making unfermented grape juice in Mattawan 11 years ago. The first season they made only 100,000 gallons of juice. Since that time the factory has been enlarged and the business has grown so that they have pressed as high as 3,500 tons in a season, and have had storage capacity for more than 250 carloads of juice. With the new improvement as seen above, their capacity will be greatly increased and there will be room in their cellars for forty more carloads of carboys, which have already been ordered." 32

" This splendid improvement made by Armour and Company not only makes the grape industry more stable, but it is an incentive to growers to take better care of their vineyards, and is a benefit not only to the growers here, but to every grape grower in Southern Michigan."

The full grape pressing capacity was never used after 1920. In 1921, about 2000 tons were made into juice because of a large carry over from 1920, and in 1922 only about 1,000 tons were made into grape juice. All because the Federal government had a temporary degree against Armour requiring them to divest themselves from all manufacturing, and selling operations not related

to the meat business. More about this later.

During the summer of 1920, period of new construction; a sign painter was hired to paint on the first brick building's north side that faced the railroad, and Mattawan's Front Street, the words, "ARMOUR'S GRAPE JUICE FACTORY", and the first day of lettering he painted the words ARMOUR'S GRA, and stopped on the Friday afternoon for the week end. During the time following some one got on the scaffold and with the same colored paint, painted the letters VE- so when Phil Deats saw the sign on Monday morning and read ARMOUR'S GRAVE he went "thru the tree tops" and rumor later was that Bob Beardsley was the artist and he claimed later was the reason why Mr. Deats terminated his job a few weeks later. Locally, it was considered a joke. The painter's helper had become a prophet of the future.

32

In about 1917, Armour and Company, was accused of being in violation of the Anti-Trust Laws, as suit being filed by the National Wholesale Growers Association, in the federal court stating that Armour and Company was a monopoly not only in the meat packing business but were operating in many other unrelated lines of the food business besides using their refrigerated cars for delivery of all their products to their many branch distribution houses in the country. By using their own cars which paid freight charges by the to the railroads to haul them, a considerable savings of freight charges were made to the disadvantage of the wholesalers who had to use the regular railroad cars and services. For instance: if the Armour branch house in Kalamazoo, or Detroit, wanted less than a carload of grape juice, say 25 cases; a refrigerated car could be stopped at Mattawan, the grape juice loaded, and no extra freight would be charged for its delivery. Grape juice was shipped sometimes to the meat packing plant in Chicago, stored there for re-shipment to points west along with meat, canned goods, and other products to other branch houses. However, after the Armour family signed the agreement with the federal government, grape juice shipped to their branch houses was not in their own cars, but railroad owned cars, same as other manufacturers would serve their wholesale houses.

33

The Armour family had sold about 55 per cent of their stock of the Illinois corporation; re-organized Armour and Company under new management, and the new company refused to divest themselves of the so-called unrelated lines claiming because of re-organization the consent degree signed by the Armour family did not apply to them, so in the federal courts for the next five years, and the government won.

However, before reorganization the Armour family had sold all their interest in the Armour Refrigerator car lines. The business going mostly to the Fruit Growers Express lines.

Therefore, on December 28, 1927, the plant, land, machinery, storage carboys with grape juice in them was sold to the new consolidated grape juice corporation, seven plants in the east, and two in Michigan, known as the United Grape Products, Inc., with general offices, all of the fourth floor, of the Liberty National Bank building in Buffalo, N. Y.

The Armour label for grape juice was retained by Armour, and the consent decree did not permit the sale of the Armour label from any of the Armour branch houses.

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Again we should mention other people who were employed by Armour; honoring their services and loyalty. Besides, Phil Deats who had retired in 1925; Mr. A. S. Henderson, who followed him as Plant Manager; Joseph Hamilton, Office manager from about 1912 to 1919, next Hubert Rix, Frank Pearsol, and Robert G. Hollis. Plant Superintendents, Phil Deats, Robert Beardslee, and Glenn A. Wood. Others--were; Victor Hall, Albert Hall, Glen Milney, Leon G. Wise, Richmond ( Sandy ) Rix and Charles C. Koons, who later would become, Sheriff of Van Buren County. Joseph Hamilton, organized the Mastercraft Corporation of Kalamazoo, and was its president until his retirement in 1978. He was active in the Kalamazoo Exchange Club, the Mattawan church and Mattawan Lions, and many other community projects.

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UNITED GRAPE PRODUCTS, Inc  
The Lawton and Mattawan Plants

When during the summer of 1927, C. C. Palmer was planning on the creation of his " Grape Juice Empire", with the consolidation and purchase of a number of small processors; it was at that time a good sound idea; the economy was still good in spite of the land speculation in Florida; which had ended a short time before. Herbert Hoover, was running on a platform of " A chicken in everyone's pot and two cars in a garage for everybody."

Little did we think at the time that in just a few months the worse depression ever to hit our economy would happen, and from it would emerge a new method of doing business, with the Federal government telling us what we should do or not. Stock market speculation was the cause. Personally, if I am going to gamble the best place to bet my money is on a dog race.

A few days ago a dude who operates a news service from Holly Hill in Florida, told his several thousand clients to buy stocks, and in less than 24 hours sent them all telegrams to sell at once. The result was one of the biggest day of sales in the market and many investors ( or speculators ) lost thousands of dollars.

This was just more or less a repeat of what happened before and was the start of the worst depression in our history to date. I can happen again, but we will probably call it a "severe recession", Many of my readers today are too young to remember the big depression of the thirties and as we continue you will we hope get the picture.

The past history of the grape juice business had been very profitable one; in particular for, Welch's, J. Hungerford-Smith and Armour's. They had a quality product, that was well known, and had also sufficient capital to advertise and promote sales. This was in contrast to the Lawton Vineyards Company, Battle Creek Grape Juice Company, and the Paw Paw Grape Juice Company, whose failure was poor quality of product in general, loss from poor storage, lack of capital and sales organization.

In other words the "Pioneer Grape Juice processors" had at last succeeded.

It is not clear to the writer but what the government would have permitted the sale of Armour's label thru their branch houses after the United Grape Products had bought the Armour plant. Evidently, Mr. Palmer thought this would be permitted and during the first year they operated the Mattawan factory, several cases of Armour's label was bottled and shipped to their warehouses; but none was sold during the second year, and the label disappeared from the stores. Mr. Palmer, was too good a business man I am sure not to have had some assurance. However, the Armour business had it continued there is no doubt in my mind the United Grape Products would today be operating the former Armour plant in Mattawan.

C. C. Palmer, had a good organization composed of men and women experienced in their lines, in the sales department, office personnel, and in the factory itself. Most of the old J. Hungerford-Smith employees and a number of the Armour and other plants were in his employ. All former employees had a job if they wished to continue with the United Grape Products,

Mr Edward Sievers, Sr., was the Manager of both the Lawton 3 and Mattawan factories. Mr Glenn A. Wood, was superintendent in charge of the Mattawan factory and Mr Ralph Sheldon was in charge same capacity of the Lawton factory.

Mistakes were made of course but none too serious. Mr Palmer desired very much to promote the Company's own labels, Royal Purple and Rosemary for grape juice, and Rosemary for a line of preserves that were being manufactured at the Lawton plant. The preserve line had been started during the last years of the J. Hungerford-Smith, and had good customer acceptance. Even when the United Grape Products was operating under receivership in the thirties, business increased and last year of receivership was carrying the full load of expenses.

At the Mattawan factory, a new product was being made, pure grape juice with a lot of added sugar to make a heavy syrup for soda fountain use and bottled carbonated drinks ( as soda pop) It was beginning to show promise of a large volume of sales, when after a few months of storage the product became stale, as to speak, developed an off flavor, so a large number of cases of bottle goods were returned to the factory,.. 37

The Company, had invested a lot of money in the development of the product, furnishing dispensers to hold gallon jugs at the soda fountains, the same as today you see for Cocoa Cola, Pepsi-Cola, Orange Crush, and other syrups where they are sold as a carbonated drink made at the fountain. A lot of money was spent in advertising; both at point of sale; elaborate colored posters, and newspaper advertising?... Note the picture of a truck load of " Grape Ola" samples to go by express to the trade. They were transported to the express office in Mattawan, probably the largest shipments made thru that office to be loaded on the train. The truck shown was owned by Charles Goodrich, hardware merchant, and Robert Beardsley was the driver.

Probably another reason why the Company failed was because Mr. Palmer soon after consolidation raised the prices of private label grape juice to equal his factory labels- Royal Purple and Rosemary. The trade resented this very much as the market on all products was showing a decline; and Welch was not interested in selling any private labels. I found this out a few months later as I contacted some brokers and wholesalers in a survey I was making with reference to starting a new grape juice factory. 38

Mr. Palmer, early in 1930 found himself in need to refinance the Company; but nobody by that time after the stock market crash had any money to invest, and the company being badly in debt; the creditors forced it into bankruptcy. Therefore, in the fall of 1932, the Federal Court of New York state, ordered the sale of all its plants in New York state and Michigan.

The factories in both Lawton and Mattawan, worth over a million dollars, with all machinery, buildings, land, five gallon glass carboys used for storage, were sold to the Welch Grape Juice Company for \$ 36,500. They were the only bidders permitted to bid in the court; something I do not understand to this day. Two friends of mine went to the court sale with a certified check for \$ 40,000 to bid only on the Mattawan plant. My only guess is that the court wanted all plants sold together, so my friends were not permitted to bid only for one plant. They told me later they didn't want the Lawton plant, or any of the seven small ones in New York state. 39

It is unbelievable that a million dollars of property would be sold for \$ 36,500 but it happened and don't take my word for it, go to the Register of Deeds office in Paw Paw and read for

yourself the record. Reference: Deeds Liber 247, pages 558-565, and you will note that Mr Edward Seivers, signed the deed, as receiver, October 26, 1932.

The end of a dream of C. C. Palmer, who a number of times told me that his ambition was to put Welch out of Business, and might have happened had he had the Armour business; but conditions in the thirties did not permit the refinance of his company.

Welch, today uses the old J. Hungerford-Smith factory building as a storage, having soon after its purchase in 1932 removed all carboys and machinery, some to Mattawan, and the rest sold. In about 1941 or 42, they sold the empty building to the Houppert Wine Company; who started to build wine tanks, but before they had finished sold the building to the Eaton Manufacturing Company, who after a few years sold it back to Welch. 39

Welch, started in the Armour factory, to press grapes and bottle grape juice but mostly they moved their preserve line there, producing a fine line of jams and jellies for a few years when the entire operation was moved back to Lawton. A new process for keeping grape juice in storage had been invented, and the old glass carboy storage became obsolete because of costs compared with the present storage under refrigeration in stainless steel tanks of thousands of gallons capacity. For this purpose their Lawton factory was better suited than the Mattawan plant, and also more economical in this case to operate one facility. The Armour factory building has been used for storage purposes after being sold by Welch. Today, it looks again that the Contech, Inc., who manufacture Adhesives will again bring to Mattawan employment as was Armours. 40

THE old WELCH GRAPE JUICE COMPANY part one 40

Our story about Welch, we have divided their operations in Michigan, from coming to Lawton in 1918, in two parts, to the sale to the National Grape Cooperative Association, Inc., The present owners will be part two.

World War number one had just started, and the Welch Grape Juice Company, secured a large government contract to supply the military with grape jam. ( Grape-lade ) Finding their facilities in Westfield over taxed, Dr. Welch, recalled one of his former visits to the Lawton grape area, and a visit with the dentist, Dr Clyde W. Johnson, who had tried very hard to interest him in buying the defunct former Battle Creek Grape Juice plant recently vacated by the Wilson Grape Juice Company. At the time of his visit the plant and production lay out had not made any favorable impression on him, but now perhaps it could be as a temporary facility to process grapes for jam for the government.



The building had been for three years mostly vacant and Mr. Wolf had made some cider and vinegar there, using part of the building, and its general condition was anything but sanitary, and must have presented a bad appearance to the good Doctor. However, the price was right, so on July 3, 1918, he bought it from Mr. John J. Wolf, see Deeds Liber 156 page 517. Other parcels of land were purchased; William L. Nelson, land and Ice house, \$ 1,000, see Liber Deeds 175, page 117, August 28, 1918; and Cora Morrill, house and parcel of land, for \$ 1200, see Deeds Liber 175 page 122, on August 22, 1918. On October 17, 1918, George Lambert, who operated a lumber yard nearby bought the house and moved it to a lot he owned a few rods north, on the east side of Main Street ( M-40 ). Now, Welch had a site that had frontage on Main Street, and on September 20, 1918 he was deeded a triangler parcel from N. Amster, who had a basket storage metal building on it. This gave the Welch Company entire railroad frontage from Main Street west to Seward Street. See Liber Deeds 171, page 371. This would be Welch's site until about 1960 when they made the storage extension for the first refrigerator grape juice storage tanks; and bought from the village Lincoln Street and closed it.

Immediately, after he received the deed from Mr. Wolf on July 3, 1918; Mr Welch had a crew of men busy cleaning and painting the interior of the factory building, and the machinery necessary to press grapes for jam was soon installed.

Now to tell the story of Welch's first year in Lawton we will copy the news articles from C. E. Lewis' Lawton Leader. " On July 20, 1918 the newspaper said", E. E. Guinnup, Superintendent of Welch's Westfield factory, has arrived in Lawton and has already started " cleaning house." Some of the material needed this year is already on the way and the rest is in sight."

" H. I. Dreyer, of Westfield, the General Superintendent of Welch's four factories, has been here for a few days assisting in the plans for the work here. He says that they expect to use 17,000 tons of grapes in their New Yprk, Pennsylvania and Canadian factories this year. Of this 15,000 tons will be used at the Northeast and Westfield factories."

From the files of the Lawton Leader of September 19, 1918, we read that, " Dr. Welch, had been in Lawton for several days and was keeping close touch with all departments. He was very much surprised at the appearance of the old building and remarked that he never thought it possible that the cellars would look as good from his first inspection of the premises in early July. On Monday over sixty tons of grapes were received and processed at the Lawton factory."

The first load of concord grapes delivered to the Welch

plant was on Tuesday, September 10th, and came from the Dr. A. E. VanVleck farm, now owned and operated by Gordon Brown. With exception of probably 3 or 4 years, Welch has always received grapes from this vineyard. Mr. Brown, is a member of the present National Grape Cooperative, owners of Welch Foods, Inc. 42

C. E. Lewis, in an interview with Dr. Welch, asked the question, "How long have you been in the grape juice business?" His reply was, "Ever since 1869, when I begin making one bottle a month, or twelve bottles a year for church communion purposes, and have seen the business grow until we have made three million gallons in a year."

When Welch, bought the old factory building of the former Battle Creek Grape Juice Company Ltd., all machinery and storage containers had been sold prior to their purchase, so it was necessary to buy storage containers, and according to the Lawton Leader they had received ten carloads of five gallon stoneware jugs, and nine cars of five gallon glass carboys. This would take care of the grapes to be processed during their first year. The company made only grape jam the first year and called it "Grapelade". 43

When Dr. Welch, visited the area in June about the time of the big late, June freeze, he no doubt knew from experience that the grape vines would grow what we call a "second bud" from which fruit would again set; and if the frosts were late, the grapes would ripen but the sugar content- brix below 14, would be ideal for jam purposes.

Again we refer to the files of the Lawton Leader, of June 27, 1918 and we read as follows: "A killing frost that did thousands of dollars damage to grapes, corn, potatoes, mint, and gardens visited southern Michigan, Sunday Morning, June 23, and all the tender plants were severely injured."

"The greatest loss in this section was the grape crop, undoubtedly one half the grapes being damaged past recovery this year. Vineyards on the higher ground were not so badly hurt, but there is hardly a vineyard that does not show the effects of the freeze."

"The grape crop before the freeze had been estimated at only about one half a crop, the vineyards having been hurt by the severe winter. Now it is estimated there will not be over a 25 per cent of a normal crop." 44

"The effects of the frost can be seen in every direction. Grapes in many places have the appearance of a fire having passed thru them. Corn fields are brown and potato tops are wilted and bean fields are badly damaged. It is thought that wheat and rye were not killed."

" The frost extended over a wide area from low lands north of Grand Rapids to several miles south of Fort Wayne, Indiana,"

The writer remembers only too well the June freeze, having lived on the " home front" thru two world wars; being a little too young for the first, and just too old for the second; because food is also important as bullets; with this thought in mind always planted in time of war a large garden. We had a nice one on June 1918-- looked very promising-- but only harvested a few radishes and one picking of early June peas. The frost took the rest, corn, potatoes, beans and squash; but later we did harvest a crop of weeds. Sorry, to record that thousands others had the same experience. 44

We read in the Lawton Leader, that on October 10th 1918, that the grape harvest was nearly over. The crop was light but in spite of the late second budding was of excellent quality. The Welch factory finished pressing grapes on the 9th, and Smith would be thru the following Tuesday, as well as Armour.. The Southern Michigan Fruit Association will load last car on Saturday, October 12th." 45

The article goes on to say, " never before in the history of the grape industry have prices been so high. The Southern Michigan Fruit Association have only shipped 115 cars this season, but many of these have sold for more than \$ 1,000 each, and it is thought the season's average will be \$ 900 a car."

About 10 tons of grapes in 1918 would fill the average railroad refrigerator car.

On October 24th, the Lawton Leader reported: " Grape shipments less than in 1917, and that only 1018 carloads were shipped from the entire state up to October 10th. For the same period in 1917 the total shipments were 1248 cars, but the seasons total for 1917 was 3298 cars. October 10th 1918 saw the harvest in Michigan about over, with 4 quart baskets at from \$ 95 to a \$ 100 a ton." The prices paid by Welch-J. Hungerford-Smith and Armour for grapes delivered their plants during the 1918 season was \$ 93.25 a ton."

The November 7, 1918 issue of the newspaper, Lawton Leader we read, " The Welch Grape Juice Company, is getting its factory in shape to put up Grapelade at Lawton this winter, machinery is already arranged for which to do the work. As the machinery will not all be installed until January first the product will not be processed before that time. It is expected the operation will continue over a period of several months."

In making a summary of the grape crop for 1918, the Lawton Leader said, " In the Lawton, Paw Paw, and Mattawan district that One Million, forty four thousand dollars is the amount the growers of the area have been paid for their 1918 crop. According to the figures the season's harvest amounted to 11,200 tons, or less than 1,000 carloads, or about one-third of an average crop. 46

The highest price received by the Southern Michigan Fruit Association this year for a straight car of four-quart baskets of Concord grapes was \$ 15<sup>40</sup>, about 37 ¢ a basket. In former years the prices have been so low that many cars of 8 pound baskets of Concorde have sold for \$ 300 or less per car. While this year a number of cars brought from \$ 1300 to \$ 1400 each. The three large juice factories here and in Michigan used 8,000 tons of grapes."

As expected every body became vineyardists, and the Lawton Leader reported on December 26th that there was a shortage of grape roots, prices quoted at \$ 40.00 per thousand if you could find any.

During 1920, Welch Grape Juice Company, as well as Armour and J. Hungerford-Smith, made vast additions to their production facilities. The economy was on a " boom " following the end of World War One. " A chicken in every pot and two cars in every garage" was one of the many " themes"; a prelude to the worst depression to our economy that we have ever experienced.

However, we are going to let Mr. C. E. Lewis, the editor of the Lawton Leader give you the story about Welch's as he was an eye witness and interviewed those who were doing the work. end 46

THE old WELCH GRAPE JUICE COMPANY  
1920

Part # 2

By C. E. Lewis

February 19, 1920

We are pleased to announce that the Welch Grape Juice Company has closed the contract for a large addition to their Lawton plant. Henry L. VanderHorst of Kalamazoo, who built the first building, has secured the job of constructing the new unit. He promises a quick start and a prompt completion so that the additional space will be available during the summer. It is understood that some of the materials have already been shipped.

Mr. H. L. Dreyer, General Superintendent, for the Welch Company, and one of the directors of the firm, was in Lawton last week. He explained that up to the present time only Grapelade has been manufactured at the local plant. It is now desired to put up a considerable quantity of grape juice here, and also to pack other fruits, including peaches, plums, strawberries, blackberries and currants. 47

The Company is well satisfied with the quality of grapes and other fruits in this section. They like the way they have been received by the growers.

No intimation is given regarding the quantities of fruit that will be used, nor as to plans for future expansion. The unit to be built this spring will be three stories above the ground and will more than double the floor space. No official announcement has been made in regard to the cost of the new unit, but it is safe to say that it will be upwards of \$ 100,000. 48

With the advent of the Welch Company to Lawton, in the summer of 1918, this section became one of the important centers of one of the largest and oldest grape juice companies in America. Dr. C. E. Welch, the President of the company, having begun the manufacture of grape juice fifty years ago, or about the time the first vineyards were set out in Lawton.

The commercial manufacture of unfermented juice from native grapes had its beginning in Vineland, New Jersey. At this place, in 1869, Dr. Welch devised a method of sterilizing the juice, and began its manufacture on a small scale for sale to churches for use in communion services. Its use was also advocated for medical purposes. The business developed steadily, and soon outgrew its early market as the product began to be used as a popular beverage. In order to insure a more adequate supply of grapes for pressing, Dr. Welch removed to the Chautauqua-Erie region (New York State) and erected a factory in 1897 at Westfield. The view of the Lawton factory as shown is the first one we've published since the building of their first unit here, and is a good picture of

the plant as it looks as I write this today. ( Feb 19, 1920 )

The wooden building in front is the one which the company acquired in the summer of 1918. This was the first grape juice factory in Lawton, being built about twenty years ago by the Battle Creek Grape Juice Company. The manufacture of grape juice in Michigan was then in its infancy, a market for juice had not yet been developed to any extent, and after spending considerable money the company found the business unprofitable and disposed of it. Later the factory was operated by different parties with varying degrees of success, but finally the business was closed out and the machinery removed.

When the Welch company took possession in 1918, it was too late to erect a new building, so they renovated the wooden building, put in necessary machinery, and did their first season's work in this building, making only Grapelade. Last summer ( 1919 ) the first unit of the new factory was built. It will be seen at the rear of the wooden part in the picture. This new unit is 80 x 106 feet, two stories and basement, having a floor space of 25,440 square feet. In addition to this unit there is a power plant 40 x 40 feet at the rear, where the boiler and other machinery have already been installed.

In building this year, the wooden structure in front will be torn down and the new unit, mentioned before, will take its place. The new unit parallel with the E C R R tracks will be in line with the one built in 1919 and will be wider than the first one built, extending farther to the north.

Since locating here the Welch company has operated its factory continually and is now employing 46 people. Last year they shipped out 100 to 150 cars of Grapelade. ( a jam made from grapes ) It has a wide sale, and during the war years the entire output was sold to the government.

In addition to Grapelade, the company is now making a jam of grapes, and raspberries in Lawton; while at their eastern factories, peaches, cherries, plums, and other fruits are made into jam.

With the establishment here during the past few years of grape juice factories with strong financial backing the Lawton, Paw Paw and Mattawan area has become the most important unfermented grape juice center west of New York state. The four factories located within a short distance of each other, press into juice every fall thousands of tons of Concord Grapes. The juice is bottled or made into jam and shipped to all parts of the United States, and some is exported.

The coming of Welch and the increased prices paid for grapes during the past two years has stimulated the interest in grape growing as never before and the growers are now giving more and better care to the vineyards. The Welch company has been well received, and we believe that is the way it should be. The juice factory needs the grower and the grower needs the juice factory, and both should work in harmony....

C. E. Lewis

MICHIGAN GRAPE PRODUCTS ( a plan )  
 Concord Grape Institute

Because during the depression years of the thirties the price of grapes had sunk to a low of \$ 10.00 a ton, with about \$ 13.00 as an average; for this reason hundreds of acres of grapes were abandoned and the State Agriculture Department was able to finance a project to pull out and destroy hundreds of acres of grape vineyards as a disease preventive measure thus taking out of production a few thousand tons of grapes

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As before mentioned, the United Grape Products, who had bought out the J. Hungerford-Smith and Armour factories had gone into bankruptcy and therefore the growers had lost a market for about ten thousand tons of grapes. Welch who had acquired both plants, including all machinery for less than \$ 40,000 did not operate the Armour plant until about 1934; and they never did operate the Smith plant as a grape juice plant. So the period from 1932 to 1934-- the Welch plant at Lawton was the only operating one in the area. The Paw Paw Grape Juice factory in Paw Paw had ceased operations also during this time. Therefore, the juice market was less than six thousand tons, until after the wineries started operations in about 1933 and 34.

The Welch company, had also felt the effect of the depression soon after the purchase of the bankrupt plants in Lawton and Mattawan. The Welch family lost controlling interest to a group of Nashville, Tennessee bankers. The absentee owners had no particular interest in the welfare of the grape industry, as had the Welch family in the past years and were content to go along on the name of Welch; to do as little as possible to promote the sales of product; and as little as possible to improve facilities and, to buy grapes at the lowest prices. After all they were bankers only interested in profits.

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June 1945, one Jack M. Kaplan, who had in 1933 bought a winery at Brocton, N. Y. was offered the controlling stock in Welch by the Nashville syndicate. We will write more about Mr. Kaplan in the National Grape Co-operative Association, Inc., part of this history later. However, it is necessary to mention him here because his plan of sale of Welch later was very similar to the one my friends and myself tried to put into operation at the time; to establish a grape juice plant, farmer operated and owned...

The Michigan Grape Products plan was very simple. Each member would have one vote each regardless of number of shares of stock to elect a board of directors, six in number, one every two years for a two year term. They in turn would hire a manager and sales manager.

We planned to accept payment for stock in grapes over a period of ten years, and the growers yearly tonnage allotment

to sell grapesto the cooperative would be based on number of shares of stock owned with a guarnreed price of \$ 40 a ton minimum. I had firm commitments of \$ 50,000 cash provided that I could get good grower acceotance, A contact to friends of mine in the R F C in Washington assured me that if could form and organize a Cooperative for the purpose of the manufacture and sale of concord grape juice, jams, jellies and preserves that we would have no trouble getting an R F C loan for the purpose, but advise not to make this public, or use it in any way to promote the sale of stock. The private cash commitment had the same restrictions.

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Most of the growers we wanted were of the best, had vineyards that in most years had a crop, and were noted for high sugar content. They had sold Welch for years, were very unhappy with the present management of the company; but were afraid if their name appeared as a stockholder in our proposed co-operative that they could no longer sell Welch. Even with the low prices then as now Welch was the best Market.

Before the plan was offered to the growers the writer had made contact with a number of buyers of grape juice; former customers of J. Hungerford-Smith, quoted them suggested prices, and had their assurance of their business-- this included the national chains, as A & P etc. These suggested prices would have paid the growers in 1938 from \$ 85 to \$ 100 a ton. Welch, in 1937 announced on February 4th that they would pay not less than \$ 40 a ton, or more than \$ 60.

I am reminded of F D R's acceptance speech in 1933, that we have nothing to fear but fear itself". So, our plan died pf abortion... However, it did not apply in this case.

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A few years later when John Turner and Andrew F Murch of the Michigan Wineries, Inc., decided to manufacture concord grape juice, in addition to their wines; they organized the Paw Paw Grape Juice Company. Today on a visit to Warner's winery in Paw Paw you will see in a wall case in the grape pressing room several bottles of grape juice, all private labels. Their factory label id " Paw Paw Grape Juice " and they make a fine product. These are some of the buyer concerns that I contacted in 1937 in interest of the Michigan Grape Products, plan.

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#### CONCORD GRAPE INSTITUTE

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Personally, the writer has always believed that if first you don't succeed try again. So when Mr Clare Graft, a teacher of Agriculture in the Mattawan Schools 1941 had an idea that the grape growers could if they really organized do something for themselves price wise. He had knowledge of our Michigan Grape Products plan, and its failure, but why not develop



a market for fresh fruit? So, again I became involved.

The story is best told in the Sunday, April 6, 1941  
Kalamazoo Gazette:

" Mattawan- You probably have never heard of the Concord Grape Growers Institute but is likely you will,

From the little village of Mattawan comes an idea which is most likely to find favor with grape growers in three states. A group of 51 farmers representing 1,000 acres of grape vineyards is organizing to provide an agency for individual grower members to study, plan and solve the problems of marketing Concord grapes. Present members are confident that the institute membership will grow to include 85 per cent of Michigan growers.

#### Seek Living Price

The institute will provide means of organized effort, explained Robert G. Hollis, chairman of the organization board. " Our biggest problem is to get a living price for grapes and that is just one of the problems. The same methods of selling used by industries should and can be applied to grapes."

Although patterned after simliar grower organizations, it is the first of its kind to be organized by grape growers and is designed to include Michigan, Ohio and New York.

#### Sign 51st Member

To thirty-five members of an adult agriculture class conducted once a week at the Mattawan Consolidated Schools by Clare Graft, goes the credit for deciding to organize. The group appointed R. G. Hollis, Harry Robinson, Theodore E. Frommahn, Volney Glidden and Robert J. Samson, as organization committee.

The signing of the 51 st member Friday evening marked the conclusion of the third meeting. Next Friday evening at eight members will again meet at the Mattawan school to elect officers. Present enrollment includes members from Paw Paw, Mattawan, Kalamazoo and Lawton.

The present unit will serve the Mattawan area. Other units are planned to be spread through the Michigan grape belt of Kalamazoo, Van Buren and Berrien counties which is estimated grows 95 per cent of the grapes in this state. The constitution will not be adopted until five units have been organized. Officers from each unit will also serve as state government body, each vote to be conducted on an acreage basis if present plans materialize.

### Purposes Outlined

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Besides dealing with marketing problems, purposes set forth by the institute are: To promote organization cooperation between the growers as individuals or associations of growers; to encourage the formation of cooperative associations and support existing growers associations; to promote and aid in the creation of an agency, state and national in character to market fresh grapes under only approved labels; to advertise the Concord grape industry and to give aid to the state and national organization in its efforts to establish itself in all wholesale markets.

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Other aims are to make agreements among individual growers or associations and to make contracts with processors of concord grape products: to form state and national institutes for doing the work of local units on an interstate basis; and to aid cooperatives in securing loans when necessary for the purposes of establishing orderly marketing of fresh grapes under approved labels.

In our chapter later under heading of "Grapes Marry Politics" G. Mennen Williams, then Governor of Michigan took the cue from the Concord Grape Institute in effort to have a state label for Michigan grapes; but unfortunately it got mixed into politics thru no fault of his and, nothing came of it,

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We failed even to get the five units organized so the idea just died. My number two failure, but this was nothing that fate held for me a few years later.

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### 1933- GOVERNMENT PROCESSES FROZEN GRAPES at former Armour and Smith Plants

By Benjamin Desenberg

In the fall of 1933 a hard freeze hit the grape vineyards in Van Buren County, with only a few acres of grapes existing on the vineyards located on high ground. The growers had only harvested about a quarter of their crop. It was late season and grapes in many vineyards were still unripe lacking sugar content that Welch wanted. At the time they were the only grape juice plant in operation.

Because of the severe damage Welch refused to buy the frozen grapes, saying that they were fit for nothing. Here was probably fifteen or twenty thousand tons that had no market. I remembered as a boy my father Julius, who had bought the grape juice factory at Mattawan from the American Fruit Juice Company, later selling it to Armour; that he had experience in processing frozen grapes for jam purposes, and the product was satisfactory.

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If we were to do anything, it had to be done right away

and within 36 hours time I had contacted, James weurding Sr., a processor of pickles in Lawton; Senator Leonlase, and former State Senator, B. G. Davis, a grape grower and with them we were on our way to Washington to see friends of mine in the F S C C.

They agreed to finance the project provided we could lease the plants, either Mattawan or Lawton from Welch. They were vacant, but both still had the machinery and storage containers. This was done, and I was appointed to have administrative charge and Edward Seivers Sr., as Superintendent in charge of operations. 58

Mr. Seivers' experience in the grape processing field was valuable, and from the tons of frozen grapes we made a good product. A few months afterwards, Welch found it good enough for their Grapelade, and bought what we had on hand, paying us costs.

I will always be happy for my part in a program that cost no tax dollars, and was a benefit to a lot of folks in the hard times of the thirties.

Ben Desenberg.

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#### GRAPES MARRIES POLITICS

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The years following the purchase by Welch, both the Armour plant at Mattawan and the Smith plant at Lawton to the year of 1949 were more or less uneventful; about the only thing happening was the establishment of four wineries, more about them later. Grapes were low in production per acre as was the prices per ton. The former fruit associations shipping fresh grapes had with the advent of trucks ceased operation; they were geared to rail shipments; and the general poor quality of grapes had discouraged consumer acceptance. The growers were only interested in the juice markets for both grape juice and wine.

Dr. C. W. Johnson, who again found himself owner of a former Day Grape Juice factory building in Lawton had made contact with William C. Houppert, a noted Winemaker, whose family had made fine wines for over a hundred years. After coming to Lawton and the possibilities of the location, started there a winery in 1934. He as well as others were interested in a wine law that would put California on the same basis as the infant industry in Michigan. Something had to be done to equalize them. Michigan at the time had a state tax of fifty cents a gallon. 60

Earl Burhans, a Paw Paw attorney, also a grape grower, at the time our representative as Senator in the Michigan Legislature and with the help of Charles J. McNeill, who at the time was a Legislative Assistant. ( It was his job along with others to aid in the drafting of legislation both for house and senate members, and because of the nature of the proposed law as Mr. McNeil was a grape grower he could give the staff valuable guidance. There- fore, the first act became a law under the sponsorship of Mr. Burhans.

In brief it simply said that if the wineries would pay the grower of grapes, residents of Michigan, a minimum of \$ 55 a ton delivered to the wineries, that the state would rebate to the winery 46¢ a gallon of the fifty cent state tax. Further, that the wineries must on or before December fifteenth each year of purchase pay the grower in cash and take an affidavit from the grower; that the grapes were grown in their vineyards within the State of Michigan.

With the market price of grapes during these years of less than \$ 55 a ton, it is sad to relate that the signing of these affidavits made a lot of growers first class candidates for membership in the famous Burlington Club. ( a club of professional liars.) 60

The wineries could only use a limited number of tons of grapes and as I recall never over three or four thousand, so many growers never did have a chance to sell them. The law required that the winery pay the grower in cash and not notes; and in many cases at first investigation by the Liquor Commission on complaints from grape growers found that a number of vineyards were producing 20 to 25 tons of grapes per acre, in the years that the best producing vineyards were less than six tons. It became so bad that the Liquor Commission had to send inspectors into the field to verify the affidavits of a number of growers. The 20 ton vineyards, were found that the grower so reporting would buy grapes from other growers at less than \$ 55 a ton, pay them cash, no checks, so there was no record, at market price. This practise was short lived, but was almost a common one for the first two years. 6

However, when the market price a few years later was above \$ 55 there were no more complaints, but at first it was a problem.

About 1948, the California wineries had a big surplus of wines and found that they could sell in Michigan at that time a better quality wine than the Michigan wineries had who were using mostly Concord grapes, at less price in spite of the 50 cent tax they had to pay and therefore they were making large inroads on the Michigan market. At that time more than 95 per cent of wines made by local wineries were sold entirely within the state of Michigan.

Local growers in cooperation with the wineries saw the need to raise the state tax to a dollar a gallon if the infant wine industry was to survive. But California wine industry had in Lansing some of the best professional lobbyists with plenty of money to buy favors of the members of the Legislature, as dinners, theatre tickets, sport events tickets, etc., and at the time of low pay of the legislators it was always attractive. 6:

It was a hard fight but we had good support and was able to get thru the legislature a bill to amend the wine law to increase the state tax to a dollar a gallon.

When it came to the Governor's desk- Governor G. Mennen Williams vetoed it. Afterwards he had the popularity in Van Buren County on par with what General Sherman had in Atlanta to say the least.

The Paw Paw Democratic Club some weeks previous to the passage of the new wine law had extended the governor an invitation to be a guest of honor at a public banquet in Paw Paw, and he had accepted. The date of the banquet happened to be a few days after he had vetoed the bill. The wine interests and several growers pressured the Paw Paw Chamber of Commerce to "snub" the Governor. I don't re-call but I believe the banquet was held as part of the Paw Paw Grape Festival; anyway the Chamber of Commerce had charge of it. But, the good common sense and Civility prevailed against the wine interests, and the Governor attended the banquet and explained in the presence of more or less a hostile audience why he vetoed the wine bill.

Governor Williams, said he vetoed it because he felt the proposed tax on imported wines would create a restriction of free trade against other Michigan industries. That the one dollar a gallon wine tax would have boosted wine prices; and thereby effect the customers least able to pay. Further, he stated that he thought the grape industry could be helped in a more constructive manner but that he needed time to study the situation and, hoped very soon to have a meeting with growers in Lansing. I have always thought that at the time Governor Williams believed the rank and file of the growers were not represented and that it was simply a bill for the wine interests alone, the growers interest very secondary. His experience while in prior <sup>years</sup> was member of the Liquor Commission in administration of the wine law was much to be desired.

Later when a real honest to goodness growers organization met with him to explain why it was in the general interest of the industry as a whole to see that the infant wineries grow and prosper and no one having any interest in the wineries present, he signed a bill into law that increased the Minium payment for grapes to \$ 85 a ton, and a dollar gallon tax on outstate wines.

Political minded one hundred per cent as well as one-hundred percent uniformed as to the real facts, a political enemy as well to the governor; one Jack Green, Lansing news commentator, saw a chance to "blast" the governor, knowing only too well that the Republican farmers would eat it up with relish, as the truth. In his syndicated news column to which a number of rural papers subscribed had this to say, we copy word for word:

" Having failed so far to make any inroads into rural sentiment with his " Seal of Quality " program, the governor made matters worse last spring by vetoung a bill to tax Michigan and out of the state wines equally. This was intended to stimulate the market for Michigan wines made from Michigan grapes."

" Southwestern Michigan grape growers were ready to chew 64!  
the governor's ear off for that veto. It didn't affect the bulk  
of Michigan farmers but the news of it apparently has heightened  
the impression among many of them that the young Democrat in Lan-  
sing isn't too sympathetic to their needs".

" The grape growers have come back with several other  
ideas for state relief and Williams or his Lieutenants so far  
have been unable or unwilling to go along with any of them."

" So this week ( September 15th ) Williams made another  
attempt to win some farmer friendliness by calling in a lot of  
experts and grape producers to see if they could help a blocked  
grape crop."

" There was a real disappointment in the governor's  
office and glee in the Republican camp when none of the grape  
growers showed up for the meeting." " The growers explaining  
later, were polite about it. They said they had been too busy  
with their own little grape war to come to Lansing and besides  
the governor's plan was too little and too late."

" Williams, tried to quiet the boys a little by send-  
ing the state department of economic development out to make a  
survey of the grape industry and now a legislative " economy"  
committee is looking askance at that. They say the department 65  
wasn't intended for such things."

" Thus the governor is finding it tough going making  
an impression on the farmers. Turned back in his relief move,  
Williams is attracted by a proposal that the state create a per-  
manent organization for moving quickley and rescue distressed  
crops."

" If he can put that one over he might have something  
concrete to offer the rural voters."

After all these years it is about time the public in  
general, the grape growers in particular get some real facts that  
were entirely different than Mr. Green pictured them. The writer  
personally was in close touch with the events of that time, a part  
of it advising and making suggestions to the governor.

We had to overcome very stiff opposition to the lobby-  
ists of the California wine interests. But when the governor was  
convinced that we did represent the rank and file of the grape  
growers we had a good ally. In his attempt to rescue and develop  
a long neglected market for fresh grapes under " Seal of Quality"  
program, that was taken from the program of Clare Graft's Concord  
Grape Institute. It was anything but political.

There was not a " blocked " grape crop that year. Demand  
for grapes were very strong. Welch, wanted 16,000 tons, and paid  
the growers \$ 110 a ton, matched by John Turner and others. In  
Mr. Green's statement that growers refused to attend a meeting at  
the governor's office, we informed them that we regretted very  
much not to be able to attend the meeting because we had a grape  
crop to harvest and a strike of growers against the Welch Grape  
Juice Company to settle. But after harvest we would be more than

pleased to again confer with the governor.

During the strike negotiating, Mr. Lyle Parker, with permission of the growers, requested that Governor Williams to send a person from his office to help mediate the strike differences. He responded by sending Mr. Edward Mead, one of his assistants, who was a former banker in Fremont and a farmer. His services proved of much value to us. 66

We picture elsewhere Governor Williams signing the new wine bill that during the strike was amended to not only increase the state tax on wines from 50 cents to a dollar a gallon but also increased the minimum price to \$ 85 a ton from \$ 55 a ton. The signing of this bill reduced the 20 ton vineyards to their real production and ended for all time the complaints that the Liquor Commission had been receiving for about 15 years. This was the beginning of the stabilized price market we have enjoyed to this day ( 1980 )-- the local wineries and the sale of the Welch Grape Juice Company to the National Grape Cooperative; - more about this later.

Personally, I did not know of the folks in the picture (67) and apparently the Lansing photographer did not identify them. But after thirty-two years I will do my best to identify them; starting Row No 1 - left to right- seated, Charles Stainton, at end of table; then Governor C. Mennen Williams, seated center of table, at opposite end, seated, Mr and Mrs Robert Beam. Now going back to left, Row No 2, first man standing, unknown; next to him Bill Hubbard, next unknown; then Frank Gearhart, next Martin Dunkirk ( just in front of Mr Gearhart ), and next to him, Mrs Dunkirk, then Jack Cummings with his arms on the back of the Governor's chair. Lyle Parker is next with his hand on chair back; the lady to governor's left at table is Mrs Walter Bitely, next Franklin Ryan, Jess Dunham, gentleman back of Mr Dunham face hidden is unknown, also next to him, lady not known, and at the end is Abe Kole. Going back again to left Row No 3- gentlemen back of Mr. Gearhart unknown; now we recognize George Ruzick ( back of Mr & Mrs Dunkirk) Now back of Mrs Dunkirk with face half hidden is Burton ( Red ) Jones and gentlemen in third row back of Jack Cummings, unknown, next to him Walter Bitely- just back of Lyle Parker. The next three gentlemen I do not know. In front of the flag on third row is the writer, Robert G. Hollis.

Most of the unknown in the picture were from Berrien County, while those identified were from Van Buren County; all but four were grape growers, the others interested business men. It was considered to be a good average representation of the industry. Two of them Charles Stainton, and Burton Jones, whose fathers had planted the first grape vineyards in Van Buren County in 1872. They were at the time still caring for the vineyards that their fathers had planted.-- still in the business.

THE GROWERS STRIKE WELCH

The Van Buren County Board of Supervisors had adjourned for lunch, as I came down the stairs from the Board meeting room, was met by one of the clerks from the County Clerk's office. She came up to me and said, "Mr. Hollis, a Mr. Charles Welch is on the phone and wishes to talk with you. He says its very urgent."

On the phone he said, "You should come over to Lawton at once as the price situation has made a lot of the boys "mad" and a large group have gathered outside the Welch plant and some of them are saying why not go right in and wreck the place. You know we don't want that to happen and, I have talked with some of the growers and we feel that as you know most of them; they respect you. If you would talk to them, perhaps we could avoid a bad situation. Also, your position as township Supervisor, and under the law, I believe in situations of this kind this you should do so before calling in the Sheriff, or State Police."

As I came out of the clerk's office, I met Mr. Lyle Parker on his way also to lunch. Lyle, at the time was a Supervisor from Decatur township, a grape grower who had always sold his grapes to Welch. Advising him of the situation, and both of us thought our presence in Lawton more important than listening to a report of the Treasurer or Sheriff; both could be read later from the records and little did we realize what we were getting into-- the time expended in the months ahead.

However, before we continue further we should give you some information that precipitated the strike prior to Tuesday, September 13, 1949.

The grape crop in Michigan in 1947 was more than a normal crop based on the previous ten years average. In most vineyards it would be recorded as "over-production" as far as the vigor of the vines were concerned, which resulted in poor fruiting wood in most vineyards for the 1948 crop, and low sugar content fruit.

Two severe hail storms, on August 10, 1948 that covered a six mile square area around the village of Lawton, caused a loss grape tonnage from 50 to 90 percent, further reduced the tonnage of 1948. Where hail damages the crop in August it not only takes a tonnage toll that year, but results in poor fruiting wood for the next two years.

George Dunham, a veteran vineyardist, told Mr. C. E. Lewis, editor of the Lawton Leader; "That it was the first time in thirty years that he had known so severe damage caused by hail". Charles Stainton, whose father had planted one of the first vineyards in the Lawton area; a veteran Vineyardist himself, commented "With the exception of the years when we had an infestation of black rot, I cannot remember such an unfavorable year as this one."



In Van Buren County, the grape crop of 1948 was the smallest in years but Berrien having missed the hail that year had about a normal crop. 70

The conditions of many vineyards around Lawton and Mattawan were generally in poor condition; and Mr. Jerry Mandigo, the District Horticultural Agent, in commenting on the grape situation said, "There has not been set more new acreage to vineyards than has been removed because of neglect and disease. In the Lawton area because of the August 1948 hail storms where a large portion of Michigan's vineyards are located has materially reduced the crop prospects for 1949. Here because of the hail damage to fruiting wood not only has this year's crop been reduced but also because of poor wood resulting it will still be in evidence in 1950."

Further he said, "To meet the present and future demand for grape products more acreage should be set as well as better care and more fertilizer applied to producing vineyards."

That was the vineyard situation in January of 1949. But nature wasn't done with the grower yet as on Tuesday night, May 10th, 1949 the temperatures in the south western Michigan grape belt dropped as low as 24 degrees on low ground to about 27 degrees on the high ground. The spring of 1949 was an early spring, the last week of April and the first week of May the temperatures were unseasonably high with result that the grape shoots (new growth on which the grapes grow) averaged about four inches long; fruit trees were in full bloom, and strawberries about to "go out of bloom". Grapes, in normal years are seldom ripe enough for grape juice before September 25th, were in 1949 season ready on September 12th. One of the earliest harvest dates on record.

It was in the year of 1947, that both Turner Brothers and Welch Grape Juice Company, paid their growers \$ 90.00 a ton for low sugar content grapes because that was all available account of a crop too large in volume for strength of the vines. In 1948, a very short crop year but excellent juice quality they paid the growers \$ 100.00 a ton. The crop year of 1949 was a normal one. 71

In about July, Turner Brothers in contracting their growers stated that they would pay the same price as Welch on delivery and match all future payments.

Mr. R. T. Ryan, Vice-president of Welch, had stopped off in Lawton, after a visit to their Springdale Arkansas plant on Monday, August 14th; had met informally with a few growers. He told them that Welch could use from 16 to 18 thousand tons at both their Lawton and Mattawan factories. Further he said that they had spent nearly a million dollars to enlarge the Lawton plant as it was expected that a much larger tonnage would be received, which

was very disappointing to date. But at the meeting no intimation was given as to what the price of grapes would be that year, but it would be announced later. The growers left the meeting feeling sure that it would be no less than last year; \$ 100.00 on delivery.

When the price was announced about ten days later it came as a " shock" to the growers who had attended the meeting as well as the 98 per cent who did not. The letter mailed to the Welch growers stated that they would pay them \$ 55.00 a ton on delivery, and give a guarantee of a later payment of \$ 20.00 more, if the company's earnings would permit another final payment would be made. ( probably about eight months later.)

Welch, had bought their grapes from members of the National Grape Association for their Westfield plant, and not from non-members. Thru years of association the growers there had confidence in Welch, and therefore, were satisfied with the arrangement. But here in Michigan it was different. They bought from individual growers and the growers here did not understand why they could not receive at least \$ 75.00 on delivery, and to them there was no guarantee that they would receive anymore than that. There was a definite lack of communication, and some bad rumors. The local management had no answers...

Because Turner Brothers, who bought a large tonnage of grapes based their prices and methods of payments same as Welch, it looked as if the market for juice and wine grapes, the price was set at \$ 55.00 with a later payment of \$ 20.00- a total of \$ 75.00; a decrease not justified from the \$ 100.00 paid the year before.

As nothing was done until the time to deliver grapes, and no further explanations from Westfield to clear up the price situation, so on Tuesday, September 13 th a large numbers of growers assembled at the Welch plant in Lawton, to stop delivery and picking of grapes for them. The strike had started.

When Lyle Parker and myself arrived in Lawton the first thing we noticed was a large number of growers congregated in a number of small groups, talking, some rather loud; on Lincoln Street, near Turner Brothers warehouse. We parked our cars nearby and joined one group comprised of Charles Welch, Red Jones, and Leon Maxwell. While we talked other groups joined us, and we became one. While we talked a number of " loud mouths " were condemning the Welch company in a rather profane and obscene way. They were getting a lot of attention, and their suggestions that we go in and take the place apart, to use their words, suggested to us that some action on our part was necessary to stop it. Apparently, two or three of their leaders had drank too much of " the unfermented juice of the grapes".

I don't remember whether it was Charles Welch, Red Jones,

or Leon Maxwell, who suggested why not go to the townhall, a short distance away and talk over the situation. It was sure the right suggestion; and the crowd of perhaps fifty growers started at once for the hall. I had a key and let them in.

Mr. Art Drije, a member of the Farm Bureau, was elected as temporary chairman and then in an orderly fashion it was agreed that we would picket the factory, and stop deliveries. That the growers go to their neighbors, request them to stop picking grapes and ask them to attend a meeting that evening in the townhall. Cooperation was remarkable, the growers were 100 per cent "mad." The season was early, weather good, dry, warm and sunny, so why not wait a few days? That was the thinking, we had everything to gain, grapes would be riper and at \$ 55.00 there was no profit in the harvest. We found a few growers tried to run a load or two by the pickets, when stopped by them they would say that they were for John Turner. He being a farmer himself was in sympathy with the Welch growers, and without any questions would accept the load. It was his policy always to pay the same price as anyone else. Except I do remember one time when there was no demand for the Niagara variety of ( white ) grapes for wine and eastern buyers were picking them up on the Benton Harbor cash market for as low as \$ 25.00 a ton; he put an ad in the paper that he would accept all that the growers desired to deliver him at \$ 55.00 a ton. He had only to buy a few tons from other growers than his own as the price went up immediately to \$ 55.00 a ton. This is just one of the many times he did the growers a favor. Here to me, it seemed only proper to mention it.

The townhall was packed to overflowing that evening and if a count had been made with all inside and out, probably between three and four hundred. Local officials of the Welch Grape Juice Company present were: Mr. George Ramsey, local plant Manager and Mr. Ruben Morgenstern, Welch's field manager. However, they could not give any assurance as to a better delivery price, terms, or final price than stated in the August letter. But they would report by phone in the morning to Westfield what the growers wanted and they were told \$ 75.00 on delivery and at least a later payment of \$ 25.00, with a guarantee of \$ 100.00.

After a discussion period, questions and answers with both Mr Ramsey and Morganstern, and their agreement that they would phone the demands of the growers to Westfield in the morning; Mr. Drije said the next order of business was to form a committee with authority to meet with the Welch officials. Named by those present were: first Walter Bitely, who would act as Secretary and as a member of the committee also. The other members were, Lyle Parker, Robert G. Hollis, G. Arden Ewing, Burton Jones, Mike Muller and Earl Cowlbeck.

Chairman Drije, adjourned the meeting for 30 minutes so that the committee could confer and make suggestions to those present on a course of action for their approval.

The committee recommended that grape picking for Welch to cease immediately. Grapes already harvested to be all delivered by midnight, Wednesday, September 14th. While this action met with the approval of all present; some suggested that in addition we should have pickets and barricades around the Welch plant. After some discussion this was voted down because the committee felt that less drastic measures would be effective and the best way was to stop the harvest at the vineyards. Watch your neighbors to see he does not pick, have your neighbor do the same to watch his neighbor and so on. It worked almost one hundred per cent; and the three days following there were not enough grapes delivered to stain purple the grape stemmer in the plant.

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Before the close of the meeting Mr. Ramsey was asked as to how soon the growers might expect some one to come from the main office in Westfield? He thought that probably by Thursday September 15th. Therefore, Chairman Drijie, announced another meeting at the townhall for eight o'clock, Friday evening, September 16th. Slips of paper had been passed to the growers present on which they were requested to write their names and address and give them to Walter Bitely on their way out of the hall. Later these slips were shown to the Welch officials as evidence that a majority of the growers had sold grapes to Welch in past years.

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During the days of the strike many interesting things happened. In spite of the committee's request that no one picket the plant, a few growers wanted to be sure that no grapes were received at the plant, and that no one "sneak in a load or two." The deliveries of grapes from Welch's loading station could be a problem, and two or three growers went to Berrien County to stop picking. After Thursday the picking there had stopped and when a few trucks from there appeared, either Red Jones or Leon Maxwell would stop the trucks inform them it was a picket line and most drivers being union men, or in sympathy would say "get out of my way, we are taking the load back. We don't cross any picket lines."

Probably, the worse headache and concern came out of Detroit, where on September 14th, some organization calling themselves the "Friends of Labor", called Lyle Parker, and for a thousand dollars they would give us enough men to "keep the farmers in line" and guarantee that not one pound of fruit would be picked or delivered until Welch met our terms and if necessary they would see that no one entered the factory to work. Mr. Parker, thanked them for their interest and said we had everything under control. The next day on a third or fourth call because they were "very sympathetic of the farmer's plight", they would do the job just for expenses. Again, Mr. Parker thanked them. Apparently, some one in the governor's office had been advised of the strike, so they called Mr. Parker, and asked if they could be any help. He thanked them and assured them so far all was going well, but if we needed their services he would call.

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After the fourth call from the so-called Friends of Labor,

the committee advised Mr. Parker to request the Sheriff and State Police to watch the plants to avoid any damage, which was done, and thereafter we had good cooperation of both.

The first reports out of Westfield were not very assuring of an early settlement. Mr. Ryan refused to recognize or meet with the committee as a lawful agent representing Michigan Welch growers. He believed that the majority of the growers who had selected the committee were Turner and other winery growers. And, after three or four Welch growers phoned him would he agree to meet with the committee? He knew them personally. In the meantime, Lyle Parker, had phoned the governor, requesting that he send a representative from his office; and the next day Mr. Edward Mead arrived in Lawton.

After the before mentioned Welch growers whom Mr. Ryan knew had advised him to meet with our committee, he agreed to do so and on Friday, September 16th he met at the Welch plant, and the names collected at the meeting were sufficient evidence that we did represent the Welch growers.

At the meeting it was mutually agreed that the advance of \$ 55.00 on delivery, with payment of \$ 20.00 before December 31st would be satisfactory, provided the Welch company would guarantee at least \$ 100.00 a ton as final payment. Mr. Ryan was somewhat reluctant to make a firm promise of the total of \$ 100.00. But he said that if the Welch plants in Michigan could get grapes in sufficient quantity to fill their storage that in his mind there would be no doubt that the growers would receive \$ 100.00 or more per ton. The final payment for grapes by Welch in 1949 was \$110.00 a ton, and John Turner true to his promise matched it as did some other wineries.

Both Mr. Ryan and Morgenstern, explained in detail the profit sharing plan that had been so satisfactory in the east and their desire to make it operative in Michigan. In closing Mr. Ryan said that if Welch could receive 18 thousand tons of grapes in both plants here he felt very sure the final price would be a \$ 100.00 a ton. The committee then requested that both Mr Morganstern and him address the growers meeting that evening at the town hall.

Space here for picture.

GRAPE GROWERS COMMITTEE AND WELCH EXECUTIVES IN CONFERENCE  
September 16, 1949

Settlement of Growers Strike

Left to Right seated: Rueben Morganstern, growers relation Welchs; Lyle Parker, Chairman growers committee; Raymond T. Ryan, Executive Vice-President, Welch Grape Juice Company; Robert G. Hollis and Earl Cowlbeck, Committee members. Left to Right standing- Burton " Red " Jones, G. Arden Ewing, and Mike Muller, Grape growers and Committee Members: George Ramsey, Lawton plant Manager and Edward Mead; Governor Williams' Representative; and Walter Bitely, Secretary of the Growers Committee and Grape grower.

D. C. Lamoreaux photo Lawton

The night of September 16th four hundred grape growers from Berrien and Van Buren Counties assembled in the town hall at Lawton to hear the report of the Growers Committee and the settlement of the strike subject to their approval.

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Chairman Art Drijie called the meeting to order and asked of Lyle Parker, a report on the negotiations with Welch and Mr. Parker reported. Chairman Drijie, then asked for a vote by show of hands. It carried. After which Mr. Parker introduced Mr. Ryan and Mr. Mead, with request that Mr. Ryan address the meeting.

In his talk Mr. Ryan said, "The larger the volume the better the prospects for a larger return". He repeated the story about the satisfactory buying of grapes thru the National Grape Growers, and Welch's profit sharing plan and that he would like to see it here in Michigan. Further he said, "That a Welch dividend statement will be mailed to each grower patronizing the plants with a final statement that will be due August 15th, thus enabling the grower to see if he is receiving his just share of the profit sharing plan." At the close of his talk he was given a standing vote of thanks.

Committee Chairman Parker thanked the growers for their conduct for the manner of which the strike was handled and thanked the State Police, Sheriff's department, and the Lawton police for their cooperation; also Edward Mead for his services on the negotiating committee. He said that the cooperation of the Berrien growers was very satisfactory, contrary to some reports.

After the agreement was accepted the Committee was given a vote of thanks, and requested to continue their services during the grape harvest to see that the Welch company would get the 18 thousand tons of grapes; and given authority to advertise. The response was good and there was enough grapes in Michigan that year so everyone got their tonnage,..

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On September 23d, Mr. Ryan announced that the first payment would be \$ 85.00 instead of \$ 55.00. This matched the new wine law, raised from \$ 55.00 to \$ 85.00 if the wineries would pay their growers at least this amount and receive 96¢ a gallon tax rebate. Governor Williams long last had signed the bill.

Everything ended fine- The Welch Grape Juice Company made a final payment to their growers of a \$ 110.00 a ton as did Turner Brothers, and all the wineries.

Soon after the harvest about 300 growers met in the townhall in Lawton on invitation of the "Welch Strike Committee" and organized the Cooperative Grape Growers of Michigan.

## THE CO-OPERATIVE GRAPE GROWERS of MICHIGAN

A dream born of violence on September 13, 1949 when a group of embattled farmers stood firm on the asphalt pavement of Lincoln Street in Lawton and, turned back loads of grapes for the Welch Grape Juice Company, was later to become the predecessor of a new organization to be known as Cooperative Grape Growers of Michigan. Its purpose as stated by its charter was to sell for its members grapes, both on the fresh fruit market in suitable packages under the association label, and in bulk to the grape juice factories and wineries. ( In the case of the Welch Grape Juice Company to cooperate with the National Grape Growers Cooperative ),..

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On or about February 5, 1950, this association sent a committee to meet with officials of the National Grape Growers and Welch at Westfield, N. Y. The committee consisted of Lyle Parker, President; Robert G. Hollis, Secretary; and Directors, Jonathan Woodman, Walter Bitely and Merle Stamm.

After a three day session the committee returned with an agreement that in Michigan they could have a free hand and that Welch would buy their grapes for their Michigan plants only from members of the association. This would in no way interfere with their members selling grapes to other juice factories or wineries, or the development of a fresh fruit market.

Considerable publicity was given the Welch contract prior to the first annual meeting to be held in Paw Paw, on March 27th.

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The report of the committee was the first order of business of the meeting; the Welch deal which of course had to be approved by some 400 members present and Mr. Parker did a splendid job in explanation. After answering numerous questions, asked for a motion of approval. It was made and seconded.

Two radicals got the floor and in no uncertain obscene language accused the committee of becoming " stuck in Jack Kaplan's Molasses Deal" and thereby sold the Cooperative Grape Growers " down the river". To have stated that the atmosphere in the Paw Paw High School Auditorium was atomized that evening would be describing it as mild. In fact the language got so bad and accusations so ridiculous, personal attacks on the members of the committee with the late hour and before Mr. Parker could get order half of those present had left the hall.

Writer's Note- I have since learned on good authority that the opposition had previously organized secretly with the purpose to destroy the so-called " Welch deal". It was instigated by one or two wineries, who unduly became alarmed because of the cooperation of the " strike committee" to get Welch the 18 thousand tons of grapes that they were afraid in future years would be no grapes for them. Nothing could be further from the truth and history has proven this. Every year there has been plenty of

of grapes for everyone. They did a wonderful job of sabotage, and no one was the victim but the grape growers themselves.

In retrospect I have always thought this would compare with the failure of President Woodrow Wilson in 1919 of not taking with him some Republican members of the Senate to sign the treaty of Versailles, in particular, one Henry Cabot Lodge. In our case we should have taken Martin Dunkirk with us to Westfield. This is no reflection on the character of either, both were good honest men with views at the time entirely wrong. Who knows, perhaps World War 2 could have never happened, and we today would have the Cooperative Grape Growers of Michigan?

After the "riot" had cooled down somewhat, and Mr. Parker could again be heard; he announced that he was not a candidate for reelection, and now it was in order for the election of officers. His announcement was followed by the resignation of Jonathan Woodman, and one or two others, who they were I don't recall. The meeting was then turned over to the Secretary for the election.

Mr. Martin J. Dunkirk, was elected President and as Committeemen, were Matt Kruzuch, Mattawan; Walter L. Bitely, Lawton; Elliot Smith, Paw Paw; Arden Ewing, Lawton; George Ewalt, Berrien Springs; and Arthur Siewart, Stevensville. Robert G. Hollis was requested to serve for a year as Secretary, as he had previously contacted a number of brokers in the south who in the 1920's had sold grapes for a number of years from the Southern Michigan Fruit Association, and other fruit associations in Paw Paw and St. Joseph.

Personally, of the officers elected only three had met previously with the group for the purpose of getting control of the meeting to sabotage the Welch deal; and now thirty years later they have departed this world, and no good could come of naming them. In less than five years they too had reasons to regret what they had done.

Mr. C. E. Lewis, Editor of the Lawton Leader, a grape grower himself in an interview with the writer the next day expressed his concern about the meeting; but being the gentleman he was simply said in his paper, "During the meeting there was much criticism of the committee, by a group of small growers who expressed dissatisfaction with the Welch juice contract, and asserted the committee has been dominated by Welch. The meeting lasted until midnight."

I met with Mr. Charles McLellan, newly appointed manager of Welch's Michigan operations the next day and as Secretary, made my official report of the meeting. I gave him a very detail account of what happened and why the contract was turned down.

Being informed by him that he needed a committee of growers to work with, and would have one by his own choice; I requested



him to delay until I could have a talk with Mr. Dunkirk and see if something could not be worked out. He agreed and the next day I conferred with Mr. Dunkirk.

A plan agreed upon between Mr. Dunkirk and Mr. McLellan was that the executive committee of the Cooperative Grape Growers would submit to Welch a list of growers, and then Welch would mail ballots to the growers for selection of a Welch Committee of our organization. Some 1400 ballots were mailed and returned to the Welch Grape Juice Company. The following committee were appointed to check, count and canvass the votes; Harry Reynolds, to represent Welch; Robert G. Hollis, to represent the Cooperative Grape Growers and James Pollock, a Lawton merchant would represent the public.

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The following were elected to serve on the Welch Committee: Arden Ewing and Walter Bitely, Porter and south Lawton area; Theo. E. Frommann and Earl Cowbeck, Mattawan area; Jonathan Woodman and C. G. Pugsley the Paw Paw area; Clayton Parsons, Texas Corners area; Lee Cook, Oshtemo area; Lyle Parker, Decatur and Valley Road area; George Ewalt, Baroda; Charles Krause, Eau Claire; Vaughn Butzbaugh, Millburg; Chester Warsco, Scottdale; Peter Hellenga, Sawyer; and Lee DeMorrow, Stevensville.

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The Welch committee of the Cooperative Grape Growers met on Tuesday evening April 24, 1950 at the Hotel Whitcomb, in St. Joseph and elected officers as follows: Lee DeMorrow, Chairman; T. E. Frommann, First Vice President; C. G. Pugsley, Second Vice President. The Board of Directors, including the President and two Vice-Presidents were: Vaughn Butzbach, George Ewalt, Arden Ewing, Johonathan Woodman, and Charles Krause... Jack Pierce, Welch manager of grower relations of Welch, was appointed as Recording Secretary.

When I was given the list of officers and in turn informed Mr. Dunkirk; I told him for its organization he had more than a "Welch Committee" of our organization, in my opinion he had a rival independent organization. In less than six months my opinion was proven to be a fact. The Welch Committee was to report back to our organization their activities and our Board of Directors to approve them. We had two or three reports and that ended that, no more. They simply went their merry own way.

So, after a few years of trying to develop a market for fresh fruit, on the death of Mr. Dunkirk, our organization simply passed from existence.

The failure of the Cooperative Grape Growers left me with a sense of great personal loss; of failure and disappointment that I felt for many years afterwards. The best men and most successful growers were members of the Welch Committee, and I knew them personally and respected their ability. That they apparently wanted nothing more to do with the Cooperative Grape Growers I did not blame them. The ordeal at the meeting in Paw Paw, would sour anyone's stomach. The loss of the support of these men caused the failure of the Cooperative Grape Growers, and therefore understanding their feelings do not blame them.

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After serving a year as Secretary, I resigned and Mr. Edgar Austin, a respected friend of mine, was elected Secretary. He served them well but the growers by this time were not interested in a fresh market as the juice and wine markets were more profitable.

Therefore, the present National Grape Cooperative Association, Inc., because it has incorporated many ideas I have, and had years ago, for a true successful association; I learned from sad experience do not let the individual farmer have any direct say about how it should be administrated. We, therefore will write about this organization as the closing chapter in our history of marketing of grapes in Van Buren County.

Now, we will tell the story of the Southern Michigan Grape Association of the Marketing of fresh grapes- 1897-1925. This will be followed by Roadside Marketing, fresh grapes and juice.

----- EARLY MARKETING OF GRAPES -----  
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On a high sandy hill at the south village limits of Lawton, today's ( 1981 ) farm of Clarence Addington, west side of Nursery Street, in the year of 1867, Mr. A. B. Jones the owner of the farm set a small vineyard of 100 Delaware and Concord grape vines; and became the first person in Van Buren County, if not in Michigan to plant a vineyard. The vineyard is long gone.

In the fall of 1870 he shipped by express 12 crates containing 4 each of 3 pound baskets of grapes. The crates and baskets were made from some thin materials that he had produced at his sawmill; which was located then at the rear of the old Township Hall; that today houses several Antique shops. He received \$ 9.00 a crate for the grapes. Shipment was made to Lansing.

It was only a year or two later that Mr. Jones had competition from his neighbors. Frank Stainton, Charles D.

Lawton, Nathan H. Bitely, Daniel Spicer, William Halstead, and N. Atwell; they also had become Vineyardists. ( A term the writer uses to distinguish between the pioneer growers than those now. )

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The scarcity of grape roots slowed the acreage planting of new vineyards which continued until about 1880, when the local nurseries of Bitely and Lawton, and others, were able to supply the demand. The prices were high as is shown by an agreement, ( in possession of Mr and Mrs Grant Cummings of Lawton ) made on the 5th of March 1881 between Mr. Lawton and the Niagara Grape Company of Lockport, N. Y. that for \$ 750.00 they would deliver to him 500 Niagara ( white ) grape roots. It was about three years later that Mr. Lawton harvest some, if not the first white grapes in Michigan; the vines in the meantime providing wood cuttings for the propagation of Niagara grape roots for future vineyardists.

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By as early as 1875 to prevent an over supply on their city markets it became necessary for these growers to not ship too many grapes to any one city. As example; when Jones would ship to Lansing; Mr. Lawton, would ship to Detroit and Mr. Atwell to Chicago, and so on. However, the plan only worked for two or three years, and as a number of other vineyards came into bearing, these men with the others formed an association; the name we do not know. The first President was N. H. Bitely, Secretary was C. D. Lawton, and Treasurer, A. B. Jones. It could not have lasted very many years because we were told by a Mr. T. R. Smith's son that his father in 1885 tried unsuccessfully to organize a growers Cooperative marketing association. He was a resident of Lawton at the time and as the growers did not organize his father became a cash buyer for grapes, and found the business over a period of years to be very profitable.

The Mark Owen & Company, Chicago produce commission merchants organized in 1894. They only bought fruit from selected number of Vineyardists; sold under labels furnished by them to be applied to every four quart basket of grapes, with name of grower and address on the label. They loaded cars at Lawton, Mattawan, Benton Harbor, and other towns in Berrien county. They controlled the tonnage of grapes consistent with sales, and all grapes had to be packed in the Vineyardist's packing house and their men inspected grapes when loading. They were buying grapes from early 1895 to about 1925 and paid the grower from 5 to 10¢ a four quart basket more than the average market. Something that the growers associations tried to do but failed miserably.

Probably the first real grower's association organized in Van Buren County was in 1897 when more than 100 growers having got tired of being swindled by the cash buyers, and paying express charges when shipped direct to commission

houses; in addition to receiving nothing for their grapes or basket cost, because of spoilage in transit, or in the commission's warehouse awaiting sale; organized the Southern Michigan Fruit Association. ( name later changed to Southern Michigan Grape Association.) C. D. Lawton, was the moving force in its organization, and one of the original member stockholders.

This association had a splendid record of service to the growers over a period of many years. It had plenty of internal trouble in the beginning as it seemed that many growers wanted to run the " show,"-- The writer calls them too many Chiefs, and for this reason their annual meetings always provided plenty of " fireworks." But when these so called chiefs resigned their membership and formed their own associations, things ran more smoothly. We will give you later more in detail of the history of this organization, and show the present grape growers the folly of their grand parents in not supporting to the bitter end the Southern Michigan Grape Association, instead of forming competing selling organizations.

A report made by the State Department of Agriculture in 1907 showed that in Antwerp township, 97 vineyards had a total of 863½ acres of bearing grapes; that in Porter township, 77 growers had 715½ acres, while in Paw Paw township there were only 31 Vineyardists with 100 acres. A total of 1,997½ acres of bearing vineyards in the three township area. In addition it was estimated that 2,000 more acres would come into bearing during the following four years. In the spring of 1901 the nurseries sold more than 800,000 grape roots.

It is interested to note that the size of the vineyards in 1901 were from 1/2 acre up to 55 acres, the largest which was located in Paw Paw township, near Lake Brownwood, owned by Mr. A. C. Martin, Section two. The second largest vineyard was that of Thomas Welch, Section 4, Antwerp township. The third largest the vineyard of Frank and Charles Stainton of 43 acres in Section 34, Antwerp. The fourth in size was that of William Halstead, Section 33, Antwerp, 35 acres. The largest vineyard in Porter township, Amos Hall, Section 21 of 30 acres. Next in size were those of Hamilton Ewing, Porter, Section 8 of 25 acres. D. L. Thornton in Section 4, Porter, had a 15 acre vineyard and George Turner in Section 2 had 10 acres, which would grow to 300 acres during the next fifteen years. Later it was owned by Turner Brothers and would be the largest vineyard in Antwerp or Porter townships, and one of the very few in the entire grape belt.

A survey made by the State in 1914 showed that there were 15,000 acres of bearing grape vineyards. But at this from the 15,000 acres in the Lawton, Mattawan and Paw Paw

area, tonnage probably not exceeded 30,000 tons of grapes available for sales to processors and on the fresh fruit markets. The grape juice plants in Paw Paw, Lawton and Mattawan, used about 10,000 tons in 1914; so that would leave about 20,000 tons to be sold in competition with other areas, which was more than the fresh fruit market could use. The price cutting competition between the four growers fruit associations contributed very much to the reason of low prices received by the growers, with a result that for many years grapes did not bring the cost of production. 92

The grower during this period who was able to care for their vineyards would in 1918 with the advent of World War One and the demand for grape products by government orders and increased civilian sales, would be more than rewarded financially as to speak.

These growers all of a sudden found themselves for the first time with "money to burn" and some of them made bad investments in buying of bonds for buildings not yet under construction in Detroit; for stocks in the expansion of the Eddy Paper Company; and buying bonds to finance the construction of a St. Joseph manufacture of candy for a second factory in Lawton, to increase their production of chocolate candy. They had the services of a professional promoter who it is said without question "could sell Eskimos refrigerators". Anyway before it was known that the company was bankrupt, he had raised some thirty thousand dollars by stock sales. But during his promotion activities, they did commence construction of a concrete block building on the east side of North Main Street. Later Murdock Brothers bought the unfinished building from the court and made it into a small foundry. They continued in business until it burned in the 40's.

Many advertisements appeared in local papers and we list a few of them as examples; December 9th ad in the Lawton Leader, Juan McKeyes & Company, bankers of Lawton, offering first mortgage bonds, earning 7 1/2 per cent, of the Cooper Underwear Company of Kenosha, Wisconsin. Also ad of the Commonwealth Mortgage and Investment Corporation of Michigan, with offices in the post office building in Lawton, Phone 133, offers a chance to buy pre-organization stock at \$ 10 a share. Contact E. C. Goodrich.

To well known citizens of Paw Paw, and Mr. Jay Allard of Lawton were offering good investments for "grape money." The only good sound investment was the Michigan Gas and Electric Company, now the Michigan Power Company, who at the time were offering 7 per cent prior lien Stock, to finance service lines locally. You could write them at Three Rivers if interested for information.

We note also at the time many of our good citizens, pioneered the now popular winter vacations in Florida, traveling over 9

miles of unimproved roads, thru mud and slush; and in the state of Georgia some farmers living along the so-called "Dixie Highway" made a few extra bucks by creating man made mud holes so deep that it was necessary to have a team of horses available hidden nearby to pull the "yankees" out for a sum of U S five dollars. ( no Confederate fives accepted.) The average trip from Michigan to St. Petersburg was from eight to ten days- depending.

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But in the light of history, these folks did get something for their money in spite of roads, a vacation, and fond memories instead of a bunch of worthless stocks.

As it was proved during the depression years of the early thirties, those who invested in farm mortgages were wise. If any proved to be a bad investment, Uncle Sam thru the Federal Farm Loan in St. Paul, would buy them, unpaid balances plus interest, so you had your money. It was these people who made this investment and kept their money out of the banks; that became the basis of a number of todays family fortunes. Personally, I know of a few but I wasn't one.

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#### ...THE SOUTHERN MICHIGAN GRAPE ASSOCIATION, ..

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Organized in 1898 as the Southern Michigan Fruit Association, its name changed later, ( two years ) because most of the fruit handled was grapes. At the time it was organized it had about one hundred members growers, and for a few years was the only cooperative association in Van Buren County selling and shipping grapes, and the membership increased to about five hundred. The first loss in membership was when Mr. Benway in 1904 organized another association known as the Michigan Fruit Exchange, and about the same time Mr. W. C. Wildey, who had a large vineyard west of Paw Paw, did likewise and organized the Fruit Growers Union. Mr Wildey, was Paw Paw township Supervisor for many years, and very much interested in community affairs, devoting much of his time. He was very well liked and respected. Between them they cost the Southern Michigan about half its membership; mostly from Paw Paw township growers.

Henry Stern, a long time Lawton merchant, and Vineyardist was the first President and A. D. Benway, the first manager, who served for one year. Mr. Benway, was succeeded by Mr. Carey Dunham, who filled the office until 1913, with exception of one year during the time, when T. R. Smith, relieved him temporarily as manager. From 1913 to 1920, Mr. Hubert E. Durkee, was manager, until his sudden death following an operation, April 27, 1920. Mr. Durkee, was 47 years old at the time of his death, son of Mr and Mrs Elisha Dunkee, pioneer settlers on 140 acres of land just north of Lawton, on the west side of present State road

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M-40. His folks were the second group of pioneer settlers here in the early 1840's. There is very little information in former county histories regarding them but his folks were quite important in community affairs, besides being first class farmers, securing a little more than a living from the light sandy soils of the area. Elisha Durkee, served two terms as probate judge from 1848 to 1856; and in 1875 was elected Antwerp Township Treasurer.

Hubert E. Durkee, was born on his father's farm on June 5, 1872. He spent his entire life in the Lawton area and graduated with a class of eleven from the Lawton High School in 1890. Married, December 18, 1912 to Miss Lettie Wickens, of Lawton.

His entire business life was spent in Antwerp township and after teaching school at the Steeple School, on the Territorial Road ( now the Red Arrow ), schoolhouse long gone, he was employed by the Southern Michigan Grape Association. First as the weigher of grapes, then had charge of carloading, promoted to assistant manager and in 1913 elected manager. During these years he had acquired a great deal of knowledge from actual experience pertaining to all phases of marketing, and added to this, his unquestioned fairness and honesty made him a very valuable man to the position he so ably filled. As the job, before he became manager was more or less seasonal, gave him time to farm and care for his grape vineyard. His death was a severe loss to the Southern Michigan Grape Association.

At the Annual membership meeting on January 20, 1920 it was announced by Manager Durkee that the board of directors had made arrangements for the handling of supplies and that they would charge their growers the regular retail prices, and at the close of the season give those buying supplies a rebate to reflect the cost price.

In his report he stated that more grapes had been shipped to eastern markets the past year than formerly; carloads being sent to Portland, Maine; Boston, New York city, Philadelphia, Newark, N. J; and Washington, D. C. That, carloads shipped from Lawton were 170; from Mattawan, 131; from Paw Paw, 34; from Marcellus, 34; Rix station, 7; Dowagiac, 18; Oshtemo, 7; Lake Cora, 27; and Decatur, 13. A total of 441 cars.

The sales of grapes, \$ 489,930.75 and the cost to members was 5.3 per cent of sales. The average pooling prices received by members were as follows, for 4 quart baskets, Champions, 22.3 cents; Moores Early, 25.2 cents; Wordens, 26 cents; and Concords, 26.53 cents... Concords in bulk for grape juice factories, \$ 82.88 per ton. ( 1919 season ) Delawares, bulk, \$ 85.34 a ton; and Niagaras bulk, \$ 90.00

ton. The were the prices paid for grapes shipped season of 1919.

The report was verified by the auditing committee, A. H. Campbell, John Marshall and William A. Rix.

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D. C. Thompson and H. L. Sutton ere reelected as Directors and Andrew H. Campbell as audutor. ∴ The Assets were \$ 9, 422.89 and no Liabilities.

On June 20, 1920, Mrs Fern McPherson, was appointed by the Board of Directors as Manager. This was not unexpected as she had been assistant to the manager for the past three years of her sixteen year employment with the Southern Michigan. She had proved herself to be very efficient as a bookkeeper and as well in her capacity of financial secretary under two managers, Mr. Dunham and Durkee. Her experience of five years with a commission firm of South Water Street in Chicago, Smith-Cordes & Company, gave her practical knowledge of marketing of fruits and vegetables by the commission merchants. The Southern Michigan sold grapes thru the commission houses to the retail stores.

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But in 1920 it was still a " man's business world" and women still had to get the key as it were " to the Executive Wash Room". A large number of growers thought a woman had no place being a manager with a position of authority-- it was just unthinkable.

An attempt was made to remove her as manager at the Annual meeting on January 21, 1923. A motion was made to ask the Board of Directors to hire a man as manager. When it was put to a vote, the Chairman asked those in favor to stand up and no one did. On vote to continue with Mrs McPherson as manager, most of those present stood up. She continued as manager from June 20, 1920 until November 1, 1923, when she asked to be relieved and the Board appointed Mr. Hubert C. Hardy, as Manager, her son-in-law....

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A special meeting was held of the association at the townhall in Lawton, on Tuesday, November 8, 1920 with President D. L. Thornton presiding. The purpose was to inform the three grape juice factories, Armour, J. Hungerford-Smith, and Welch, the prices to be paid for bulk grapes based on the associations average pool prices, less basket weights. The price arrived at by the association was \$ 114.40 a ton. It was the highest prices paid for juice grapes to date..  
( 1920 )

Mrs McPherson's method of determination was questioned by the juice factories, and on December 23, 1920, Mr H. W. Fick, CPA., of the Michigan Trust Company, made a statement that he had completed an audit of the books and that therefore



the price of \$ 114.40 was correct.

Mr. H. P. Bannpn, of the North American Fruit Exchange, the sales manager for Van Buren and Berrien districts, was present and gave some interesting facts in regard to the season's business. He said the good demand for grapes coupled with the good quality of our product made it possible for his organization to sell our crop at good prices. Another advantage, he pointed out was that his organization has 125 representatives in the important markets of our country. One of the difficulties this year was many kinds of packages. The 4 quart, jumbo, and bushel baskets are the best to sell. The bushel basket is considered by the trade as the cheapest package, used for home making of juice, preserves and wines. He advised growers to make provisions early for their packages for next year and, to stick to their organization. He said, " that when you are backing your association, you are backing something that belongs to you; and because you had good prices this year, don't expect low ones next year."

The speaker said that he could see no reason why prices should not be good another season. " The Man who comes to you early next year and wants to buy your grapes at a given price expects to make money out of the deal. The man who bought grapes early this year at \$ 85 or \$ .90 a ton could sell them at \$ 95 to a \$ 100 a ton and make a profit of \$ 120 a car; and a lot of tonnage was bought at these prices too, unfortunately. He was making a good thing and was not particularly interested in keeping prices up. One with a few cars or one without any grapes at all can sit up at night and send out low quotations by wire, and do a lot of harm to the market."

Writer's Note: As I wrote these lines above, how true they are. A few years ago I was in the office of Mr. Edward Carpp of the Lawrence Frozen Foods, and he had just quoted a jobber in Milwaukee a price delivered for frozen cherries; had an acceptance. Shortly afterwards the jobber called him back and said a reliable canning factory in Michigan had offered them at three cents a pound less. Unless he could he could deliver at their prices they would cancel. Mr. Carpp, being a small processor had been thinking of his neighbors and the big corporation in competition didn't care about them.

The North American thru Mr. Bannpn, sold in 1920, 1005 cars of grapes for the Southern Michigan Grape Association; between 150 and 200 cars for the Paw Paw Coperative Association, and 1038 cars off grapes, and 200 cars of Apples and Pears for the St. Joseph Michigan Fruit Association.

Grapes sold by them in 1919 went to 41 states. This year ( 1920 ) there was a strong demand for our fruit from

the Northwest, some cars going as far as Wyoming and Montana; to the Southwest our grapes went to Texas, Arizona and New Mexico. Two cars were sent to Tampa, Florida, and others went as far northeast as Maine.

Mr. Hubert C. Hardy, who for a number of years had been associated with the Fruit Growers' Express Company, who owned and rented cars for the shipment of all kinds of fruit that required refrigeration during transit, was on November 1, 1923 hired as manager, and Mrs McPherson, was appointed as financial secretary and assistant manager. 100

Mr. Hardy, was a young man at the time, who had much experience in dealing with cooperative fruit and vegetable associations all the way from the Atlantic coast to Michigan. From 1919 to 1923, he had been stationed in this district during the grape shipping season; for three years being at Lawton on the Michigan Central and the past season at Hartford on the Pere Marquette Railroad. At other seasons he had charge of the company's business on the east coast of Florida at Miami and on the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad in North Carolina. He followed the fruit and vegetable shipping seasons, as they were harvested from Florida north to Michigan. He was what we would call today a traffic manager. He not only secured cars, placed them where needed at the different shipping points but would route them over the different railroads, using the most direct routes, and the lowest freight rates. He did have thru years of experience a wonderful knowledge of the complicated tariffs involved. Therefore, his experience in this field was valuable to the Southern Michigan Grape Association, as the big expense in marketing the crop was freight charges, that always came out of the grower's pocket. 101

It was because of the increased volume of business since 1919 that the board of directors saw the need to hire a man of experience that Mr. Hardy had, and so at the end of 1923 he became the manager. Mrs McPherson, was retained as bookkeeper and financial secretary as well to act in Mr. Hardy's absence as manager.

Mr. C. E. Lewis, editor of the Lawton Leader in commenting said, "Those who have known Mr. Hardy for any length of time speak very highly of his character and integrity. He is quiet and unassuming, but it is apparent that he has a good knowledge of the work in which he has been engaged and it is predicted that he will become familiar with the details of his new position." I knew him personally for many years, and counted him as a friend- he is very much missed.

Mr. Hardy's wife was formerly Miss Lillian McPherson of Lawton. She was a fine woman, respected, and had a host of friends, was interested in church, club and civic activities. During her lifetime she would help in the office during the grape season, and at other times, whenever the office again would need extra help.

Before continuing with the story of the Southern Michigan Grape Association under the management of Hubert C. Hardy we will depart for a few pages and tell you how the grapes were handled from the vineyard to the railroad cars; it was the same up to the loading whether they were sold thru a grower's association, or a cash buyer. No trucks were used in hauling grapes from the vineyards until after 1920, just wagons with a team of horses.

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It wasn't until about 1905 before refrigerator cars were available and Armour and Company, meat packers of Chicago, furnished the first cars here of record for the shipment of grapes under refrigeration. Prior to then, shipment was made by express in small lots, or by express in box cars with screen doors for ventilation. The marketing area was restricted to within 200 miles. Berrien County growers, and growers living west of Hartford would ship their fruits mostly by boat from St. Joseph and South Haven to Chicago or Milwaukee.

We are therefore indebted to C. E. Lewis for information on this subject, and we copy word for word from the Lawton Leader. "From about 1909 grapes from this district have been shipped in Armour refrigerator cars exclusively. In fact these cars if used at all must be used exclusively, for that is the only condition under which Armour and Company will allow their use. There are some disadvantages about a monopoly of this kind, but the good so far has exceeded the evil. By this method there is not nearly so apt to be a shortage of cars, as the Armour and Company have a man here, whose duty is to see that there are cars sufficient and that they are properly iced. The cars are all of uniform size, each being 40 feet long. They hold about 5 tons of ice and instructions always are to fill them full. These cars are used for fruit only, during the entire year; they are kept perfectly clean and are never allowed to be used for anything that gives off an odor. C. S. Robertson of Jacksonville, Florida, has charge of the cars here and is assisted this year by J. M. Barley, of Washington, D. C."

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"These men personally supervise the icing of the cars and see that there are enough on hand at all times to meet the demands of the fruit growers. The Armour Company has icing stations all over the United States so that the cars can be re-iced at any of the stations on the way and

fruit reaches Oregon, Georgia, Florida or Minnesota in just as good a condition as when it leaves Lawton. It is Mr. Robertson's business to learn the destination of each car. He then sends orders ahead to various icing stations, with instructions that a car of a certain number must be iced at that station. A car going as far as Duluth would probably be iced three or four times before reaching its destination. This gives an unlimited territory for our grapes and we can feel assured that they will carry thru in good shape."

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"As to the process; the grower brings his fruit to town. He does not inquire if there is a sale for it but drives on the scales and then to the car and lets the manager of his organization look after the selling. But before reaching the car the grapes must pass the careful scrutiny of an inspector, whose duties sometimes make him as unpopular as General Sherman was in Atlanta. But now withstanding the unpopularity the inspector sees to it that the man who does not properly pack, or who brings green or cracked or rotten grapes to market will have the fun of drawing his load home again. L. M. Waldron has been the efficient inspector for the Southern Michigan at Lawton for six years and Charles Lee has performed the same duties for the Fruit Exchange ever since its organization 13 years ago. After inspection the grapes are loaded in the car. For nine years Hubeert Durkee has superintended the loading for the association at Lawton and thinks he could load a car so it could take a trip to the moon without any baskets falling. After unloading and having the baskets counted, the driver goes back to the scales and learns whether or not his load was up to the required weight of 8 pounds per basket; or whatever it was to be according to the size basket. He then leaves it all with the manager of his organization to see that the grapes are sold and soon the telegrams begin to fly all over the United States to find buyers. Sometimes as high as \$200 are paid for the telegrams of a single day from this grape belt, they will probably be loading within a few weeks as high as 125 cars a day. To dispose of so many grapes to the best advantage to the grower is a tremendous task and confers an enormous responsibility upon the manager of our organizations."

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"After the grapes are sold and money received the shipments of each day are pooled separately so that every shipper on a certain day receives exactly the same price for each day being averaged. For instance, if half the shipments of a certain day were sold for 11 cents and the other half for 13 cents, each man who shipped that day would receive the average price of 12 cents, no matter whether his grapes went into the 11 or 13 cent car. Mr. Dunham, Mr. Benway and Mr. Wildey are all men of wide experience in the grape business. Mr. Dunham commenced buying grapes in

Lawton in 1878 and has been in the business nearly every year since ( 1921 ). Mr. Benway has been buying grapes about 25 years, sixteen of which he has been in Lawton. Mr. Wildey also has been buying for several years, with headquarters at Paw Paw."

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Not mentioned by Mr. Lewis, was another cash buyer, Mr. James Marcelletti, who bought and loaded many cars of grapes from about 1919 thru 1928. James, or " Jim " as we called him was very fair with the grower consistently paying prices a little higher than other cash buyers, and many times would exceed the growers organizations price. Like Mark Owen Company, he had a select market. His sons today own and operate the Fruit Growers Package Company at Paw Paw, manufacturing fruit baskets and containers.

In about 1919 or 1920, Armour and Company signed an agreement with the Federal government to get out of the private transportation business, selling their cars to other companies, as the Fruit Growers Express, and the Pacific Fruit Growers Express for instance. Armour and Company in 1905 needed refrigator cars to transport the fruits they were buying, as strawberries from Hammond, La., to their factory in Chicago and later in Westfield, N. Y. where they were making crushed fruits and fruit syrups for the soda fountain trade. These fruits were frozen and packed in barrels before shipment. Also, to develop a market in the United States they needed these cars to carry fresh meats to many towns and cities. Before 1905 the meat business was supplied mostly by local butchers buying cattle and hogs from farmers and slaughtered locally. It was for these reasons they got into the transportation business, and to keep their investment in use 365 days a year they would rent the car services to people engaged in the fruit shipping business. Their service was the best; the customer always had plenty of cars and we read of no car shortage until they were forced by the government to go out of business. They had both the capital and the need so along with other Chicago meat packers, as Swift, had a fleet of refrigator cars, the first, and at times a surplus.

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We will now return to the Southern Michigan Grape Association and its competition with other organizations and cash buyers in the grape season of 1923 when the price of grapes to the juice factories dropped from \$ 114.40 a ton to \$ 60.00 a ton, a decrease of \$ 54.40 in just one year. The " boom days " of the war years were over.

## THE GRAPE MARKET SITUATION 1923

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When rankbitely made his first bottle of grape juice in 1902 based on the sale of basket fresh grapes, the grapes he used from his own vineyard were worth \$ 15.00 a ton. During the next years following the grape juice factories paid an average of \$ 25.00 a ton until 1917 the year we entered World War One, the price increased to about \$ 60 a ton; in 1918, \$ 93.25; in 1919, \$ 98.00; and in the big boom year it reached the all time high of \$ 114.40 a ton. Not until the year of 1957, when Welch paid their growers, \$ 122.17 was the record passed. Even during the years of World War Two, the record of \$ 114.40 held. In the years following 1920, the grape juice factories paid in 1921, \$ 95.00 a ton; in 1922, \$ 60.00; in 1923, \$ 55.00 a ton was the high price until the wineries came to Michigan in 1932 and 33 and paid \$ 55.00. During the years between the prices were as low as \$ 15.00 but the juice factories paid from \$ 25.00 to \$ 35.00 a ton.

The first real shock price wise came to the grower in 1923 when they only received on an average \$ 55.00. The crop in 1922 was a little more than normal and no one expected to get anywhere near the 1920 price; a normal crop in 1921 and they received \$ 95.00, but in 1923 with only half a crop in Michigan the prices of \$ 55.00 was a disappointment. A number of growers did not have to wait for the bank failures that happened a few years later, they were broke.

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The Michigan grape belt unfortunately in 1923 was the only area in the United States that had about a half crop of grapes, while others had a little more than a normal one. Because of erroneous information to the contrary about the other areas it was believed here that they also had a small crop. It was apparent that the cash buyers had more accurate information then did the associations.

But something had been added to the market that at the time most growers did not realize, the planting of hundred acres of grapes, in not only California, but in Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas; besides in the past ten years, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Missouri and Pennsylvania had about doubled their acreage also. In 1920 because of the demand the market was not over supplied, but in the years, the age of the vines, with no early frosts, their production increased materially and with less demand for grapes than in 1920 this was probably the number one reason for the decline in grape prices.

Another reason is that about this time because of improved transportation, the railroads had cut the time about a third on getting California fruits into the eastern markets was a factor. Anyway, in the light of what happened this was another reason for the price decline. It would never be

more until during the years that followed these vineyards in the central west, were destroyed and the land returned to the raising of grains. They needed a hundred dollar price per ton to stay in the grape business...

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A market report dated, September 6, 1923 had this to say: "Grapes are now moving in carlots from Michigan, New York, California, Iowa, and Delaware. Of a total of 722 cars, shipped the first three days of this month, California had 518 cars and Michigan 55, with only a few cars from other states. The primary destination of the car shipments of Michigan grapes for these first three days were, Pittsburgh 21 cars, Chicago, 6; Cincinnati, 4; Toledo, 3; and one each to Charleston, W, Va; Detroit, Jacksonville, Fla; Cleveland, Evanston, Ill; Flint, Menominee, Sault Ste, Marie, and other states."

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On September 13th, the Lawton Leader reported; "Michigan grape prices lower as a result of competition. California, Ohio, and Iowa grapes are flooding Michigan's former markets. Up to Tuesday night, 54 cars of grapes had been shipped from Lawton, Mattawan and Decatur. Decatur shipped one car; Mattawan, 12 cars; and Lawton 41 cars. The United States department of agriculture reports the entire carload shipments from Michigan up to September 11th to be 265 cars as against 744 cars for the same period last season ( 1922 )."

"The street cash buyers prices were for 4 quart baskets of Wordens, 20¢ each and for bulk Wordens ( in bushels or jumbos ) \$ 40.00 a ton. The Southern Michigan was quoting, Wordens at \$ 50.00 to \$ 55.00 a ton; 4 quart baskets at 25¢ each. The above prices are very low considering the prices at which Champions were sold. Growers and shippers, however are anticipating better prices later. Several reasons are attributed to the low prices at present; the usual slump which comes between Champions and Concord because the presence of Peaches on the market, the hundreds of carloads of California grapes which are now reaching all of the big markets, and also the fact that Ohio and Iowa have full crops of grapes this year. Pittsburg, which is usually a good market for Michigan grapes had 180 cars of California grapes on track there last Saturday. These grapes are sold at auction and come in competition with our fruit. Cleveland which took 250 cars of grapes from the Southern Michigan Grape Association in 1920 is now buying grapes from her own district which has a good crop and the grapes are brought in by truck." Editors note: This is the first record we have of truck shipments of over 100 miles.)

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"The grape district around Council Bluffs, Iowa, has a good crop this year and that district is breaking in to the Michigan grape trade in the west."

It was reported on September 13th that the New York crop was only 60 per cent; which proved a month later to be not true as it was more than 95 per cent of normal.

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The quality of grapes in 1923, were indeed a "vintage year" for a superior quality to the crops of 1920-1921 or 1922-- the best anytime since 1918- and price wise the cheapest.

In making his usual summary of the grape crop and prices for 1923, Editor C. E. Lewis had this to say; "to date, October 4th 1923, that the total shipment of grapes from our area to date was 645 car loads, while the total for Michigan was, 1965 cars. Compared with 1922, there were 4288 cars shipped by the same date, or a decrease of 2323 carloads."

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You will recall before in our story we told of a freeze and snowstorm in May which accounted for the decrease in shipments of grapes from 1922. In looking back over 80 years, our grape crops are reduced about an average of every three years. The other grape growing areas as mentioned had a normal crop in 1923 and we were only ones who did not. For the entire country in 1923 to October 4th, had shipped 28,313 car loads; while in 1922 they shipped a total of 28,030 carloads. This was a national increase of 283 car loads of grapes.

Further regarding the grape market, Mr. Lewis said, "That the price of grapes for bulk Concord of \$ 40.00 a ton. The grape crop had only been half picked ( Sept 13 ). While the slump in prices was attributed to several causes, the major one here was the cash buyers who early had cut the associations prices of \$ 52.50 a bulk ton, and they had sent out hundreds of telegrams offering delivery based on \$ 47.50 a ton."

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---- THE THREE THIEVES OF MATTAWAN ----

Because at the time, grape harvest season of 1923; the price situation, half a grape crop, best quality in years, had the growers angry and disappointed to say the least. But when the Armour grape juice factory told a number of their growers we don't want you to pick grapes for us in Armour picking boxes, but pack into jumbo baskets, and bring them to our factory to be loaded in cars for shipment on the fresh fruit market. That was "straw that broke the camel's back" and to say broke loose would be putting it mildly.

Gould and Stone, had bought grapes for three or four years previous for Armour and also had some good trade connections on the fresh fruit markets that they were able to



to pay the grower a little more than the average cash buyer, and sometimes equal the associations prices, or more. Horace ( Hod ) Stone was a grape grower and George Gould at the time had sold his business in Mattawan and was studying law. Later he was Register of Deeds of Van Buren County, afterwards on becoming an Attorney moved to Kalamazoo where he pratise law until he retired, (112)

As we have related before in the Armour story that at the time they were operating under Federal Court orders, because of a consent degree signed about 1920, that they could only buy each year a supply of grapes to press sufficient to care for overhead maintenance costs to keep the plant in good condition pending court decisions as to its sale. In 1922, they permitted Armour to buy 2,000 tons of grapes to blend with unsold high priced grape juice, to improve its color and flavor. It was understood until about the 10th of September that the purchase of 2,000 tons would be approved for 1923, and Gould and Stone had already signed the growers for about 2/3 of the tonnage. Under the circumstances Armour had no other choice then to buy the grapes and ship them. 113

The general opinion was therefore, as the price was low and demand not good, that to get rid of the grapes Armour would " dump" them on the market for any price. Which was not true; and when the season ended Armour's average price paid was the highest, an average of about \$ 56.00 a ton.

I know all about what happened. At the time I was employed by Armour at their Mattawan factory and I handled the whole deal, paying the growers and keeping the records.

Just how the designation of " the three thieves" originated I never knew but on the second day we were loading cars, Hod Stone, came into the office and said to Mr. Gould and Deats who were present, laughing-" What do you know, the three of us have a new title-we are now the three thieves.", and we all laughed considering it a joke.

I would not mention it here now except for the fact that a Mr. Dickerson, absentee owner of a large vineyard, from a vineyard we had received grapes for several years, after receiving payment, came to Mattawan and heard the talk that his grapes were sold to the three thieves, demanded an accountung, which I gave him. Not being satisfied had the court subpoena me and all the records, and when we showed the court he had got the same as everyone and that Armour had paid more than anyone else for grapes that year; the court ruled in our favor assessing him all the costs. But the ruling of the court still didn't satisfy the " skittle-butt" gossip on the street and a number of 114

growers still believed the three thieves for real.

Mr. George B. Gould, Horace (Hod ) Stone and Phil Deats, were fine gentlemen, honest, better than the average citizens and sure didn't deserve to be known as the three 114 thieves; which at first considered a joke but later regardless gossip seem to prevail over truth, this was a cross they certainly didn't deserve.

Mr. Stone was the father of Horace Stone, who was the first President of the Village of Mattawan, Mr Deats continued with Armour as plant manager until his retirement in 1924, had a good record of twenty years service. Personally, I feel better having written this.

The fact that Armour loaded grapes to be sold on the fresh fruit markets had no depression on the prices received, but a number of cash buyers were quoting grapes from \$ 45 to \$ 47.50 by telegrams as early as July was a reason. Later in early September it was both the national sales agencies for the associations who got " cold feet", the North American, representing the Michigan Fruit Growers was the first to cut prices because they had a several cars of 115 grapes on tracks in different markets unsold. Shortly afterwards they were followed by the Federated Fruit Growers, the sales agency for the Southern Michigan Grape Association to reduce prices to meet the competition.

As we've said before all evidence points to the fact that the cash buyers had a better knowledge of the national crop situation then the grape growers. It would be perhaps natural that the managers of the associations with the same knowledge wouldn't advertise the facts to depress the market for their growers.

So now we will continue with the story about the Southern Michigan Grape Association, from 1923 to its bitter end with the bank failures of 1932.

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 THE LAST YEARS OF THE SOUTHERN MICHIGAN  
 GRAPE ASSOCIATION  
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The reader of our story about this association will note we didn't write much in detail the years from 1898 to 1920, and only the period of 1920 thru 1923. Our reason is that these years will describe pretty much of those years missed.

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During the first years of the Depression, the cause of this association going out of shipping and selling fruits for the growers was simply that the North American Fruit Exchange, and the Federated Fruit Growers Exchange had went into bankruptcy in the fall I believe of 1932 and with the failure of the banks owed not only the Southern Michigan but the Paw Paw Cooperative Association, and many other grower associations for hundreds of cars of fruit. The result was as far as the Southern Michigan was concerned they ceased to exist as an association. This was the end of both the Southern Michigan and the Paw Paw Co-op of shipping any more grapes by rail.

Both associations did handle in a small way shipments made by truck but as far as I can remember, even this service was discontinued in the early 1960's.

The Paw Paw Co-operative Association, is still in business selling supplies for farmers and home gardeners.

Mr. Hardy, by agreement took over the supply business of the Southern Michigan, operating both the warehouse in Lawton and Mattawan. Mr. William Bunce, who had charge of the Mattawan warehouse, as employee of the Southern Michigan for a number of years and continued as an employee of Mr. Hardy until as I remember about 1950 or thereabouts, until it was closed. The building today is owned by the village of Mattawan and used for storage.

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Again as I remember it, Mr. Hardy continued to sell growers supplies in Lawton until about 1955, having bought the warehouse and scale house there from the Southern Michigan about 15 years previous.

With the good roads program of the early 1920's and by the act of congress creating a national numbering system to be used in all states by the symbol of the prefix U S before the number( U S 12 ) this stimulated the demand and use of trucks. At first they were rated at a ton and half and most every owner would load three tons; it became a popular means of moving fruit to markets as far away as Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis and St. Paul. A few years later as the mileage of paved roads increased; Semi-trailer refrigerator trucks came into use and fruit by truck could be shipped from coast to coast. It was the end of the rail-road refrigerator cars. A few with wheels removed can be seen today for cold storage of fruits. Robert Morrison, Roadside market on Red Arrow Highway has one of them.

It has always been a question in my mind that an organization "geared" as it was to shipping of fruit by rail thru sales agencies as the North American had there not been a depression could have continued in business because of the thousands of trucks owned by growers selling direct today to retail and wholesale stores.

The story that follows about Turner Brothers will explain the reason for making this statement.

-- O --  
TURNER BROTHERS OF LAWTON

It all started out in Porter township in 1835 when George Turner inherited the eighty acre farm on which he was born on January 24, 1859 and soon after bought another 80 acres next to it; so he had a 160 acre farm. On January 22, 1880 he had married Miss Ida Maxwell, and to this union soon after had been born, John and Lewis, who in 1911 were living on a farms of their own; but Homer, Margery, George Jr, Oscar and Dea H., were still living on the family farm with their mother.

George Turner, was an excellent farmer and with help of his sons they increased the ten acres of grapes in 1901 to about three hundred acres by about 1920. It has been said that Ida, the mother was the "business head" and to her is given credit for the financial success of the Turner family-- at least she gave it a good start.

As such about 1928 or perhaps a little sooner, I am not sure, the Turner brothers saw the advantage of direct marketing their grapes by truck to Detroit, and at the time John Turner had secured the grape business of one or two large chain stores operating in Detroit and surrounding area. It was not long before they did not have sufficient grapes of their own to supply the stores; so they began buying from neighbors and about 1933 had a very successful business. Soon after they started selling direct, they were able to make contacts with suppliers of fertilizers and spray materials that they could purchase at wholesale. About 1932 or 1933 they leased a site from the Fruit Belt Railroad, on the west side of Main Street in Lawton, just north of Lincoln Street (which now is part of Welch's factory,) and erected a small office, warehouse, and installed a pair of scales, on the north side of the building. Here they received grapes from the growers for truck shipment and after they became interested in the Michigan Wineries, (now Warner's Vineyards) for delivery to the winery. Today, under the name of Warner's Vineyards, they still sell growers supplies, and have in addition a few rods east of Main Street along the railroad a fertilizer mixing plant, and the fertilizer is sold in bulk to the growers, mixed there and loaded into spreaders which are taken direct to the vineyard and

spread on the ground.

After the death of John Turner's mother, John became the "business head" of Turner Brothers, and his wife, Alice, assisted in keeping the business records. After her death, Mrs Jean Atwater and Charles MacDonald followed her were employed as clerk-bookkeeper. When he resigned to enter the employ of the Eaton Manufacturing Company in 1951, Robert Hollis, was employed at the Turner warehouse in Lawton for the next eleven years, until he retired. Before then he was employed as accountant at the Michigan Wineries from 1941 to 1948. John Turner at the time was fifty-one per cent owner of the winery. So I spent some 18 years employment with the Turner interests, all of them very happy years with fond memories of my association with this fine family. Charles MacDonald is at present Van Buren County clerk. Also, the personal friendship enjoyed with Andrew Murch, the 49 per cent partner of the Michigan Wineries at that time.

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#### GRAPE HARVEST IN LAWTON- 1920

To give our readers a picture of the grape harvest as it was some 60 years ago, we copy in full a news item from the Lawton Leader, Thursday, October 7, 1920.

ANNUAL GRAPE HARVEST IS NOW AT ITS HEIGHT ws the headline. Weather fine, Car Situation Improving; 4 quarts Sell for 30¢, Bulk \$ 90 to \$ 110 a ton.

Fair weather is favoring the grape grower, and the annual harvest is now at its height. The juice factories are all receiving grapes and shipments are being made from all of the loading stations, which include Lawton, Paw Paw, Mattawan, Decatur, Marcellus, Oshtemo, Rix, Lake Cora, Lawrence, Dowagiac, Gobles, Williams, and Spring Lake. The last named is up near Grand Haven but shipments are being made from there thru the Southern Michigan Grape Association.

Prices are keeping up, four quarts selling for 30¢ jumbos at \$ 110 a ton and bushels from \$ 95 to \$ 100 a ton.

The car situation is improved, but on account of the large yield the demand is great. For the first three days of this week 206 refrigerator cars for shipping grapes were received at Lawton. About one-half of these went to stations on the Fruit Belt Line.

Notwithstanding the many outlets for unloading grapes, the shipping stations and factory yards are lined with teams from early morning until late at night.

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As an illustration: One day this week the Southern Michigan Grape Association loaded 14 cars at Lawton before 3 o'clock, and at that time probably 25 teams were waiting with grapes, with only one car placed and that for two quart baskets. On the same day the Michigan Fruit Exchange and the Mark Owen Company were taking in grapes as fast as they could be unloaded. On the same day and about the same time probably 50 teams and trucks were in line at Paw Paw waiting for cars. The same situation also prevailed at Mattawan.

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Everyone is feeling the force of the season's rush. Even the blacksmith is so busy he will hardly speak to you. For him it is a hurry-up job in repairing a broken grape wagon or shoeing horses, that are being used in drawing grapes.

Some of the farmers who do not have grapes of their own are doing hauling for others, and they too are overworked.

Besides the extra help in the vineyards and at the railroads, the juice factories are each employing about a hundred hands. At the J. Hungerford-Smith plant they have a force of 130 people. The Welch Company is now running twelve hour shifts and pressing continues there thruout the day and night.

There is a force of 30 men who are icing refrigerator cars, and tons of ice are being used daily to keep the grapes cool until they reach their destination. On Wednesday thses men iced 70 cars, handling about 350 tons of ice, and could have iced more cars if they had had them.

At the railroad yards there are two engines and three full crews engineers, firemen and brakemen, also two conductors. These crews remain here all the time to place cars for icing and loading. One crew is on duty at night, thus giving 24 hour railroad service. At the Michigan Central freight office four extra people are employed, one employee works there all night, while Agent Healy and his chief clerk are putting in from 12 to 16 hours a day.

122

The largest day's shipment so far this season, made by the Southern Michigan Grape Association was 50 cars."

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In 1920, fifty cars represented about 500 tons of grapes, which today would compare favorably with the receipts of some of the grape juice factories..

Lawton, was at the time a division or junction point where the Fruit Belt Railroad would turn over to the Michigan Central grapes loaded on its tracts from Lawrence, Paw Paw Oshtemo, Lake Cora and Rix. All cars were iced here, except

those loaded at Mattawan. The Michigan Central had a large ice house there also.

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### DECATUR WAS ALSO A SHIPPING POINT FOR GRAPES- 1920

The Decatur Republican, a local newspaper said "that 130 cars of grapes were shipped from there during the grape harvest of 1920. The Southern Michigan Grape Association had loaded and shipped 45 cars, and that a cash buyer, Ward McKee, had shipped 56 cars, and 19 cars were consigned to the J. Hungerford-Smith Grape Juice Company at Lawton. Another buyer B. F. J. O'dell bought and shipped 10 cars.

Of the shipment of 19 cars to Hungerford-Smith, it would be about 228 tons, average of 12 tons a car.

However, we probably will not in the future again ship as many grapes because in our area there are only a few acres of grapes, and the reason why we shipped this number of cars, was because the growers mostly in Porter township to avoid the difficulties of unloading, and the time to do so at Lawton; even tho they had to drive a few miles more did so."

It was not unusual to ship grapes from the Lake Cora, area, Wildey siding ( M-51 ) west of Paw Paw, Paw Paw or Decatur to the grape juice plants in Lawton and Mattawan. There were reasons for this. At the time and before 1920 all grapes were hauled to market for loading in cars, or to the juice factories, by wagons, a team of horses as motive power; there were no trucks and if the market was more than 10 miles with no paved roads, it was cheaper and less time required to ship by rail. Also, it happened many times that a cash buyer or association would find that they had a few cars loaded on track and because of a surplus on the city markets, the grapes were unsold. It was a common practise of the associations to consign cars thru their brokers, as Federated Fruit Growers, to certain cities and many times they would while in transit to there be rerouted to a different destination.

If these cars were loaded entirely with 12 quart or jumbo baskets, and were unsold the grape juice factories would buy them if it looked as if they were not going to get the tonnage of grapes needed. Not until after about 1930 grapes marketed as fresh fruit were about 75 per cent of the tonnage harvested in contrast of today when only less than 10 per cent is marketed as fresh fruit. I recall a case in point. In the middle of October 1924 at Armour in Mattawan, it looked as if we were going to

get the tonnage of grapes needed. Not until after about 1930 grapes marketed as fresh fruit were about 75 per cent of the tonnage harvested in contrast of today when only less than 10 per cent are marketed as fresh fruit. I recall a case in point. About the first week of October in 1924, Armour at Mattawan saw that they were going to be short of tonnage of grapes, so they bought a number of cars grapes packed in jumbos from the Southern Michigan at Lawton and shipped them by railroad to their juice factory in Mattawan. After unloading the cars the empty baskets were sold to the growers at one-half the price of new unused ones.

124

124

12

-- 0 --  
AS THE FORMER RAILROAD YARDS AT LAWTON  
LOCKED IN 1981.

Where the grapes were loaded and the cars of grapes and other merchandise loaded at stations east of Hartford on the KLS&C ( Fruit Belt Line ) were transferred to the Michigan Central, now Conrail, at Lawton was the area that is south of White Oak Street, east of Walker Street, and south to the present Conrail tracks and Welch Foods factory. In 1920 this was the KLS&C railway yards, where cars were held for the Michigan Central to pick them up. After being received by the M C they were taken to a siding just west of Welch's where they were iced if they contained grapes. The KLS&C had their passenger depot, freight office and general offices in a building fronting on Main and White Oak Streets. Until 1979 after the area was abandoned in 1925 when the railroad ended its business career and removed and sold all their rails and right of way from Kalamazoo thru Mattawan, and Lawton to Paw Paw, it was then remodeled into offices for a lumber company, who also used other buildings that the railroad had for the storage of lumber and coal.

John Turner about 1950 bought the entire old railroad yards where he had built his warehouse in the thirties on railroad ground he had leased, and used the area for the storage of fence posts. For several years he leased the balance of the yards first to the lumber company and when they ceased operations it was leased to the Michigan Power for pole storage and the building for their offices. Welch Foods in 1980 bought the area and this year will about cover the area with a 52,000 square foot storage addition to their fruit processing facility, more than doubling its ability to store non-frozen products waiting shipment. This is in addition to three 700,000 gallon juice storage tanks to the facility last year ( 1980 )

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125A

On the east side of Main Street at the railroad tracks



is a stone building of the American Legion and it still has a side track on the north side of the building that continues west across Main Street and serves as one of two side tracks for Welch's. In 1920, it was used also to place cars for the loading of grapes for the Southern Michigan and other shippers. It is about a half mile long from Main Street and connects with the main train line. It seems to me there was another short siding much shorter, just north of the one mentioned, parallel and running east.

125 AA

126

The freight house and office of the Michigan Central was a few rods east of the passenger depot and on the south side of the railroad tracks; and here during the grape harvest was where the billing of cars was done.

The former railroad yards of the Michigan Central was on the east side of Main Street and a car driving south thru Lawton today on M-40 will see a large pile of posts that are sold by Warner's to grape growers, and once in awhile a few mobile homes are on display. On the west side of Main Street ( M-40 ) at the railroad crossing is Welch's. Their factory and office entrance being from Walker Street thru the parking lot. Just north is Warner's Supply warehouse, and then before mentioned former Power Company office building.

Amtrak -trains give one long continuous whistle for the three railroad crossings all located within a mile, passing the former stone depot at 70 miles an hour is the only the only train whistle heard today, except once a day for six days a week Conrail freight trans stop to serve Welch's and a few times a year to serve Warner's Fertilizer Mixing plant. While in 1920, thirteen passenger trains stopped in Lawton on the Michigan Central, seven going west and six eastbound. The KLS&C served the town in addition with eight trains, four each way.

In 1920 there was another siding on the south side of the double track main line running west from the present wine storage building of Warner's Vineyards on Nursery Street west to Walker Street. This siding served at the time the Day Grape Juice factory, the Michigan Central freight house and the J. Hungerford-Smith Grape juice factory. This was a busy siding year around.

126 A

Today, the old railroad yards are rather silent; just phantoms of a past era that was once the busiest section of Lawton.

We will close this chapter with an article from the Lawton Leader of February 26, 1920 as example of the volume of business done by the Michigan Central there.

" For the size of the town of Lawton is probably the most important shipping point on the Michigan Central Railroad. A force of four people is kept constantly at the freight house here, and a 24 hour ticket and telegraph service is maintained at the depot. During December 1919, the ticket sales reached \$ 4,300. From January 1919 to January 1920, there were 1160 cars of outbound and inbound freight handled by the Michigan Central Railroad at this station, while 2897 cars were transferred between the K L S & C railroads. Of the outbound freight from Lawton were 592 carloads, and inbound freight 568 carloads. The shipments included, Grapes 318 cars; Grape Juice & Jam, 175 cars; Stock 25 cars; Potatoes, 12 cars; Grain, 20 cars; and Sundries, 42 cars.

"The figures shown are only the shipments made from Lawton over the Michigan Central; we do not know the total shipments that were made over the K L S & C, but a good guess is that the number would be increased for the totals of both railroads."

THE WINERIES

OF

VAN BUREN COUNTY

## THE WINERIES OF VAN BUREN COUNTY

(Historical)

## The Houppert Wine Company

This pioneer winery was the first one after repeal of the 18th amendment to make wines on a commercial scale in Van Buren County. William Houppert came to Lawton in 1932 and bought from Clyde W. Johnson DDS of Lawton, the empty factory building, the former J. I. Day Grape Juice factory before mentioned in our history story, located at the Michigan Central Railroad and Nursery Street in the village of Lawton.

W-1

Mr. Houppert, after his purchase of the property went ahead, cleaned it up, painted and installed storage casks for wine in the basement, fermenting tanks and other necessary equipment for the production and bottling of wines. The first two years in any business are always critical and expense of getting wines ready for market, including sales promotion had exhausted his capital; so he asked for receivership; and John Turner was appointed as receiver. The business finally got its start, and with Mr. Houppert's fine quality wines met good consumer acceptance; this with Mr. Turner's good management the business prospered. It was indeed a very good combination.

William C. Houppert's father, Franz, came to the United States in 1847 and settled in 1850 at Madison, Indiana where he planted a hillside vineyard and established a winery. Prior to 1847 the Houppert family had made fine wines in France for several generations. From his winery in Madison he then sold wines for twenty-five years to private consumers all over the nation. He later moved to larger quarters in Indianapolis, Indiana and with his sons, continued making fine wines until the prohibition era.

For this winery, the grapes were first purchased at the Benton Harbor Fruit Market in 1889. It was discovered that Michigan grapes, grown here, and handled by those who understood the vintors art, were especially good for producing blended wines.

In Indiana, W. C. Houppert, as a boy, was taught by his father the chemical secrets of making fine wines, and knowledge of the kinds of bouquets ( aromas ) to use. Travels to old world wineries gave Mr. Houppert additional knowledge of wine making, and when the prohibition law was repealed, he resumed business. Remembering the high quality of Michigan grapes purchased by his father in the early part of this century and the favorable wine law adopted in Michigan; this with an abundance of grapes grown in the Lawton- Paw Paw area, and a good building just waiting to become a winery sure made his choice an easy one.

He was right in his belief that here was a great future for making of the finest wines in the nation, from a most favored area to grow grapes- it would be a profitable industry. Mr, Houppert, also believed growers needed help from College and praised the assistance he had received from the University of California where vineyard research was carried on by a larger staff. Since 1935, here in Michigan, our Michigan State University has been and still is engaged in grape research work. The Michigan Liquor Control Commission at Lansing during the thirties and forties, provided grape inspection of grapes at their receipt at the wineries, and did much to improve the sanitation in the wineries.

W-2

W-3

Mr. Houppert's observations that the growers and wineries will be greatly benefited if wine comes to be regarded as a table beverage as it is in Europe, instead of high powered intoxicating drink is slowly becoming a fact. The wine tours of today are part of an educational program along with the growing of new varieties of wine grapes, and more about this later.

His only son was taken by death and he began teaching the art of wine making, which had been handed down by generations, to Mr. Robert Wade, his son's college friend, who came to live with him. Wine making is one of the oldest, highly skilled arts in the world, requiring years of practice and study. But modern science and machinery provides shortcuts which vintners today are quick to utilize.

Robert Wade, educated as a chemist, has been under Mr. Houppert's instruction since he came to take the place of his son who died suddenly. He founded the winery, hoping to see his son established in business in what he considered one of the finest grape growing sections of the United States. His son was just beginning his career in the plant when fatally stricken.

W-4

The Houppert winery had been reorganized and the receiver discharged, and they were in the process of enlarging the wine storage; and had just finished a new deep cellar just east of the winery building, when I was hired to buy grapes from them. This came about because on my visit a year before I was critical because of the poor quality of grapes received. According to the wine law to get a rebate of 46¢ a gallon state tax they had to pay the grower \$ 55 a ton for grapes. The market at the time was from \$ 35 to \$ 40 a ton. The growers seem to have an idea that any junk would do for wine, so when I bought grapes for Mr. Houppert we changed all of that and he got the very best because we paid that year from \$ 15 to \$ 20 more than the market. Also, at this time I suggested to the Liquor Commission that they provide an inspector to see that the wineries got the best fruit and that started for a number of years their inspection of grapes being received at the wineries. It was my pleasure then to instruct Mr. Lee Holmes, who was their representative in charge of wineries operation here.

Bill Houppert, had more than his share of bad luck but to his credit he was an optimist. The new company was prospering, wines were excellent and sales on the increase; when in about 1940, the brick winery building burned down to the concrete first floor covering the basement, causing the loss of equipment, machinery, tanks and everything on the first and second floors. Besides several thousands of wine lost when the casks burst because of the heat. The ditch nearby ran full of wine and it was a holiday for some Wine O's in collecting it in pails or whatever was handy.

W-4 A

The Lawton Vineyards Company, who had built the building in 1903, contractor H. V. Snyder of Chicago, had done a good job. The foundations and cellar, with the concrete floor above had sustained the heat of the fire and they were used in the construction of the beautiful stone building you see today. After the fire and while the building was being constructed, Mr. Houppert, showed me plans for the landscaping the grounds. He was sure an optimist.

In about John Turner and Andrew Murch bought the assets of the Houppert Wine Company, and in the deal Mr. Robert Wade, agreed to join them as Winemaker.

This Story is dedicated to Mrs Mary Houppert McIntosh, in the memory of her father, W. C. Houppert.

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MICHIGAN WINERIES, INC- Paw Paw  
Paw Paw Grape Juice Company  
WARNER'S VINEYARDS, INC

W-5

The winery organization to have the same name, was first organized in Detroit and operated there a winery for a few years, as the Michigan Wineries; was started in Detroit soon after repeal of prohibition in the early thirties by residents of that city. Andrew Murch, of the Mattawan Cooperative Association of grape growers, had sold them grapes and was having difficulty in getting pay for them, so he went to Detroit and stayed there, collecting from their sales each day of portion of it to pay for the grapes. However, he was successful before they were closed out of business because of an operation of an unlicensed still at their Paw Paw winery.

In the meantime they had purchased from Mrs Gale Cavanaugh the old Paw Paw Grape Juice factory building in Paw Paw and had started to remodel it and had installed some wine storage tanks or casks. The remodeling was interrupted by an agent of the Federal Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Unit on discovery of the still. For two weeks he had fished the

nearby Paw Paw River, but the only fish he caught was the still. The government now owned the winery.

As about the same time John Turner was being relieved as receiver for the Houppert Winery and had a taste of the wine business as well as Andrew Murch; they got together and bought the assets of the confiscated Michigan Wineries, and reorganized it. Andy, had become a registered Mortician, and kept the license in force, going from time to time to school for that purpose. Once I asked him, " Why?", and he replied, " Bob, I feel that it is an ace in the hole, just in case we don't make it here." I should add here that at the time, I was their accountant, having joined the firm soon after its incorporation in 1938.

W-5

W-6

As I've said before that the first two years in business is a critical period and more so if you are a new one having to establish a market.

The Michigan Wineries was no exception. Before, Robert Wade joined them as Winemaker; they had hired two good men, one John Dohora, who resigned after a few months to become a Winemaker for Bronte Wineries. Edwin Davis, a good chemist who stayed a little over a year and resigned to be employed by a distillery ( Shenley's ) at Peoria, Illinois; where after several years he retired and since has raised many Roses that have been winning national prizes. It seemed in both cases the winemakers would go thru a pressing and fermenting season and finding the wine turning to vinegar would resign. It was not their fault, we were buying more grapes then we had capacity to care for. Mr. Turner, had confidence in Bob Wade, and remarked to me many times that, " Bill Houppert could make good wine out of most anything and he was sure Bob had learned the trick." Between his confidence in Bob and our increased capacity, our wines improved.

With the advent of World War Two, the government offered the Michigan Wineries a contract for several thousand gallons of unfermented Concord grape juice to be packed in five gallon tin cans. They did not consider the making of wines necessary to winning the war, but if you would turn part of your capacity to the production of food, and grape juice was so considered, it made it easier to buy some items in short supply. During the war years there was a shortage of labor, and because we were processing grape juice we were able to employ German war prisoners. Mrs Alice Turner, wife of John Turner, did not like the wine business; so I have always felt she was a factor in getting the Michigan Wineries to expand into the grape juice business. We were able to secure the services of Albert Hall, a former Armour employee in Mattawan, and with Richmond Rix, who was already employed by the winery, were valuable as they had experience in processing grape juice in cans.

W 7

After the war the Paw Paw Grape Juice Company was organized as a subsidiary of the winery; and tanks were erected to store several thousand gallons of unfermented grape juice under refrigeration. The same machinery is used to bottle grape juice as for wines, and the grape juice factory label is- PAW PAW GRAPE JUICE. When you visit the winery you will see there in a wall case all the different brands of private label grape juice they bottle for the trade. Today, the Paw Paw Grape Juice Company is doing the same private label business as before the thirties was done by the J. Hungerford-Smith Grape Juice Company. W-7

Andrew Murch, proved himself to be an excellent salesman; he was to the Michigan Wineries in its early days as was C. C. Palmer, to the Lawton Fruit Juice Co., and if any business is to succeed it must have sales. It was a good combination, John Turner, management and finance with Andrew Murch's ability to sell, his ambition, youth, and applied energy to succeed. It was he who re-organized the warehouse and sales, that the company had inherited from the original one in Detroit, and made it a success. A few years later when I left the employ of the company, they had bought a larger warehouse building there, besides an office girl, had eight salesmen contacting the wine and beverage trade in Detroit. W-8

In 1958, Andrew F. Murch, sold his interest to John Turner, and built a plant on the Red Arrow Highway west of Paw Paw. First started to make champagne, and later begin the production of pure concentrated fruit juices for the bottling and preserving trade.

After buying Mr Murch's interest, James K. Warner, son-in-law, of John Turner, who at the time was President of the First National Bank in Lawton, resigned and accepted the Presidency of the Michigan Wineries. The years following saw many improvements in the winery, grounds, and the purchase of the old village waterworks station which now serves as a hospital ty house- the Warner's Wine-Haus. Also the beautiful landscape grounds, with the Paw Paw River running thru, they have an old 1912 vintage Grand Trunk Railroad passenger car there where audio-visual presentations of winemaking may be seen by visitors before the tour thru the winery.

In April 1976, the senior Warner turned the reins over to his son, James J. Warner, as President of the Warner Vineyards and its affiliate, the Paw Paw Grape Juice Co. W-9

The name change took place in 1973. In addition to becoming the largest winery in Michigan, the affiliate is now the fourth largest grape juice producer in the United



States, Welch Foods, Inc., is number one. According to the Michigan Liquor Control Commission, Warner Vineyards collared 42 percent of the market for wine sales within Michigan for the first six months of 1980. When all the American wines are taken into account, including those produced in California and New York, Warner ranked sixth just under 4 per cent of the market with Gallo of California number one.

W-9

Warner, has the capacity for storing 3.3 million gallons of juice in its plant and that puts it in the top third of American Wineries of the United States. They also take great pride in being the only winery in Michigan to make champagne in a traditional French process where wine is fermented in its own bottle. It is a painstaking process and involves:

- Blending according to bouquet color and taste.
- A second fermentation prompted by an injection of sugar and yeast.
- Aging for six to eight months in bottles with the necks tilted downward.
- Manual rotation of a quarter turn a day for each bottle in the rack.
- Freezing the liquid in the neck to remove the last vestiges of sediment.
- And returning the volume of liquid to its proper fill by a hand-operated " dosage " machine.

W-10

And all this has paid off because Warner Brut Champagne, first offered, in 1973 was a prize winner.

Monsieur Lumbroso, a member of a famous French organization of fine wine connoisseurs of Paris, France, spent several days visiting the winery, and sampling wines. He was particularly pleased with their Brut Champagne which he said was one of the finest he had tasted in this country. He praised also Warner Solera Cream Sherry saying it was as good as Harvey's Bristol Cream, if not better.

James J. Warner, also operates a second winery in Lawton, the former Houppert Winery, and here both the basic fermentation and aging processes for most wines are started. Housed in the winery are the Warner sherry solera and port solera systems. The system provides a fractional blending of wines thru a series of small fifty gallon oaken casks stacked three tiers high on a special designed racks. The process is at least 500 years old and dates back to methods in Portugal and Spain. The original wines in this winery solera, date back to 1946. Theoretically, some could still be a part of the blending process.

President Ronald Reagan had an opportunity to taste Warner's Brut Champagne the summer of 1980 at the Republican Convention in Detroit. It was the official wine drink served.

Shortly after John Turner had bought Mr. Murch's interest and James K. Warner had taken over Mr. Murch's duties, the increase of business made it necessary for Jim to spend all his time at the winery, and therefore, someone had to be employed for the sales end. So, Mr. Ken Needham joined the company as Vice President in charge of Sales. He was with the company for about twelve years and resigned to organize with his friend Mr. Tokid Nielson, a wine brokerage firm known as, Needham & Nielson Sales, Ltd., an equal partnership, with offices in Paw Paw and Farmington Hills; which today is the second largest firm of its kind in Michigan. They sell both Michigan and outstate wines to wholesalers and retailers.

W-11

Before closing the story of Michigan Wineries and Warner Vineyards, I would like to say that it was one of the most happy times of my life to have a part in the beginning of this wonderful business, and to see it grow. Fond memories of the days when the office was on the second floor, with a sliding window to the bottling room adjacent; where when I was not in the office Richmond ( Red ) Rix in charge of the bottling line would hear the phone ring and answer it. After Mrs Margaret Dillon Sgavers, joined us as Secretary he was relieved of this chore. Between us we grew with the business and Margaret had capacity for work. When she resigned to go with Mr. Murch as his Secretary at his winery, two people was hired to do her job. In all I believe she spent about twenty years associated with the wine business. She retired from Murch's.

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## THE WINERIES OF VAN BUREN COUNTY

### THE ST. JULIAN WINERY

#### St. Julian Wine Company, Inc.

Mariano Meconi, was born October 28, 1895 in Faleria, Italy, the son of Dominic and Francesca Meconi. He moved to Canada in 1921 where he founded the Border City Wine Cellars in Windsor, Ontario, in 1921. This small operation began slowly but was successful; and soon he organized there the Meconi Wine Company for the enlarged operations.

W-1

In 1933, after repeal of prohibition he moved his family and winery to Detroit. He was considered a pioneer in the wine business of Michigan, having started the state's oldest continuous operating winery. He moved the winery to Paw Paw in 1936; buying a former canning factory building located on South Kalamazoo Street. At this time the name was changed to Italian Wine Company, Inc., Because of the ethnic hostilities caused by World War Two the name was changed again, and in 1941, the corporation title was to St. Julian Wine Company, Inc. One of Meconi's

largest vats, a 3,600 gallon vessel, is still in use at the winery, which is named after the patron saint of his hometown in Italy. The winery still has the founder's original winemaking license that is attached to the vat.

W- 12

Mariano Meconi, was instrumental in the formation of the Michigan Wine Institute, the trade association of the state's fifteen wineries and served as president. He was very active in community development of Paw Paw, and played a major role in building Lake View Community Hospital in the early 1950s. He was a member of St. Mary's Church, Paw Paw and a 4th degree member of the Knights of Columbus Council No. 3798, Paw Paw.

W-1

He retired in the late 1960s and moved to Hollywood Beach, Florida, where he died February 25, 1980.

In 1946, with the demand for wines ever increasing, they decided to add champagne to their line of wines. The original four charmat tanks are still in use today. Sparkling wines proved a worthwhile venture for Meconi as was evidenced in 1963 when St. Julian became the first American winery to produce Cold Duck, now a world wide product.

It was in 1947, that Paul Braganini, Meconi's son-in-law, became associated with the firm. Thru the peak expansion period of the fifties and early sixties he served as Vice-President, Winemaker and General Manager. This period of time was to show distribution of St. Julian Wines expanding thru out the Midwest. In 1966, Paul, left the business in search of other interests. Meconi's two sons, Robert and Eugene, assumed management upon Braganini's departure.

In 1972, a devastating electrical fire destroyed the former canning factory building, fronting on South Kalamazoo Street. Only to increase the tragedy, 1973 saw both Robert and Eugene suffer fatal heart attacks.

Paul Braganini, was called back and renamed President and Chairman of the Board, and Mariano Meconi, the founder, retired and moved to Florida.

W-14

The winery was reconstructed in attractive decor and a spacious hospitality room was added, and is visited by several thousand people a year, same as is Warner's Wine-Haus next door.

Today the winery is still operated by the same family and with the same pride that originated 60 years ago - the oldest continuous one of them all. As the awareness of Michigan Wines continues to increase, so does the heritage and history of the St. Julian Wine Company continue to grow.

David Braganini, today's President of St. Julian, grandson of the founder, sees a "bullish future" for Michigan Wines. Like his grandfather is at present (1980) the President of the Michigan Wine Institute, and now the fourth generation winemaker of St. Julian, In conversation with Mr. Tom Thinnies, Gazeete Editor, September 1980, he said, "We make high quality wines that win medals and come at affordable prices. But most people can't afford to buy those every day. We're shooting for good wines that are affordable on a daily basis as a cocktail or to enhance a meal" "Wine is definitely a growth industry in the U.S. The consumption level in this country amounts to nearly three gallons a year of wine for each American adult. The same figures in Italy is more than 30 gallons, 27 in France and 24 in Argentina. In consumption in this country beer is almost 35 gallons, however for the first time on record wine consumption outstripped "spirits" (hard liquor) in the country."

W - 14

W-15

St. Julian, other than bottling thirty-five different kinds of wines they also market carbonated grape juice under its own label and for other firms. It has 85 distributing outlets in nine states, selling almost 300,000 gallons of wine and juice a year in Texas, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Pennsylvania and, also in Michigan. It sells more of its wine outside of the state of Michigan than any other Michigan winery.

Indiana has a particularly warm place in David's heart. At the Indiana State Fair in 1980, a national wine competition attracted 826 entries from all over the country. Only five gold medals were awarded and he got for St. Julian three of them. Not bad at all, three out of five.

From 1933 thru 1950s, sweet wines dominated the wine markets of Michigan because we were primarily a concord grape juice area. People eventually tired of those types of wines, and California was allowed to take over the Michigan market because we couldn't make a decent dry wine.

But now because of the planting of winter-hardy hybrids and French varietals in this county over the past 20 years we now have grapes to produce other wines. It has indeed been a life savor. In about 1960, sixty-three percent of wines sold in Michigan were from local wineries, and California took over the market, but now with the new grape wine varieties we can make wines on par with any area in the country. More of these "wine grapes" are being planted each year while the acreage of concords are on the decline.

W-16

Cold Duck, a combination of red and white wines, is the most famous creation of Michigan winemakers. Introduced in 1964, its popularity has spanned the Atlantic.

Winemakers of Europe now are doing some imitating.

An authentic account of how it originated and was named is almost impossible to obtain since more than one Michigan winery claims to have invented it. All, however, agree it was created in Detroit by accident.

The name, COLD DUCK, has an origin associated with a German custom of mixing the left over wines at the end of a party into a large container, often a punchbowl.

It was assumed that the party goers wouldn't be concerned about what the combination would taste like after drinking all evening.

The custom, undoubtedly, brought about the "cold end" of the evening. The German word for "end" (ende) and "duck" (ente) sound similar, and Americans attending German parties assumed their hosts were calling the custom "cold duck", according to legend.

Both St. Julian and Bronte claim to have been the first with Cold Duck, but some say that they combined their efforts. But St. Julian has its own process for making Cold Duck. However, the advent of its appearance on the market was a "boost" to many of the wineries sales that were on the decline because the public's taste was changing to dry wines, and as before mentioned at this time we did not have available in Michigan the varieties of grapes from which to make good dry wines.

St. Julian along with Warners Vineyards were the first to plant these new wine grapes. This was a daring step to plant the delicate French hybrid grapes that had never before grown in Michigan's often harsh winter climate. In all, to get varieties to withstand our climate it was necessary to graft some 45 European varieties on hearty American root stock. From humble beginnings in the soil of Van Buren County came the grapes never grown here before, and eventually new wines. This is the reason why today our wineries here in Michigan receiving gold medals and winning in competition with wines from other areas.

Before ending our story about St. Julian, a few personal words about the founder, Mariano Meconi. Mr. Meconi "Mac" as I called him, was a personal friend of mine and I have fond memories of him. It was my pleasure to serve with him on the building committee of the Lake View Hospital in Paw Paw; also when we had a drive for funds to start the hospital, I got my first experience in asking the public for funds. We valued his business experience on the Board of Trustees.

## BRONTE WINERY

## THE BRONTE WINES AND CHAMPAGNE COMPANY

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was founded in 1933, the year of repeal of Prohibition, by a group of investors headed by Dr. T. W. Wozniak, dentist at the time. His son, Robert, is now President of the Company. The original winery was located in the old Columbia Brewery in Detroit. In 1951 operations were moved to a new winery that was constructed at the Bronte Vineyards at Keeler, in Van Buren County. The winery and vineyards are presently at this same location. The 150 acre vineyard site was purchased in 1943, and that same spring vines were planted by German war prisoners that were stationed in nearby Hartford.

The winery and vineyard sites have a very interesting history. It was here where the famous Keeler Donnybrook Harness Races were held between 1901 and 1913. These races were very pretigious and, as a result, this area was a mecca for harness racing fans thru out the Midwest. Further more it was at the time the Farm house that still stands on this property that, ironically, the Keeler branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union was formed on November 14, 1879. This was " a self appointed agency to help stem the issuance of many unnecessary prescriptions". As Van Buren County at that time was a local option county where the sale of liquor, beer and wines prohibited within its borders; a doctor's prescription would be good at any drug store for their purchase, and save driving into Berrien County, to Benton Harbor or Watervliet over unimproved country roads. Van Buren County, was known as a " dry" county from about 1875 to the repeal of national Prohibition in 1933 and was the first county to vote for so called local option to prohibit the manufacture and sale of beverages of more than two percent alcohol by volume within its borders. The drug stores did a good liquor business by prescriptions.

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The first French-American hybrid grapes to be used in Michigan for commercial wine making were planted at Bronte Vineyards in 1958. These grapes were named Baco Noir after Maurice Baco, who developed this fine variety near the Burgundy District of France. The Baco Noir was brought to the Bronte Vineyards by Angelo Spinazze. Mr Spinazze, who has been with Bronte since 1937, is a viticulturist and enologist and is presently (1976) vice-President in charge of operations at the Bronte Winery and Vineyards. Mr. Spinazze was born into a wine-making family in Conegliano, Italy, and attended the famous school of Enology and Viticulture at Conegliano.

The Winery itself also has an interesting history. Several of the spectacular wood wine storage tanks that are located in the main cellar of the one-million gallon capacity were originally used by Al Capone in a brewery at Kankakee, Illinois. The tanks were purchased by Bronte when the Capone Brewery was closed by the government.

Another even of great historical significance took

place at the Winery when Bronte originated bottled Cold Duck.

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The colorful history that links Bronte with the past is fascinating. However, of prime importance is the fact that Bronte has been dedicated to making fine wines for nearly 50 years. Today ( 1976 ) Bronte is the largest maker of premium champagne and wines in Michigan. Our wines are distributed thru out the Midwest and have received international recognition and several awards.

Leon Adams, wine connoisseur and today's ( 1977 ) foremost writer on American Wines, rated Bronte Baco Noir as " outstanding." At a Detroit News tasting of nine red table wines from around the world, Bob Damoth, of the American Wine Society rated Bronte Noir number one. The prestigious-- Wine and Food Society of San Francisco, at a tasting of American Champagnes which was attended by over 700 members and guests, rated Bronte Champagne, " among the best".

Much of Bronte's success in making wine wines can be attributed to the excellant climatic conditions at our Sister Lakes District vineyards near Lake Michigan. Lingering warm breezes off Lake Michigan provide us with extended growing season and allow the grapes to ripen to perfection in the bright autumn/sun. We have also made much progress because of the fine wine and grape research program the Michigan Wine Institute has subsidized at Michigan State University. We have successfully experimented with new grape varieties that will make some truly classic wines of the future.

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At Bronte, in order to develop wines with fine character and to maintain this quality year after year, we have a very extensive and disciplined quality control program. In addition, many of the Old World methods for making fine wines, such as aging sherry in small oak barrels, are incorporated into our operations.

The Bronte Winery and Vineyards are located five miles south of Interstate Route 94, Exit number 46 and south on County Road 687 in Keeler township, southwest quarter of Section 15.

\*\*\*\* Credits \*\*\*\*

99 percent of this story was copied from the 1976 Brochure and Program of the 9th Annual Paw Paw Grape and Wine Festival...

Historian

