



***GEORGE  
HUSMANN***

***THE CULTIVATION  
OF THE NATIVE  
GRAPE, AND  
MANUFACTURE  
OF AMERICAN  
WINES***

**George Husmann**

# **The Cultivation of The Native Grape, and Manufacture of American Wines**

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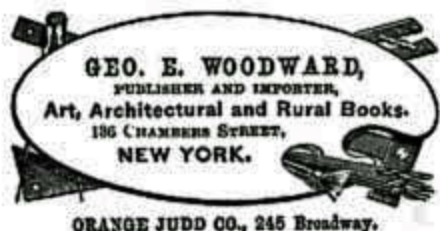


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**TO THE  
GRAPE GROWERS OF  
"OUR COUNTRY, ONE AND  
INDIVISIBLE,"  
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED  
BY THEIR  
FRIEND AND FELLOW-LABORER,  
THE AUTHOR.**

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# INTRODUCTION

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It is with a great deal of hesitation I undertake to write a book about Grapes, a subject which has been, and still is, elucidated every day; and about which we have already several works, which no doubt are more learned, more elaborate, than anything I may produce. But the subject is of such vast importance, and the area suitable for grape culture so large, the diversity of soil and climate so great, that I may be pardoned if I still think that I could be of some use to the beginner; it is for them, and not for my brethren of the craft more learned than I am, that I write. If they can learn anything from the plain talk of a practical worker, to help them along in the good work, I am well repaid.

Another object I have in view is to make grape growing as easy as possible; and I may be pardoned if I say that, in my opinion, it is a defect in all books we have on grape culture, that the manner of preparing the soil, training, etc., are on too costly a plan to be followed by men of little means. If we are first to trench and prepare the soil, at a cost of about \$300 per acre, and then pay \$200 more for trellis, labor, etc., the poor man, he who must work for a living, can not afford to raise grapes. And yet it is from the ranks of these sturdy sons of toil that I would gain my recruits for that peaceful army whose sword is the pruning-hook; it is from their honest, hard-working hands I expect the grandest results. He who has already wealth enough at command can of course afford to raise grapes with bone-dust, ashes, and all the fertilizers. He can walk around and

give his orders, making grape culture an elegant pastime for his leisure hours, as well as a source of profit. But, being one of the first class myself, I had to fight my way up through untold difficulties from the lowest round of the ladder; had to gain what knowledge I possess from dear experience, and can therefore sympathize with those who must commence without means. It is my earnest desire to save *them* some of the losses which *I* had to suffer, to lighten their toil by a little plain advice. If I can succeed in this, my object is accomplished.

In nearly all our books on grape culture I notice another defect, especially in those published in the East; it is, that they contain a great deal of good advice about grape culture, but very little about wine-making, and the treatment of wine in the cellar. For us here at the West this is an all-important point, and even our Eastern friends, if they continue to plant grapes at the rate they have done for the last few years, will soon glut the market, and will be forced to make them into wine. I shall therefore try to give such simple instructions about wine-making and its management as will enable every one to make a good saleable and drinkable wine, better than nine-tenths of the foreign wines, which are now sold at two to three dollars per bottle. I firmly believe that this continent is destined to be the greatest wine-producing country in the world; and that the time is not far distant when wine, the most wholesome and purest of all stimulating drinks, will be within the reach of the common laborer, and take the place of the noxious and poisonous liquors which are now the curse of so many of our laboring men, and have blighted the happiness of so

many homes. Pure light wine I consider the best temperance agent; but as long as bad whisky and brandy continue to be the common drink of its citizens we can not hope to accomplish a thorough reform; for human nature seems to crave and need a stimulant. Let us then try to supply the most innocent and healthy one, the exhilarating juice of the grape.

I have also endeavored throughout to give plain facts, to substantiate with plain figures all I assert; and in no case have I allowed fancy to roam in idle speculations which cannot be demonstrated in practice. I do not pretend that my effort is "the most comprehensive and practical essay on the grape," as some of our friends call their productions, but I can claim for it strict adherence to truth and actual results.

I have not thought it necessary to give the botanical description of the grape-vine, and the process of hybridizing, etc.; this has already been so well and thoroughly done by my friend Fuller, that I can do no better than refer the scientific reader to his book. I am writing more for the practical farmer, and would rather fill what I think a vacancy, than repeat what has been so well said by others.

With these few remarks, which I thought due to the public and myself, I leave it to you, brother-winegrowers, to say whether or not I have accomplished my task. To all and every one who plants a single vine I would extend the hand of good fellowship, for he is a laborer in the great work to cover this glorious land of the free with smiling vineyards, and to make its barren spots flow with noble grape juice,

one of the best gifts of an all-bountiful Creator. All hail to you, I greet you from *Free* Missouri.



# GRAPE CULTURE

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REMARKS ON ITS HISTORY IN AMERICA, ESPECIALLY AT THE WEST—ITS PROGRESS AND ITS FUTURE.

In an old chronicle, entitled, "The Discovery of America in the Tenth Century," by Charles C. Prasta, published at Stralsund, we find the following legend:

"Leif, son of Eric the Red, bought Byarnes' vessel, and manned it with thirty-five men, among whom was also a German, Tyrker by name, who had lived a long time with Leif's father, who had become very much attached to him in youth. And they left port at Iceland, in the year of our Lord 1000.

But, when they had been at sea several days, a tremendous storm arose, whose wild fury made the waves swell mountain high, and threatened to destroy the frail vessel. And the storm continued for several days, and increased in fury, so that even the stoutest heart quaked with fear; they believed that their hour had come, and drifted along at the mercy of wind and waves. Only Leif, who had lately been converted to Christ our Lord, stood calmly at the helm and did not fear; but called on Him who had walked the water and quieted the billows, with firm faith, that He also had power to deliver them, if they but trusted in Him. And, behold! while he still spoke to them of the wonderful deeds of the Lord, the clouds cleared away, the storm lulled; and after a few hours the sea, calmed down, and rocked the tired and exhausted men into a deep and calm sleep. And when they awoke, the next morning, they

could hardly trust their eyes. A beautiful country lay before them, green hills, covered with beautiful forests—a majestic stream rolled its billows into the ocean; and they cast the anchor, and thanked the Lord, who had delivered them from death.

A delightful country it seemed, full of game, and birds of beautiful plumage; and when they went ashore, they could not resist the temptation to explore it. When they returned, after several hours, Tyrker alone was missing. After waiting some time for his return, Leif, with twelve of his men, went in search of him. But they had not gone far, when they met him, laden down with grapes. Upon their enquiry, where he had stayed so long, he answered: "I did not go far, when I found the trees all covered with grapes; and as I was born in a country, whose hills are covered with vineyards, it seemed so much like home to me, that I stayed a while and gathered them." They had now a twofold occupation, to cut timber, and gather grapes; with the latter, they loaded the boat. And Leif gave a name to the country, and called it Vinland, or Wineland."

So far the tradition. It is said that coming events cast their shadows before them. If this is so, may we not recognize one of those shadows in the old Norman legend of events which transpired more than eight hundred years ago? Is it not the foreshadowing of the destiny of this great continent, to become, in truth and verity, a *Wineland*. Truly, the results of to-day would certainly justify us in the assertion, that there is as much, nay more, truth than fiction in it. Let us take a glance at the first commencement of



grape culture, and see what has been the progress in this comparatively new branch of horticulture.

From the very first settlement of America, the vine seems to have attracted the attention of the colonists, and it is said that as early as 1564, wine was made from the native grape in Florida. The earliest attempt to establish a vineyard in the British North American Colonies was by the London Company in Virginia, about the year 1620; and by 1630, the prospect seems to have been encouraging enough to warrant the importation of several French vine-dressers, who, it is said, ruined the vines by bad treatment. Wine was also made in Virginia in 1647, and in 1651 premiums were offered for its production. Beverly even mentions, that prior to 1722, there were vineyards in that colony, producing seven hundred and fifty gallons per year. In 1664, Colonel Richard Nicoll, Governor of New York, granted to Paul Richards, a privilege of making and selling wine free of all duty, he having been the first to enter upon the cultivation of the vine on a large scale. Beauchamp Plantagenet, in his description of the province of New Albion, published in London, in 1648, states "that the English settlers in Uvedale, now Delaware, had vines running on mulberry and sassafras trees; and enumerates four kinds of grapes, namely: Thoulouse Muscat, Sweet Scented, Great Fox, and Thick Grape; the first two, after five months, being boiled and salted and well fined, make a strong red Xeres; the third, a light claret; the fourth, a white grape which creeps on the land, makes a pure, gold colored wine. Tennis Pale, a Frenchman, out of these four, made eight sorts of excellent wine; and says of the Muscat, after it had been long boiled,

that the second draught will intoxicate after four months old; and that here may be gathered and made two hundred tuns in the vintage months, and that the vines with good cultivation will mend." In 1633, William Penn attempted to establish a vineyard near Philadelphia, but without success. After some years, however, Mr. Tasker, of Maryland, and Mr. Antil, of Shrewsbury, N.J., seem to have succeeded to a certain extent. It seems, however, from an article which Mr. Antil wrote of the culture of the grape, and the manufacture of wine, that he cultivated only foreign varieties.

In 1796, the French settlers in Illinois made one hundred and ten hogsheads of strong wine from native grapes. At Harmony, near Pittsburgh, a vineyard of ten acres was planted by Frederic Rapp, and his associates from Germany; and they continued to cultivate grapes and silk, after their removal to another Harmony in Indiana.

In 1790, a Swiss colony was founded, and a fund of ten thousand dollars raised in Jessamine county, Kentucky, for the purpose of establishing a vineyard, but failed, as they attempted to plant the foreign vine. In 1801, they removed to a spot, which they called Vevay, in Switzerland County, Indiana, on the Ohio, forty-five miles below Cincinnati. Here they planted native vines, especially the Cape, or Schuylkill Muscadell, and met with better success. But, after about forty years' experience, they seem to have become discouraged, and their vineyards have now almost disappeared.

These were the first crude experiments in American grape culture; and from some cause or another, they seem not to have been encouraging enough to warrant their

continuation. But a new impetus was given to this branch of industry, by the introduction of the Catawba, by Major Adlum, of Georgetown, D.C., who thought, that by so doing, he conferred a greater benefit upon the nation than he would have done, had he paid the national debt. It seems to have been planted first on an extensive scale by Nicholas Longworth, near Cincinnati, whom we may justly call one of the founders of American grape culture. He adopted the system of leasing parcels of unimproved land to poor Germans, to plant with vines; for a share, I believe, of one-half of the proceeds. It was his ambition to make the Ohio the Rhine of America, and he has certainly done a good deal to effect it. In 1858, the whole number of acres planted in grapes around Cincinnati, was estimated, by a committee appointed for that purpose, at twelve hundred acres, of which Mr. Longworth owned one hundred and twenty-two and a half acres, under charge of twenty-seven tenants. The annual produce was estimated by the committee at no less than two hundred and forty thousand gallons, worth about as many dollars then. We may safely estimate the number of acres in cultivation there now, at two thousand. Among the principal grape growers there, I will mention Messrs. Robert Buchanan, author of an excellent work on grape culture, Mottier, Bogen, Werk, Rehfuss, Dr. Mosher, etc.

Well do I remember, when I was a boy, some fourteen years old, how often my father would enter into conversation with vintners from the old country, about the feasibility of grape culture in Missouri. He always contended that grapes should succeed well here, as the woods were full of wild grapes, some of very fair quality, and that this