

BEN LOMOND MOUNTAIN VITICULTURAL AREA PROPOSAL
Supportive Evidence and Analysis

I. PLACE NAME VERIFICATION: The name "Ben Lomond Mountain" can be found on all current U.S.G.S. maps of the mountain area northwest of the city of Santa Cruz, California (Santa Cruz and Davenport Quadrangles). [See Appendix I, U.S.G.S. Topographical Maps].

II. HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS: Ben Lomond Mountain was first pioneered by Scotsman John Burns who gave the area its name in the 1860s. Burns was also the first grape grower in the area and made wine with limited commercial success until the 1880s, setting the example for several other families.

Commercial winegrowing began in the Ben Lomond Mountain region in 1883 with the foundation of the Ben Lomond Wine Company by F.W. Billings. The Ben Lomond Wine Company, under the management of Billings' son-in-law, J.F. Coope, brought the Ben Lomond Mountain wines out of the obscurity of the remote mountain area to stand with the finest wines in the State.

In 1887, Coope wrote..."Ben Lomond(Mountain) as a wine district, is yet in its infancy and is struggling to establish a name for itself in that industry...the wine yield of 1886(for the Ben Lomond Wine Company) was 28,000 gallons, chiefly Riesling, part of which was grown (by the Ben Lomond Wine Company), while a part was purchased (from neighboring vineyards)". By 1891, approximately 400 acres of vineyards were devoted to wine production on Ben Lomond Mountain.

In 1889 the Ben Lomond Wine Company wines were chosen by the California State Board of Viticultural Commissioners to be placed in the permanent exhibit of California wines at the Viticultural Commission office in San Francisco.

Frona Eunice Waite Colburn, in her treatise "Wines and Vines of California"(1889), proclaimed the Ben Lomond Mountain region as a "future Chablis district"... "here the Ben Lomond Company makes a wine of this (Chablis) type which is unrivaled by any other product in the State, and is the only wine in California which has the thin, delicate, flinty dryness of a true Chablis...It is a superior table wine; not heady or earthy in flavor and has the fine bouquet and exquisite flavor of a high-type mountain wine. It is sold under the classical name of Ben Lomond."

Between the years of 1890 and 1900 the Ben Lomond Wine Company wines won awards for excellence in Paris (Paris Expo,1889), Chicago (World's Columbian Expo,1893), San Francisco (Mid-winter International Trade Fair,1894), Bordeaux (Societe Philomatique,1895), and again in Paris (Paris Expo,1900).

The Ben Lomond Mountain wine industry declined after the turn of the century. By the end of World War II, only the 75 acre Locatelli Ranch vineyard and the 40 acre Quistorff vineyard remained. Both had been abandoned by the mid-1960s.

During the 1970s Ben Lomond Mountain experienced a viticultural renaissance in and around the town of Bonny Doon. In 1972, the University of California Agricultural Extension Service released a study of climatologically prime growing areas for several commercial crops, including wine grapes. This study, entitled CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST: ITS TERRAIN, CLIMATE, AND AGRO-CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS, established Ben Lomond Mountain as being a prime growing region for wine grape production [see Appendices III & IV]. This report stirred the interest of several individuals in the region. Since then, nine separate vineyard operations have been established within in the proposed Ben Lomond Mountain Viticultural Area.

These are the Beauregard Ranch vineyard(14 acres; Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, Chardonnay), the Grahm-Bonny Doon Vineyard(14 acres; Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc), the Ley vineyard(12 acres; Chardonnay), the McHenry vineyard(5 acres; Pinot Noir, Chardonnay), the LeBouef vineyard(4 acres; Chardonnay), the Green vineyard(3 acres; Chardonnay), the Cox vineyard(2 acres; Pinot Noir), and the Meehan vineyard(1.5 acres; Cabernet Sauvignon, White Riesling). In addition to these there are two vineyards far enough into development to merit their mention. These are the (newly reincorporated) Ben Lomond Wine Company vineyard(250 acres proposed planting; primarily Pinot Noir, Pinot Blanc, and Chardonnay for champagne-type sparkling wine production, and Cabernet Sauvignon for still wine production) and Bill Cunningham's Redwood Ranch vineyard(80 acres proposed, 14 planted; Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot). [see Appendix I].

III. GEOPHYSICAL FEATURES AND CLIMATOLOGY OF THE BEN LOMOND MOUNTAIN VITICULTURAL AREA

A.) Topography: Ben Lomond Mountain rises directly from the California coastline to an altitude of 2,630 feet above sea level. This mountain region is bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west, the San Lorenzo River Basin to the east, the city of Santa Cruz (and river mouth of the San Lorenzo) to the south, and Scott Creek and Jamison Creek on the northwest and northeast sides, respectively. The proposed Ben Lomond Viticultural Area is approximately 15 miles long and an average of four miles wide, defined by its borders which generally coincide with the 800 foot elevation level.

B.) Soils: The geophysical boundaries of the Ben Lomond Mountain region become apparent when examining the geologic stratigraphy of the area. Ben Lomond Mountain is comprised

of a large geologic structure known as a pluton, composed primarily of granitic rocks [quartz diorite, marked "gr" on Appendix II, Geology Map], with some intrusions of metamorphic rocks [quartzite and pelitic schists, marked 'mr' on Appendix II]. This plutonic structure distinguishes Ben Lomond Mountain from surrounding areas and is unique within viticulturally viable growing areas in the Santa Cruz Mountains. These bedrock formations are covered at the lower elevations and isolated tablelands by depositions of sandstone [marked 'T' on Appendix II], primarily Santa Margarita sandstone and to a lesser extent Santa Cruz Mudstone. The combination of the granitic quartz diorite and metasedimentary rock structures with the sandstone deposits and forest detritus forms a variety of soil complexes which are generally described as slightly acidic, sandy loams. The resultant topsoil complexes are well-drained and deep, lending themselves readily to successful viticulture as demonstrated by past and present vineyards in the area.

C.) Climate: The Ben Lomond Mountain area is particularly distinguishable by climatological evidence. Ben Lomond Mountain presents the first major obstruction to marine weather patterns. Winter storms lose much of their moisture on the western slope of coastal hills and mountains where the warm, moisture-laden marine air is lifted and cools, precipitating in fogs or rainfall. As a result, Ben Lomond Mountain draws much of the precipitation from marine air that moves onshore between the city of Santa Cruz and Ano Nuevo point. As is apparent from the precipitation map [Appendix III], Ben Lomond Mountain receives the highest average amount of precipitation in Santa Cruz county at 60 inches.

During the summer, the mountain forms a barrier against the low-lying fogs that inundate the shore and coastal valleys. This fogbelt generally rests between the 400 and 800 foot elevations along the western slope of Ben Lomond Mountain. Above this level, the marine air climate tends to give way to a low mountain climate where abundant sunshine is characteristic of the summer months.

The 1972 University of California climatology study of prime growing areas for commercial crops [Appendix IV] demonstrates the suitability of the climate afforded by Ben Lomond Mountain for wine grape production. Of special interest is the delineation (in broken lines) of a "premium wine grape production thermal" existing along the ridgeline of the mountain above 1,500 feet.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF SPECIFIC BOUNDARIES OF PROPOSED BEN LOMOND MOUNTAIN VITICULTURAL AREA

From the beginning point at the intersection of Sections 25, 26, 35, and 36 (Davenport Quadrangle, T. 10 S., R. 3 W. MDBM) which coincides with the 800-foot contour line, the boundary follows the 800-foot contour line in a meandering line in a northwest direction across Section 26 into Section 27 (T. 10 S., R. 3 W.).

1.) Thence in a meandering line along the 800-foot contour line in a generally north northwesterly direction through Sections 27, 23, 22, 15 20, 17, 16, 9, 8, 5, 7, 6 (T. 10 S., R. 3 W.); and Sections 32, 31 and 30 (T. 9 S., R. 3 W.) to the intersection of the 800-foot contour line and Scott Creek in Section 19 (T. 9 S., R. 3 W.).

2.) Thence in a northeasterly direction along the south bank of Scott Creek through Sections 19, 20, and 17 to the intersection of Scott Creek with the 1600-foot contour line in Section 16 (T. 9 S., R. 3 W.).

3.) Thence in a meandering line in an easterly direction along the 1600-foot contour line through the southeast and southwest corners of Sections 9 and 10 (respectively) to the intersection of the 1600-foot contour line with Jamison Creek in Section 16 (T. 9 S., R. 3 W.).

4.) Thence in an easterly direction along the south bank of Jamison Creek across Sections 15 and 14 (T. 9 S., R. 3 W.) to the intersection of Jamison Creek and the 800-foot contour line in the southwest corner of Section 14 (T. 9 S., R. 3 W.).

5.) Thence in a southeasterly direction in a meandering line along the 800-foot contour line across Sections 23, 24, 25 (T. 9 S., R. 3 W.), Sections 30 and 31 (T. 9 S., R. 2 W.), and Sections 5, 8, 9, 16, 17, and 21 (T. 10 S., R. 2 W.).

6.) Thence in a generally northwesterly direction in a meandering line along the 800-foot contour line through Sections 31 and 30 (T. 10 S., R. 2 W.), and Sections 25 and 36 (T. 10 S., R. 3 W.) to the point of the beginning at the intersection of Sections 25, 26, 35, and 36 (T. 10 S., R. 3 W.).

APPENDICES

- Appendix I : U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute series topographical maps including Santa Cruz CA., Davenport CA., Big Basin CA., and Felton CA. Quadrangles.
- Appendix II: Clark, Joseph C. STRATIGRAPHY, PALEONTOLOGY, AND GEOLOGY OF THE CENTRAL SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS, COASTAL CALIFORNIA RANGES. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1981) Geological Survey Professional Paper 1168 - Page 3, Figure 1.
- Appendix III: Average Seasonal Precipitation Map of Santa Cruz County. From CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST: ITS TERRAIN, CLIMATE, AND AGRO-CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS.
- Appendix IV: Wine Grapes by Region Map. From CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST:...

SOURCES

- Appendix II: Clark, Joseph C. STRATIGRAPHY, PALEONTOLOGY, AND GEOLOGY OF THE CENTRAL SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS, COASTAL CALIFORNIA RANGES. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1981) Geological Survey Professional Paper 1168.
- Appendices
III & IV : Gilbert, Dewayne E. CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST: ITS TERRAIN, CLIMATE, AND AGRO-CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS. (Davis, California: University of California Agricultural Extension Service, 1972). Figure 16 - Santa Cruz County Precipitation Map, Santa Cruz County Section; Wine Grapes by Region (Map Case)
- Historical Section Extracted from WINE HISTORY IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY: 1835 TO PRESENT. Bachelor of Arts Thesis in American Studies by Michael R. Holland, University of California at Santa Cruz, 1982.