Original Petition Submitted by the Amador County Wine Grape Growers Association

Gentlemen:

Please find enclosed the necessary information for a petition for an American Viticultural Area, as defined in 27CFR, Part 9 (Treasury Decision ATF-60), to be called Shenandoah Valley Viticultural Area.

Section 1 : Evidence that Shenandoah Valley Viticultural Area is locally and/or nationally known as referring to the area specified in the application:

A. Copy of Gourmet Magazine, May 1977, page 3, mentions Shenandoah Valley as a grape growing region.

B. Copy of Wine Growing regions of California by Specific Appellation Areas as determined by author. Amador County listed as Shenandoah Valley Appellation and Fiddletown Appellation.

C. Wine Store Catalog.

D. Wine story by Barbara Ensrud, Daily News, New York City, December 5, 1979.

E. Story in California Arizona Fram Press, dated July 19, 1980.

Section 2 : Historical or current evidence that the boundaries of the viticultural area are as specified in the application:

F. Article from Wine Grapes in Amador County, June 1967, by Robert E. Plaister.

G. U.S.G.S. map shows area called Shenandoah Valley. U.S.G.S. map "Fiddletown, CA" N3830-W12045/7.5, 1945.

Section 3 : Evidence relating to the geographical features (climate, soil, elevation, physical features, etc.) which distinguish the viticultural features of the proposed area from surrounding areas:

H. Soil Survey of Amador County, California by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, dated Series 1961, No. 26, issued September 1965.

Maps and proposed boundary of Shenandoah Valley.

Section 4 : The specific boundaries of the viticultural area, based on features which can be found on United States Geological Survey (U.S.G.S.) maps:

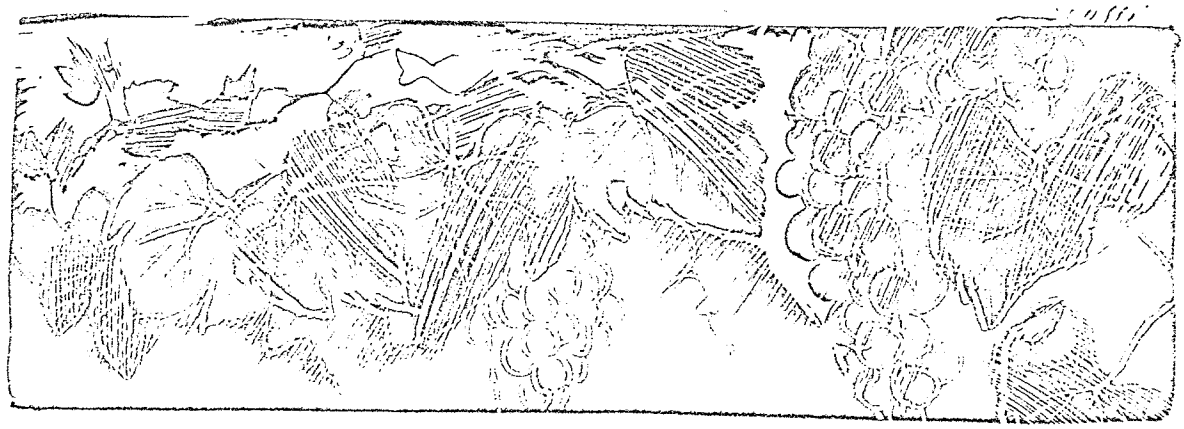
I. Proposed boundary.

Section 5 : A copy of the appropriate U.S.G.S. map with the boundaries prominently marked:

J & K. U.S.G.S. maps - both boundaries of proposed area. J:Fiddletown, CA; K:Amador City, CA

L. Boundary description for Items J and K.

Vine Journal



By Gerald Asher

A RESTAURANT THAT OFFERS two vintage Ports by the glass (most recently Warre's 1961 and Butler Nephew's 1964/65) can't be all bad, if I might paraphrase W. C. Fields. Chez Panisse in Berkeley has, in fact, one of the most impressive wine lists in the country—not least because selections are made with knowledge, with a degree of passion, and without the slightest intention of impressing anyone. There must be thirty California red wines available at any one time, and all of them, as a modicum of familiarity makes plain, are just about the best that their respective wineries have to offer.

To notice on such a list that five of the twelve Zinfandels come from Amador County, better known for sleepy gold-rush towns and Saturday-night fiddling than for wine, is a signal not to be ignored. Dining at the restaurant early last summer, after one of those postcard Pacific sunsets when the whole sky glows and for just a few minutes the waters of the bay glitter purple, I ordered a bottle of a 1974 Amador County Zinfandel made at the Mount Veeder Winery. I didn't quite see the connection between the Sierra foothills and the higher reaches of Napa, but the wine was a revelation to me and could not have been more appropriate to the evening: darkly glowing with a rich bouquet and ripe flavor that seemed both to symbolize and to contain the heady cornucopia of California.

Amador County lies east of Sacramento. After twenty-five miles or so of flat valley the foothills rise abruptly at the county border, then Amador climbs in a long narrow wedge to the Sierra heights. It is said that the odd shape, rather like an elephant's trunk, was caused by the county founders' determination to wrest the Carson Pass road from neighboring Calaveras County. It was a lucrative toll, especially in the mother lode country, and any fan of Bret Harte's can read how they might have schemed to do it.

At the lower, western end of the county, Route 49, an appropriately numbered highway, meanders through spruced-up mining towns that have forsaken the streams and workings to make fortunes anew from macramé, herb sachets, relics of the forties (the nineteen forties, that is), and cheerfully preserved inns and saloons. There is reassurance in the neat, conical hills, looking for all the world as if Botticelli in a moment of whimsical generosity had scattered another Tuscany in the West, and it is easy to understand why th miners planted their vineyards and o chards here with the confidence of pe manent settlers. By 1860 there wer already five hundred acres of vines i the county, and the number continue to grow until Prohibition. Many of th miners retired to vineyards and cottage even the notorious Madame Pantaloon who mined at Jackson's Gate in men clothes and boots (but with a delicat concern for detail that never failed t attract attention), sold her claim in th 1880s and planted a small vineyard near by. By 1890 there were more than hundred small wineries flourishing in th hills.

The frost of Prohibition closed dow the wineries. One of the few o ones to survive is the D'Agostini Winer near Plymouth. The old building, se back a little from the road, is made fron locally hewn oak and stone quarrie from a nearby hill. The vats and casks huge ovals in the German manner with deeply concave fronts, were coopered by the Uhlinger sons, members of the Swiss family that founded the winery in 1856, and by John Davis, one of those men of the West whose origins are always described as "mysterious"

Continued on page 138

but were probably no more mysterious than those of many another new Californian who just cut loose from whatever domestic ties held him east of the Mississippi to seek riches and adventure on the new frontier.

The D'Agostini family bought the winery in 1911 from the Uhlingers and started up again as soon as Prohibition ended. They began with barely twelve acres of vines, but they have gradually purchased and planted more as sales have grown and now have about a hundred. They use only their own grapes and sell most of their wine from the winery door. Twenty years ago a prospective buyer would taste down the line of barrels until he found exactly the wine he wanted. "That one," he'd say, and they would run off the wine for him.

Those days are long since past, but the winery remains a simple operation with the special charm of age and good housekeeping. It has the unusual distinction in California of being one of the few wineries—if not the only winery—to allow natural yeast fermentation. Normally, the strains of yeast attached to the "bloom" of the grapes that arrive at the crushers in California are so varied that they are unpredictable. A more vigorous, cultured strain is introduced, which takes over, and in this way the winemaker can be sure of the outcome of his fermentation, secure from off flavors. But at D'Agostini's, as in Europe, a small quantity of grapes is picked early to make a starter—what in Europe is called a *fond de cuve*—and some of the briskly fermenting juice is then introduced into each new vat as it is filled. Perhaps it is the almost continuous use of the winery (there was some activity there even during Prohibition) or the fact that the grapes are consistently from the same vineyards or the isolation of Amador from other vineyard areas or a combination of all three that makes this possible. D'Agostini tells of the day three or four years ago when the University of California descended on him. "They were in here tasting the wines, and they wanted to know what sort of yeast I was using. I told them 'None,' and they wouldn't believe it. 'It's impossible,' they said. 'The wines taste clean.' You know, they expect natural yeasts to give a strange flavor. They asked if they could come back at crushing time and take away some of the must, and they studied it for about a year. They have a fellow over at Davis who's worked all over Europe on yeasts, and he traced our yeast back to Germany." He shook his head. "Can't think how it got here."

When the wineries shut down during Prohibition there was a corresponding decline in vineyard acreage. Some demand for grapes continued from home winemakers, permitted by the law, and considerable quantities were shipped to the Basque shepherd communities in Nevada, and even as far as Montana. The home winemakers liked the rich style and sturdy sugars of the Amador grapes. And it was through this home winemaking connection that the renaissance of Amador came about.

The catalyst was Charles Myers, a professor of English at Sacramento City College, a keen amateur winemaker now turned professional on a modest scale. Myers had found his way to Amador in the early sixties and was buying grapes from Ken Deaver, the step-grandson of the mysterious John Davis. Darrell Corti, a Sacramento wine merchant, tasted some of the huge Zinfandel wines that Myers produced. By that time, in the late sixties, the small Sutter Home Winery in Napa was making wines for Corti's own label but was being hard pressed by the rising price of Napa grapes. Corti suggested to Sutter Home's Bob Trinchero that he try Amador County, and together they went to see Ken Deaver, who still cultivated the vines planted by his step-grandfather. The first batch of Zinfandel from the Deaver ranch was fermented by Sutter Home in the fall of 1968, and when the wine was eventually released, its success was such that Bob Trinchero virtually stopped making any other kind of wine and now specializes in Amador County Zinfandels. Because good news travels fast, other wineries followed. Ken Deaver, a tall, spare man with a wry country humor, is amused at the commotion. Not so many years before he'd taken grapes on the back of his truck to the wineries in the Napa Valley, and no one would even look at them because they weren't Napa-grown.

I sat in the Deaver kitchen recently talking with Ken and his son. "We always knew our grapes were good," they said, "but no one seemed interested. We liked to sell to the home winemakers because they would pay a little more for the ton. Otherwise we just hauled them down to the big central valley wineries and they paid us central valley prices, even though our yield per acre is half what they get down there and the quality is twice as high. The fruit of our Zinfandel even looks different," he went on, "with darker grapes and looser bunches."

In those days there was no question of a grower making a return on the value of his land; no one could think of replanting. All the work was done by the rancher, and he just hoped to have a few more dollars in hand at the end of the year than he had started with. But since then prices for Amador County grapes have risen steeply and now run pretty close to Napa prices. The unique quality of Amador grapes springs from the soil of the hills: a decayed granite, red with cinnabar and iron. And the style is determined by the hot days and cool breezy nights of Amador County. The grapes have an unusual combination of high sugar and high acidity, and the wines they give are both robust and zesty. To discuss them in terms of alcohol, acid, and tannin, however, is like describing Nureyev's leaps in terms of muscle dynamics. Amador County wines have a vigor, a strength, and a warmth that is as much the essence of the California foothills as a finely etched red Graves is the essence of the drawing rooms of Bordeaux.

Ken Deaver was trying to remember the age of his vines for me. His acre of Mission was the oldest. These had been the first vines planted in the county and must have been there for "about 120 years." The Zinfandel went in later, "perhaps in the 1880s," he said.

Mrs. Deaver looked up from the pie she was making. "Well, Grandpa was eighty-seven when he died in 1961, and he said he planted those vines when he was sixteen," she said. Ken Deaver has seventy acres of vines, mostly Zinfandel, but within the last four or five years he has put in some Cabernet Sauvignon. While we sat in the kitchen we drank a wine from his first Cabernet crop, 1974, made by Charles Myers at his Harbor Winery in Sacramento. It was a big, firm wine with the distinctive varietal taste of Cabernet subtly woven into the Amador style.

There are now about fifty-five acres of Cabernet Sauvignon planted in the county, all of it since 1969. But Zinfandel still dominates, with over seven hundred acres planted, more than half of which were bearing fruit long before

the recent revival and probably even long before Prohibition. There are now scatterings of other varieties, particularly in the Shenandoah Valley. Shenandoah isn't really a valley at all, just a depression between two ridges; but it was given the name by settlers from Virginia, and it is there that the best vineyards are concentrated. Along with Deaver and D'Agostini there must be twenty or thirty growers, some working just an acre or two and others, like the Monteviña winery, with almost two hundred.

Cary Gott, who owns Monteviña in partnership with his father-in-law, was one of the first to try his hand at other varietals. He put in Cabernet Sauvignon seven years ago, and he was the first to plant Merlot, Barbera, Sauvignon Blanc, Ruby Cabernet, and even a little Nebbiolo, the grape used to make Barolo in Italy. He is exuberantly enthusiastic about Amador County and likes to experiment. He has tried sun-drying Mission grapes before crushing (like a French *vin de paille*) for a dessert wine; he has made "Zinfandel *nuevo*" (Amador's riposte to Beaujolais *primeur*); currently he is experimenting with a sweet Sauvignon Blanc in the style of Sauternes. In his spanking new winery the wines age in small casks, mostly of American oak. His 1974 Zinfandel is as fine an example of Amador as you can get. Even his Ruby Cabernet, a hybrid developed by the University of California for the central valley and planted in Amador County by Gott, is a full rich wine that would put some Cabernet Sauvignons of distinguished origin to shame. On a recent visit to the winery with Charles Myers as my guide, we tasted the 1975's in wood and looked at the new, deeply purple 1976 wines.

With a small vineyard acreage—less than a twentieth of that of Napa—and a total production that can't exceed 150,000 cases a year on present plantings, Amador County wines are unlikely to hit the supermarket shelves. But along with the wines of Mount Veeder and Sutter Home, Harbor Winery and Monteviña, D'Agostini, Ridge, and Carneros Creek, there are Amador County grapes in the blends of Zinfandel of several large California wineries. The grapes are highly prized for the intense flavor they bring. They are truly worth seeking.

Asked Ken Deaver how he felt about [illegible] being "rediscovered." He

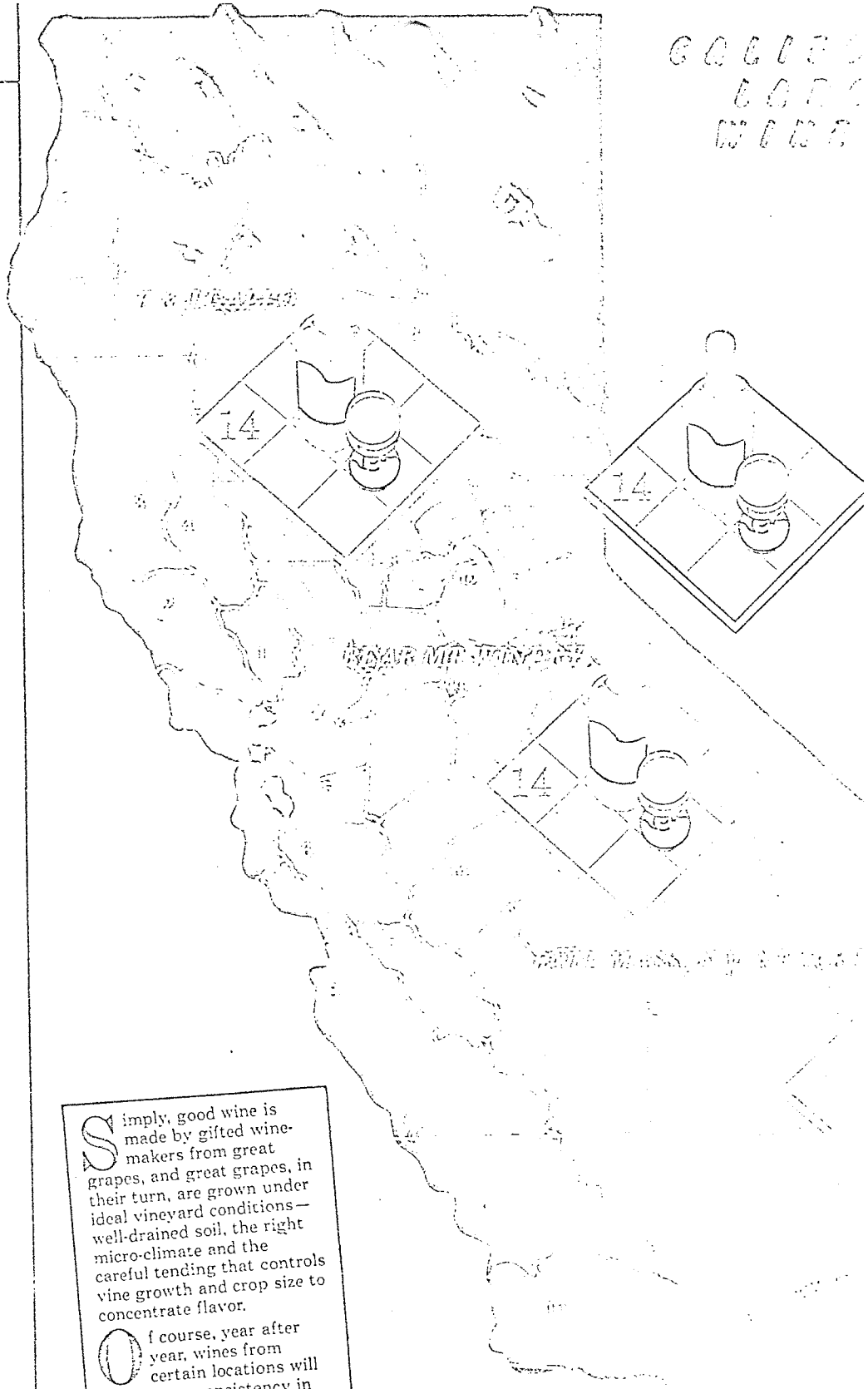
WINE

California's fine wines have come into their own. They do not have the incredible subtlety and delicacy of the finest European wines, but they have their own very American style—big, powerful, assertive and slick, and mind-boggling diversity.

There are really three distinct wine industries in California. Giant producers such as Gallo (which makes 60 percent of the state's wine), Almadén and Paul Masson aim their wines at popular tastes and pocketbooks. Their success is reflected by their dominance of the market. Smaller—but by no means small —commercial wineries such as Louis Martini, Charles Krug, Sebastiani and Christian Brothers offer wines of some refinement and distinction from the better vineyard areas.

The new wave of tiny, glamorous wineries now capturing international attention were established in the 1960s and early 1970s by those convinced that California wines could be as good as the best in the world. We had the soil, the climate and the grapes. All it took was money and know-how and work—and the right vineyard locations. The production from small wineries will always be small because California's chaotic earthquake geology and intricate climate variations combine ideally only in small pockets, but they occur all over the state, and the new little wineries stretch from north to south. Their freewheeling experiments have caused even the biggest wineries to change the ways they are making wine; all California wine is the better for it.

The broad acceptance of wine in American social life, the movement of big corporations into what had previously been family-owned businesses, and the rise of small fine wineries have been the dominant forces in this decade. They have thrust a formerly staid industry directly into the frenzy and turmoil of the seventies, and there is no prospect of any slowing of the change. An unprecedented array of wines and wineries—most of them new and unfamiliar—faces Cal-

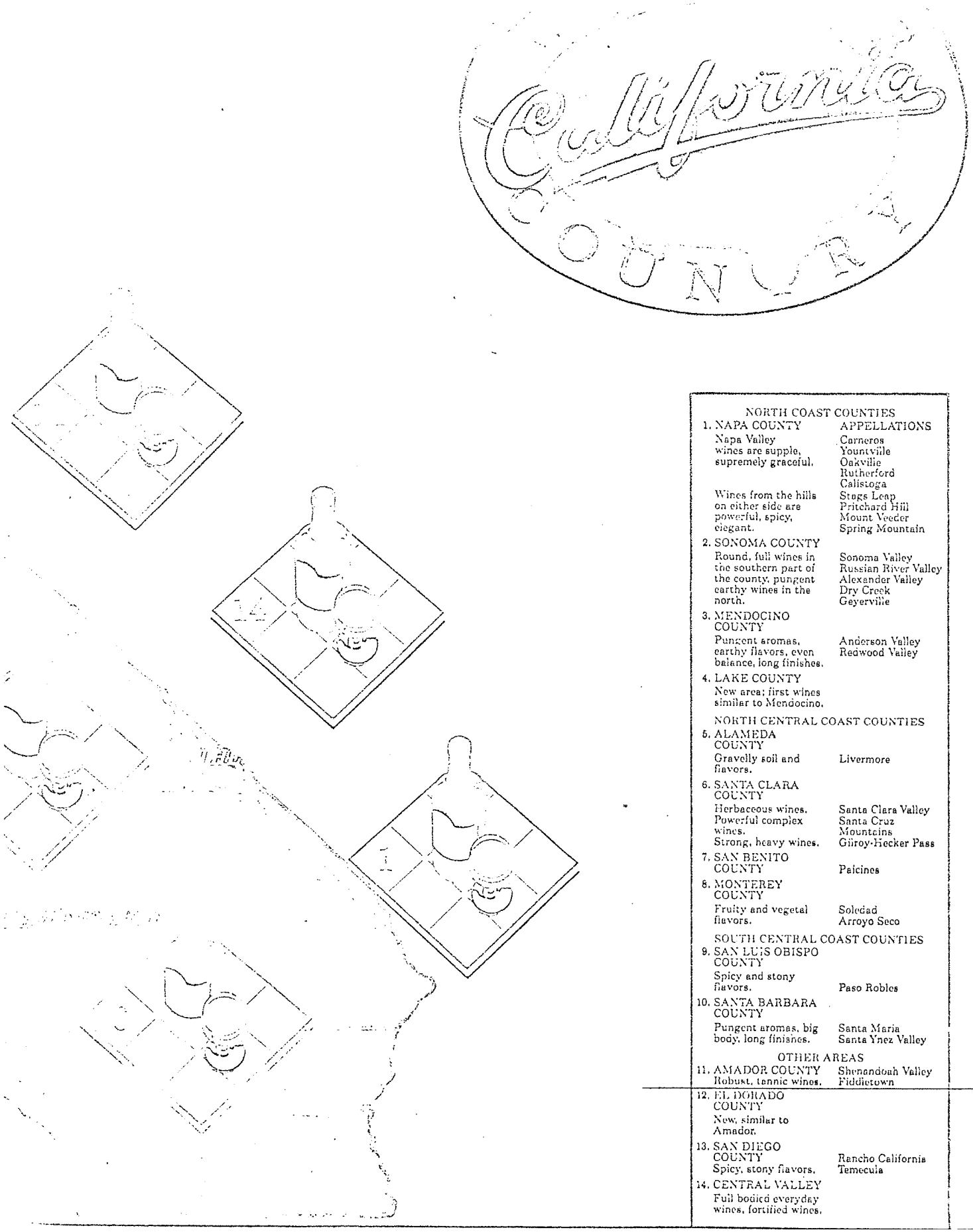


Simply, good wine is made by gifted winemakers from great grapes, and great grapes, in their turn, are grown under ideal vineyard conditions—well-drained soil, the right micro-climate and the careful tending that controls vine growth and crop size to concentrate flavor.

Of course, year after year, wines from certain locations will show some consistency in flavor and aging characteristics. But then there's the variable element—the changing weather that plays a hand in every growing season. California's prime vineyards lie in the path of the fog that rolls off the

New West Magazine

Item B



NORTH COAST COUNTIES

1. NAPA COUNTY	APPELLATIONS
Napa Valley wines are supple, supremely graceful.	Carneros Yountville Oakville Rutherford Calistoga
Wines from the hills on either side are powerful, spicy, elegant.	Stags Leap Pritchard Hill Mount Veeder Spring Mountain
2. SONOMA COUNTY	
Round, full wines in the southern part of the county, pungent earthy wines in the north.	Sonoma Valley Russian River Valley Alexander Valley Dry Creek Geyerville
3. MENDOCINO COUNTY	
Pungent aromas, earthy flavors, even balance, long finishes.	Anderson Valley Redwood Valley
4. LAKE COUNTY	
New area; first wines similar to Mendocino.	

NORTH CENTRAL COAST COUNTIES

5. ALAMEDA COUNTY	
Gravelly soil and flavors.	Livermore
6. SANTA CLARA COUNTY	
Herbaceous wines.	Santa Clara Valley
Powerful complex wines.	Santa Cruz Mountains
Strong, heavy wines.	Gilroy-Hecker Pass
7. SAN BENITO COUNTY	Paicines
8. MONTEREY COUNTY	
Fruity and vegetal flavors.	Soledad Arroyo Seco

SOUTH CENTRAL COAST COUNTIES

9. SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY	
Spicy and stony flavors.	Paso Robles
10. SANTA BARBARA COUNTY	
Pungent aromas, big body, long finishes.	Santa Maria Santa Ynez Valley

OTHER AREAS

11. AMADOR COUNTY	Shenandoah Valley
Robust, tannic wines.	Fiddletown
12. EL DORADO COUNTY	
New, similar to Amador.	
13. SAN DIEGO COUNTY	Rancho California
Spicy, stony flavors.	Temecula
14. CENTRAL VALLEY	
Full bodied everyday wines, fortified wines.	

Amador County's Shenandoah Valley Zinfandel

. . . by Ben Hattem

Aficionados will tell you that the finest Zinfandel doesn't grow in Napa but in Amador County's Shenandoah Valley. Much of this interest has been cultivated with especial bottlings by Sutter Home, Corti Brothers (1972) and Harbor Winery (1973), respectively of grapes grown on the Deaver ranch in the heart of the Mother Lode.

In 1972, the Montevina winery crushed its first Shenandoah Valley wines. The vineyard contains 165 acres of which over half is 80 years old. Yields have ranged from 220 tons in 1972 to an extremely large crop of 440 tons in 1973. Approximately 15 percent of the yield is selected for crushing by Montevina's young winemaker, Cary Gott. The balance finds its way to the blending vats of a North Coast winery.

Montevina produces several distinct styles of wines from the Zinfandel grape. Just released is the second lot of the 1973 Shenandoah Valley Zinfandel. It has good varietal character and offers exceptional value at $2.75 per "fifth." It is superior to the first lot and was withheld for further aging.

Most of the first lot was bottled in half gallons. At $3.50 per jug, supplies were exhausted within weeks. It was the best wine buy in America!

With some *blanc de noirs* priced as high as $6.00 per bottle it is not remarkable that Montevina's 1973 Shenandoah Valley White Zinfandel sells out quickly at $2.75. To make a white wine from Zinfandel, the red skins must be removed at the time of crushing and prior to fermentation. At its best the wine retains a copper tinge sometimes referred to as *l'oeil de perdrix* (the partridge's eye). To attempt to filter all of the color would result in an unattractive diminution in the flavor and complexities of the wine.

Challenging tradition and new in style of enjoyment to California is Montevina's Zinfandel Nuevo produced by fermenting whole, uncrushed berries in a carbon dioxide atmosphere. This process, known as carbonic maceration, originated in Beaujolais, France.

The Nuevo sells for $2.50 per "fifth" and should be quaffed while it is young and still retains its distinctive freshness and lingering fruitiness. In his *Private Guide to Wines,* Robert Finigan extolled:

> "This beautifully made wine is as fine an example of 'Beaujolais nouveau' as I have found on either side of the Atlantic."

Item C

For Your Present, Pleasant Drinking Pleasure

During the recent seller's market many wine bibbers and merchants found themselves exploring wines for which they would not have given short shrift except for the fact that the classified growths of Bordeaux and the grands and premiers crus of Bourgogne had become so dear.

When duty and shipping start to represent 40 percent of a wine's landed cost it loses its competitiveness in a normal market. In our last mailer we listed several Rhone wines being unloaded by Frank Schoonmaker which we do not foresee being imported in later vintages at such attractive prices. You can expect to pay at least 40 percent more for their closest California equivalent.

In years ahead only those who travel to Europe will be able to "discover" say, a Cornas, an exceedingly decent red table wine made from the peppery syrah grape, or a white Hermitage powerful enough to provide the perfect foil for exotic Indian, Chinese or Mexican cuisine.

In addition to the Rhone wines we suggest for your enjoyment some recent close outs of the Loire:

Anjou . . .

	Bottle
1969 Coteaux du Layon, *Gonnet & Ravion* — *An inexpensive, thoughtfully aged alternative to Sauternes that is lovely with cheese and fruit.*	1.89
1971 Saumur Champigny, *Gonnet & Ravion* — *Said to have been the favorite wine of Clemenceau, this wine is made from the Cabernet franc grape and properly considered the best red wine of Anjou. Wonderful with spring lamb.*	2.39
1972 Rose d'Anjou, *Gonnet & Ravion*	1.75

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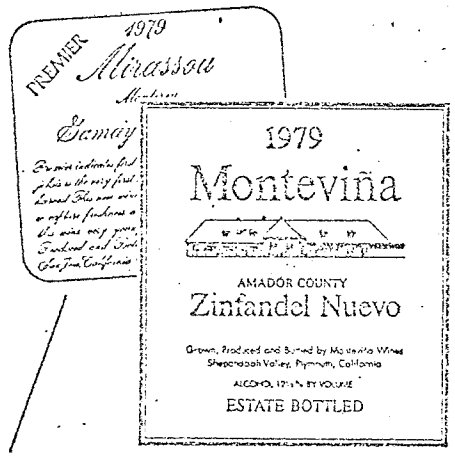
Nouveau wines can be rich and rewarding

CRITICS MAY inveigh against wines made in the nouveau style because of all the hype that surrounds these little wines this time of year. But when they're well-made and the grapes have developed the right amount of fruit, it should come as no surprise to find that the wine-loving public is fond of them — they're delightfully fruity and pleasant, very refreshing if cooled a bit. As some of my best friends are wont to say: "What's not to like?" — about a wine that's light-hearted, uncomplicated and fun to drink.

Beaujolais nouveau is, of course, the prototype for this style of wine, fermented quickly, bottled immediately and ready for consumption the moment it is shipped. The first nouveaus to arrive on these shores from the 1979 vintage show the typical charm of young Beaujolais at its best — generous, soft, full fruit and a liveliness that invites quaffing rather than sipping. Jack Lang of 67 Wine and Spirits had a keg of Gobet's beaujolais primeur (as the very "first" beaujolais is known) flown in from France on Nov. 15. At his informal tasting it was charming and rather fun to realize that we were sampling it just as they were in certain Paris bistros over 3,000 miles away — straight from cask. It is now available in bottles for $3.99, $47.50 a case.

Two others from well-known Burgundian shippers, Moillard and Prosper Maufoux, are also good, a little bit spritzier. The Maufoux, a beaujolais-villages primeur also has rosier fruit and a bit more body. Both sell for $4.99. Several others are on the way, most arriving at wine shops this week.

California got into the "nouveau act" a few years ago when Sebastiani Vineyards produced the first gamay



beaujolais nouveau. It was so popular they have continued to make it each year and now other wineries are doing it. Mirassou just released its Premier gamay beaujolais, and Giumarra has releasd its second nouveau. All of these are under $5.

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Some wineries have experimented with other grape varieties such as pinot noir and zinfandel. Rutherford Hill Winery in Napa Valley has a 1979 pinot noir nouveau made by the same method used in beaujolais: carbonic maceration, in which the juice is fermented inside the unerushed grape. Out on the tip of Long Island, Alex and Louisa Hargrave use the same method for their Whole Berry pinot noir.

Cary Gott co-owner and homemaker at Monteyina in Amador County, introduced his zinfandel Nuevo in New York last week, bringing along a marvelous assortment of California specialties to accompany it for a California-style "picnic." — cheeses like aged California Jack, Sonoma County teleme and fresh goat cheese, San Francisco sourdough, walnut bread and a sack of walnuts from Gott's own trees adjacent to his vineyards in the Shenandoah Valley. The wine is lovely — full and fruity, with aromas like summer berries and the color of ripe cherries.

Montevina's zinfandel Nuevo is one of the most successful of the nouveau-style wines — just one more instance of the versatility of zinfandel, California's own, the grape variety we developed on home ground. Though zinfandel is a member of the European family of vinifera grapes and now linked genetically to the primitivo grape of southern Italy, it is California winemakers who have given it identity, interpreting its robust character in a fascinating variety of styles (the subject of a future column).

For the zinfandel Nuevo, Gott also uses whole berry fermentation. I visited Amador County a few weeks ago while the harvest was in full swing. And at Montevina some of the Nuevo was still fermenting. I've looked into many a fermentation tank but remarked that I had never seen the whole berry method in action.

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In a flash Cary jumped on his forklift, thrust its metal arms under a heavy wire cage and, when we stepped aboard, lifted us gently right to the top of the tank. It was brimming with clusters of grapes, though not much action was visible. It was all going on inside the skins of the grapes where natural yeasts were rapidly converting the grape sugars to alcohol. When they get down to about 10% residual sugar (from a high of 22 or 23 when the grapes come off the vine) the grapes are crushed, pressed and finish fermenting in stainless steel tanks. Then the wine is "rough-racked" several times and bottled.

"We really treat it brutal," said Gott with a grin. "We act tough with it to get a lot of air in there so it will soften, open up quickly and be ready to drink when you open the bottle.

All of the color, flavor, fruit and aromas of the Nuevo come from the way it is made, Gott continued. The same intensely ripe grapes are used for Montevina's regular, more high-powered zinfandel. They are just handled differently. The Nuevo has enough substance so that it won't fade in a few months time the way most nouveau wines do, as they're intended to. They aren't made to last but to be consumed quickly.

"This wine will be in its glory next spring," Gott said of his Nuevo. Whether or not this is so, there probably won't be any left on the market anyway. At the appealing price of $2.89 a fifth and a little over $5 a magnum it is likely to be snapped up pretty quick.

ld Vineyard Grows Quality Wine Grapes

CARY GOTT checks crop development on some of his Zinfandel vines at Shenandoah Valley near Plymouth.

By Dan Bryant
Associate Editor

PLYMOUTH, Calif. — Cary Gott is a grape grower-vintner who has been instrumental in putting Amador County on the wine drinker's map in recent years, and he credits having an established vineyard in the right place as the key to success.

Gott operates Montevina Vineyards, a 170-acre planting in the Shenandoah Valley, a wooded, foothill area of about 9,000 acres at the 1,500-foot elevation near here.

His winery crushed 500 tons last year and expects to do 700 tons this year from grapes grown by Gott and his neighbors.

Although his best seller is Zinfandel, Gott says, there is also healthy demand for his Sauvignon blanc wines, which he calls "the hot variety" for new plantings in the area.

Awards Cited

"Our Zinfandel has been rated first or second for overall quality in the state by several tasting groups," he said. "The San Francisco Vintners Club gave

(See PRICES, pg. 8).

(Continued from Page 1)

our 1977 Zinfandel a best-in-the-state rating early this year. Our 1978 Zinfandel and 1979 Sauvignon blanc were winners at the Calaveras County Fair in May. We've also received awards at the Orange County Fair."

Interest in Amador County be new growers and winemakers has been strong. According to Robert Plaister, Amador County Extension director, Zinfandel prices last year averaged $438 a ton. As a result of the price, more acreage is going to Zinfandel.

The 32-year-old Gott was a newcomer to Shenandoah Valley 10 years ago when he began operating 78 acres of Zinfandel from 30 to 70 years of age. He studied enology and viticulture at the University of California, Davis, and gained winemaking experience in the cellars of Sterling and Inglenook.

Growing Factors

"If I had to list the three most important things for growing grapes that we have here, they would be soil, climate and our farming practices," he said. The soil is a Sierra type, free of compaction, and the climate is between a high region III and a low region IV.

"Our methods are fairly straightforward and common. But the big thing is that we are farming for ourselves and not just cranking out the tonnage for somebody else."

"We keep the Zinfandel cropping level around four tons, the Cabernet Sauvignon at three, and the Sauvignon blanc at about six. We came here to an old Zinfandel vineyard, and old vineyards make the best wines as you bring along the younger vines."

Income From Start

Normally, an operation starts with all new vines and goes three or four years without income, but Gott sold grapes to other wineries while concentrating on building a new winery and expanding acreage.

Today, in addition to Zinfandel and Sauvignon blanc, he also has Barbera, Cabernet Sauvignon, Ruby Cabernet and Nebbiolo, plus small quantities of other varieties he is observing.

Farm advisor Plaister said that cost comparisons for growing grapes in the foothill with other areas are not available. But savings are realized because the old vines are not on wire, there are fewer insects to deal with, and most of the bearing acres are dry-farmed.

Main Insects

Williamette mites and leafhoppers are Gott's main insect pests. He originally applied trithion for control but found the mites developed resistance to it. He now uses Zolone to handle any insect problem.

While the old Zinfandels are dry-farmed, Gott has sprinklers on his newer vines. The Sauvignon blanc and Cabernet, for example, require supplemental moisture. The system draws from wells and ponds on the property.

He controls weeds with applications of paraquat and Princep.

The Montevina winery is adding a 12,500-square-foot cellar for processing. The earlier 10,000-square-foot portions are used for bottling, warehousing and offices. It has stainless steel fermenters and storage tanks for aging white wines and oak barrels and tanks for reds.

The reds are aged 18 to 20 months and the whites are bottled after six months. All wines are bottled in 750 milliliters, except for about 2,000 cases of 1.5 litre Zinfandel Nuevo," one of Gott's specialties produced by carbonic maceration. This process involves fermentation within the berries before crushing, instead of afterward.

Gott has spent much time developing contacts for expanded markets in 25 states. He has also been selling wine to European buyers for two years.

New Labels

Along with others already in the business, Gott feels that the increasing number of small wineries in California is causing a flood of new labels on the market. There are 14 wineries in Amador County and more are coming. New labels, he predicts, will have a difficult time accepted.

Amador County grapes, harvested at a sugar of 25 or more, make wines with an alcohol content of 14 to 16 percent, a bit high for the generally recognized 12.5 percent in "fine wines." Yet wines from the area are in demand by vintners in other areas to bolster wines deficient in alcohol.

Success Factor

Plaister noted that the real success of wines made by Gott and others in the county is their higher acidity, caused by the elevation, which gives a sugar-acid balance that brings out flavor.

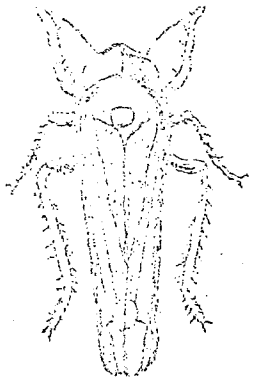
Alcohol content of Gott's wines follow the area pattern: 15 percent for Zinfandel, 14.5 for Sauvignon blanc, and down to 13 for white Zinfandel and white Cabernet. These latter two have a slightly pinkish color and are made by removing the skins of the black grapes as soon as possible after crushing.

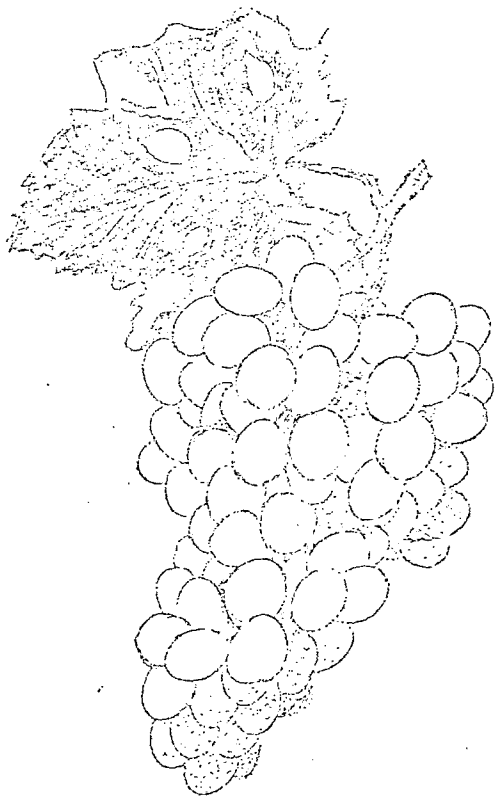
He sees a place for the low-alcohol wines being made by some vintners, but he feels that his climate and vines are best suited to the traditional approach of higher alcohol wines.

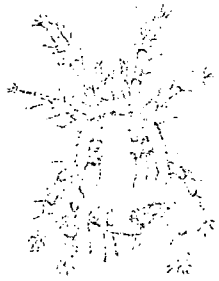
"If I had to list the three most important things that we have here for growing grapes, they would be soil, climate and farming practices. The soil is a Sierra type, free of compaction, and the climate is between a high region III and a low region IV."

Item E

WINE GRAPES IN AMADOR COUNTY







AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

"WINE GRAPES IN AMADOR COUNTY"

by

Robert E. Plaister
County Director and
Farm Advisor

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June 1967

INDEX

THE HISTORY OF GRAPE GROWING IN AMADOR COUNTY

Almost as soon as the miners came to the Sierra Foothills in Amador County, grape growing became a way of life. The economics of grape growing had several violent fluctuations over the years. In spite of this, the industry has persisted and today is one of the most profitable crops that can be grown between the one thousand and the two thousand foot elevation. One of the earliest recorded statements on grape growing is mentioned in Sargeant's History of Amador County: "The Davis Ranch in Shenandoah Valley was settled upon in '59 by John J. Davis. He has made a specialty of pears, grapes, almonds and apricots." This ranch still has a beautiful vineyard on it and many of the original vines are still producing. By 1860 there were nearly 300,000 grape vines (500 acres) in Amador County. This is nearly equal to the current acreage of grapes.

In 1860 Woolsey and Palmer planted a large vineyard at Lancha Plana. This was later dug up when a depression hit the wine business.

In 1863 James Laughton quit the mining business and bought a farm on which he planted a fine vineyard. During 1861 to 1864 a severe depression hit the wine industry. Attempts to market the wine in the east resulted in a loss so that many persons were induced to tear up their vineyards and give up the business. At this time there were vineyards along the Mokulmne River around Jackson, Ione, and the Jackson-Ione Valleys as well as higher up along the head waters of these creeks.

In the 1880's a group of Frenchmen notably Douet, Madam Pantaloons, and Xavier Benoist planted vineyards above the Vela Ranch east and south of Jackson, in what is now the Clinton Area.

Along about this time Anthony Caminetti first engaged in grape growing at what was called French Gardens.

In 1881 J. D. Mason in his history of Amador County mentions choice grapes being grown in the Shenandoah Valley. He mentioned the Ball Ranch as being planted to grapes. Mason describes the Uhlinger Ranch (D'Agostini Winery) as having perhaps twenty thousand vines of different varieties flourishing finely. "The wine is said to be of fine quality."

"In the Drytown area wine of a fine quality is manufactured in considerable quantities, the capacity of the soil for grapes being unsurpassed."

In the description of the grape growing areas, Mason indicated that grapes are in perfection at Jackson, grapes in Volcano owing to the situation of the town and basin are liable to frost, and that grape growing at Pine Grove required sheltered situations but produced good grapes. Dentzler's flume house at 2980 feet grew grapes which were uncertain and lacked sugar.

On July 25, 1889 the U. S. Agricultural Experiment Station situated on the Creek Road opposite the Molfino Ranch east of Jackson was turned over to the Board of Regents of the University of California for experiments in agriculture, horticulture and viticulture. At a dinner on the important day honoring Professor W. E. Hilgard, wines were served at dinner including claret, riesling, and angelica. This station is no longer owned by the University, however, some of the trees and vines are still in existence and are occasionally used to collect virus free stock for University experiments.

In a newspaper article in 1889, the adaptability of this section to the production of the best quality of grapes is described. "Wine of body and bouquet and a

fine quality and flavor of brandy were indicated to have been universally commended."

Grapes were grown at the Preston School of Industry near Ione in the 1890's. These were replanted in the 1920's.

In the late 1890's many Frenchmen became discouraged with mining and planted vineyards in the Middle Bar area along the Mokelumne River. These vineyards were planted from cuttings brought from France.

In Sargeant's History of Amador County it is mentioned that Olita's (Fiddletown) future was never so bright, thousands of vines and trees having been planted the last six years. I. P. Ostrom has one of the largest vineyards. Louis Smith and Sons a vineyard, Dennis Toomey a vineyard, and also W. D. Clark and Son. During the 1920's B. L. Jones, El Dorado County Farm Advisor for the University of California, conducted demonstrations in pruning in a Shenandoah-Fiddletown area.

Although the industry has had many violent ups and downs, in the past hundred years, it has persisted in the Shenandoah-Fiddletown-Ridge Road areas. The county at one time boasted many small wineries. All of these have gone out of existence except the D'Agostini Winery in the upper Shenandoah Valley which is discussed in another section.

In 1955 the Agricultural Extension Service's office was opened in Amador County. Since that time a continuing program of research and investigation has continued in the vineyard areas. Systematic studies and the close cooperation of the growers has resulted in the determination of proper nitrogen levels, fertilization, the discovery of boron deficiency, the identification and control of the spider mite, and the establishment of a varietal test plot.

CLIMATE AND VARIETIES

In order to determine which grape varieties are best suited to Amador County (Shenandoah Valley), a careful study has been made of temperature records. This was done because temperature especially during the ripening period strikingly affects the sugar and/or acid content of the grapes. On the basis of temperature, or more specifically, the summations of heat as degree-days above 50°F. for the period April 1 to October 31, any grape-producing area falls into one or another of five temperature groups or regions (I, II, III, IV, V), Zone I being the coolest and Zone V the hotest.

Our office has analyzed the temperature records collected by Tulio D'Agostini in the Shenandoah Valley. The heat summation as expressed as degree days is as follows:

Year	Degree Days	Climate Zone
1962	3706	IV
1963	3339	III
1964	3436	III
1965	3133	III
1966	3752	IV

Thus, in three out of five years the area is in Climate Zone III. Excellent natural sweet table wines can be produced from soils in this climate zone according to Professor A. J. Winkler. Based on this data, Mr. A. N. Kasimatis, extension viticulturist, obtained cuttings of Semillon, Barbera, French Colombard, Sauvignon Blanc, Gamay, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Ruby Cabernet. These were planted in a nursery in John Ferrero's vineyard in 1966. In 1967 they were transplanted into the vineyard. These will be compared with Zinfandel, our most plentiful grape. Grapes are picked at the desired maturity, taken to U. C. Davis, made into wine, aged, scored, and evaluated by the enology staff. Dr. George Cooke, extension enologist, is cooperating in this work.

VINEYARD SOILS OF AMADOR COUNTY

Shenandoah Valley:

A few vineyards are established on the Ahwahnee Series. This is a brown, well-drained to somewhat excessively drained, mostly moderately deep soil formed from weathered granitic rock. They are gently sloping to steep. The surface soil is brown, friable, loam or fine sandy loam that is porous and slightly hard when dry. The subsoil is slightly finer textured than the surface soil. It is brown to reddish-brown loam or heavy loam and is plastic and slightly sticky when wet. Weathered bedrock is at a depth of 15 to 36 inches. The weathered bedrock material is fractured and is somewhat pervious to moisture and roots. These soils are moderate to low in fertility.

The principal soil in the Shenandoah Valley upon which vineyards are grown is the Sierra Series. This consists of well-drained deep and moderately deep soils formed in material from granitic rock. These soils are gently sloping to very steep.

The surface soil, a brown to yellowish-red coarse sandy loam or loam, is friable and slightly acid to medium acid. The subsoil is yellowish-red to red heavy loam or clay loam. Depth to weathered bedrock ranges from 20 inches to more than 60 inches. Natural fertility of the Sierra soils is moderate to moderately low. The erosion hazard of this soil runs from moderate to severe.

A small acreage of Shenandoah Series is also planted to vineyards. These are moderately well drained to somewhat poorly drained, moderately deep, light brownish-gray soils. These soils have a subsoil of heavy clay. They formed in material from granitic rock. The surface soil, a light brownish-gray to pale-brown loam, is friable and medium acid. The subsoil is light grayish-brown

to yellowish-brown clay. Depth to the clay subsoil ranges from 20 to 36 inches, but depth to decomposed rock ranges from 30 to 58 inches. These soils are seasonally wet for long periods after the winter rains.

Fiddletown Area:

The Fiddletown vineyards are on Sierra soils but some are on the Sites soils. This area is well-drained, deep and moderately deep soil. These soils formed in material weathered from metasedimentary rock, mostly slate schist, and intrusive rock. Sites soils are gently sloping to very steep. The surface soil, a brown or reddish-brown gravelly loam or siltloam is friable and granular and slightly acid to medium acid. Subsoil is reddish-brown to yellowish-red, firm clay or clay loam. Depth to bedrock is from 28 to more than 60 inches.

Ridge Road:

With few exceptions the vineyards along the Ridge Road leading from Sutter Hill to Pine Grove are on Supan cobbly loam. This is a well-drained, cobbly, very deep to moderately deep soil formed in material weathered from volcanic conglomerate. These soils are on gently sloping tabular ridges and steep to moderately steep side slopes that adjoin these ridges. The surface soil is brown, dark-brown or reddish-brown cobbly clay loam, or it is sandy clay loam or clay in places near bedrock. Depth to weathered, tuff-cemented conglomerate is 24 to 70 inches or more.

Other Areas:

Several other soil series have vineyards on them. Grapes will grow on almost any soil but the above mentioned are on the principal soils.

SOIL EROSION

On the rolling vineyards in the Shenandoah Valley soil deterioration is mainly the result of soil erosion. The use of cover crops in the vineyards is strongly recommended. The cover crop is most valuable if it is well established and growing during the period of heavy rains; yet it is still effective if heavy rain falls in the spring after it has been disced to check its growth or kill the plants. Since cleaning up the vineyard with an over-all weed growth is expensive, and the cost of the spring cleanup has a discouraging effect on the grower, it is recommended that fertilization be done if possible with an easy-flow type spreader that restricts the stimulated growth to the area between the rows, thus lowering considerably the cultivation near the vine. Most growers here do not seed cover crops but rely on the native growth of burr clover, filaree, wild oats, and others.

The time of cultivating in the cover crop is particularly critical. This needs to be done in order to stop the water competition between the vines and the cover crop. It also needs to be delayed long enough so that protection from erosion is still effective. Some growers disc lightly to discourage the rapid growth of the cover crop and then come back later and do a more thorough cultivation.

The in-vine-in row practice of applying Simizine and other herbicides to control growth may greatly improve the spring cultivation of our foothill vineyards. The use of subterranean clover as the between row cover crop also needs to be investigated.

Most growers use a disc to do the cultivation even though the vines are narrowly spaced at eight feet apart. The soil is of such a structure that discing is practical. This is usually followed by another discing and/or harrowing. Some growers get into the problem of discing or harrowing when the soil is dry enough to throw clouds of dust. This is an extremely bad practice which causes a buildup of spider mites in the vineyard.

PRO OSED BOUNDARY OF SHENANDOA VALLEY

VITICULTURAL AREA

The boundary of the Shenandoah Valley Viticultrual Area starts at the point where the boundary of Amador County and El Dorado County meets Big Indian Creek and then proceeds south following Big Indian Creek until Big Indian Creek meets the boundary between sections 1 and 2 of Township 7 North Range 10 East and then follows this boundary until it meets the Oleta (Fiddletown) Raod and then follows the Oleta Road East until it meets the boundary between Sections 6 and 5 of Township 7 North Range 11 East and follows the boundary North into Township 8 North Range 11 East and continues North on the boundary between Sections 31 and 32 until this boundary meets Big Indian Creek and then follows Big Indian Creek in a North East direction until Big Indian Creek meets the boundary between Sections 27 and 28 of Township 8 North Range 11 East and then follows this boundary North until it meets the intersection of Sections 21, 22, 27, 28, of Township 8 North

Range 11 East and then proceeds East, then North then West along the boundary of the West half section of Section 22 of Township 8 North Range 11 East to the intersection of Sections 16, 15, 21, and 22 and then proceeds North along the boundary between Sections 16 and 15 of Township 8 North Range 11 East and continues North along the boundary of Sections 9 and 10 of Township 8 North Range 11 East until the boundary meets the boundary between Amador County and El Dorado County and then continues West following the county line until the starting point.

SOIL LEGEND

Each symbol consists of letters or a combination of letters and numbers. The first capital letter is the initial one of the soil name. A second capital letter, if used, shows the class of slope. Some symbols without a slope letter are for nearly level soils or land types, but others are for soils or land types that have considerable range in slope. A final number, 2 or 3, in the symbol shows that the soil is named as eroded or severely eroded.

SYMBOL	NAME
HfF	Holland very rocky coarse sandy loam, 51 to 71 percent slopes
HkE	Holland very rocky coarse sandy loam, deep, 16 to 51 percent slopes
Hm	Honcut clay loam, over clay
Hn	Honcut silt loam
Ho	Honcut very fine sandy loam
Hs	Honcut very fine sandy loam, moderately well drained
Hv	Honcut very fine sandy loam, channeled
IdC	Inks loam, deep variant, 3 to 16 percent slopes
IrE	Inks loam and Rock land, 3 to 45 percent slopes
IsE	Iron Mountain very stony loam, 9 to 51 percent slopes
IvE	Iron Mountain very stony loam, rhyolite substratum, 9 to 51 percent slopes
JgE	Jiggs very rocky loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes
JmC	Josephine loam, 3 to 16 percent slopes
JmD	Josephine loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes
JmE	Josephine loam, 31 to 51 percent slopes
JnC	Josephine loam, deep, 9 to 16 percent slopes
JnD	Josephine loam, deep, 16 to 31 percent slopes
JnE	Josephine loam, deep, 31 to 51 percent slopes
JoC	Josephine very rocky loam, 3 to 16 percent slopes
JoE	Josephine very rocky loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes
JoF	Josephine very rocky loam, 51 to 71 percent slopes
JpE	Josephine very rocky loam, deep, 16 to 51 percent slopes
JpF	Josephine very rocky loam, deep, 51 to 71 percent slopes
JsE	Josephine-Maymen complex, 16 to 51 percent slopes
JxE	Josephine-Mariposa complex, 16 to 51 percent slopes
JxF	Josephine-Mariposa complex, 51 to 71 percent slopes
LaC	Laniger sandy loam, 2 to 16 percent slopes
LgB	Laniger sandy loam, thick surface, 0 to 5 percent slopes
Ln	Limestone rock land
Lo	Loamy alluvial land
Ma	Made land
MbD	Mariposa gravelly loam, 3 to 31 percent slopes
McD	Mariposa very rocky loam, 9 to 31 percent slopes
McE	Mariposa very rocky loam, 31 to 51 percent slopes
McF	Mariposa very rocky loam, 51 to 85 percent slopes
MdE	Mariposa-Maymen complex, 16 to 51 percent slopes
MdF	Mariposa-Maymen complex, 51 to 85 percent slopes
MgE	Maymen very rocky loam, 9 to 51 percent slopes
MhE	Maymen-Mariposa complex, 16 to 51 percent slopes
MkE	McCarthy very rocky loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes
MkF	McCarthy very rocky loam, 51 to 71 percent slopes
MlC	McCarthy very cobbly loam, 3 to 16 percent slopes
MmE	McCarthy and Jiggs very cobbly loams, 16 to 51 percent slopes
Mn	Mine tailings and Riverwash
Mo	Mixed alluvial land
Mp	Mixed wet alluvial land
MrB	Mokelumne sandy loam, 2 to 5 percent slopes
MsD	Mokelumne coarse sandy loam, 5 to 36 percent slopes
Mt	Mokelumne soils and Alluvial land
MuB	Musick sandy loam, 3 to 9 percent slopes
MuC	Musick sandy loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes
MuD	Musick sandy loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes
MuE	Musick sandy loam, 31 to 51 percent slopes
MvC	Musick very rocky sandy loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes
MvE	Musick very rocky sandy loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes
MvF	Musick very rocky sandy loam, 51 to 71 percent slopes
MwE	Musick very rocky sandy loam, moderately deep, 16 to 51 percent slopes
MwF	Musick very rocky sandy loam, moderately deep, 51 to 71 percent slopes
MxF	Musick extremely rocky sandy loam, moderately deep, 51 to 71 percent slopes
PaD	Pardee cobbly loam, 3 to 31 percent slopes
PnC	Pentz sandy loam, 2 to 16 percent slopes

SYMBOL	NAME
PnC2	Pentz sandy loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes, eroded
PnD	Pentz sandy loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes
PoE	Pentz sandy loam, very shallow, 2 to 51 percent slopes
PpC	Pentz gravelly sandy loam, 2 to 16 percent slopes
PrA	Perkins loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
PrC	Perkins loam, 3 to 16 percent slopes
PtB	Peters clay, 3 to 9 percent slopes
Pw	Placer diggings and Riverwash
RbB	Red Bluff-Mokelumne complex, 0 to 5 percent slopes
RbD	Red Bluff-Mokelumne complex, 5 to 16 percent slopes
RbE2	Red Bluff-Mokelumne complex, 16 to 36 percent slopes, eroded
RmD	Red Bluff-Mokelumne-Mine pits complex, 2 to 16 percent slopes
Ro	Rock land
RyA	Ryer silty clay loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
Sa	Sedimentary rock land
Sb	Serpentine rock land
ScF	Shaver very rocky coarse sandy loam, 51 to 71 percent slopes
SdF	Shaver very rocky coarse sandy loam, moderately deep, 51 to 71 pe
SfB	Shenandoah loam, 3 to 9 percent slopes
SgB	Sierra coarse sandy loam, 3 to 9 percent slopes
SgB2	Sierra coarse sandy loam, 3 to 9 percent slopes, eroded
SgC	Sierra coarse sandy loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes
SgC2	Sierra coarse sandy loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes, eroded
SgD	Sierra coarse sandy loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes
SgD2	Sierra coarse sandy loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes, eroded
ShB	Sierra coarse sandy loam, moderately deep, 3 to 9 percent slopes
ShB2	Sierra coarse sandy loam, moderately deep, 3 to 9 percent slopes,
ShC	Sierra coarse sandy loam, moderately deep, 9 to 16 percent slopes
ShC2	Sierra coarse sandy loam, moderately deep, 9 to 16 percent slopes
ShD	Sierra coarse sandy loam, moderately deep, 16 to 31 percent slope
ShD2	Sierra coarse sandy loam, moderately deep, 16 to 31 percent slope
SkD	Sierra very rocky coarse sandy loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes
SkF	Sierra very rocky coarse sandy loam, 51 to 71 percent slopes
SlD3	Sierra sandy clay loam, 9 to 31 percent slopes, severely eroded
SmD	Sierra very rocky coarse sandy loam, moderately deep, 9 to 31 perc
SmE	Sierra very rocky coarse sandy loam, moderately deep, 31 to 51 pe
SnB	Sites loam, 3 to 9 percent slopes
SnC	Sites loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes
SnD	Sites loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes
SnE	Sites loam, 31 to 51 percent slopes
SoC	Sites loam, moderately deep, 3 to 16 percent slopes
SoD	Sites loam, moderately deep, 16 to 31 percent slopes
SoE	Sites loam, moderately deep, 31 to 51 percent slopes
SpD3	Sites clay loam, moderately deep, 3 to 31 percent slopes, severely
SrC	Sites very rocky loam, 3 to 16 percent slopes
SrE	Sites very rocky loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes
SrF	Sites very rocky loam, 51 to 85 percent slopes
SsE	Sites very rocky loam, moderately deep, 16 to 51 percent slopes
StE	Sites-Mariposa complex, 16 to 51 percent slopes
SuB	Snelling loam, moderately well drained, 0 to 9 percent slopes
SvA	Snelling fine sandy loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes
SvB	Snelling fine sandy loam, 2 to 5 percent slopes
SvC	Snelling fine sandy loam, 5 to 9 percent slopes
SwD	Snelling sandy loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes
SwE	Snelling sandy loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes
SxD	Supan cobbly loam, 3 to 31 percent slopes
SyD	Supan very cobbly loam, moderately deep, 3 to 31 percent slopes
SyE	Supan very cobbly loam, moderately deep, 31 to 51 percent slopes
TcE	Tiger Creek very rocky loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes
WcD	Windy cobbly sandy loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes
WcE	Windy cobbly sandy loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes

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SOIL LEGEND

Each symbol consists of letters or a combination of letters and numbers. The first capital letter is the initial one of the soil name. A second capital letter, if used, shows the class of slope. Some symbols without a slope letter are for nearly level soils or land types, but others are for soils or land types that have considerable range in slope. A final number, 2 or 3, in the symbol shows that the soil is named as eroded or severely eroded.

SYMBOL	NAME
AaB	Ahwahnee loam, 3 to 9 percent slopes
AaB2	Ahwahnee loam, 3 to 9 percent slopes, eroded
AaC	Ahwahnee loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes
AaC2	Ahwahnee loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes, eroded
AaD	Ahwahnee loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes
AaD2	Ahwahnee loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes, eroded
AdD	Ahwahnee very rocky loam, 9 to 31 percent slopes
AdD3	Ahwahnee very rocky loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes, severely eroded
AdE	Ahwahnee very rocky loam, 31 to 51 percent slopes
AeE	Ahwahnee very rocky loam, shallow, 16 to 51 percent slopes
AfD	Ahwahnee extremely rocky loam, 9 to 51 percent slopes
AnB	Aiken loam, 3 to 9 percent slopes
AnC	Aiken loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes
AkC	Aiken cobbly loam, 3 to 16 percent slopes
AkD	Aiken cobbly loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes
AkE	Aiken cobbly loam, 31 to 51 percent slopes
AmE	Aiken very rocky loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes
AmF	Aiken very rocky loam, 51 to 71 percent slopes
AnD	Argonaut gravelly loam, 3 to 31 percent slopes
AoD	Argonaut very rocky loam, 3 to 31 percent slopes
ApD	Auburn silt loam, 0 to 31 percent slopes
ArC	Auburn silt loam, moderately deep, 3 to 16 percent slopes
ArD	Auburn silt loam, moderately deep, 16 to 31 percent slopes
AsB2	Auburn very rocky silt loam, 3 to 9 percent slopes, eroded
AsD	Auburn very rocky silt loam, 3 to 31 percent slopes
AsE	Auburn very rocky silt loam, 31 to 51 percent slopes
AtD	Auburn very rocky silt loam, moderately deep, 3 to 31 percent slopes
AtE	Auburn very rocky silt loam, moderately deep, 31 to 51 percent slopes
AuD	Auburn extremely rocky silt loam, 3 to 31 percent slopes
AuF	Auburn extremely rocky silt loam, 31 to 71 percent slopes
AvE	Auburn extremely rocky silt loam, moderately deep, 31 to 71 percent slopes
AwC	Auburn-Argonaut silt loams, 0 to 16 percent slopes
AxD	Auburn-Argonaut very rocky silt loams, 3 to 31 percent slopes
CaC	Cohasset loam, 5 to 16 percent slopes
CaD	Cohasset loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes
CbC	Cohasset very cobbly loam, 3 to 16 percent slopes
CbE	Cohasset very cobbly loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes
CbF	Cohasset very cobbly loam, 51 to 71 percent slopes
CcC	Cohasset very cobbly loam, moderately deep, 3 to 16 percent slopes
CcE	Cohasset very cobbly loam, moderately deep, 16 to 51 percent slopes
CoC	Cohasset very cobbly sandy loam, 3 to 16 percent slopes
CoE	Cohasset very cobbly sandy loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes
EcD	Exchequer very rocky silt loam, 3 to 31 percent slopes
EcE	Exchequer very rocky silt loam, 31 to 51 percent slopes
EhD	Exchequer and Auburn loams, 3 to 31 percent slopes
ExD	Exchequer and Auburn very rocky loams, 3 to 31 percent slopes
ExE	Exchequer and Auburn very rocky loams, 31 to 51 percent slopes
FdC	Fiddletown gravelly loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes
FdD	Fiddletown gravelly loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes
FgB	Fiddletown gravelly loam, deep, 3 to 10 percent slopes
FoE	Fiddletown very rocky loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes
FoF	Fiddletown very rocky loam, 51 to 71 percent slopes
FtE	Fiddletown very rocky loam, deep, 16 to 51 percent slopes
HaD	Henneke very rocky loam, 3 to 51 percent slopes
HcC	Holland coarse sandy loam, 5 to 9 percent slopes
HcD	Holland coarse sandy loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes
HcE	Holland coarse sandy loam, 16 to 36 percent slopes
HoC	Holland coarse sandy loam, deep, 5 to 9 percent slopes
HoD	Holland coarse sandy loam, deep, 9 to 16 percent slopes
HfD	Holland very rocky coarse sandy loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes
HfE	Holland very rocky coarse sandy loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes
HfF	Holland very rocky coarse sandy loam, 51 to 71 percent slopes
HkE	Holland very rocky coarse sandy loam, deep, 16 to 51 percent slope
Hm	Honcut clay loam, over clay
Hn	Honcut silt loam
Ho	Honcut very fine sandy loam
Hs	Honcut very fine sandy loam, moderately well drained
Hv	Honcut very fine sandy loam, channeled
IdC	Inks loam, deep variant, 3 to 16 percent slopes
IrE	Inks loam and Rock land, 3 to 45 percent slopes
IsE	Iron Mountain very stony loam, 9 to 51 percent slopes
IvE	Iron Mountain very stony loam, rhyolite substratum, 9 to 51 percent
JgE	Jiggs very rocky loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes
JmC	Josephine loam, 3 to 16 percent slopes
JmD	Josephine loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes
JmE	Josephine loam, 31 to 51 percent slopes
JnC	Josephine loam, deep, 9 to 16 percent slopes
JnD	Josephine loam, deep, 16 to 31 percent slopes
JnE	Josephine loam, deep, 31 to 51 percent slopes
JoC	Josephine very rocky loam, 3 to 16 percent slopes
JoE	Josephine very rocky loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes
JoF	Josephine very rocky loam, 51 to 71 percent slopes
JpE	Josephine very rocky loam, deep, 16 to 51 percent slopes
JpF	Josephine very rocky loam, deep, 51 to 71 percent slopes
JsE	Josephine-Maymen complex, 16 to 51 percent slopes
JxE	Josephine-Mariposa complex, 16 to 51 percent slopes
JxF	Josephine-Mariposa complex, 51 to 71 percent slopes
LaC	Laniger sandy loam, 2 to 16 percent slopes
LgB	Laniger sandy loam, thick surface, 0 to 5 percent slopes
Ln	Limestone rock land
Lo	Loamy alluvial land
Ma	Made land
MbD	Mariposa gravelly loam, 3 to 31 percent slopes
McD	Mariposa very rocky loam, 9 to 31 percent slopes
McE	Mariposa very rocky loam, 31 to 51 percent slopes
McF	Mariposa very rocky loam, 51 to 85 percent slopes
MdE	Mariposa-Maymen complex, 16 to 51 percent slopes
MdF	Mariposa-Maymen complex, 51 to 85 percent slopes
MgE	Maymen very rocky loam, 9 to 51 percent slopes
MhE	Maymen-Mariposa complex, 16 to 51 percent slopes
MkE	McCarthy very rocky loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes
MkF	McCarthy very rocky loam, 51 to 71 percent slopes
MlC	McCarthy very cobbly loam, 3 to 16 percent slopes
MmE	McCarthy and Jiggs very cobbly loams, 16 to 51 percent slopes
Mn	Mine tailings and Riverwash
Mo	Mixed alluvial land
Mp	Mixed wet alluvial land
MrB	Mokelumne sandy loam, 2 to 5 percent slopes
MsD	Mokelumne coarse sandy loam, 5 to 36 percent slopes
Mt	Mokelumne soils and Alluvial land
MuB	Musick sandy loam, 3 to 9 percent slopes
MuC	Musick sandy loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes
MuD	Musick sandy loam, 16 to 31 percent slopes
MuE	Musick sandy loam, 31 to 51 percent slopes
MvC	Musick very rocky sandy loam, 9 to 16 percent slopes
MvE	Musick very rocky sandy loam, 16 to 51 percent slopes
MvF	Musick very rocky sandy loam, 51 to 71 percent slopes
MwE	Musick very rocky sandy loam, moderately deep, 16 to 51 percent slo
MwF	Musick very rocky sandy loam, moderately deep, 51 to 71 percent slo
MxF	Musick extremely rocky sandy loam, moderately deep, 51 to 71 perce
PaD	Pardee cobbly loam, 3 to 31 percent slopes
PnC	Pentz sandy loam, 2 to 16 percent slopes

Proposed Boundary of Shenandoah Valley Appela

Items H an

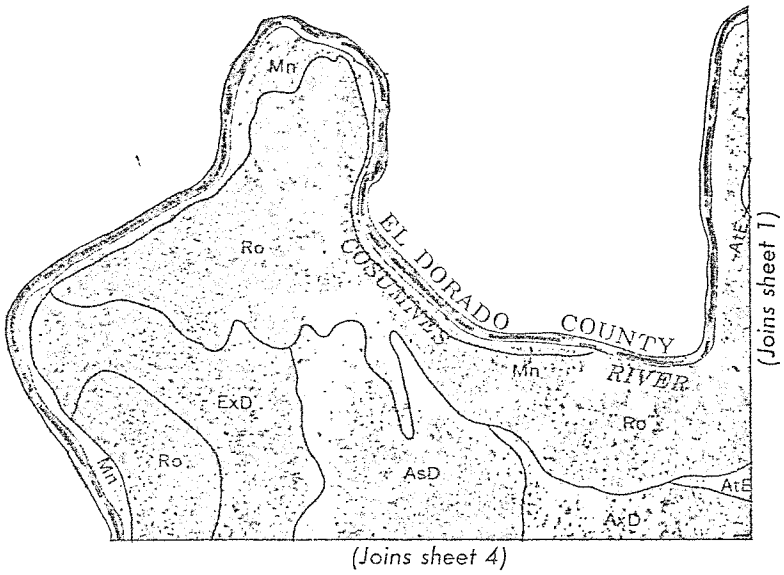
N

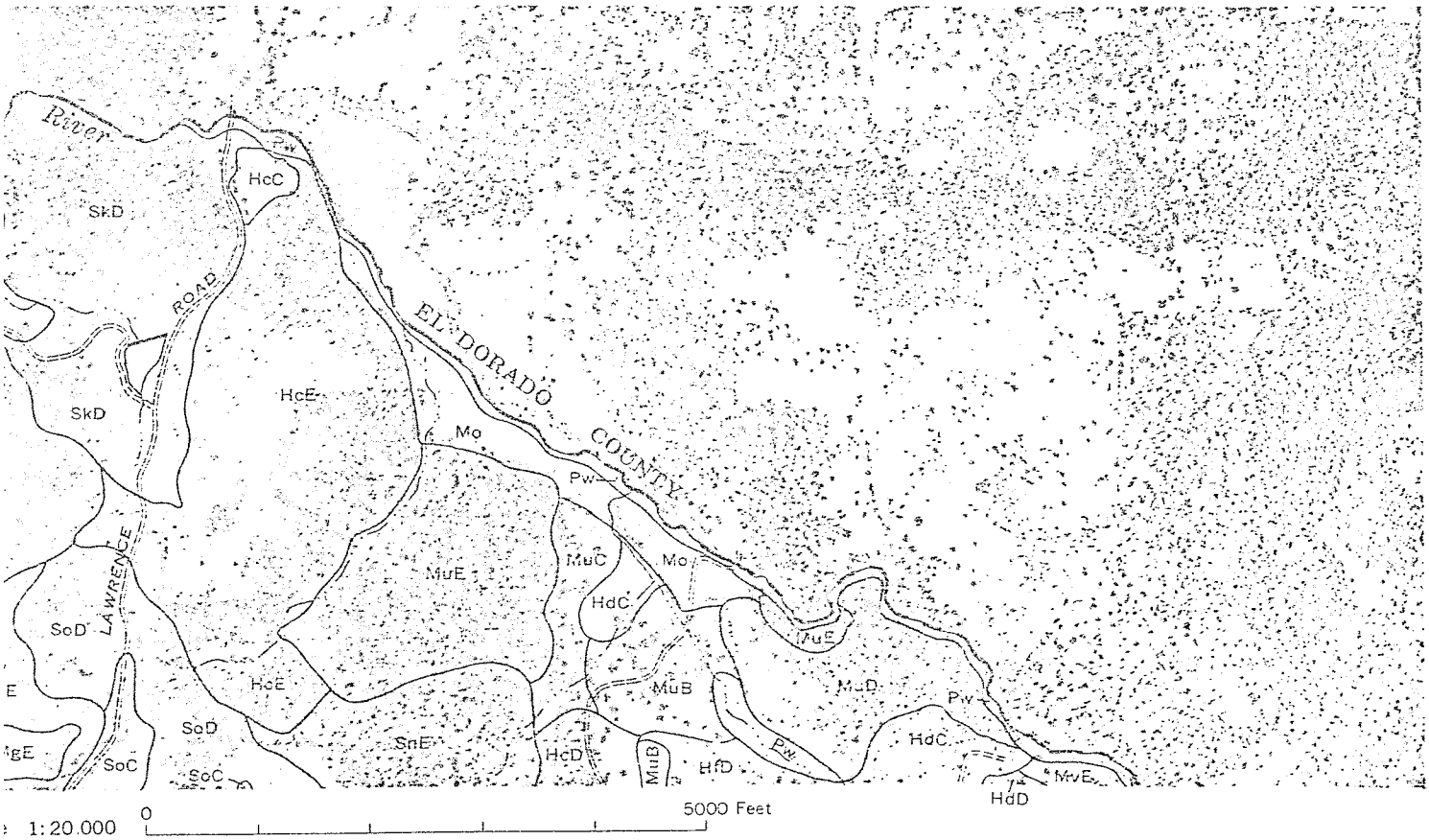

South
Fork
EL DORADO COUNTY
FLUME
UPPER ROAD
Cosumnes
River
SHENANDOAH ROAD
STEINER ROAD
Pigeon
Creek
SHENANDOAH CEMETERY
Prospect Hill
Valley
SkF
SdF
SgD2
SmE
McE
ShD2
ShC2
SgB2
SfB
SgD
Pw
SgC2
SkD
SgB
SgC
IsE
0
5000 Feet
(Joins sheet 2)
(Joins sheet 5)

(2)


N
Proposed Boundary of Shenandoah Va
South
Fork
Cosumnes
River Pines
Creek
SHENANDOAH
ROAD
Creek
Pigeon
SmE
SkD
Pw
SgD2
SgC
SgD
SgB
SgC2
SuB
AaD2
AaB2
AaC2
AdD
AdE
AaC
SoC
HcD
MgE
SsE
SnC
Ro
Sb
JoE
AhB
(Joins sheet 1)
(Joins sheet 6)
ShC2
0
½
1 Mile
Scale 1:20

Valley Appelation





(Joins sheet 2)

(Joins sheet 5)

(Joins sheet 14)

0 ½ 1 Mile

Scale 1:20

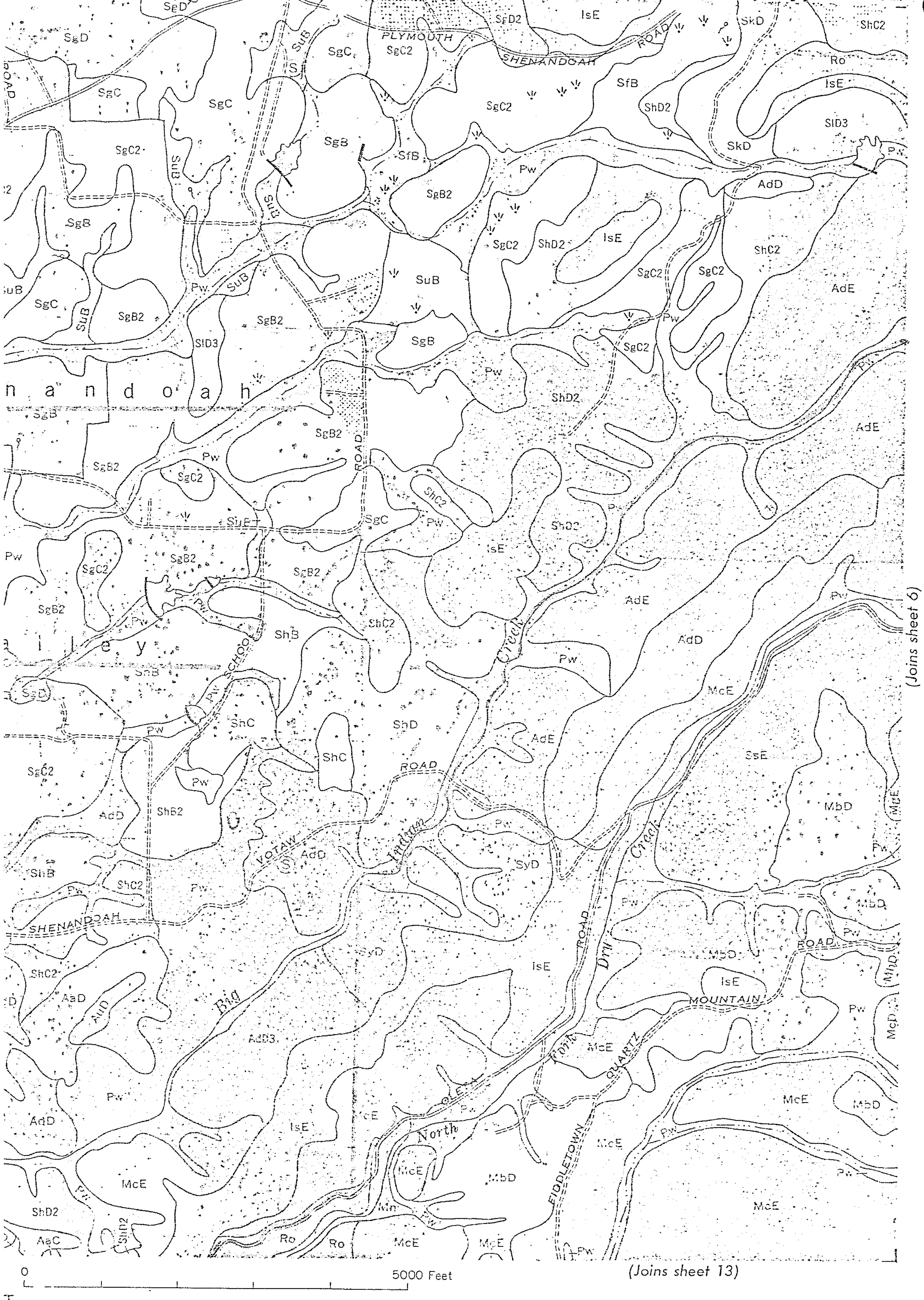
Proposed Boundary of Shenandoah Valley Appleation

0 ½ 1 Mile Scale 1:20 000

Items H and I

Proposed Boundry of Shenandoah Valley Appelation

5

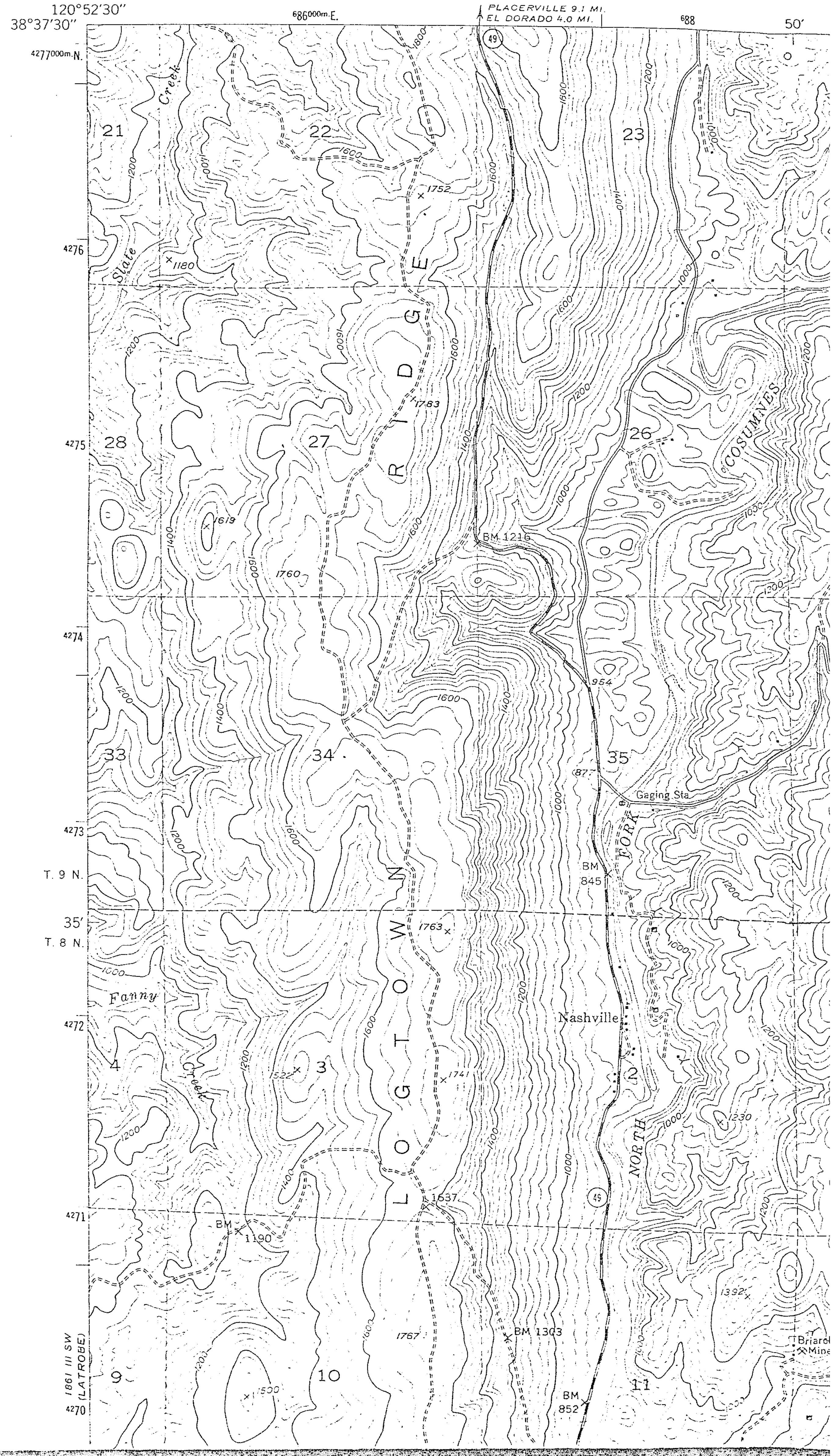


0 ½ 1 Mile Scale 1:20 000

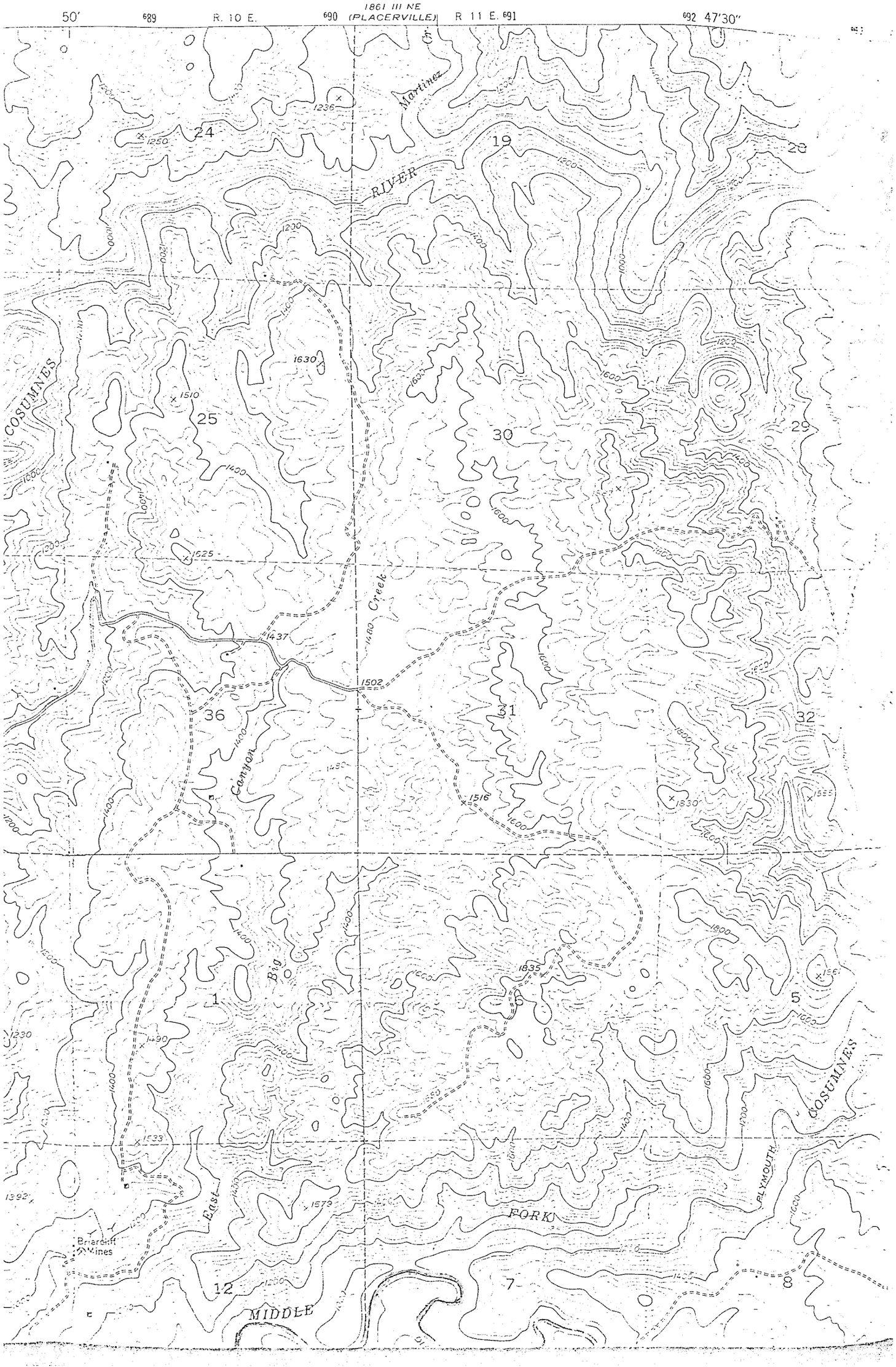
Proposed Boundry of Shenandoah Valley Appelation

1861 III NW
(SHINGLE SPRINGS)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

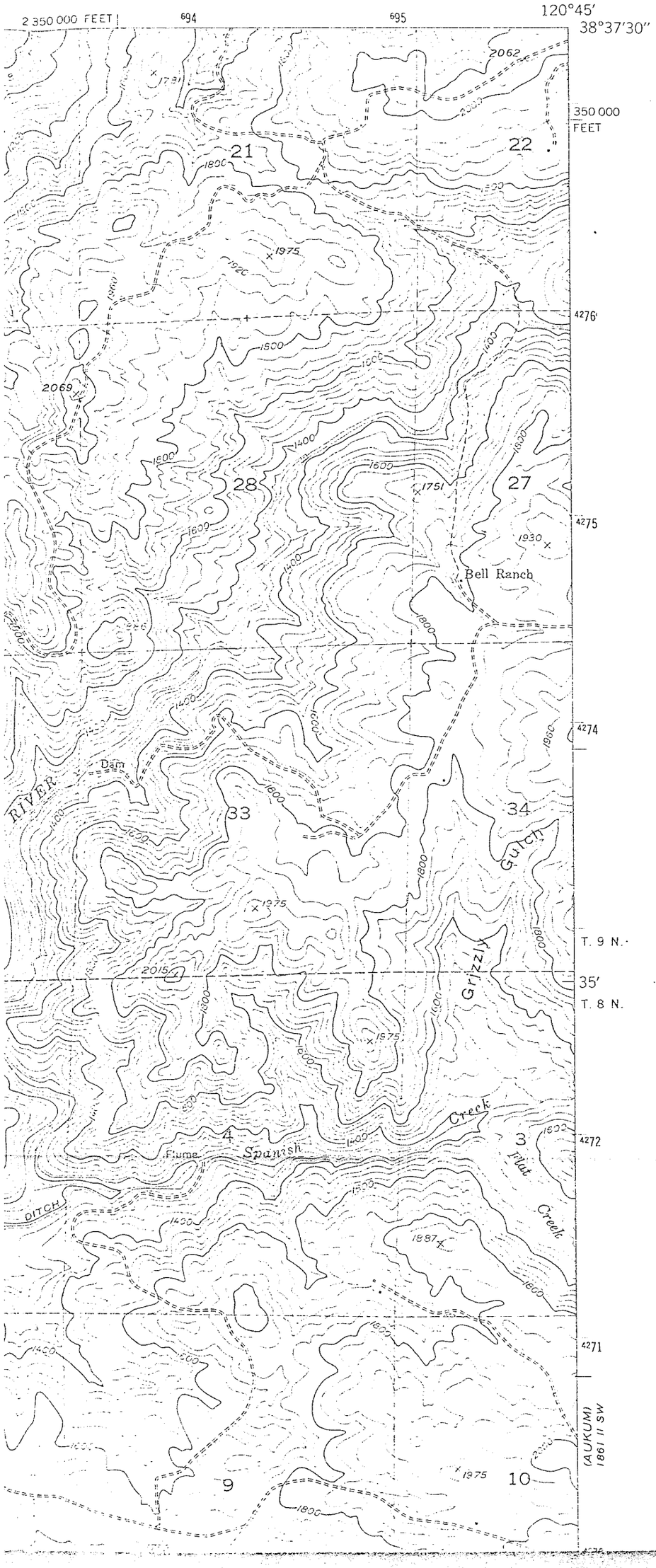


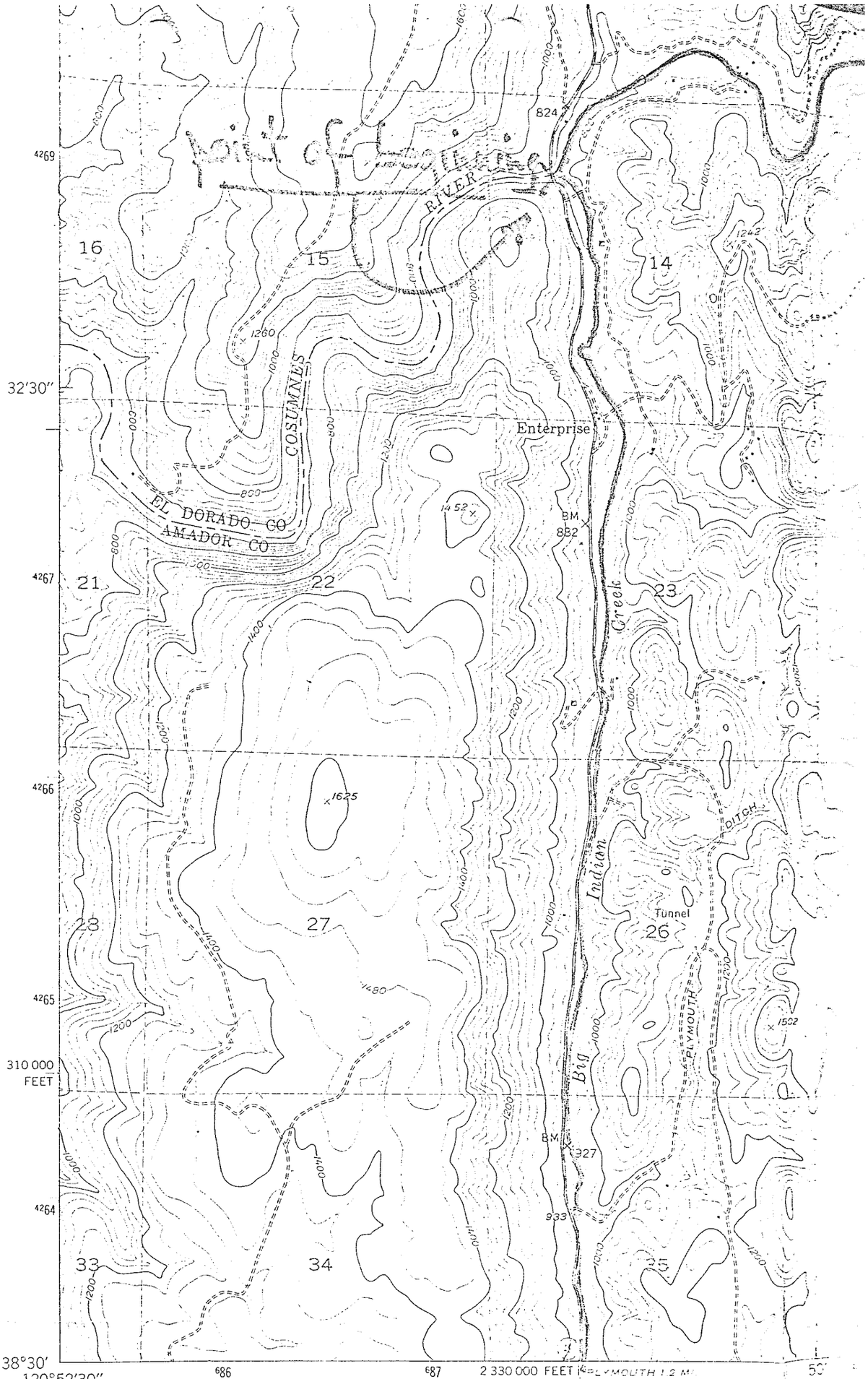
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REPRESENTED BY THE
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS



FIDDLETOWN QUADRANGLE
CALIFORNIA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

1861 II NW (CAMINO)





(IRISH HILL)
1860 IV NW

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS

Topography from aerial photographs by multiplex methods
Aerial photographs taken 1946. Field check 1949

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on California coordinate system, zone 2

Dashed land lines indicate approximate location

Unchecked elevations are shown in brown

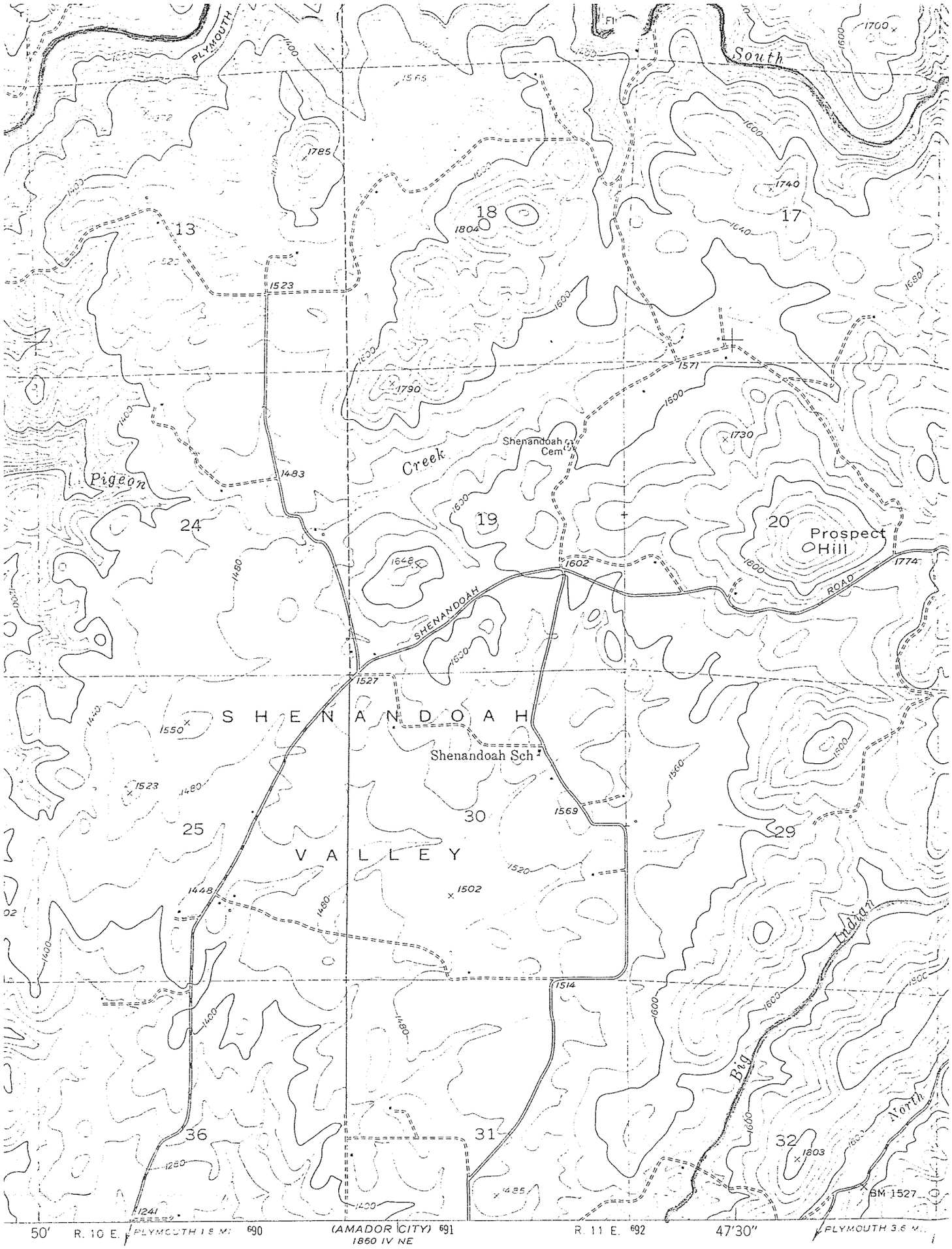
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 10, shown in blue

GN MN

1°22'
24 MILS

17½°
311 MILS

UTM GRID AND 1949 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



50′ R. 10 E. PLYMOUTH 1 S M. 690 (AMADOR CITY) 691 1860 IV NE R. 11 E. 692 47′30″ PLYMOUTH 3.6 M.

SCALE 1:24 000

1 0 1 MILE

1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET

1 .5 0 1 KILOMETER

CONTOUR INTERVAL 40 FEET

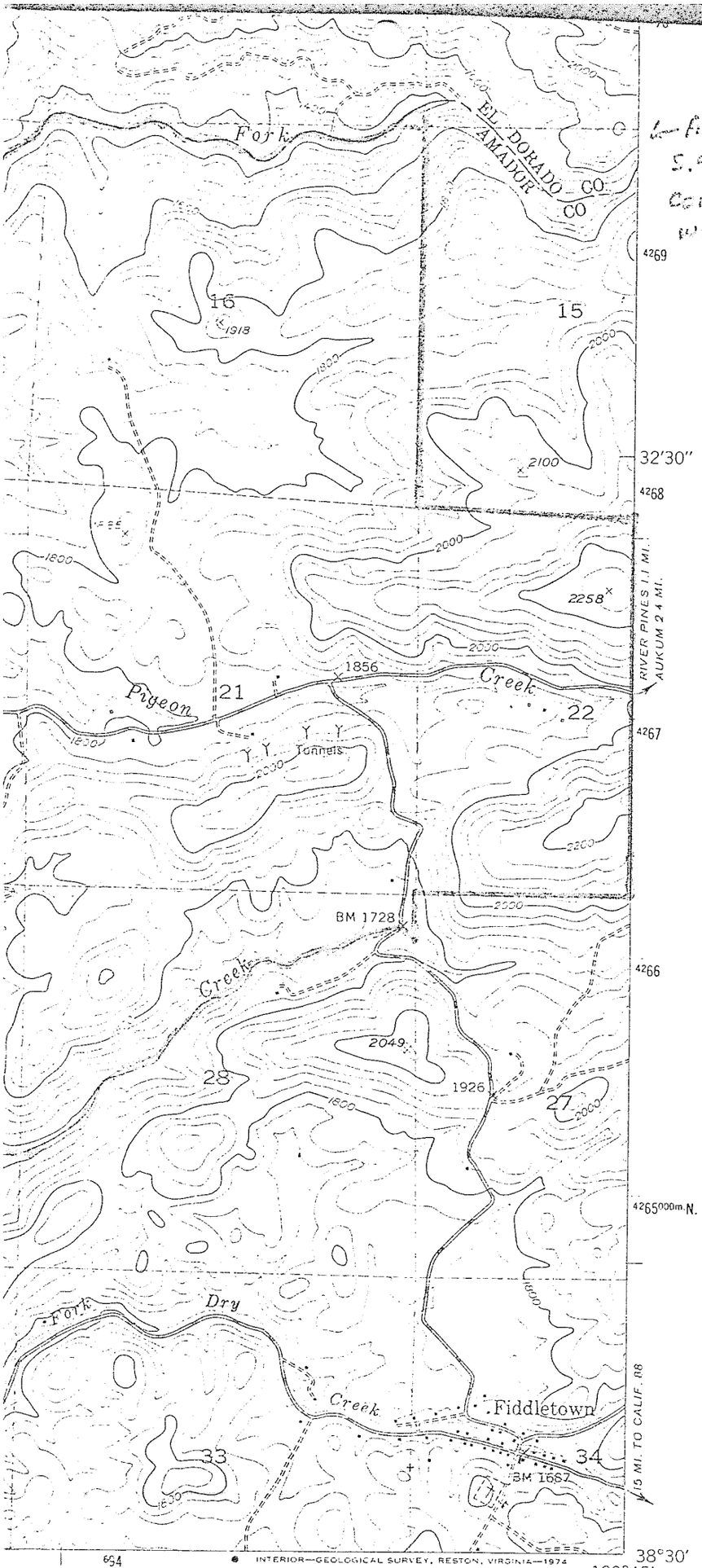
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Item G
Item J



INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1974

(PINE GROVE) 1860 I NW

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

HARD-SURFACE ALL WEATHER ROADS		DRY WEATHER ROADS	
Heavy-duty	4 LANE 2 LANE	Improved dirt	
Medium-duty	4 LANE 2 LANE	Unimproved dirt	
Loose-surface, graded, or narrow hard-surface			

U. S. Route State Route

FIDDLETOWN, CALIF.

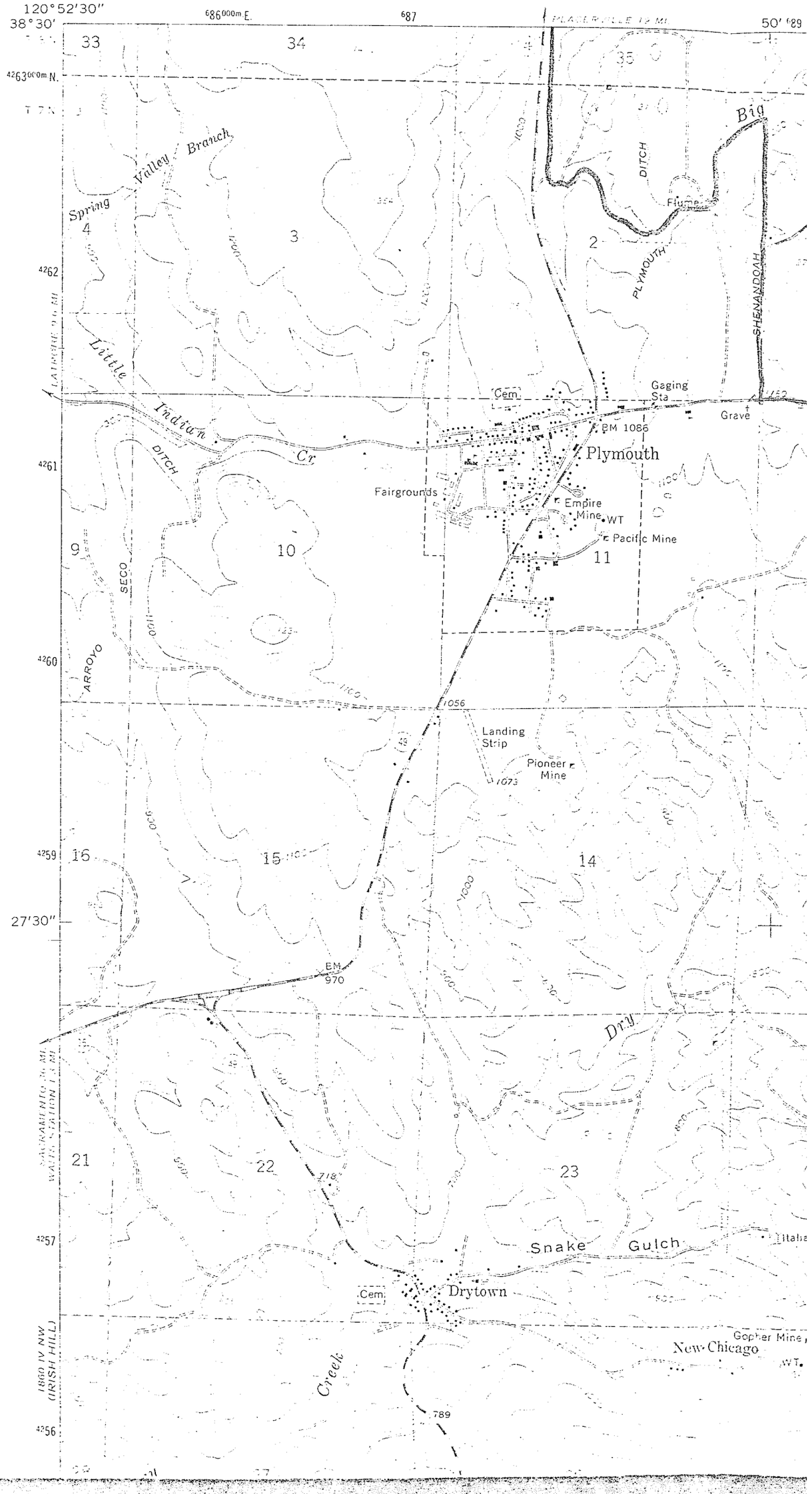
N3830—W12045/7.5

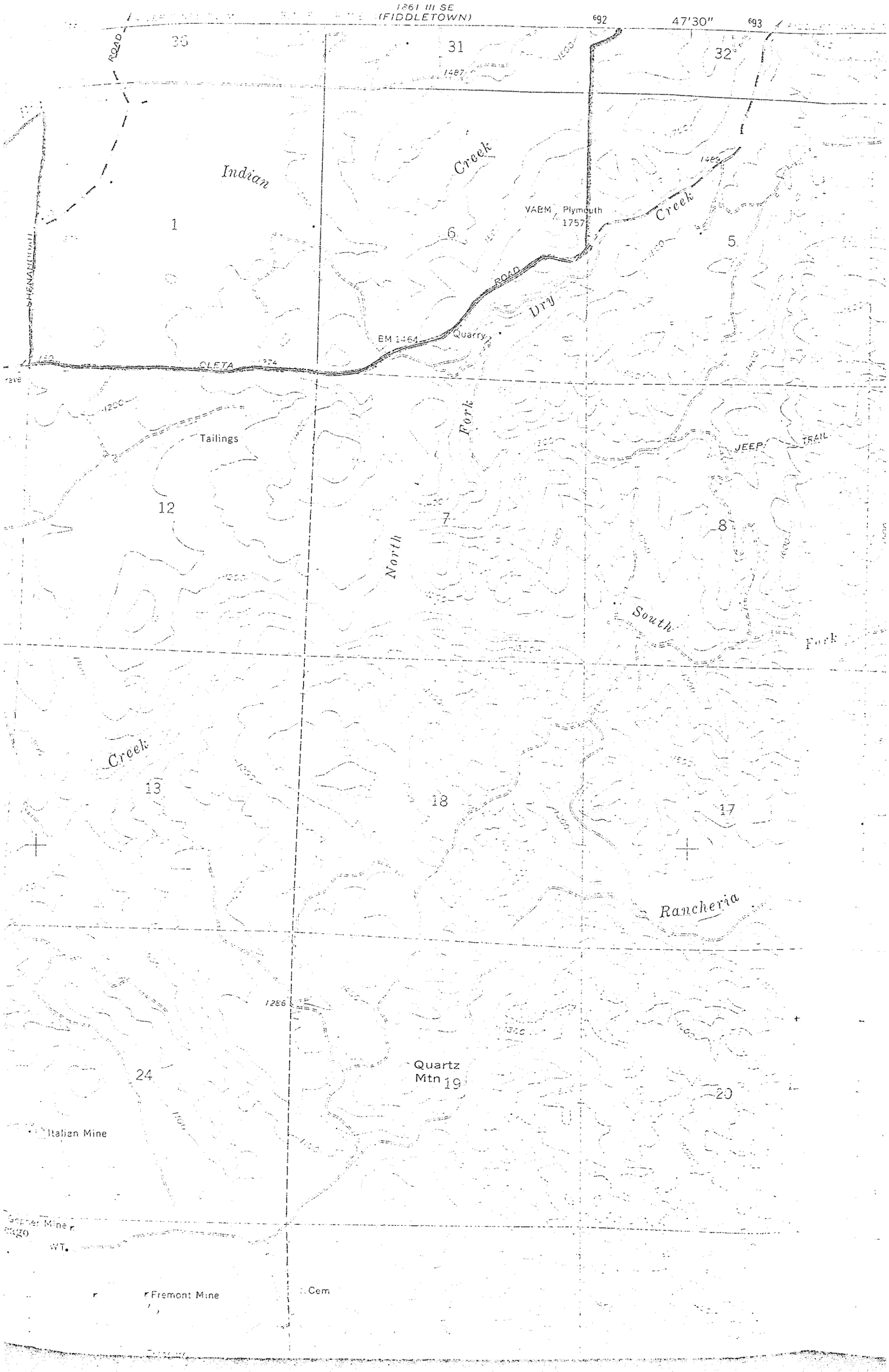
1949

AMS 1861 III SE—SERIES V895

1961 III SW
(LATROBE)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY




1261 III SE
(FIDDLETOWN)
692
47'30"
693
ROAD
36
31
32
1487
Indian
Creek
1
6
5
VABM
Plymouth
1757
Creek
SHENANDOAH
ROAD
Dry
EM 1464
Quarry
CLETA
1274
Tailings
JEEP
TRAIL
12
7
8
North
Fork
South
Fork
Creek
13
18
17
Rancheria
1266
24
Quartz
Mtn
19
20
Italian Mine
Fremont Mine
Cem

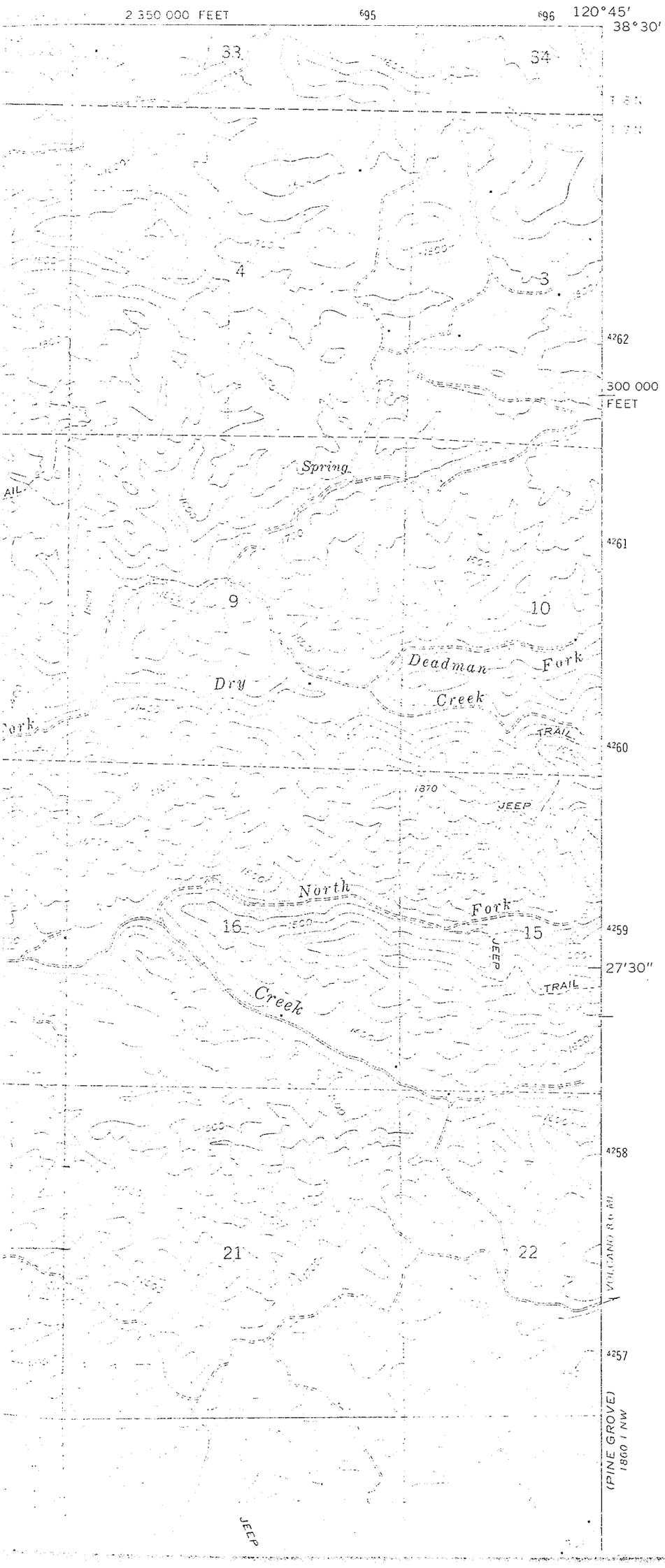
AMADOR CITY QUADRANGLE

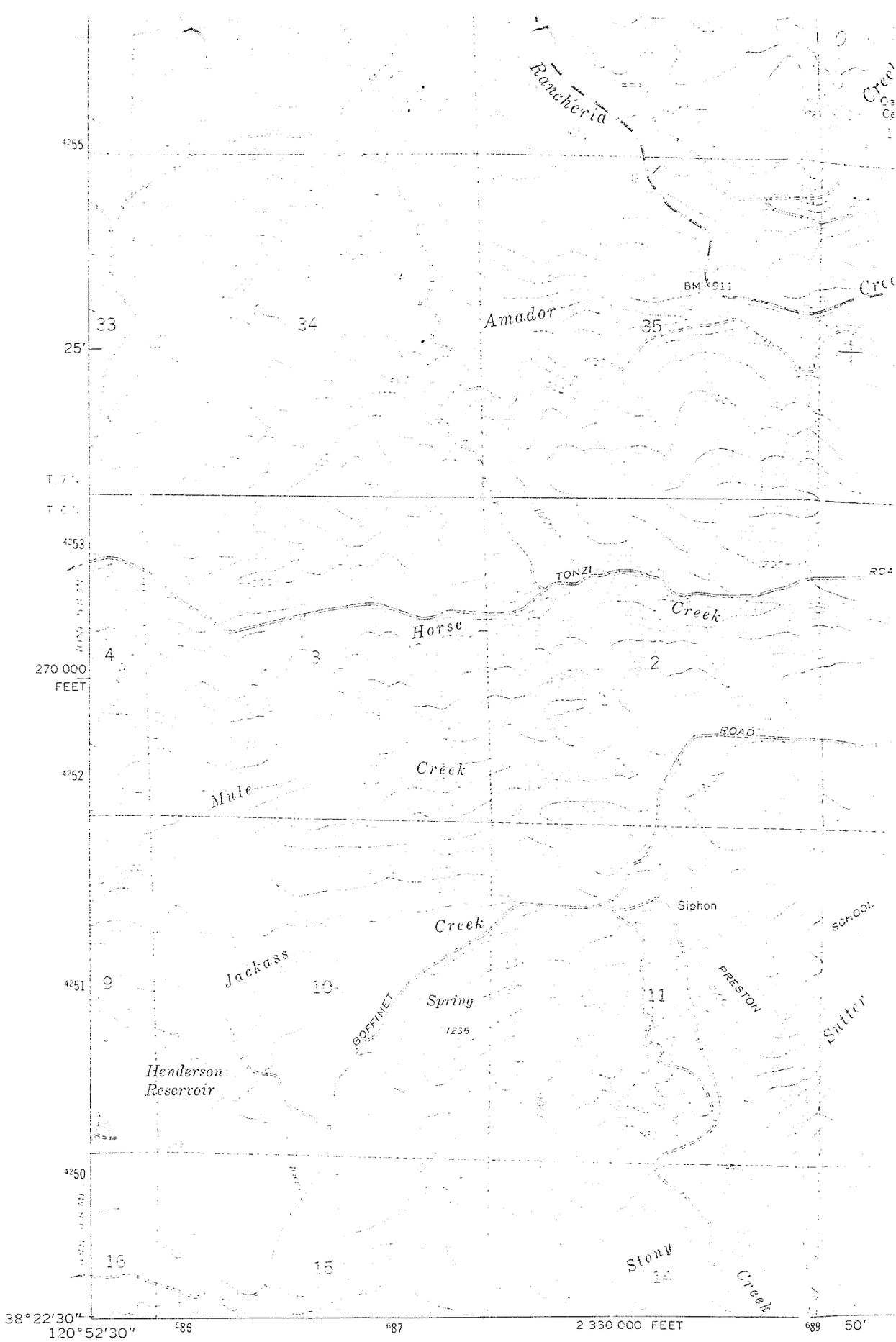
CALIFORNIA—AMADOR CO.

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

NE/4 SUTTER CREEK 15 QUADRANGLE

1861 II SW (AUKUM)





(IONE)
1560 IV SW

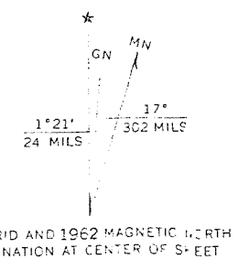
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
in cooperation with California Department of Water Resources

Control by USGS and USC&GS

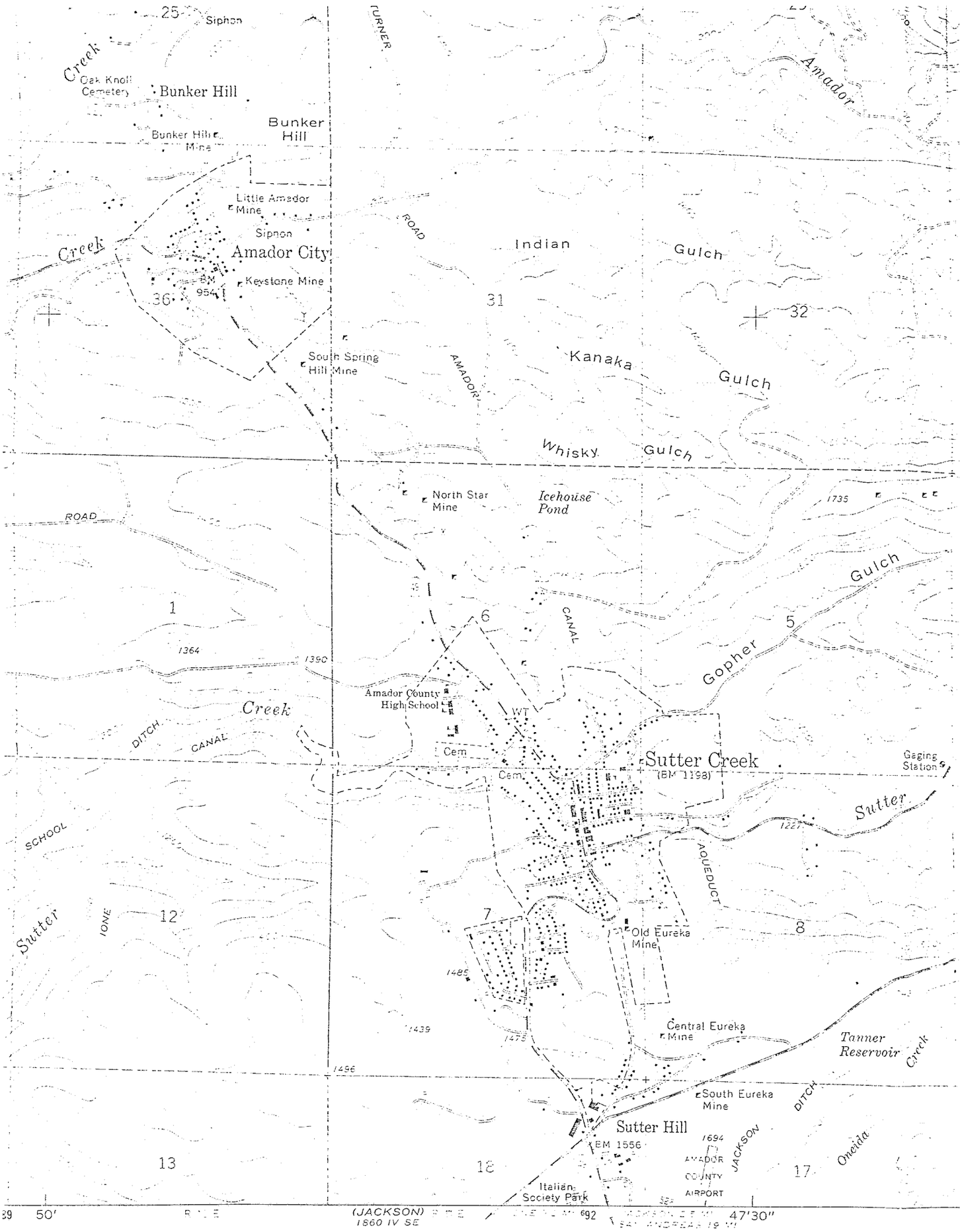
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1959. Field checked 1962

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on California coordinate system, zone 2
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 10, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines



UTM GRID AND 1962 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



SCALE 1:24 000

1 MILE

1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET

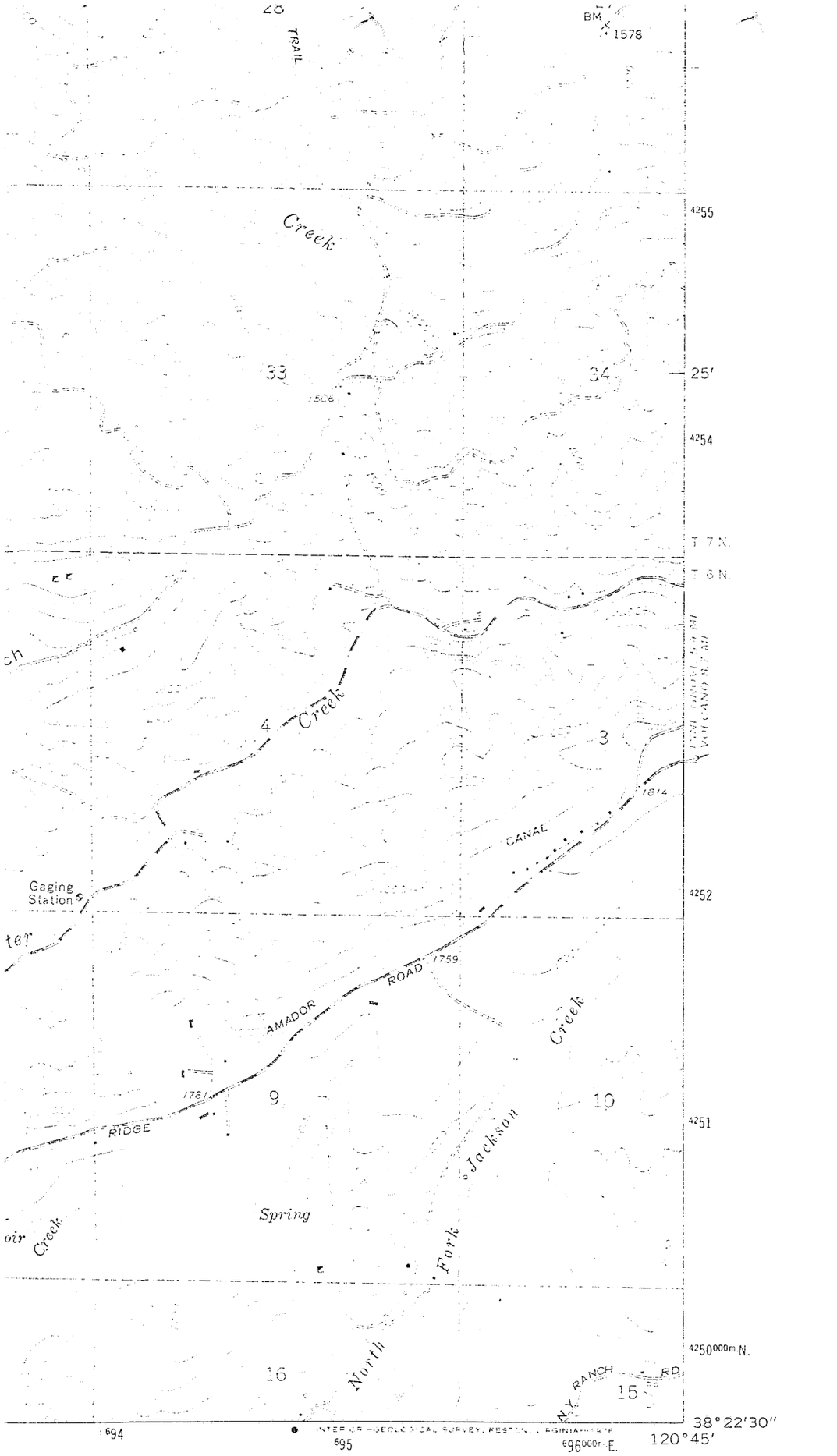
1 0 1 KILOMETRE

CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

QUADRANGLE LOCATIC

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Item K



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Medium-duty ..... Light-duty .....

Unimproved dirt .....

State Route

RANGLE LOCATION

AMADOR CITY, CALIF.

NE/4 SUTTER CREEK 15' QUADRANGLE

N3822.5—W12045/7.5

1962

AMS 1860 IV NE—SERIES V895

Rec 7-10-81

Ken Deaver, President
Amador County Wine Grape
Growers Association
Route 2 Box 27
Shenandoah School Road
Plymouth, CA 95669
July 8, 1981

Chief
Regulations and Procedures Division
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
P.O. Box 385
Washington, D. C. 20044

Dear Sir:

This letter and enclosures are supplementary to our petition to designate Amador County's Shenandoah Valley as an American Viticultural Area.

The articles (Exhibits 1-18) from a variety of newspapers, magazines and wine columns from the late 1960s to present are provided to substantiate the fact that this proposed viticultural area has been recognized as Shenandoah Valley for many years and the wines produced from this area are highly regarded by wine writers and consumers.

Since the early 1970s, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, through its offical label approval procedure, has approved the wording "Shenandoah Valley" on numerous wine labels from many California wineries. Exhibits 19-22 are selected examples of this type of labeling. Thus, the BATF has sanctioned the use of our local name, and now wine consumers throughout the United States associate Shenandoah Valley of Amador County with quality wines.

The BATF's concern about the likelihood of consumer confusion regarding grape origin if the name "Shenandoah Valley" is used to identify our viticultural area is unfounded. How could anyone be confused over the origin of the grapes on a label such as Montevina's (Exhibit 23)?

The wineries of our area are very concerned about the artistic and economic problems of label redesign should the BATF rule that the requested appellation be changed from "Shenandoah Valley" to "Shenandoah Valley of California". An appellation of that length would be hard to fit on many existing labels, given the proposed type size requirements. Most wineries in our area could ill-afford the expenses involved in label redesign and printing, or the prospect of loosing product recogition should extensive label redesign be required.

The enclosed fact sheet (Exhibit 24) relates a number of historic and economic items to support the fact that grape growing and wine production is the principal economic activity in our Shenandoah Valley. Since wineries throughout the State (Exhibit 25) use our grapes, the petition for the Shenandoah Valley appellation has state-wide economic implications. Continued use of the name "Shenandoah Valley" is essential to our economic well being.

Should the BATF feel that a hearing will be required to resolve issues regarding the use of the name "Shenandoah Valley", we respectfully insist that the hearing be held in Amador County, California. Since our members are family farmers or owners of family operated wineries, a trip to the Washington, D.C. area would be out of the question and a number of our members would be denied their due process.

Unfortunately, the press has dwelled on the Virginian's claim that we are trying to "swipe" their historical name. We have included in our petition and this letter considerable evidence supporting the fact that our area has been known for over 120 years as the Shenandoah Valley of Amador County. In addition, we have shown that our wine growing area had a national reputation before the BATF proposed American Viticultural Areas. The issue is not which area has the historical right to use the Shenandoah name, but rather, which area has established a superb, national viticultural reputation and has unique growing characteristics that distinguish it from other areas.

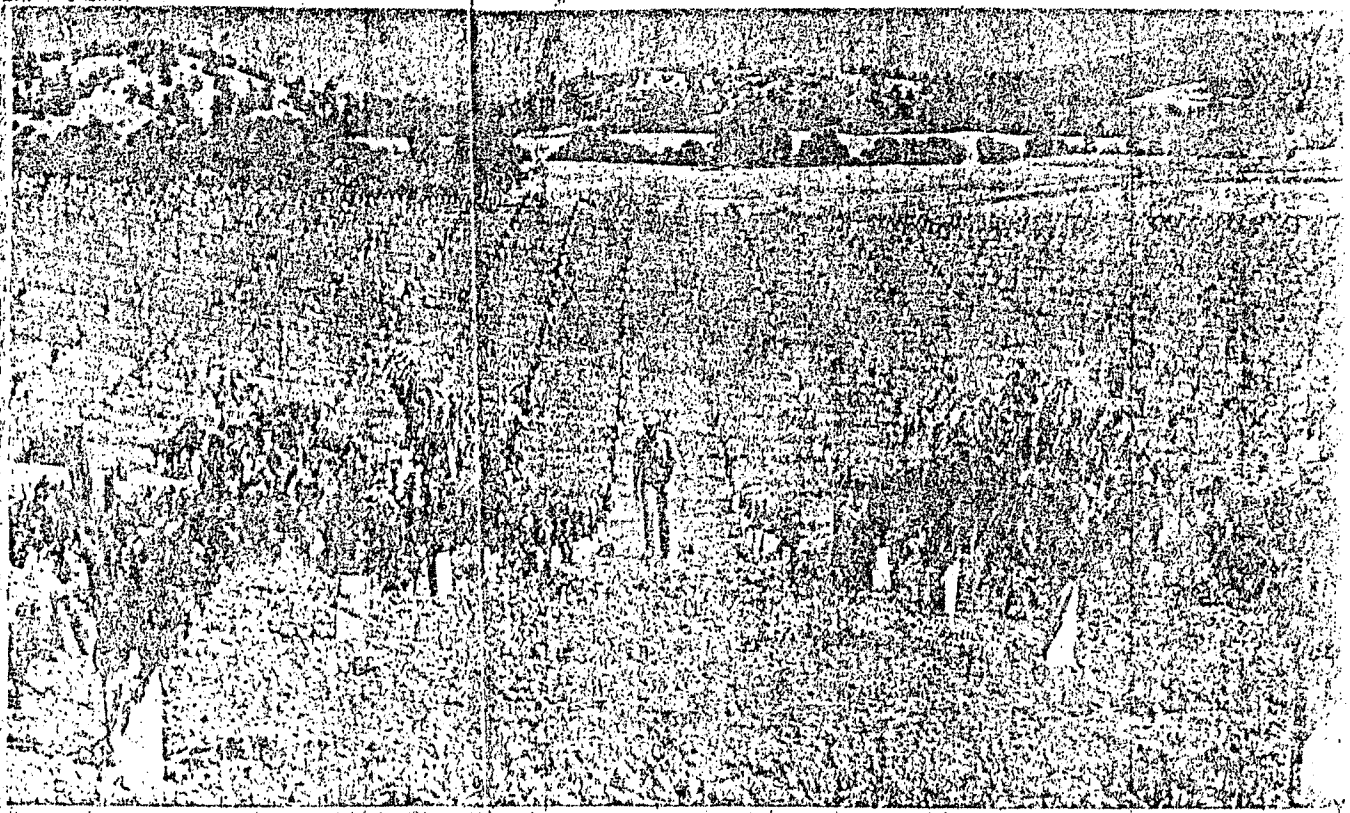
Sincerely yours,

Ken Deaver

Ken Deaver, President

Enclosure: 25 Exhibits

Amador County



A new breed of vineyardist is cropping up in Shenadoah Valley, but many are adopting the same goals and values which have proved beneficial for the valley's veteran vintners. At right, young Ken Deaver Jr. checks his newly planted Zinfandel vineyard overlooking the Shenandoah Valley.

Expanding Vineyards

Area Near Plymouth Goes After Growing Market

By Michael Dunne
Bee Correspondent

PLYMOUTH, Amador Co. — The Shenandoah Valley near here has joined other California grape growing regions in trying to keep pace with the skyrocketing popularity of wine.

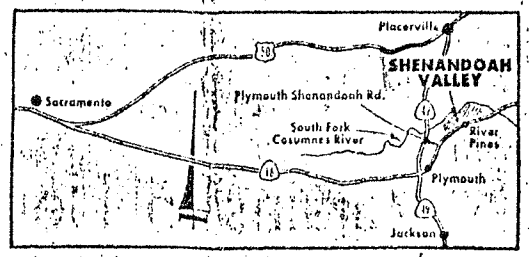
Since 1856, when Swiss immigrant Adam Uhlinger planted 20,000 of the area's earliest vines and established what has since become the D'Agostini Winery, the valley's gently rolling hillocks have constituted the county's principal wine grape region.

In recent years, however, increasing consumer desire for some wine and expanding awareness of the quality of the Shenandoah Valley's grapes have brought new praise, attention, around formulology and employ techniques unfamiliar to their older counterparts.

The new growers, however, seem to be adopting the same goals and values which have long characterized the valley's veteran vintners — small family-oriented operations which take pride in producing a quality product.

They include W. H. Field of Gilroy and his 26-year-old son-in-law, Cary Gott, who have established Montevina Vineyards, the valley's second winery, and Sacramento veterinarian Dr. Eugene C. Story, who is constructing the valley's third winery, tentatively named Cosumnes River Vineyards.

Other new growers, such as the Frank Alviso [illegible] John Dolan, ed

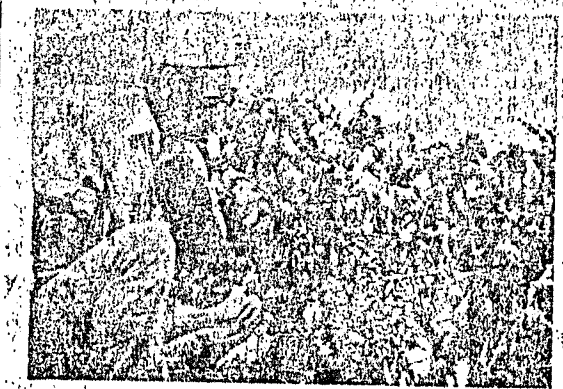


Bee Map

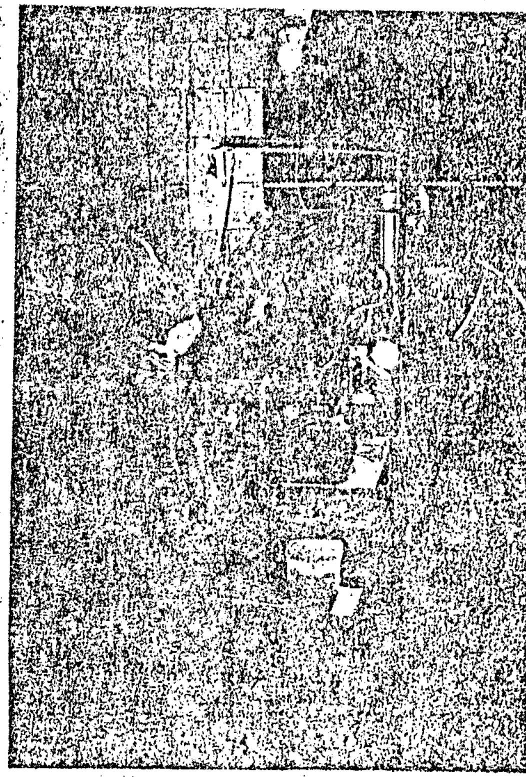
ducing an admirable grape, particularly Zinfandel, will carry their grapes through possible hard times facing the wine industry because of doah Valley primarily because land was less expensive than in the Napa Valley and because of the rising popularity of locally produced Zinfandel.

The valley's longtime grape growers — the four D'Agostini brothers, Ken Deaver, John Ferrero and others — are being joined by a new breed of young men and women who toss- yards during the past two years with hopes of selling their grapes to established wineries.

New and old growers alike are confident the valley's reputation for pro-



Ken Deaver Sr. checks his Zinfandels.



sumer tastes.

A year ago the Shenandoah Valley produced 2,200 tons of wine grapes, a 66 per cent increase over the previous year's total, said county agricultural commissioner Dave Thompson. Despite a May frost which damaged some vines and a cooler summer which slowed growth, this fall's total harvest is expected to be about as high as last year's because of an increase in bearing acres, he added.

Faced with an uncertain wine-grape market, growers are leveling off plantings of new vines in the valley after a spurt of expansion. Some 150 new acres were planted during the past year, compared with 125 acres in 1973, 117 in 1972 and 15 in 1971, said Thompson. A random survey of several growers found that few new plantings are expected this coming season.

Zinfandel is the principal grape grown on the valley's 500 acres of vineyards. The valley's warm days and cool nights and unirrigated granitic soils are credited with producing a Zinfandel with an exceptionally fine sugar/acid balance, which in turn produces a wine of unusual character and body, agreed county farm adviser Bob Plaister and several growers.

Plaister, noting that the scenic valley is easily accessible off the Mother Lode's main arterial, Highway 49, believes the area has the potential of a major tourist attraction.

In contrast to the D'Agostini Winery, with its walls of rock quarried from nearby hills and hand-hewn beams made from locally grown timber, the Montevina Winery on Shenandoah Schoolhouse Road three miles west occupies a brightly lit 7,500-square-foot steel structure.

More than three tons of Sauvignon Blanc are already fermenting in the winery's new tanks and the crushing of the Zinfandel has just gotten under way.

Last year, working in the basement and on the patio of his nearby home, Gott bottled his first 1,000 gallons of Zinfandel and White Zinfandel under the Montevina Vineyards label. The unusual White Zinfandel, which he is producing again this year, proved highly popular and reportedly has been sold out for some time.

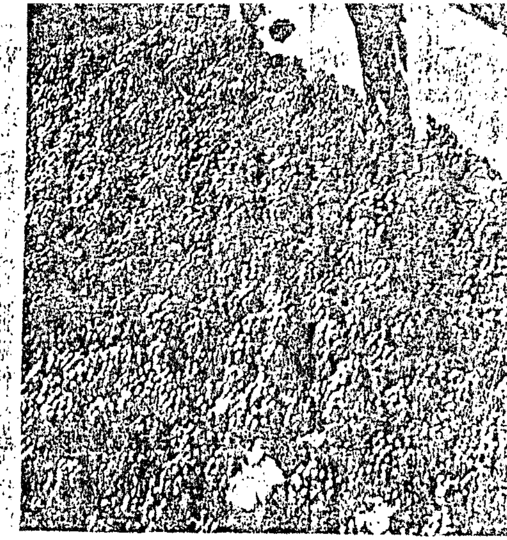
Most of Gott's Zinfandel will be exported to Geyser Peak Winery in Sonoma County. Of the 400 to 450 tons of grapes he expects to harvest, he will be crushing some 60 tons himself.

Gott said he settled in the Shenan-

Three of the D'Agostini brothers work in the cool, dark confines of their family-owned winery to bottle wine from vineyards first established in the area in 1856.

area were expressed by Dr. Story and Alviso, a former alfalfa farmer from Turlock, Stanislaus County, and Hahn, Amador County's new county counsel and former faculty member of the University of Southern California Law School.

For his operation, Dr. Story purchased a 70-year-old, 27-acre vineyard, consisting primarily of Zinfandel, to more seriously pursue his 10-year interest in wine making. He does not expect to begin marketing his own label for another year. Most of this year's crop is being sold to Ridge Winery in Cupertino, Santa Clara County.



The fall harvest of wine grapes in Shenandoah Valley finds workers toiling throughout the day stripping the vines and loading waiting gondolas. Workers at right harvest the bountiful crop of Zinfandels owned by Dr. Eugene Story.

EXHIBIT 2

New Vines Again In Amador County

Almost as soon as the miners came to the Sierra Nevada foothills in Amador County, grape growing became a way of life. But in recent years the vineyards decreased from at least 6,000 acres to about 600 acres.

Today Amador County is believed to be on the threshold of a major upswing in its acreage.

Farm Advisor Robert Plaister of Jackson, is the focal point of the advancing interest in growing of wine grapes in Amador County.

"There are three primary areas in the county where good wine grapes are grown," he explains. "There is the Ridge Road area between Sutter Creek and Pine Grove, and the Shenandoah Valley out of Plymouth and Fiddletown. These areas are in region III and thus produce the better quality wines. The third area is Jackson Valley out of Ione, which is in region IV and is thus considered to not produce as good a quality wine.

"Nearly all growers in Amador County are doing some planting the last three or four years, increasing their acreage, or making plantings to replace acreage pulled out because of age. Some vineyards in this area are 100 years old and some have begun to drop in production.

"There is considerable interest from people in other areas of California. Some acreages belonging to older families, where perhaps only an elderly couple or a widow has been running the vineyard, have been sold to outside interests.

"Walter Field of Atherton has bought 450 acres and has a nursery full of young vines in the Shenandoah Valley area. This acreage will be planted this fall. We have had numerous other calls from persons interested in acreage in Amador County. Some persons have been inquiring about as much as 1,000 acres at one time. We think there are some negotiations going on."

Field also will erect a winery.

There are three bonded wir eries in the county now. One the very historical D'Agosti Winery, operated by fou brothers, a one man winery a Amador City, and a nor operating winery at Jackso Gate.

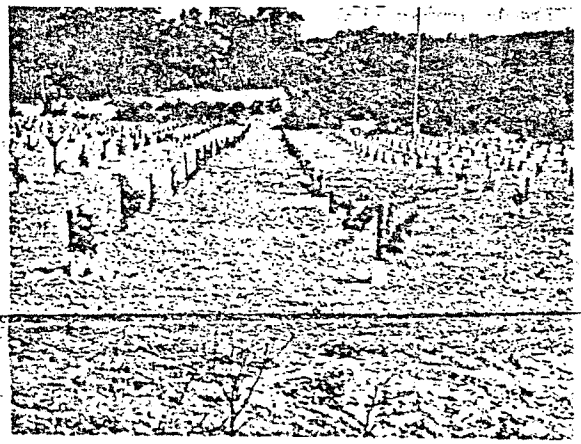
The primary reason, accord ing to Plaister, for the great los in grape acreage in the count was wine depressions and scourage of disease that no on seemed able to control.

Most of the acreage is nor irrigated and under that syster produces about three tons to th acre. Irrigation is quite spotty but seems to increase tonnage t about five tons per acre.

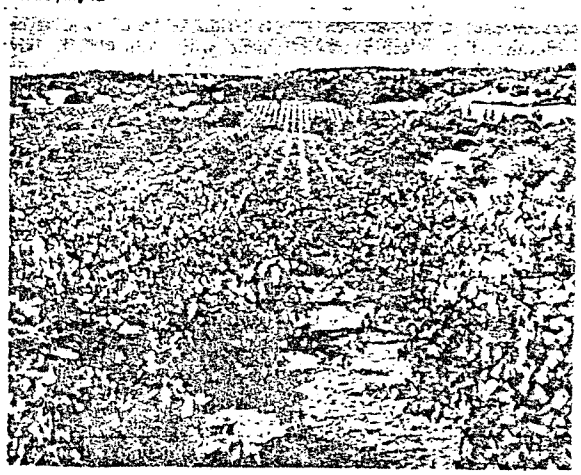
In 1955 the University c California Agricultural Exten sion Service's office was opene in Jackson. Since that time continuing program of researc and investigation has continue in the vineyard areas. Systen atic studies and the close coop eration of the growers has re sulted in the determination c proper nitrogen levels, fertili tion, the discovery of boron de ficiency, the identification an control of the spider mite, an the establishment of a variet test plot.

A.N. Kaismatis, UC's state wide extension viticulturist, ol

(Continued Next Page



Many grape growers in Amador County have been planting small acreage the last three or four years. This is a view of a vineyard, or portion of new vineyard, planted this year by Ken Deaver on School Valley Road in Shenandoah Valley. Some of the older vineyard is seen in the background. Each of the new vines has a milk carton around the trunk to keep the mice from nibbling on the trunk and destroying it.



This view on Ridge Road out of Sutter Creek, a prominent grape growing area in Amador County gives an idea of the type of hilly country in which grapes are grown. This vineyard was recently sold to outside interests.

Robert Plaister, Amador County farm advisor uses magnifying glass to check th back of grape vine leaf to determine the trouble in a vineyard which was sol rocently, by Gladys Esola, to interests outside Amador County. The reaso leaves were turning yellow was because of an attack by Willamette Mite.

(From Preceding Page)

tained cuttings of Semillon, Barbera, French Colombard, Sauvignon Blanc, Gamay, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Ruby Cabernet. These were planted in a nursery in the John Ferrero vineyard in 1966. The following year they were transplanted into the vineyard. These varieties and what they will do in Amador County are being looked at and they are being made into wine and then aged, scored and evaluated by the enology staff. These will be compared with Zinfandel, the most plentiful grape in the county.

After running hundreds of individual petiole and soil tests, Plaister has come to the conclusion that in most instances forty pounds of nitrogen per acre is adequate fertilizer under the dry-land vineyard operations that prevail.

Recent investigations indicate that the soils in the Shenandoah Valley are causing plant growth which is borderline for zinc deficiency.

The most prevalent trouble in the county as far as insects go is with the Willamette Mite. "There is something about the climate in this area," says Plaister, "that seems to be ideal for this mite, especially on Zinfandels."

Dr. Clarence Davis, extension entomologist, has spent time in the county evaluating the control methods. His recommendation is that every row rather than every other row be treated. He feels the lack of control is due to the lack of proper control methods or application.

"If the mites continue to build up resistance to miticides and we must go to other miticides and to spray rather than dust," says Plaister, "then it will be necessary to change some of the basic cultural practices. This would mean pulling out certain vines in order to increase the spacing in order to allow spray equipment into the vineyard."

Grape leafhoppers, a small insect about one-eighth of an inch in length, often give trouble, but are easily controlled. Phylloxera, an extremely destructive root aphid, has occured in several locations in the county. A number of years ago several growers were wiped out by this very difficult pest. But it seems to be well under control at present.

Cost analysis in the county show that the average total cultural costs is $66.69 per acre, total harvest costs $102.65, and total cash overhead $17.04. Thus total cash costs are at $186.38 per acre. Total investment is $92.44 per acre, setting total cost per acre at $278.82. The cost per ton for three ton of production per acre is $92.94.

The fact that it seemed apparent a number of years ago that grape growing could boom again in Amador County caused a major interest in the area by extension. As can be seen from the former paragraphs, they have been at work on problems of the area and have come up with the kind of good answers that new comers into the county will be interested in.

Farm Advisor Robert Plaister of Jackson checks over the vines in a nursery planted by Walter Field of Atherton, who has purchased 450 acres which he will plant to grapes in Shenandoah Valley.

Modesto, [illegible]
Bee
(Cir. D. 40,801 - S. 41,801)
JUN 19 1966
Allen's P.C.B. Est. 1888

Shenandoah Valley Vineyardists Produce Amador's Special Wines

By Larry Cenotto
Bee Staff Writer

442

SHENANDOAH — On the rolling hillsides of this Shenandoah Valley can be found the best of Amador County's vineyards.

In the winter, its slopes and flats soak up the average 30-inch rainfall. Its moderately deep sandy loam soils rise from 1,200 to 2,000 feet.

In the grape industry terms, it is a zone three area. It is warmer than the North Coast; it is cooler than the valley. In its more temperate climate, grow varietal premium grapes for wine alone.

In 1965, its 576 producing acres included 399.1 acres of Zinfandel; 90.7 of Mission; 39.2 of Carignan; 28.7 Muscat; 8.8 Golden Chasselas; one of Alicante Bouschet, and one-tenth of an acre of Tokay.

Two Ton Average

The country's 30 growers average 19 acres. During a 10-year period (1955-1964) on an average of 617.4 acres, they produced an average 1,213.7 tons, or about two tons per acre.

In high rainfall years, the non-irrigated vineyards have produced over three tons per acre; in drouth years, the tonnage has dipped as low as one.

Wet years or dry years, bumper harvests or not, there has always been a demand for the Shenandoah's dryland varietal grapes. There have been no surplus problems here.

The valley's largest producer is the D'Agostini Brothers. The four vintners — Armenio, Henry, Michele and Tulio — own [illegible] family enterprise of ungrafted vines, and the county's only winery.

Its average annual crush is about 500 tons. About 90 per cent comes from D'Agostini's own vineyards. They buy from neighbors if they need more tonnage.

Since they cannot supply the winery, other growers look to where the tradition of home winemaking is still strong, they usually don't have to look too far.

Over half the produce from the 470 acres not owned by D'Agostini goes in home winemaking. Buyers, their palates honed to the valley's premium grapes, come from as far away as Montana.

Production Costs

In 1962, a study under the direction of Farm Adviser Robert Plaister showed it cost the grape grower here $64.49 to produce a ton of grapes. The average yield per acre was two and one half tons.

But the high cost of production was offset by the price the premium grapes could bring. In the 1961-64 period, a ton brought $105. Last year it dropped to to about $95.

The cost of the land still is relatively inexpenisve. The 1962 study used a figure of $300 per acre. But land prices could go up as pressures from land speculators and subdividers mount.

Despite having strong county zoning laws, the two key agriculture ares in the county, the Shnandoah and Jackson Valley, are not zoned at all.

Though the Zinfandel Variety best, growers with Plaister's help constantly seek an even better premium grape for even finer premium wine.

Rooting now in John Ferrero's Ranch are seven varieties alien to Shenandoah's soils and climate. In five years time, enologists will know if any can equal or surpass the present premium wine varieties.

Plaister says the valley's growers have no special problems, except perhaps deer. The animals love the succulent green leaves and shoots, he says.

The D'Agostini Brothers, alone, have installed about four miles of eight foot high wire fencing to keep out the deer.

With deer restricted, the growers still must contend with the Willamette mite, mildew, grass and leafhoppers, frost, capricious hail or rain at bloom time and that baisc worry, rainfall.

Oldest In Area

In the D'Agostini Winery, the county boasts one of the oldest in the state. In 1961 it was designated an historical landmark by the State Park Commission.

Swiss immigrant Adam Ullinger started the winery in 1856. Rock quarried from the nearby hillsides composed its walls; beams hand hewn from local timber made its roof. This original wine cellar still stands and is used today.

Many of the original oak casks are still in use, too. They were fashioned by a Shenandoah Valley cooper.

Early Beginning

Because the valley reminded Italian immigrant Enrico D'Agostini so much of his beloved vineyards about Rome, he bought the winery in 1911. When he died in 1956, his four sons had charge of the growing operation.

In the late 40s, the family winery could store about 45,000 gallons. Now it can store 200,000. Then it had about 48 acres of grapes; today it has 100 acres.

Each year the winery produces between 70,000 and 90,000 gallons of wine. Without direct paid advertising in any communication media, its business increases substantially.

Premium Wines

Its premium varietal table wines, Burgundy Reserve, Burgundy, Claret, Vin Rose, Dry Muscat, and Sauterne go out to customers throughout California after aging in wooden casks.

After 110 years, the Amador County grape industry is still small enough where most growers can harvest their crops with local help. And it is successful enough to sell just about everything it grows.

Despite potential problems of land, labor and lost markets, the Shenandoah Valley grape industry will continue to prosper.

EXHIBIT 4

Amador's Shenandoah Valley

Where The Grapes Grow Sll, But The Wines Are Powerful

By Mike Dunne
Of The Dispatch

PLYMOUTH -- The big find in wine circles these days is the nearby Shenandoah Valley.

Wine critics for national and regional publications are boundless in their praise of the wines that are being produced from grapes grown in the valley.

The area, however, is not a newcomer among the state's esteemed wine grape districts.

As far as several of the valley's veteran growers are concerned, the region's granitic soil, normal rainfall and breezy climate have combined to long produce a grape and wine lovingly respected locally and enthusiastically appreciated elsewhere.

They note, for example, that Gold Rush argonauts who either exhausted the area's placers or tired themselves of the search started settling into the valley and planting vineyards in the 1850s. One of them, a Swiss immigrant named Adam Uhlinger, planted 20,000 vines and established a winery in 1856, coopering casks of white oak felled on nearby hills. The casks still are being used at what is now the D'Agostini Winery at the east end of the valley. A registered state historic landmark, it may be the oldest winery in the state.

The others who arrived included John J. Davis, who in 1859 planted a Mission vineyard which his step-grandson, Ken Deaver, still is harvesting. Today other valley growers also can point to vineyard parcels which are 60, 80 or 100 years old and still productive.

During the past 120 years the size and productivity of the valley's vineyards has been subject to economic depression in the wine industry, insect infestation, Prohibition, disease, drought, fickle tastes and decay. Through it all, however, the region's grapes remained high in demand among local and distant home wine makers who constituted the primary outlet for the valley's vineyard bounty.

The market situation and the character of the valley's wine grape industry started to shift quietly but dramatically in 1963, however. At that time only the home wine makers and one winery in D'Agostini were relying primarily on the valley's grapes.

But then Charles Myers, an English instructor at Sacramento City College, started looking around for a few Muscat grapes to use in his home wine making avocation. An acquaintance of his, Sacramento veterinarian Dr. Eugene Story, also a home wine maker, had an assistant, Loree Cuneo, an Amador County native who was aware of Ken Deaver's Shenandoah Valley vineyard. She referred Myers to Deaver. While acquiring the Muscat from Deaver, Myers also found that Deaver had available a vineyard of Zinfandel, the fruit that is to the valley what pineapple is to Hawaii.

Myers started making Zinfandel wine with Deaver grapes in 1964. Four years later, when a wine boom was dramatically escalating the price of Napa Valley grapes, commercial wine makers started looking beyond Napa and other traditional wine grape regions for new territory that might be producing equally respectable grapes at less expensive prices. One of the hunters was Bob Trinchero of Sutter Home Winery in the Napa Valley, where his family had been purchasing all their Zinfandel grapes since 1946.

That changed in 1968, however, when Sacramento wine merchant Darrell Corti introduced Trinchero to a bottle of Myers's 1965 Zinfandel made from Deaver grapes. Trinchero was so impressed with the wine that he began buying Deaver grapes that fall. The Zinfandel wine which Sutter Home produced from the grapes, in turn, proved so popular on the market that by 1971 Trinchero was buying nearly all the grapes Deaver could produce.

Since then, the number of commercial wineries producing wines from Shenandoah Valley grapes has skyrocketed. Myers started his own winery in 1972 -- Harbor Winery of West Sacramento -- to produce Zinfandel, Cabernet and a white dessert wine with Shenandoah Valley grapes. Dr. Story bought 27 acres of Shenandoah Valley wines and built his winery Consumnes River Vineyards -- on one edge of the vineyard in 1973.

After dumping a bucket of grapes into a box at the end of a row, Lynn Payne of Argonaut Winery starts the long walk back up the vineyard slope to cut another bucket load.

most often credited by growers, [illegible] of the valley's wine grape industry, officials with guiding the revitalization of the valley's wine grape industry, wineries "are paying premium prices for our grapes!"

What's more, they are encountering growing competition for the valley's grapes from the county's own booming winery industry. A decade ago, the county had just one winery, D'Agostini. Today it has seven, four in the valley and three elsewhere in the county. Two of the three wineries outside the valley rely in part on its grapes to produce their wines.

The current spurt in new local wineries started with Cary Gott, his wife Vickie and her father, Gilroy banker W. H. Field, who in 1971 bought an 80-acre vineyard of 80-year-old Zinfandel vines and built Montevina Winery.

Gott crushed 39 tons of grapes in 1973, the first year Montevina started to commercially produce wine. He crushed some 200 tons this season, double the past year's total. He now has 160 acres of vineyards.

Dr. Story followed Gott and then last month Lee and Shirley Sobon and their six children pulled up roots in Los Altos, where Sobon was a materials research scientist for Lockheed, and started crushing grapes at the valley's newest winery, Shenandoah Vineyards, situated in a converted storage garage behind the family's hilltop residence.

Sobon hopes to produce 3,000 gallons of Zinfandel, White Zinfandel, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet and Chenin Blanc this first year and 6,000 gallons next season. Up to now, as a fulltime space scientist and part-time but serious home wine maker, Sobon had been producing just 100 to 150 gallons of wine per season for the past four years. He is undaunted, however, by the challenge of being a fulltime wine maker. "Everything we have is in it, but hopefully when the money runs out the wine will start selling," he remarked. "I'm confident it will be a success."

The county's other wineries are Argonaut Winery in the Willow Creek area southwest of the Shenandoah Valley, Stoneridge Winery east of Sutter Creek and Amador Winery in Amador City.

In addition to the new wineries, old vineyards have been expanded and new vineyards have been introduced to the valley by new growers. The valley now has approximately 850 acres of vines, of which some 350 acres were planted during the past five years, said Amador County Agricultural Commissioner Dave Thompson. Because of the drought, new plantings dropped sharply the past two springs. "If the weather conditions we can expect now plantings to go back up to 60 acres per year," said Thompson.

The drought also has trimmed the county's grape production, which includes total from smaller vineyards in the Jackson Valley south of Ione and the Ridge Road area east of Sutter Creek. In 1973, the best year the county's wine grape growers have had, production total 2,570 tons and wine grape income topped $1 million for the first time. Grape production has been uneven since then, down to 1,343 tons in 1974 because of a damaging spring frost and an unusually cool summer. Because of the drought, last year's tonnage totaled just 1,844 tons. The grapes, however, are attracting higher and higher prices. In 1967, the average price was $104 per ton. This year it is expected to average around $400, with some growers receiving up to about $500 per ton, said Thompson.

Unlike the valley's longtime growers and the four D'Agostini brothers, who conservatively stick largely with Zinfandel grapes and who do not veer from their traditional methods of making wine, the area's new growers and wine makers are now shy about experimenting with the grapes and techniques. Although most of their efforts remain focused on the valley's premier wine, Zinfandel, they also have been introducing new varieties -- Cabernet, Merlot, Barbera, Ruby Cabernet, Sauvignon Blanc and Nebbiolo -- and tinkering with methods also unfamiliar to the valley, such as carbonic maceration.

Although some of the wine makers have been able to afford sophisticated and expensive equipment, others have pieced their wineries together with old dairy equipment, a converted grain conveyor, former aerospace tubing and the like.

Perhaps their tendency to the unorthodox has something to do with their professional backgrounds, which with the exception of Gott has not involved the extensive study of enology and viticulture. Dr. Story is a veterinarian, Sobon a scientists, Gary Porteous of Stoneridge Winery a Pacific Gas & Electric Co. employe and Jim Payne, Harley Harty, Paul Lloyd, Bill Bilbo and Neal Overboe of Argonaut Winery, all Aerojet engineers.

Just as the valley's veteran growers and wine makers, however, the newcomers differ over the foremost factor which accounts for the quality of the district's grapes. Some believe it's the soil, a weathered granite which is well-drained, moderate to low in natural fertility and moderately to severely susceptible to erosion because of the area's sloping hills, said Plaister.

Aluminum tubes formerly used in the aerospace industry are assembled by Dr. Eugene Story of Sacramento, owner of Cosumnes River Vineyard in the Shenandoah Valley, for conveying crushed grapes from crusher to fermenting tank.

While her husband oversees wine making at Montevina Winery, Vickie Gott supervises and assists field crews during the fall grape harvest.

"One of the odd things about vineyard soils throughout the world is that practically no quality wines are produced on highly productive soils," he added. "On a scale of one to a hundred, Shenandoah soils rate from 35 to 55. Thus the soil itself limits the tonnage per acre and improves the quality of the wine."

Others credit the climate. In California, wine grape areas are classified according to a climate scale ranging from one to five, with one being the coolest and five the hottest. The Shenandoah Valley falls right in the middle, zone three. Its climate is characterized primarily by hot breezes blowing up from the Sacramento Valley during the day and cool breezes blowing down off the Sierra at night. The combination provides a lengthy maturation, which some growers believe gives the vines ample opportunity to heighten the intensity of flavor in their berries.

The blend of hot days and cool nights, said Charles Myers, means the grapes "are not being forced as if they were in a hot house." In addition, noted Cary Gott, the combination, along with the lack of irrigation in normal weather years, produces bunches and berries that are smaller but more intensely flavored than grapes from other districts. Shenandoah Valley vineyards, he remarked, produce just one-third to one-half the tonnage produced in other regions. "The vine has only so much flavor to put into the grapes. As the tonnage goes down per acre, the flavor is more concentrated," he remarked.

The cool nights following hot days, said Bob Trinchero, "seem to give a rest period to the growing, and the plants seem to do better because of it."

"You get the quality, but not the quantity," said Armenio D'Agostini, general manager of the D'Agostini Winery.

Darrell Corti credits the valley's soil, temperatures and winds, the older age of most of the vines, the lack of irrigation, the maturing on the vine and the sloping hillsides which Zinfandel seems to prefer for the soundness and distinctive character of the region's Zinfandel grapes.

The consensus seems to be that the valley's Zinfandel does not have an easy time of it, but that its stress and agony results in a wine that drives wine connoisseurs ecstatic. "The berries do not fill out as much, so concurrently you have a more intensely flavored wine," remarked Corti.

"If you take grapes from a valley area where the soils are richer and where you have a good source of water it means the vineyard is getting more production per acre or that it could," commented Paul Draper, winemaker for Ridge Vineyards of Cupertino, which produces six Zinfandels each year, includig one from the Shenandoah Valley and one from Fiddletown. "Low production per acre, however, increases the intensity and flavor of the red wines."

Whatever the cause, growers, wine makers and vintners agree that the Shenandoah Valley Zinfandel vines consistently produce a grape with an exceptional sugar/acid balance. "You can always count on the sugar. They will always sugar up for you," remarked Francis Mahoney, winemaker for Carneros Creek Winery of Napa.

"We have always had high acid and high sugar both, which is something you don't get everywhere," said Ken Deaver.

The ultimate result is a Zinfandel wine variously described as intensely flavored, gutsy, earthy, extremely fruity, rich, full-bodied, spicy, grapey, huge, dark, robust, zesty and powerful, depending on such factors as vintage and the bias of the critic.

"It's usually a very big wine, a masculine wine. Napa Valley Zinfandel is kind of feminine by comparison," commented Mahoney. "It's a very stright forward wine."

"In a normal year," aid Charles Myers, "the Zinfandel from Amador County develops the very finest characteristics that Zinfandel is capable of."

"What they lack in finesse they more than make up in sheer power," added Bob Trinchero of the Shenandoah Valley's Zinfandel wines.

The valley's long-range future appears as bright as its recent past. Although no up-and-coming heir apparent is threatening to knock king Zinfandel off its throne, several other grape varieties are appearing in the valley and showing promising results in the bottle, particularly Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc, Barbera and Ruby Cabernet.

"The outlook for Amador County wine is excellent," said Bob Plaister. "Quality alway sells and we now know we have the quality."

If there are two traits which old and new grower and wine maker in the valley share they are a desire to have their operations family-oriented and a goal centered on quality rather than quantity. Consequently, they view the widespread introduction of irrigation systems in the valley during the past year as a necessary and positive step to save their vineyards and maintain the customary quality of their grapes. They see little danger that the valley's growers will start relying on the irrigation networks to swell production, increasing tonnage but diluting the quality of the grapes.

More tonnage, said Cary Gott, would result in a lighter and less interesting grape. "When normal rains return we will go back to normal practices," he added, noting that Montevina had invested some $25,000 in a drip irrigation system this year.

If used correctly, said Howard R. Haggs, friend and associate of Dr. Eugene Story at Cosumnes River Vineyards, where a drip irrigation system will be installed next year, irrigating can be paced to assure optimum production and quality. "You can cut your cloth to fit your pattern," he remarked.

"The test," said Paul Draper, "will be the tonnage and the quality of the grapes produced in the future."

Amador County's Shenandoah Valley

Some aficionados will tell you that the finest Zinfandel doesn't grow in Napa but in Amador County's Shenandoah Valley. Much of this interest has been cultivated with especial bottlings by Sutter Home, Corti Brothers (1972) and Harbor Winery (1973), respectively, of grapes grown on the Deaver ranch in the heart of the Mother Lode.

The Montevina Winery crushed its first Shenandoah Valley grapes in 1972. The vineyard contains 165 acres, of which over half are 80 years old. Yields have ranged from 220 tons in 1972 to an extremely large crop of 440 tons in 1973. Approximately 15 percent of the yield is selected for crushing by Montevina's young winemaker Cary Cott. The balance finds its way to the blending vats of a North Coast winery.

Montevina produces several distinct styles of wines from the Zinfandel grape. Just released is the second lot of the 1973 Shenandoah Valley Zinfandel. It has good varietal character and offers exceptional value at $2.75 per fifth. It is superior to the first lot and was withheld for further anging.

Most of the first lot was bottled in half gallons. At $3.50 per jug, supplies were exhausted within weeks. It was the best wine buy in America!

With some *blanc de noirs* priced as high as $6.00 per bottle, it is not remarkable that Montevina's 1975 Shenandoah Valley White Zinfandel sells out quickly at $2.75. To make a white wine from Zinfandel, the red skins must be removed at the time of crushing and prior to fermentation. At its best the wine retains a copper tinge sometimes referred to as *l'oeil de perdrix* (the partridge's eye). To attempt to filter all of the color would result in an unattractive diminution in the flavor and complexities of the wine.

Challenging tradition and new in style of enjoyment to California is Montevina's Zinfandel Nuevo produced by fermenting whole uncrushed berries in a carbon dioxide atmosphere. This process is known as carbonic masceration and originated in Beaujolais, France.

The Nuevo sells for $2.50 per fifth and should be quaffed while it is young and still retains its distinctive freshness and lingering fruitiness. In his *Private Guide to Wines*, Robert Finigan extolled: "This beautifully made wine is as fine an example of 'Beaujolais nouveau' as I have found on either side of the Atlantic." *B.H.*

Solving seasickness and other wine problems.

The Wine Bibber

by BEN HATTEM

Many wines suffer from "seasickness" and should be laid down on their sides to rest in a cool, dark place free of any vibration for four to six months after being imported and a week following the trip from your merchant to home, depending upon the condition of your shocks. Some wines are too fragile to journey even to your neighbor and can be served successfully only at their place of storage.

A few unfortunate wines never recover from the voyage. The symptoms include a separation of richness and acid. But the astringency attributable to tannic young Cabernet Sauvignons and Bordeaux should not be ascribed to seasickness. A young expensive wine has likely lost the fruitiness and aroma of its youth without adequate time to develop bottle bouquet and suaveness. It's not bad, but it doesn't appear to have reached its potential—sort of like adolescence. Don't complain that "the wine doesn't travel very well." Next time you make a reservation at a restaurant, select an older wine and ask the *maitre d'hotel* to open it several hours before you arrive.

OPENERS: CORK POPPING

Champagne is one wine you can open and serve without a corkscrew. Refrigerate the bottle for two hours or chill it in a bucket of water and ice for 20 minutes. Ice alone will not do the job. To open, always point the bottle away from your friends and yourself. Unravel the wire hood securing the cork without shaking the bottle. Keep a thumb on top except for the moment of drawing the wire and foil capsule. Grasp the top of the cork firmly with thumb and forefinger. Turn the bottle, not the cork, slowly with your hand while maintaining a 45-degree angle. Allow the internal bottle pressure to ease out the cork instead of letting it ricochet dangerously off the ceiling or a chandelier. Remember, the cork is quicker than the eye and can attain a velocity of 45 feet per second. If the bottle has not been shaken, you'll likely avoid spilling. But have some chilled glasses ready just in case.

OPENERS: AH SO

For opening most other wines you should use the two-pronged Ah So. The prongs are inserted on opposite sides of the cork within the neck of the bottle with a gentle rocking motion. The handle is pulled firmly with a twisting motion. *Voila!* The whole cork slides out with no crumbs in the wine. The cork can be reused several times without breaking. Cork closures are made from the spongy bark of the evergreen cork oak, *Querous Suber*, grown mainly in Spain, Portugal and North Africa. Each square inch of cork is comprised of some 200 million microscopic air-filled cells.

OPENERS: WAITER'S CORKSCREW

Occasionally you'll find a cork that is too tight to engage the Ah So. That's the time to use the leverage of a jackknife or waiter's corkscrew. Most fancy and unfancy corkscrews sold in markets and liquor stores have three thin, round wire turns set far apart. More often than not they tend to cut instead of remove the cork. A proper waiter's pocket corkscrew obtained from a store specializing in kitchen utensils will have four to five coils that are squared off and set close enough together to permit all of the worm to transpierce the cork. The tip should be aligned with the curvature of the helix, never centered. If the cork is brittle or crumbly, a carbon dioxide pressure injector decorker is an excellent remover. The injection of gas into the bottle will push the cork out from inside the bottle.

BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE

Stand your bottle up for a week to permit any precipitates to slide to the bottom. Wipe the mouth of the bottle and remove the cork without disturbing the contents of the bottle. To decant, hold the bottle so that you can see a candle flame behind the neck and, with the use of a funnel, slowly pour without interruption into a clean vessel until you observe the sediment approach the neck of the original container. Stop! Your wine should be brilliant. About 1½ ounces of wine and sediment remain for sampling by the cellarmaster.

So much for tradition. The modern way to avoid shaking the bottle involves the use of a siphon. This method eliminates undue aeration. It is the same process used at a winery to rack wine off the lees into a clean barrel or storage tank. At home, with the assistance of a flashlight, you can avoid lowering the siphon tube below the level of the sediment and have the same clarity.

BREATHING

Wine is a living thing. If it tastes smooth and velvety after decanting or racking, cover until served. Depending upon robustness, vintage and present age, you ought to allow two to three hours breathing for the wine to open.

Sacramento, Calif.
Bee
(Cir. D. 169,590 - S. 189, 940)

MAY 27 1966

Wines Are Amador Specialty

By Larry Cenotto
Bee staff writer

SHENANDOAH, Amador Co.—On the rolling hillsides of this Shenandoah Valley grow most of Amador County's vineyards.

In the Winter its slopes and flats soak up the average 30-inch rainfall. Its moderately deep sandy loam soils rise from 1,200 to 2,000 feet.

In grape industry terms, it is a zone three area. It is warmer than the North Coast; it is cooler than the valley. In its more temperate climate grow varietal premium grapes for wine alone.

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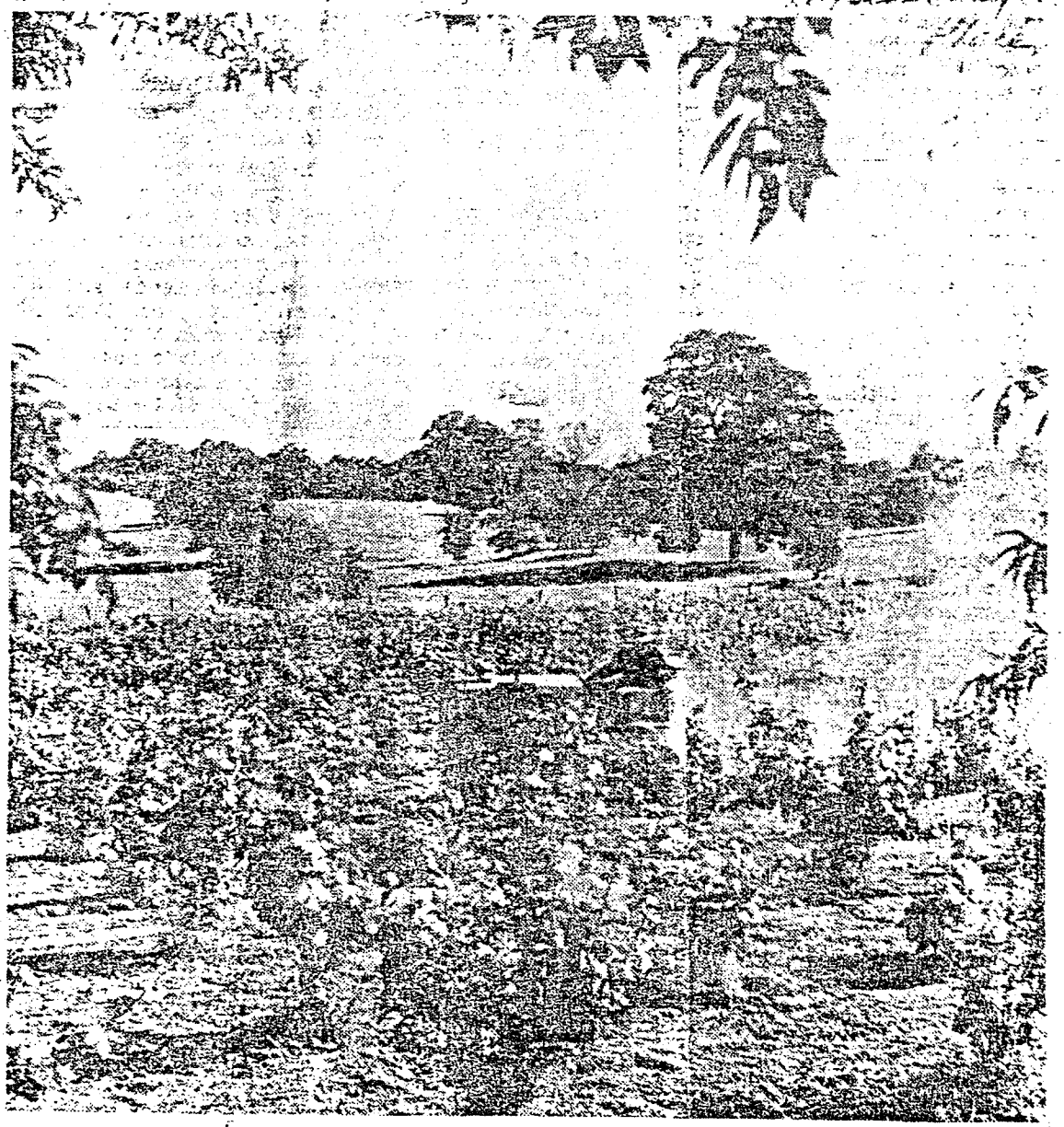
Wet years or dry years, bumper harvests or not, there has always been a demand for the Shenandoah's dryland varietal grapes. There have been no surplus problems here.

Largest Producer

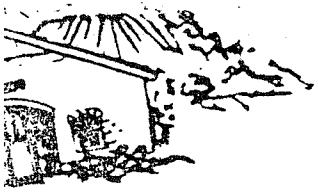
The valley's largest producer is the D'Agostini Brothers. The four vintners — Armenio, Henry, Michele and Tulio — own and operate a family enterprise which includes 100 acres of ungrafted vines, and the county's only winery.

Its average annual crush is about 500 tons. About 90 per cent comes from D'Agostini's own vineyards. They buy from neighbors if they need more tonnage.

Since they cannot supply the



AMADOR ACREAGE—John Ferrero, a vineyardist in the Shenandoah Valley of Amador County, guides his disc-pulling tractor between rows of Zinfandel vines which are over 45 years old. The county boasts of 576 producing acres, the bulk of it in the Zinfandel variety and the remainder in specialty, premium wine grape types. Bee Photo



CREEK WINERY

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ZINFANDEL

ESOLA VINEYARDS

Amador County Zinfandel:

Liquid Gold In The Foothills

by Norman S. Roby

It is not uncommon today for blind tastings of Zinfandels to attract a huge turnout and to be conducted with as much solemnity as a tasting of Cabernet Sauvignons or Classified Growths. But it certainly is surprising when you realize that only a few years ago Zinfandel was a blending wine only, reserved for the red generics and port-type wines. When varietal Zinfandels were made, they received little attention and care at the wineries; they weren't aged so much as they were placed in giant old redwood tanks and set aside until the important wines were tended to. Then suddenly, with the beginning of the wine boom and the rush to plant varietals, Zinfandel moved from obscurity to stardom as an interesting, unique wine that vintners began to proudly display. As the wine began to be discovered by consumers and as winemakers brought it out of the closets, new areas emerged as Zinfandels country. At the present time one of the most talked-about regions linked with Zinfandel is Amador County.

In Amador itself life has been pretty tranquil ever since the gold mines were abandoned; most of the inhabitants had never heard of any wine boom. Amador County is part of the so-called Mother Lode region in the foothills of the Sierras. However, it is one of the oldest viticultural regions in California. According to Leon Adams there were more

than 100 wineries operating in the Mother Lode area as late as 1890. But Prohibition closed most of them, and there was no revival with Repeal. Mother Nature makes grapegrowing difficult in the foothills, but the vineyards remained in production, mainly to supply local amateur winemakers and occasionally to sell to large outside wineries.

Many of the present Amador vineyards were originally planted around 1900, and the area hasn't changed much since then. It remains a relic of "the old wild west" where the primary pastimes are hunting, gossiping, brawling and tippling. However, back in the 1850s the area was bristling with activity, and Amador County was part of Calaveras County. Around 1853, it was decided that the large county should be divided into two. The first name suggested was Washington County, but many didn't like this eastern-sounding name and suggested Amador instead. After some heated discussions when the time came for the bill to be voted on those favoring Amador hit upon the idea of serving plenty of local wine to those in opposition. The wine was enjoyed well into the night, and before the Washington contingent could come to its senses, the bill authorizing the Amador County name had passed without debate.

Today Amador County consists of numerous small towns which normally have one general store, a schoolhouse, and a cemetery. The names of various towns send you back to another era: Jackson, Volcano, Sutter Creek, and Chili Gulch. The present-day town of Plymouth was once called "Pokerville," and nearby Ione which began as a trading post used to be called "Bedbug" and was later changed to "Freezout." Fiddletown, which got its name because the young men of the town were always "fiddling" around, was briefly changed to the name of Oleta. But Fiddletown was immortalized in a story by Bret Harte, and the original name was restored in 1920.

Throughout it all the old vineyards survived as part of the local color and tradition. Long before anyone had ever heard of Amador Zinfandel, the local residents took part in an annual rite which consisted of deer hunting in the fall and making wine as soon as the hunting season was over. After one had bagged a deer or two, it was traditional to purchase some local grapes, either Zinfandel or Mission, most often a mixture, and make some wine which would enable you to get through till next hunting season. In the early 1960s, a few outsiders would occasionally venture into Amador to buy some grapes for home winemaking. But this didn't pose any threat, and, besides, there was always the D'Agostini Winery in Plymouth to supply the local folks with whatever Burgundy, Claret, or Sauterne they needed.

Life in the Mother Lode would have continued unchanged except for two related circumstances. The first was that the amateur winemakers made some interesting wines from Amador Zinfandel; the second, was that rising grape prices in Napa and elsewhere forced some smaller wineries to investigate other areas as possible alternatives. By the early 1970s Amador County Zinfandel was creating quite a stir. Now in late September and early October the long time residents hear the sounds of trucks hauling Amador Zinfandel to Napa, Sonoma, Livermore, and Cupertino, disturbing their peace, frightening away the deer, and removing their winter joy and comfort. But Amador has suddenly come alive, and the growers are jumping higher in glee than the celebrated frogs of Calaveras County in the annual Jumping Frog Jubilee held in Angels Camp each May.

When you look back upon Zinfandel's rise to popularity, the two primary moving forces were Ridge Vineyards and Sutter Home Winery. They made the varietal wine "respectable." Ridge had the audacity to make Zinfandel the same way one makes a classical Cabernet Sauvignon, leaving it on the skins for several days and aging it in expensive oak. At about the same time Sutter Home in St. Helena defied tradition by looking outside Napa and Sonoma for grapes. At one time Sutter Home bottled more wines under its label than most large wineries, but it is now moving toward specializing in Zinfandel wines made exclusively from Amador County grapes. Ridge, on the other had, always made just a few wines but scurried all over California in search of choice Zinfandel grapes. In 1974 Ridge went to Amador and made two different Zinfandels which are scheduled for release later this year. According to Ridge, Amador grapes "show real promise" and they may continue buying Amador grapes for years to come.

With Ridge joining Sutter Home, Amador County is destined to be regarded nationally as a prime Zinfandel wine region. But they are not alone in their esteem for Amador. One can find Zinfandels on the market today made from Amador grapes from many wineries: Mayacamas, Carneros Creek, Mount Veeder, Harbor Winery, Monteviña, Concannon (a rosé), Gemello, Corti Brothers (a private label), ZD Winery, and D'Agostini. Geyser Peak Winery buys a good deal of Zinfandel and blends it with wines from other regions, and on a lesser scale, Caymus Vineyard makes a Zinfandel with some Amador wine in it. For several years, until 1972, Robert Mondavi Winery bought some Zinfandel from an Amador grower. The Christian Brothers have on occasion also purchased Amador grapes. Neither of these does any longer. One problem was that in the first few years, some of the old Amador growers couldn't understand why the premium wineries would get a little upset if Mission grapes were mixed in with the Zinfandel.

One could easily put together a tasting of Zinfandels made from Amador County grapes. In fact, I recently took part in a tasting of Amador Zinfandel vintages from 1964-1974, sampling some 27 different wines which included an early attempt which was similar to a vermouth and ended with a vintage Port made from Amador Zinfandel. It was quite an eye-opening event, not just because of the number of wines available but because even when made by different producers the wine exhibited a highly distinct style.

Amador Zinfandels have a unique style, more so than most other wines from some of the better-known and more prestigious regions. In general, they tend to be an extremely dark ruby in color, with a heavy, full body; high in alcohol and tannin; and when young, they are highly perfumed, but not in the "briary" sense. The aroma is more like that of intensely fresh, ripe grapes. With their high alcohol and tannin, young Amador Zinfandels taste somewhat coarse. But given good aging in oak, they can develop a spicy aroma and flavor, which, combined with the strong berry character, imparts some complexity to the mature wines.

Although for a moment they could fool an experienced taster into thinking an aged Amador Zinfandel resembles a Claret, they are too full bodied and rough to sustain that impression for long.

Amador Zinfandels, it should be mentioned, are not for everyone. Many well-versed wine tasters object to their heavy style. If you especially enjoy California Zinfandels made in that fresh, fruity style similar to a Beaujolais, it is possible the Amador Zinfandels may strike you as too heady and inelegant. However, to me, with their great deal of body and extract, the Amador wines resemble full-bodied northern Italian wines or heavy Côtes du Rhône reds. They do share a similar high degree of ripeness which you either like or dislike in a red wine.

But in any case, Amador Zinfandels are worth trying, and a few of the wineries involved have national distribution. And besides, all serious California wine buffs should be familiar with Amador, if for no other reason than the fact that the region deserves to be recognized as an official appellation of origin. This is especially so because it is primarily Zinfandel country. Of the 900 acres planted, almost 700 acres consist of Zinfandel vines, and 400 of these are ten years or more old. Actually, much of the Amador Zinfandel was planted in 1900, and even more surprising is the fact that these gnarled old vines are still producing quality fruit.

In location, Amador County is about 40 miles east and little south of Sacramento which places it in the foothills of the Sierras. The terrain is mostly rolling hills which make grape growing somewhat difficult. Depending on where you are, the elevation in Amador varies from 1200 to 1700 feet, and based on degree days and heat summation, the climate of Amador is a high Region III or low IV. During the summer the days in Amador are quite warm, often over 100°, but the area consistently has cooling night breezes that give its grapes a unique character. In the Shenandoah Valley, one of Amador's finest grape growing regions, a cooling air mass rises from the lower valley floor and reaches the vineyards on a regular evening schedule. Much of the soil consists of shallow decomposed red granite. The hot summer days and cool evenings tend to cause the grapes to shrivel and thus concentrate the juice, but also enable the Zinfandel grapes to retain fairly high acidity. Largely because of the unique conditions, growers can obtain high sugar, around 25-26 Balling or more, with good acidity; the wines are high in alcohol and tannin and are concentrated in flavors.

The growers often lose a good percentage of their Zinfandel either to spring frosts which are quite persistent or to the intense heat during July and August. But the fruit that survives is often remarkable in varietal character. On an average, the Amador Zinfandel vineyards yield somewhere between two and a half to five tons per acre, or slightly below the average productivity for Zinfandel in the coastal regions.

Most large wine producers have shied away from Amador since the economics of grape growing there make it unattractive and uncongenial to any large winery. Somehow the growers managed to survive, supplying grapes to amateur winemakers and periodically selling to larger wineries in years of shortage. Others went to Amador simply because the prices were dirt cheap, that is until the Zinfandel craze set in. For years the only active winery in Amador after Prohibition was D'Agostini Winery in Plymouth, the area's oldest winery. The vineyards were originally planted in 1856, and D'Agostini bought the winery in 1911. It still specializes in what might be called *vin de pays*—honest, decent drinkable wine. D'Agnostini Claret and Burgundy wines are made from Zinfandel, Carignane, and a little Mission and are sold by the bottle and half-gallon. The winery, now a historical landmark, makes a good quality Estate-Bottled Zinfandel, but this and the other wines are seldom available outside the immediate area.

But the revival of interest in Amador as a wine region came from outside forces. The first Zinfandel from Amador that caught anybody's attention was made by Charles Myers of Sacramento, who was making wine as a serious hobby in 1965. Myers is an English teacher at a Scramento College who recently started a small commercial winery called Harbor which today is noted for its Zinfandel and Chardonnay wines. To him goes the distinction of being the "discoverer" of Amador Zinfandel.

By late 1967 and early 1968 Bob Trinchero of Sutter Home was beginning to feel squeezed by rising grape prices, which were then "soaring" to $300 a ton for Napa Zinfandel. He had been making some private label wines for Corti Brothers, Sacramento wine merchants/grocers who were close friends of Myers. Hearing of the situation, Darrell Corti arranged for Trinchero to sample the Zinfandels from '65 and '66 made by Myers. Impressed by what he tasted, in the spring of 1968 Trinchero visited Ken Deaver, a Shenandoah Valley grower, and arranged to purchase Zinfandel from the coming vintage.

The '68 Sutter Home Amador Zinfandel from the Deaver Ranch was aged in Limousin oak and released in January of 1971. This event pretty much put an end to deer hunting in Amador. Before too long, word spread about this unusual Zin and the wine eventually became a collector's item. Myers, Corti, and Trinchero continued to make wines from the region in '69 and '70, and by the release of the 1970 Amador wines which were superb, the rush was on—this time for grapes, not gold in the foothills.

Between 1968 and 1971, Sutter Home made its Zinfandel from grapes grown on the Deaver Ranch. By 1972, the demand had increased so much that Trinchero went to a neighboring vineyard owned by John Ferrero and blended the Deaver and Ferrero lots together. Both of these vinyards are in the subregion or pocket known as the **Shenandoah Valley**, not the one immortalized in song, but one winning many praises these days. Harbor Winery makes its Zinfandel from Deaver grapes. Since 1968 Corti Brothers has offered an Amador Zinfandel; each year Darrell Corti selects certain lots from wines made at Sutter Home, and then he ages his Zinfandel in his own cooperage at the winery. So the Harbor, Sutter Home, and Corti Brothers Zinfandels are all made primarily from the same vineyard, but they are always somewhat different in taste. These three producers, along with Cary Gott of Monteviña, feel that the Shenandoah Valley merits special and official recognition as a wine region.

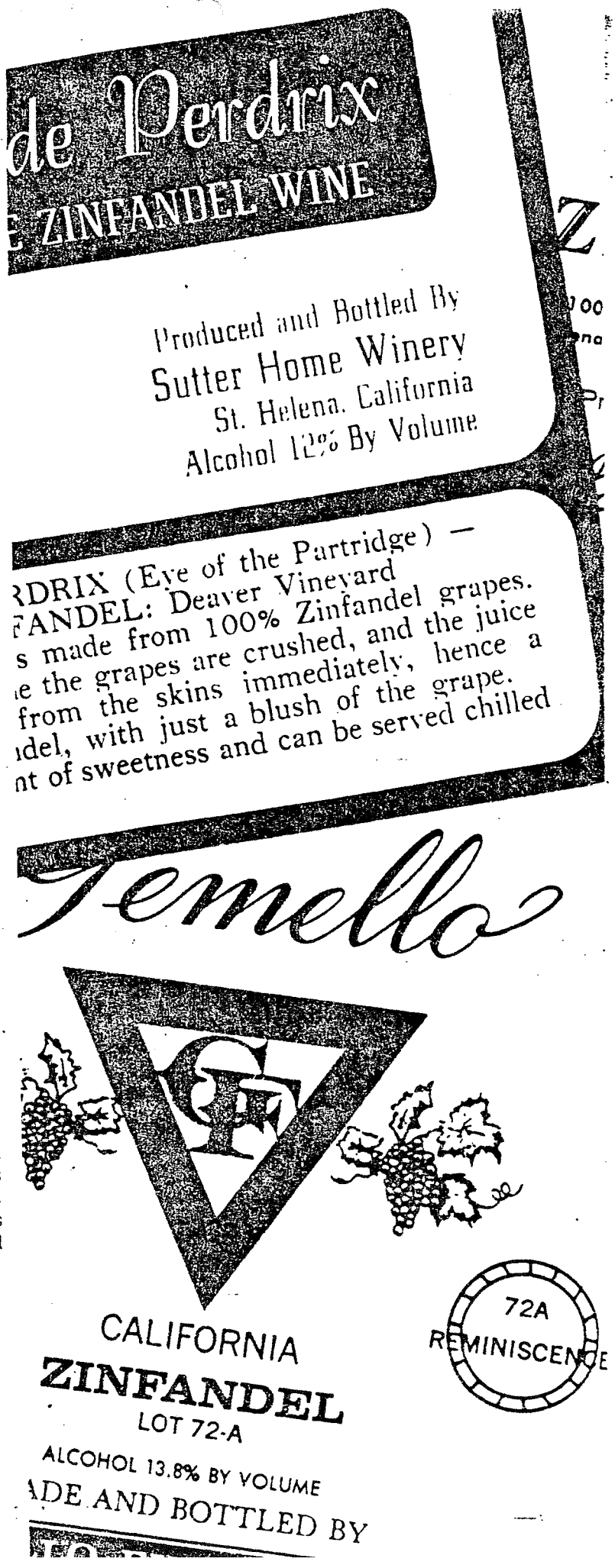
More and more, you will see different place names appearing on bottles of Amador Zinfandel which can be somewhat confusing. Some wineries simply use Amador; others will refer to the Shenandoah Valley, and still a few producers identify the wine by a particular vineyard. The

most important vineyards often singled out are Deaver, Ferrero, Monteviña, and Esola--all of which are located in the Shenandoah Valley. Eshen, another sought-after old vineyard, is located near the town of Fiddletown, and one Ridge '74 Zinfandel will carry the Fiddletown appellation, while the second will bear the Shenandoah Valley designation. The St. Amant Vineyard mentioned on the label of the delightful Concannon Zinfandel Rosé is a new one located near Jackson to the south; Concannon is soon to release the '75 Zinfandel Rosé and hopes to make a regular Amador Zinfandel in 1976.

Now when we turn from the specific vineyards to the producers, the picture becomes even fuzzier, since occasionally the Amador wine is blended with wines from other regions or for some reason may not be identified. In 1972 Mayacamas made a now famous Late Harvest Zinfandel with immense fruitiness and depth and an alcohol content of around 17 per cent. This wine was actually made from the oldest Zinfandel vines belonging to Monteviña Vineyards. When last available, this Late Havest wine was selling in California for $12 a bottle. Caymus Vineyard in Rutherford made a '74 Zinfandel with a "California" designation that was made from Amador, Sonoma, Napa, and Lodi grapes; the '75 Caymus Zinfandel was made from Amador, Napa, and Lake County grapes in equal proportion. The Amador grapes are purchased from the D'Agostini Ranch, not related to the winery of the same name. The Caymus Zinfandel is a lighter, fresher wine, ideal for sipping and drinking with many types of food.

At the moment, Geyser Peak is the largest winery using Amador Zinfandel, but how much is in the winery's "California" Zinfandel is not known. Geyser Peak has a long-term grape contract with Monteviña Vineyards in Amador, and many consider this to have been one of the better moves made by the winery under its present ownership. The non-vintage Voltaire Zinfandel has a pleasant dark color and fresh grapy aroma that tempts one to say these fine features are derived from Amador grapes. It is a good wine for the money, lacking only some wood aging for greater complexity and interest. Geyser Peak is now beginning to move toward vintaged-dated varietals, and it has a '73 Zinfandel on tap that should be worth looking for shortly.

The Gemello Winery in Mountain View offers small quantities of Amador Zinfandel which are usually distinguished by "Lot 71A" or "Lot 72A" with the "A" standing for Amador. The wines are purchased from Sutter Home and aged and finished in Mountain View. Gemello favors using Nevers oak for the Amador Zinfandel which adds its own distinctive character. Mario Gemello also likes to give his wines lots of time in the oak, averaging around three years or so. Gemello Zinfandels are sometimes difficult to find, but the Amador wines are extremely well



made and worth seeking out.

While Amador's reputation was gained from the activities of outsiders, there is now some excitement created from within by a new, small winery in Plymouth–Monteviña. Managed by Cary Gott, a young and talented winemaker, Monteviña now consists of around 175 acres including about 100 acres of Zinfandel. He has added small plantings of Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Ruby Cabernet, Barbera, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Nebbiolo to see how they will fare in Amador. After taking over the old vineyard in 1971, Gott first made wines under the Monteviña label in 1973. Although he only makes about 2500 cases annually, every time Gott makes a new wine he manages to catch everyone's attention. Also, because he is adamant about pricing his wines attractively, Monteviña has developed quite a following in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Beginning in 1973 when he was still temporarily working out of his basement, Gott got off to an auspicious debut. Lacking cooperage and being daring by nature, he made what he called "Zinfandel Nuevo" by the carbonic maceration process which has since become a big fad. However, the Monteviña "Nuevo" in '73 and '74 are two of the finest nouveaux wines made in California–intensely fresh and fruity in aroma and flavor and delightfully spritzy. The '75 Nuevo made from grapes picked during rains is full of tartrates, but is also delightful to drink. Monteviña also offers a White Zinfandel, both a dry and sweet version in 1975, and a regular Amador Zinfandel that while not as full bodied as others is well balanced and extremely attractive. Monteviña, both as a source of grapes and as an innovative winery, has helped establish Amador County in California wine circles.

But Gott is very much interested in the other varieties as well as Zinfandel. So far the Monteviña Sauvignon Blanc and Barbera have been well received, being strong on varietal character and intensely fruity.

But at the moment, the larger story still rests with Sutter Home Winery which has decided to make only Amador County wines. All Sutter Home Zinfandel has been first rate with only minor variations in the different vintages. The winery now produces a White Zinfandel going under the "Oeil de Perdrix" designation, made fresh and fruity with a touch of sweetness. In 1974 Sutter Home made a special lot of Late Harvest Zinfandel which will need much more time in wood and bottle before one can say whether it is as interesting as the '72 Mayacamas Late Harvest wine. This Sutter Home Zinfandel has around 16 per cent alcohol and is amazingly bone dry. It will be worth watching for in the next few years.

At one time, Bob Trinchero was seriously considering blending some Cabernet Sauvignon into his Amador Zinfandels for added complexity, but has since abandoned the project after several experiments. This brings up an

interesting point about Amador Zinfandel–the wines are certainly good but they are by no means as capable of complexity as are those of a few other regions. We should not position it as "the" Zinfandel growing region, which a few writers have already done.

But when the '68 Sutter Home Amador Zinfandel was recently tasted, it was still quite powerful and had developed a beautiful spicy aroma and flavor. With time, and this is worth noting, the Zinfandels made from the old Amador vines do acquire quite interesting features. When young, however, they appear fat, awkward, closed-in, and somewhat unappealing. But after some bottle aging, they come around nicely, developing that regional spiciness in bouquet and flavor and acquiring a delightful "sweet" sort of finish, characteristic of mature, full-bodied "sweet" sort of finish, characteristic of mature, fullbodied Zinfandels. When you taste them try to keep in mind their slow-developing nature. From my own experiences, it seems quite possible for Amador Zinfandels to reach their peak some ten years or more after the vintage.

But as is unfortunately true of most California wines, they are seldon cellared long enough to develop their full potential. A few '72 Amador Zinfandels are still available, and if you are lucky enough to find some, put them away until 1980 or later. Amador County Zinfandel is usually harvested two to three weeks before the Zinfandel from Napa and Sonoma, so Amador growers escaped the problems caused elsewhere by late rains in 1972. The '73 harvest in Amador is considered to be on the light side only by Amador standards; the wines from this vintage are still quite full bodied and fruity, and should age well into the 1980s. But as you know, '74 is considered to be the year for red wines in California, and the Amador Zinfandels sampled from the tanks hold out much promise and should become fantastic wines. During the '75 harvest it rained even in Amador County, but since the clusters were reduced in size by both frost and heat, most of the Zinfandel was picked with little evidence of mold or rot. So while the '73s and '74s are the real gems to look for, the '75 Amador wines may be the only Zinfandels worth drinking.

It used to be maintained that you could grow Zinfandel anywhere in California, but this is no longer true. Zinfandel ripens late in the season along with Cabernet Sauvignon, but unlike the hardy, tough Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel has very tight, compact clusters and is quite subject to bunch rot in wet or humid regions. When grown on the floor of the Napa Valley, Zinfandel usually develops some bunch rot. But in Amador, the clusters are uncharacteristically loose and the vineyards are dry with well-drained soils: they thereby avoid this tendency to develop bunch rot on almost all fronts.

Today, Zinfandel lovers, and there are many of them, fall generally into three different camps. No longer can one discuss Zinfandel without being asked to define one's terms and to identify particular styles of wine. There are those who favor the fresh, fruity, light Zinfandel often described as "brambly" in taste and similar to a young Beaujolais in style. Here, I have in mind those delightful wines made by the Christian Brothers, Louis Martini, Sebastiani, and the altogether pleasant new wine from The Monterey Vineyard. These are "drinking" or sipping wines. Secondly, there are Zinfandels that are full flavored, medium bodied, made in a balanced and somewhat refined style, such as those offered by Souverain, Oakville, Simi, and in 1972 by Robert Mondavi and Clos du Val. These are either enjoyed immediately or laid away for a few years.

Then there is the third style of Zinfandel which I call the "hairy-chested school." These are the *heavy-sipping*, extremely tannic Zinfandels that are often described as "chewy." I have in mind the Ridge Occidental Zinfandels, David Bruce Late Harvest Dry, Joseph Swan '70, Ridge '70 Geyserville, and perhaps Clos du Val '73 Zinfandel. These are the high alcohol brutes with immense depth of fruit and loads of tannin which demand years of cellaring.

Within this over simplified scheme of Zinfandels, it would be a mistake in judgment to equate Amador Zinfandels with the latter school. The reason is that the style of Amador wines is more of a factor of the growing conditions than of the winemaking process. They are high in alcohol by nature, rather than from any willfullness on the vintner's part. Those who dislike the Amador wines have criticized them for their obsessive high alcohol, positioning them with the other faddishly "big" wines from California. But what should be mentioned is that the Amador Zinfandels have the needed structure and body to support the alcohol, and they have plenty of fruit to balance with the high tannin. No matter who so far has made Zinfandels from Amador, there always has been a definite, regional style discernible. Like them or not, tasters should judge the Amador wines on their own merits within the context of a definite Amador County style.

Ironically, as this report is being written about the coming of age of Zinfandel and the recognition of Amador as Zinfandel country, Dr. Olmo of U.C. Davis is probably putting the final touches to his long-awaited study of the true origin and ancestry of California's unique wine. Some people fear that once this definitive study is made public, Zinfandel's reputation will begin to decline. To slip into the vernacular, "No way! "

The last word had it that Dr. Olmo was convinced that Zinfandel was descended from the Sangiovese grape of Tuscany. But this report which will certainly be comprehensive and authoritative will most likely be of academic interest to most of us. Zinfandel no longer needs the romantic stories and mysterious trappings to perpetuate itself. Besides, so many cuttings have been taken and transported to various parts of California over the last 100 years that the Zinfandel of today probably has very little in common with its true European ancestors. The unraveling of the myths and legends may in fact prove beneficial to this variety; once divested of this tired, stale promotional clutter, the wine may be allowed to show its abilities to perform within other small growing regions.

The irony of the research is even greater in Amador. Since the region's reputation has been staked so firmly on those old vines in the Shenandoah Valley and in Fiddletown, the news of Zinfandel's family tree will have little impact. As one Amador grower once told me, he couldn't say for sure that the grapes were really Zinfandel at all; he had merely taken at face value the previous owner's words that they were Zinfandel. And he added, "Besides, what difference does it make; the grapes make good wine, don't they? " He had me there, but then again, I'm partial to Amador wines. You'll have to try a few for yourself to see if they are for you.

Tasting Of Amador County Zinfandels

1972 Sutter Home, Shenandoah Valley Zinfandel, national, $3.75. Heavy, ripe fruity aroma just opening up, full but not heavy on the palate, rich varietal flavor with subtle oakiness; strong finish with some complexity to it. Give it time; this will be a superb Amador Zin.

1972 Harbor Winery, Deaver Ranch Amador Zinfandel, local California markets, $3.75. Fine rich color, strong fruity aroma, extremely full-bodied, high alcohol, rich texture, short finish. Somewhat ponderous and rough in the aftertaste. Will repay long aging.

1972 Mayacamas Vineyards, Late Harvest Zinfandel, national, $12.00. Powerful Amador scent, rich dark color and flavor; powerful (17 per cent) alcohol; rich tannin, immense fruit on the palate; tastes like a Zinfandel Port.

1972 Corti Brothers, Reserve Selection, Deaver Ranch Shenandoah Valley Zinfandel, California, $3.75. Deep color, a firm wine still backward in development; rich flavor with a firm structure; heavy on oak now. Will age beautifully.

1973 Monteviña Vineyards, Shenandoah Valley Zinfandel, California, $2.75. Spirited deep color, firm fruity-woody aroma; fine balance with excellent fruity flavor; astringent finish.

1973 Carneros Creek Winery, Eschen Vineyards Zinfandel, California, $3.25. Medium dark color, definite ripe grapy aroma, medium bodied: good fruity flavor with strong oaky taste; pleasant astringent finish.

1973 Sutter Home, Shenandoah Valley Zinfandel, national, $3.75. Typical rich color and strong grapy nose; mouthfilling flavors, still quite undeveloped; high tannin, good fruit. Shows great promise.

1973 Corti Brothers Reserve Selection, Shenandoah Valley Zinfandel, California, $3.75. Ahead of the Sutter Home in development. Heavy aroma with plenty of fruit and oak in evidence; rich texture, flavors undeveloped; should age into a complex and deep wine.

1973 Harbor Winery, Deaver Ranch Zinfandel, California, $3.75. Deep color, assertive, full aroma, heavy body, loads of fruity, good Amador definition in flavor, rough in the finish.

1973 ZD Winery, Sierra Foothills Zinfandel, national, $3.95. Dark ruby color; healthy looking wine; moderate but attractive spicy nose, well-balanced, moderate tannin, soft and delicious flavor with good fruit, short finish. Elegant, refined Amador wine. Enjoyable now, but will age for three or four more years. Made from 71 per cent Amador Zinfandel, with the rest from the Clements area to the east of Lodi.

1974 Ridge Vineyard, Fiddletown Zinfandel, national, $5.00. (Tasted one month after bottling.) Short grapy nose, beautiful, medium-dark color, attractive, softness on the palate, fine body, sufficient tannin for further aging, nicely balanced with obtrusive high alcohol. A refined Amador Zinfandel, but at a steep price.

1974 Mount Veeder Winery, Esola Vineyards Zinfandel, California, $4.75. Ruby color, on the light side for Amador; nose is beginning to develop some spiciness; soft, grapy flavors, medium body, moderate tannin, soft, refreshingly long finish. Price is a little dear.

1974 Caymus Vineyard, California Zinfandel, California, Oklahoma, and Washington, $2.98. Made from Amador and several other counties. Appealing fresh, fruity aroma; medium to light color and body; soft on the palate with good fruity; mild tannin; well balanced, pleasant, delightful finish. An excellent drinking wine.

1974 Carneros Creek Winery, Esola Vineyard Zinfandel, California, $4.00. The winery switched to Esola from Eschen. Good medium color, assertive fruity nose with strong oak; heaps of fruit in the flavor with strong tannin; very astringent finish. Well-made wine that needs several years to smooth out.

1974 Concannon Vineyard, St. Amant Vineyard Zinfandel Rosé, national $2.50. Fairly dark for a Rosé, fresh fruity aroma, medium body, well-balanced and absolutely dry, crisp, refreshing finish. One of the best if not the best rosés made in California today. Remember, it is dry and definitely a Zinfandel wine.

1974 Monteviña Vineyard Shenandoah Valley, Zinfandel Nuevo, California, $2.50. Medium color; heavenly fruity nose, fruity flavors with a good shot of spritzig for added freshness, mild tannin, short finish. A quaffing wine, but the best California wine made by carbonic maceration method.

1974 Monteviña Vineyard, Shenandoah Valley White Zinfandel, California, $2.50. Light salmon color, fruity nose, some fruit with lots of tannin on the palate since the wine was placed in new oak; some acid, delightful astringent finish. Pucker power. Ideal for sipping on warm summer afternoons.

Non-Vintage Amador County Zinfandels

Geyser Peak, California Zinfandel, national, $2.50. Made from an unknown percentage of Amador grapes. Medium-dark color, good solid fresh grapy nose, fairly full bodied; well-balanced, short, uncomplicated finish. A fine all-purpose Zin at an extremely attractive price.

Gemello Winery, Lot 71A Zinfandel, California, $3.75. Medium-dark color, strong fruity nose, full on the palate with plenty of tannin and oak along with the substantial fruit; rough, astringent finish. A fine wine with more fruit to it than the Lot 72A which is also a good wine.

Sutter Home Winery, Deaver Vineyard Oeil de Perdrix (White Zinfandel), national, $3.25. Slight pink tinge, soft grapy nose, pleasant medium body with fruity flavor; the high alcohol peeks through the taste; smooth, attractive finish with a hint of sugar. Nothing to get too excited over, but easy to drink.

Amador's Shenandoah Valley sprouts vineyards

1/2

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY MIKE DUNNE, Bee Correspondent

SAVE - HISTORICAL VALUE

PLYMOUTH — At the expense of persons unfamiliar with the history of the nearby Shenandoah Valley, growers are sharing a quiet chuckle over the current "discovery" of the region as an esteemed wine grape district.

Much ado is being made in regional and national magazines whose wine critics are enraptured with the high quality of wines coming out of the valley. But as far as several of the area's veteran growers are concerned, the region's granitic soil, normal rainfall and breezy climate have combined to long produce a grape and wine lovingly respected locally if not enthusiastically appreciated elsewhere.

THEY NOTE, for example, that Gold Rush argonauts settled in the valley and planted vineyards in the 1850s. One, a Swiss immigrant named Adam Uhlinger, planted 20,000 vines and established a winery in 1856, coopering casks of white oak felled on nearby hills. The casks still are being used at what is now the D'Agostini Winery at the east end of the valley. A registered state historic landmark, it may be the oldest winery in the state.

Others who arrived included John J. Davis who, in 1859, planted a Mission vineyard which his stepgrandson, Ken Deaver, still is harvesting. Other growers can point to vineyard parcels which are 60, 80 or 100 years old and still productive.

The market situation and character of the valley's wine grape industry started to shift quietly but dramatically in 1963.

CHARLES MYERS, AN English instructor at Sacramento City College, started looking for some Muscats to use for home winemaking. An acquaintance, Sacramentan Dr. Eugene Story, also a home winemaker, had an assistant, Loree Cuneo, who knew of Ken Deaver's Shenandoah Valley vineyard. She referred Myers to Deaver.

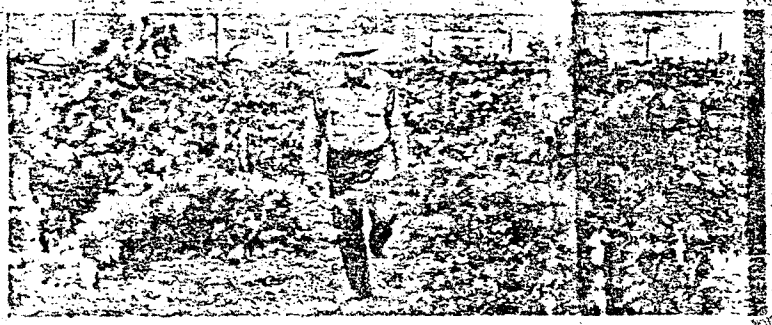
Myers also found that Deaver had Zinfandels available and started making Zinfandel wine with Deaver grapes in 1964. Four years later, when the wine boom was dramatically escalating the price of Napa Valley grapes, commercial wine makers started looking for new territory that might be producing equally respectable grapes at less expensive prices. One of the hunters was Bob Trinchero of Sutter Home Winery in the Napa Valley, where his family had been purchasing Zinfandels since 1946.

IN 1968, SACRAMENTO wine merchant Darrell Corti introduced Trinchero to Myers's 1965 Zinfandel made from Deaver grapes. Trinchero was so impressed he began buying Deaver grapes that fall. The Zinfandel wine which Sutter Home produced, in turn, proved so popular that by 1971 Trinchero was buying nearly all the grapes Deaver could produce.

Since then, the number of commercial firms producing wines from Shenandoah Valley grapes has skyrocketed. At latest count, says Amador County Farm Adviser Bob Plaister — the man most often credited with guiding revitalization of the valley's wine grape industry — 14 North Coast, San Francisco Bay Area, Napa Valley and Sacramento wineries "are paying premium prices for our grapes."

What's more, they're encountering growing competition for the valley's grapes from the county's own booming winery industry. A decade ago the county had just one winery. Today it has seven.

THE CURRENT SPURT in new wineries star



Longtime Shenandoah Valley grape grower John Ferraro strolls through one of his vineyards.

Jim Payne of Argonaut Winery rakes crush grapes from fermentation tank.

Cary Gott of Montevina flanked by oak wine barrels.

Vickie Gott assists in Montevina's wine grape harvest.

Dr. Eugene Story checks Cosumnes River's fruit harvest.

ed with Cary Gott, his wife Victoria and her f ther, Gilroy banker W. H. Field, who in 19 bought an 80- acre vineyard of 80-year-old Zinfa del vines and built Montevina Winery. Go crushed 39 tons of grapes in 1973; he expects crush 200 tons this season.

Dr. Story followed Gott, and last month Lee a Shirley Sobon left Los Altos and started crushi grapes at the valley's newest winery, Shenando Vineyards, situated in a converted stone garag Sobon hopes to produce 3,000 gallons of Zinfand White Zinfandel, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet a Chenin Blanc this year; 6,000 gallons next seaso

The county's other wineries are Argonaut W ery in the Willow Creek area; Stoneridge Wine east of Sutter Creek, and Amador Winery Amador City.

The valley now has approximately 850 acres vines, of which some 350 acres were planted d ing the past five years, says Amador County Ag cultural Commissioner Dave Thompson. Becau of the drought, new plantings dropped sharply t past two springs.

THE DROUGHT ALSO has trimmed the co ty's grape production. In 1973, production total 2,570 tons and wine grape income topped $1 mill for the first time. Grape production has been even since then, down to 1,343 tons in 1974 beca of a damaging spring frost and an unusually c summer. Because of the drought, last year's p duction totaled 1,844 tons. Grapes, however, tract higher and higher prices. In 1967, the av age price was $104 per ton. This year it is expect to average around $400, with some growers rece ing up to about $500 per ton, reports Thompson.

THE AREA'S NEW growers and winemak

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Lee and Shirley Sobon of Shenandoah Vineyards, and grower Don Potter, right, begin their first wine grape crush.

are not shy in experimenting with new varieties and techniques. Although most of their efforts remain focused on the valley's premier wine, Zinfandel, some introduced varieties have been Cabernet, Merlot, Barbera, Ruby Cabernet, Sauvignon Blanc and Nebbiolo.

Although some winemakers have been able to afford sophisticated, expensive equipmment, others have pieced their wineries together with old dairy equipment, a converted grain conveyor, former aerospace tubing and the like.

Perhaps their tendency to the unorthodox has something to do with their professional backgrounds: Dr. Story is a veterinarian; Sobon a scientist; Gary Perteous of Stoneridge, a Pacific Gas & Electric Co. employe, and Jim Payne, Harly Harty, Paul Lloyd, Bill Bilbo and Neal Overboe of Argonaut Winery, all Aerojet engineers.

EVERYONE IT SEEMS, disagrees over the factors which account for the quality of the district's grapes. Some believe it's the soil, a well-drained granite, moderate to low in natural fertility. Plaister says, "On a scale of one to 100, Shenandoah soils rate 35 to 55. The soil itself limits tonnage per acre and improves the quality of the wine."

Others credit the climate, characterized primarily by warm breezes blowing up from the Sacramento Valley during the day and cool breezes blowing down off the Sierra at night. Myers believes the blend of hot days and cool nights means the grapes "are not being forced as if they were in a hot house."

The consensus seems to be that the valley's Zinfandel does not have an easy time of it, but that its stress and agony result in a wine that drives connoisseurs ecstatic.

WHATEVER THE CAUSE, growers and vintners agree the Shenandoah Valley Zinfandel vines consistently produce a grape with an exceptional sugar/acid balance. "You can always count on the sugar," remarks Francis Mahoney, winemaker for Carneros Creek Winery of Napa.

"We've always had high acid and high sugar both, which is something you don't get everywhere," Deaver adds.

The result is a Zinfandel wine variously described as intensely flavored, gutsy, earthy, fruity, rich, full-bodied, spicy, grapey, huge, dark, robust, zesty and powerful, depending on such factors as vintage and the bias of the critic.

THE VALLEY'S FUTURE appears bright. Several other grape varieties are appearing in the valley and showing promising results in the bottle, particularly Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc, Barbera and Ruby Cabernet.

As Plaister says: "Quality always sells and we have the quality."

Harvey Steiman/On Wine

Look to the Sierra

Only a few vineyards punctuate the landscape of the Sierra foothills east of Sacramento, in what has come to be known as the Mother Lode country. In between the abandoned gold mines are also a few wineries. To date, neither the vineyards nor the wineries have made the splash that the Gold Rush brought to this region. But give them time, give them time.

Vines have been cultivated here since before the Gold Rush. In fact, many was the Gold Rush miner, his stake petering out, who planted vines to make wine and keep body and soul together. There was even a time — around 1860 — when El Dorado County alone had more vineyards than either Napa or Sonoma.

But except for a few Amador County Zinfandels, serious wine drinkers only recently have recognized the possibilities. The region is beginning to make a name for itself. The appellations of Amador, Sierra and El Dorado Counties, the Shenandoah Valley and the hamlets of Plymouth and Fiddletown are becoming increasingly familiar to Zinfandel drinkers.

Sutter Home Winery in the Napa Valley was the first to exploit the character of Amador Zinfandels — intense berry aromas and flavors, high alcohol, wines of power. Sacramento vintner Darrell Corti recognized the potential in the late 1960s, having tasted a Zinfandel made by home winemaker Charles Myers (who now owns Harbor Winery). It had been made from grapes grown at the then-unknown Deaver Vineyard in the Shenandoah Valley near Plymouth. Corti had Sutter Home make some wine for his stores from the Deaver Vineyard. That wine, and subsequent vintages, put Amador County on the map.

Wineries with names like Montevina, Shenandoah, Boeger, Stevenot and Sierra Vista have joined the pioneers actually producing wines in the Mother Lode. The oldest existing pioneer is d'Agostini, founded 1856 (and still going strong). And now it's more than Zinfandel. Excellent Cabernets, Chardonnays, Sauvignon Blancs and Muscats are being grown in the Sierra Foothills.

With virtually all the vineyard land in Napa County planted, very little suitable land left in Sonoma, the search is on for new places to grow fine grapes for fine wine. U.S. wine consumption is rising, so the thirst is there. The question is where the grapes will come from. The jury is still out on Monterey. The Edna Valley in San Luis Obispo and the Santa Ynez Valley in Santa Barbara look promising. To that list one must add the Sierra Foothills.

This year, Amador County took a big step toward carving its place as a wine producer when it held its first extensive competition. Any wine made from Mother Lode grapes, including those made by wineries elsewhere in the state, was eligible. As one of 20 judges who worked their way through the nearly five dozen wines, I can attest to the quality.

I must note, however, that the organizers of this competition were a bit generous with medals. Nearly two of every three wines entered won awards, a rate more than double that of most other competitions around the state. Judges did not make the final decisions on the awards; the event's organizers "interpreted" our rankings.)

The big winner was Montevina, one of the area's modern pioneers, which opened shop in 1973. (Most of the action has taken place since 1975.) Winemaker Cary Gott reaped 10 medals, including golds for its 1978 Zinfandel, 1979 Sauvignon Blanc, 1978 Barbera and nonvintage Mission red. Montevina also picked up silver medals for its 1978 Montino Zinfandel (lighter than the regular vintage wine), 1978 Cabernet Sauvignon, 1979 White Zinfandel and White Cabernet.

The Sauvignon Blanc and Barbera are prime examples of what can be done in the Shenandoah Valley. They are the equal of better wines produced in better-known coastal regions. They also represent good value, being priced under $5.

Another big winner was Shenandoah Vineyards, a relative newcomer (1977), which picked up seven medals. It won three gold medals — for a Zinfandel port, a 1978 Cabernet Sauvignon and a lovely Black Muscat. All three are superb wines. The Cabernet has depth and elegance, chatacteristics missing in many Amador reds. The port is a stunner, rich, complex and subtly balanced. The Muscat is a sweet red wine, spicy and flowery-perfumey, a unique wine in California.

Boeger, a winery in neighboring El Dorado County, earned five medals for its Amador-appellation wines, including a gold for its generic white wine, 1979 Sierra Blanc.

The Grand Award went to fledgling Stevenot Winery, a Calaveras County winery just now releasing its first vintage. It won for its Amador-appellation 1979 Chardonnay, a wine with considerable fruit and appealing balance of oak. It is not a wine to compare with the giants of the North and Central Coasts, but it's an eye-opener from an area never known for Chardonnay. Stevenot also won a gold medal for its Chenin Blanc, a steely-tart wine with that green-fruit aroma typical of the variety, and a silver for its White Riesling.

Sutter Home, the winery that started it all, picked up a gold medal for its 1978 Zinfandel, and deservedly so. I find it to be the best Amador Zinfandel SH has produced since 1972. The intervening wines have been disappointing, beset with a variety of off-odors and flavors. This one is a winner, harkening back to the rich, intense Zinfandels of the early 1970s. (Sutter Home, incidentally, also makes a lovely, light Zinfandel from El Dorado County grapes, so labeled.)

For the record, here are all the medal winners from the 1980 Amador County Fair.

Zinfandel (regular): Gold — 1978 Montevina, 1978 Argonaut, 1977 Geyser Peak, 1978 Sutter Home, 1978 Abern. Silver — 1977 Veedercrest, 1977 Richard Cary, 1978 Montevina Montino. Bronze — 1978 Shenandoah.

Zinfandel (late harvest): Gold — 1978 Carneros Creek. Silver — 1977 Argonaut, 1978 Sierra Vista. Bronze — 1978 Shenandoah.

Zinfandel (sweet): Gold — Shenandoah Zinfandel Port (n.v.). No silver or bronze.

Cabernet Sauvignon: Gold — 1978 Shenandoah. Silver — 1978 Montevina. Bronze — 1977 Boeger.

Mission: Gold — Montevina (n.v.). No silver. Bronze — 1977 Shenandoah.

Other reds: Gold — Shenandoah Black Muscat (n.v., sweet), 1978 Montevina Barbera. No silver. Bronze — 1978 Montevina Ruby Cabernet, 1977 Boeger Hangtown Red, 1979 Montevina Nuevo Zinfandel.

Rose: Gold — 1979 Baldinelli. No silver or bronze.

White Zinfandel: Gold — 1979 Sierra Vista. Silver — 1979 Montevina, 1979 Shenandoah. Bronze — 1979 BeauVal.

Sauvignon Blanc: Gold — 1979 Montevina. No silver or bronze.

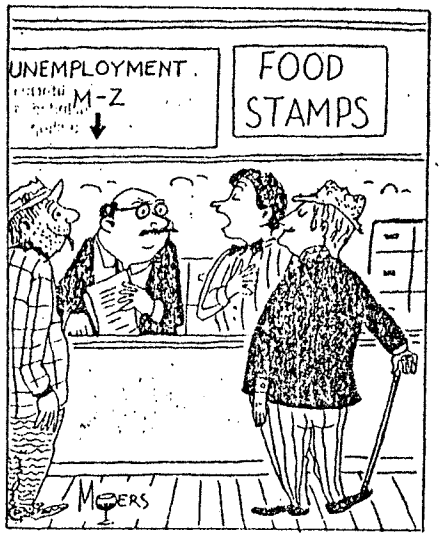
Chenin Blanc: Gold — 1979 Stevenot. No silver or bronze.

Chardonnay: Grand Award — 1979 Stevenot. No silver. Bronze — 1979 Boeger.

White Riesling: No gold. Silver — 1979 Stevenot. Bronze — 1979 Boeger.

Other white: Gold — 1979 Boeger Sierra Blanc. Silver — 1979 Montevina White Cabernet. No bronze.

The wine set



'This gentleman wishes to be directed to our Wine Stamp window.'

R.B. Read

Underground Gourmet

Island seafood

VOYAGERS, 1556 Solano Ave., Albany. Closed Monday, otherwise lunch 11:30 to 2, dinner 4 to 10. Full bar continuous. Wheelchair access. Reservations: 525-2330.

Voyagers is located in quarters occupied for some 15 years by Vin et Fromage, a restaurant established by Ed Brown after leaving Berkeley's famed Pot Luck, which he founded in 1954. Pot Luck (now Nadine) never quite lost, in its successive manifestations, a certain improvised — not to say slapdash — look which was part of Brown's style. This was also true at Vin et Fromage, as a series of ownerships sought to dress up the interior. With Voyagers, however, the site has undergone fundamental revision, losing all hint of plywood tackiness. Designer/carpenter John Gasper and crew spent three months restructuring the interior and street facade, and the place now has a comfortable air of solidity and charm, adorned with a modicum of island art and artifact. It also, for the first time, has a full bar license, with spacious rattan cocktail lounge.

We dined here as a party of three, and everything we had was quite fine. My only disappointment was in the menu, which I'd hoped would offer authentic seafoods of Polynesia (as advertised). At its debut nine months ago, it seems there was such a menu, but its dishes of raw fish and the like proved too exotic for the clientele, and within a month it was abandoned. Still, the present list has a few items of special interest, as well as such familiar dishes as the Indonesian satay and gado gado and the Filipino lumpia.

Served on the dinner at $6.50 are squid a la Formosa, marinated in plum wine, which is then used in the saute batter — tender and only slightly sweet. Reluctantly, since it was frozen, I ordered the grilled mahi mahi at $6.75, but it proved to be delicious. It had been marinated in paprika, Worcestershire sauce, garlic and pepper and was topped with coconut, pineapple and cherry. One companion had the sauteed scallops at $6.50, done with mushrooms, shallots, butter and sherry — not island fare, but exquisite.

Entrees are with soup or salad, a seasoned almond rice and sliced cucumbers in sweetened vinegar. We had a spicy tomato-beef soup, and instead of mixed greens we chose the tasty gado gado — sprouts, vegetables and tofu in peanut sauce. We'd begun with a double order of barbecued spareribs ($1 for three chubby little pieces), wonderfully succulent. We ended with a double order of banana fritters ($1.75), with a light batter only on the bottom.

Our wine was Sebastiani's white Pinot Noir, full and fruity, at $6.50. An interesting hors d'oeuvre is the pu pu platter (no snickers, that's Hawaiian) at $5.75, with the barbecue ribs, lumpia, shrimp toast, fried won ton and beef teriyaki on skewers. Popular entrees are the boneless chicken breast stuffed with ham and mushrooms and cooked in lemon ($7.50) and the beef satay at $8.95. Curried chicken or breaded pork chops are $6.75, while deep-fried items are from $6.25 for sole to $8.50 for jumbo prawns.

The working owner is gentle Herman Chang, born and raised on Taiwan (he was our waiter), while the cooks are his mother and his Taiwanese wife, May. Locally, he has worked at the Mandarin in Ghirardelli Square for six years.

At lunch, chicken or seafood salads are from $3.95 to $5.75, while a choice of five entrees at $4.50 brings vegetable and rice plus beverage. A Sunday brunch at $6.50 offers the satay or a seafood combination on a full meal with soup, beverage, etc.

Inspiration for a summer meal

By Elaine Tait
Knight News Service

2 tablespoons wine vinegar
¼ cup olive oil
½ teaspoon each thyme, pepper, sage
Dash liquid hot pepper sauce

Cut fish into serving portions and place in single layer in shallow baking dish. Combine remaining ingredients and pour over fish. Place dish in refrigerator until cooking time.

Wine with Narsai David

Guest columnist

Mining the Gold Country

There's a new find in the Mother Lode. Or rather a rediscovery of Amador County as a rich source of top quality zinfandel grapes. Back in the '50s, the gold country boasted only one major winery, D'Agostini.

I remember, one long ago day, driving through such quaint towns as Murphy's, Daffodil Hill, Volcano, certainly not thinking of wines and vines.

Then, driving out from Jackson, near the town of Plymouth, I was astounded to see a patch of vine neatly sliced into the mesquite and back brush of the rolling hills. Soon another, then another and finally I was surrounded by lush vineyards. A final turn up the hill brought us to D'Agostini Winery, founded half a century earlier with grapevines actually dating back to 1856.

D'Agostini was known for its honest, everyday, jug wines. A dry white Muscat, a "Burgundy" made of Carignane and Zinfandel and a "Reserve Burgundy" were the selections. This latter wine was produced entirely of Zinfandel and aged a minimum of three years in wooden casks. The price was a nostalgic one, about $1.50 per gallon.

As the sons of D'Agostini started an expansion plan, and mesquite bushes gave way to new vineyards, production increased enough to ship the wines into Sacramento and San Francisco.

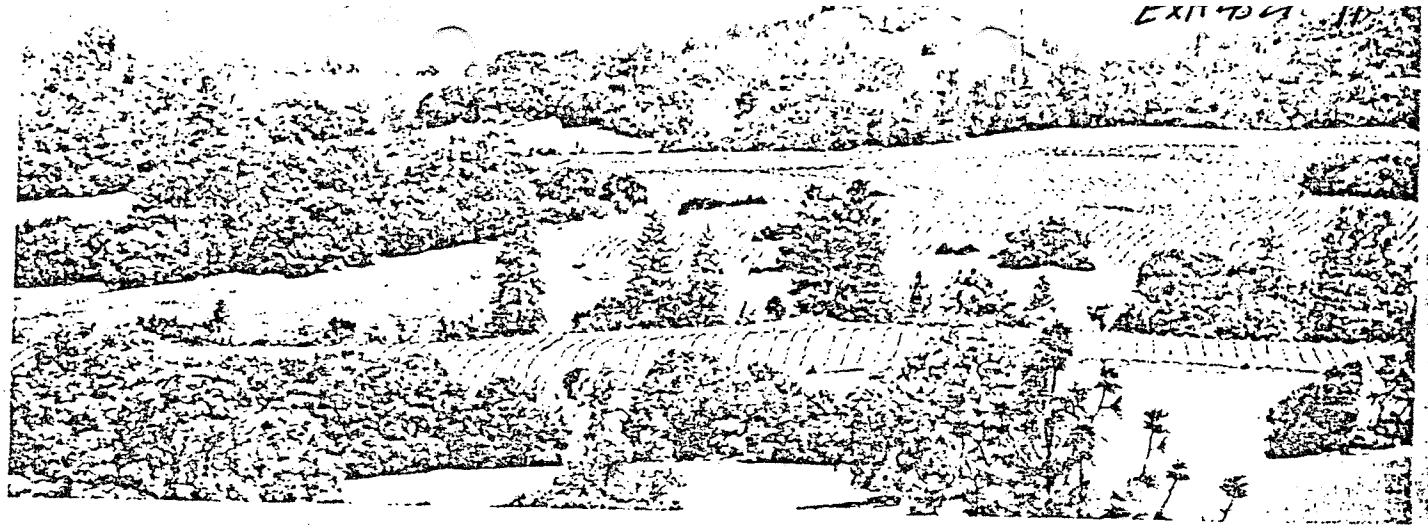
One of the first merchants to recognize the great potential of these Zinfandel grapes was Darrell Corti, the owner of a Sacramento gourmet and wine shop. He had a friend, Charles Myers, who owns the Harbor Winery in Sacramento. Myers was then experimenting with Mission and Zinfandel grapes from the vineyards of Ken Deaver in Plymouth. The rich, lusty fragrance of the Harbor Zinfandel, plus a little Sacramento area chauvinism, led Corti to introduce the wine to Sutter Home Winery in the Napa Valley.

Sutter made an experimental lot in 1968 and soon was using gold country Zinfandel exclusively. It is now the only red wine Sutter Home makes and is considered one of the finest Zinfandels produced in the state.

By the early '70's Amador County wine, both from Fiddletown and the Shenandoah Valley, were finding their way onto the labels of Mayacamas, David Bruce, Ridge, Carneros Creek and other distant wineries.

As the good news about the Zinfandel discovery spread, Amador County finally got a new winery on its own soil. Montevina was founded in 1972 by Cary and Vickie Gott to produce exciting wine from their own vineyards. In partnership with his father-in-law, a retired banker named W. E. Field, Gott is off to a fantastic start. Trained at the Fresno State College Department of Oenology, the young Gott is quite an experimenter. With established Zinfandel grapes as his mainstay, he started out with Zinfandel Nuevo in the style of a delicate, light Beaujolais Nouveau. He then made a White Zinfandel, which is kept almost as clear as a white wine by very carefully crushing and pressing the grapes to avoid coloration from the skins. The first lots of Barbera and Ruby Cabernet are astonishing in the rich intensity of their flavors.

The Montevina winery may very well hit pay dirt again, with the new test plot of Italian Nebbiolo just planted. This is the finest of the red grapes produced in the Piedmont area of northern Italy. If the luscious earthiness of the grape aromas from Amador County develop in the style of the Piedmont, Californians will have a new Gold Country wine to brag about.



Who's Buying Those Amador County Grapes?

Answer: Practically Everybody

By Charles E. Olken
and Earl G. Singer

To be perfectly candid, Amador County never possessed a glowing reputation for the production of premium wines. Names like Plymouth, Fiddletown and the **Shenandoah Valley** were not celebrated on commercial winery labels as a guarantee of quality during the early history of the California wine industry. Rather, the vineyards of the area were the haunt of home winemakers and the brokers who served this market.

Home winemakers loved the problem free, generously ripe Zinfandel and Mission grapes produced in Amador vineyards. Their affection for these easy-to-use grapes produced a solid market that allowed the growers to ride out Prohibition and the booms and busts that caused great fluctuation in vineyard acreage in other areas. Out of the way of urban expansion and small in size, Amador vineyards weathered economic pressures. The growers enjoyed a steady, comfortable market which stretched from San Francisco Bay to the Badlands of North Dakota.

These vineyards, part of the thousands of acres that graced the farm lands and foothills east of Sacramento during the last century, survived almost alone. In Sacramento County what had been 4548 acres has now dwindled to 45. In Tehema County only a trace remains of what had once been the largest vineyard in the world (4000 acres). The 1358 acres in El Dorado County dropped to 7 acres, but in Amador County the 425 acres reported in the first book published on California wines (*Wines and Vines* by Frona Eunice Wait, 1889) actually grew by a few acres to a total of 491 acres by 1968.

The recent "discovery" of the area by the premium wine producers must be credited to Charlie Myers (Harbor Winery) and Sacramento wine merchant Darrell Corti. (See our article on Sutter Home in the October 1975 issue). Delighted by the quality of the grapes he was getting, Myers gave Corti some of the Zinfandel he produced as a home winemaker and the enthusiasm was shared.

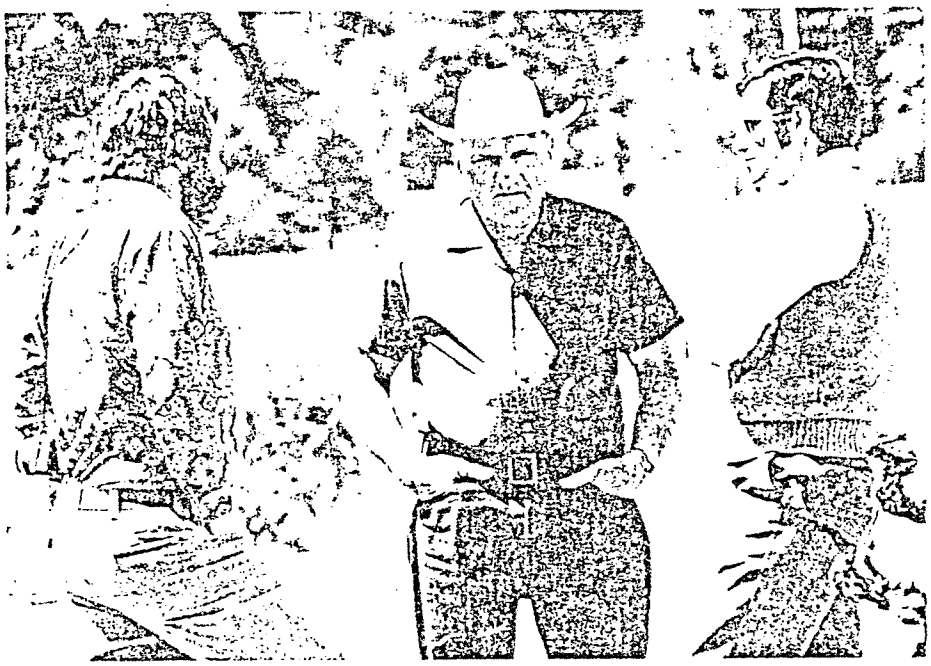
Darrell, in turn, surprised Sutter Home's winemaker Bob Trinchero with the wine's quality and Bob cautiously ordered twenty tons from the same grower that sold grapes to Myers. On the last day of August the grapes arrived neatly packed like table grapes in 50 pound lug boxes.

"This was the earliest I'd ever received grapes," Trinchero recalls, "but the grapes themselves were the real surprise. Ken (Deaver) had been selling to home winemakers who liked very ripe grapes. I hadn't thought to specify the

level of sugar I wanted so they arrived in excellent condition but at a full 32° sugar." For Sutter Home's contract in 1969 the picking level was established at a level set to normal 25° BRIX.

Very few wines have been better tuned for the market's changing tastes and by 1971 Sutter Home Zinfandel had become a success story. Contracting for substantially all of Deaver's harvest of over 200 tons, Trinchero still needed more grapes to meet the demand for his wines and build some inventory. For the next three years he found what he was looking for in the vineyards of John Ferrero. It was not until 1975 that Sutter Home built up stock enough to be able to keep their Zinfandel as much as three years before release. In the meanwhile, Sutter Home had converted from a family style winery into a Zinfandel specialty house. White and red Deaver Ranch Zinfandel accounted for over 80% of total production in 1975. The only other wines produced were a Moscato (from Muscat of Alexandria) and a dessert wine called Triple Cream (partially from Mission grapes).

If anyone could be even more committed to the special character of Amador County grapes than Trinchero, it is Cary Gott. As a young couple with good financial support, Cary and Vicki Gott were looking for a winery/vineyard site when Corti successfully turned this search towards the Shenandoah Valley. Since their purchase of an old Zinfandel vineyard in 1972, the Gott's Montevina Vineyards has become the largest grower of wine grapes in Amador County. Approximately 20 percent of the harvest is produced as Montevina wines. The size of this crush has rapidly grown from 39 tons in 1973 to over 100 tons in 1975. Montevina has also ventured as a grower into Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, Barbera, Ruby Cabernet and even has a few Primativo and Nebbiolo vines. But it is the special character of Zinfandel that established Amador County as a distinctive viticultural area and the key is climate.



Grower John Ferrero discusses a few delicate points about Amador grapes with Darrell Corti, right and writer/photographer Earl Singer. Photo by Charles Olken.

"The wind blows all the time," Vickie Gott told us. "In Summer it blows out of the Sacramento Valley and climbs to over 100 degrees during the day. Then it reverses direction. The wind comes from the Sierras and we have cool evenings and morning dew."

"What that means," interjected Cary, is that we experience no problems with molds or bunch rot." The adaptability of Zinfandel to this swing between extreme daily hot and cold temperatures make it the perfect grape for the dry-farm foothills of Amador. According to Gott, "the grapes suffer some dehydration but characteristically they produce a concentrated, intense fruit flavor. Zinfandel's aroma and flavor may be raspberry-like in other areas, but here it develops a deep, heavy fruit character."

The names of the wineries now using Amador grapes reads like a Who's Who of the California wine industry. Some have made a firm commitment. Francis Mahoney told us that he will reduce his production of Carneros Creek Amador Zinfandels as more of his own vines come into bearing "but I can't conceive of a time when we would get away from producing an Amador Zinfandel. The grapes have something very unique. It is simply an incredible place."

Dave Bennion said that Ridge Vineyards is also committed to regularly producing Amador Zinfandels. "We'd tasted some good wines from there and knew it as a place of old vineyards and dry farming. We spent a year searching out vineyards and decided to give Amador a good try," Bennion told us. "The decision did not come lightly. It required that we drop Lodi in spite of success and excellent relations with our growers

Amador Cont.

in that area. We tried five Amador vineyards as a somewhat controlled experiment and out of that came wines that supported our decision. We've had a good experience. The growers are nice people and they are trying to get good grapes out of their vines."

Other wineries, including Robert Mondavi, Joseph Phelps, Concannon, San Martin, ZD, Christian Brothers, Geyser Peak, Villa Mt Eden and Mayacamas have been more tentative about this commitment to Amador as a long term source for grapes. Mayacamas, for example, produced a huge late harvest Zinfandel in 1972 from Ken Deaver's vineyards and a lighter (14½ percent alcohol) Zin from John Ferrero's vineyards in 1973 (just being released). Another huge Zin is in the tanks from Ferreros in 1974 and no Amador grapes at all were crushed in 1975.

The growers are also far from trusting this sudden burst of demand. County Agricultural Advisor Bob Plaister said that 30 of the 31 growers were still keeping alive a portion of their home winemaker market. Typically, these are sales to "customers" of a half ton of grapes apiece.

Being suddenly "discovered" after you already knew you were there for a hundred and ten years gives the growers moments of doubt about their new market. Fortunately, the wineries have developed Amador County as a recognizable name at the retail level and this should go a long way towards assuring a firm market for the grapes.

While the wines must speak for themselves, Amador County is unique as a viticultural district. The concentration on a single variety (81 percent of its 871 acres of grape vines are Zinfandel) makes it more akin to a European appelation control area than any other wine grape growing district on the West Coast. The climatological conditions are distinctive. And, the fact that the grapes are being shipped long distances to be made into wine bearing the County as an appelation is quite unusual. These factors, the identifiable character of the grapes and the number of premium wineries (23) now using these grapes combine to make Amador County one of the most distinctive growing areas in the world. It is a fine discovery for those of us who appreciate a big, flavorful wine.

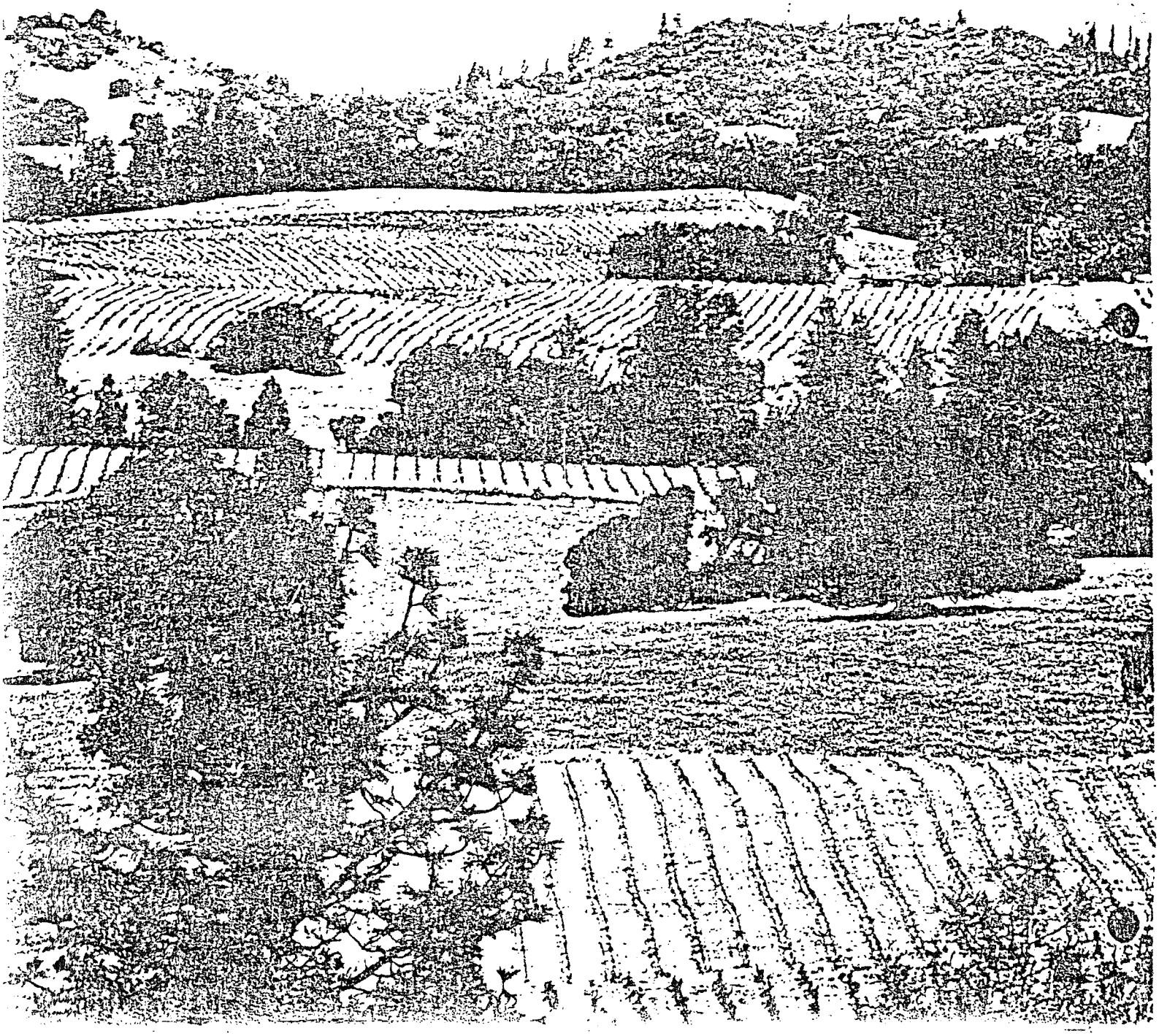
Messers Olken and Singer, publishers of a very meticulous journal, "Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wines," are Bay Area residents.

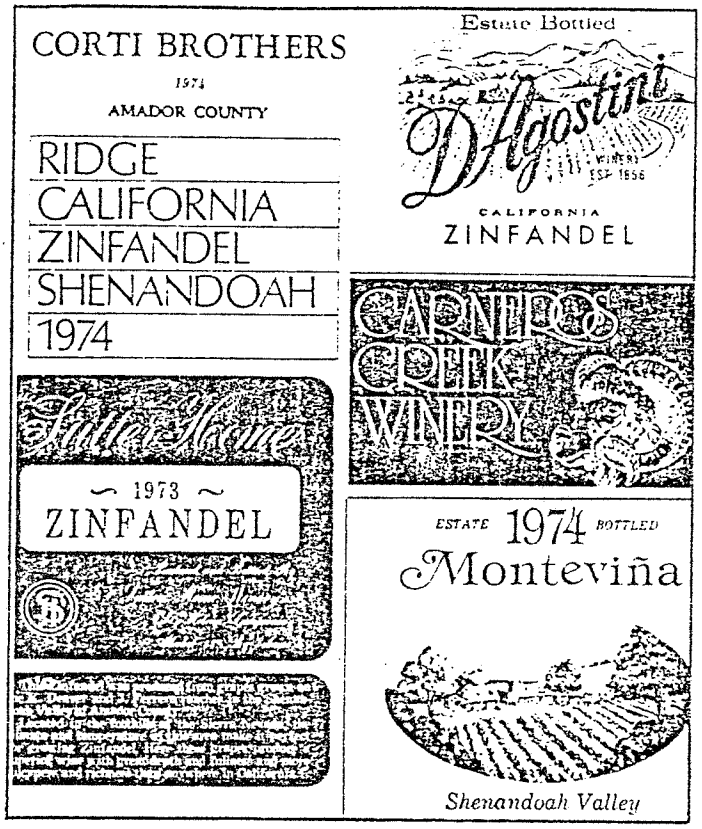
connoisseurs grade 5/76

AMADOR COUNTY

lost vineyards become an exciting discovery!

SAVE - HISTORICAL VALUE





AMADOR COUNTY

are different from Shenandoah Valley grapes," declares Corti. "They are on opposite sides of a ridge and both the microclimate and the native vegetation are different. The wines are going to be lighter in color and in the intensity of the flavors. The grapes simply don't get as ripe." In their limited experience with making wines from both sides of the ridge, Francis Mahoney and Ridge winemaker Paul Draper agree with Corti that the wines from Fiddletown and Shenandoah vineyards are different. However, Ridge found their Fiddletown to be a bigger wine than the Shenandoah grapes produced. Mahoney observed that there were real differences but he was not yet prepared to generalize about the difference. In the three years he had received Eschen (Fiddletown) grapes they had varied greatly depending upon the section of the vineyard he received. Our tasting notes indicate that the winemakers have experiences that would lead to contradictory conclusions. At the moment, the wines need to be tasted over a broader range of vintages than are currently available before the distinctive differences can be defined.

The difference, we believe, is one of relative degree. The wines all have excellent color with a

AMADOR Zinfandels

BARGETTO WINERY 1973 Amador

Light to medium nose. Good fruity aroma although low in varietal character. Slight vanillin smell of oak barrels. Medium bodied. Very hard and firm on the palate. Fruity flavors are quite short for high alcohol and tannin.

$2.95

CARNEROS CREEK 1974 Amador

Esola Vineyards, Shenandoah Valley. A lovely example of Amador Zinfandel. Rich, generous aromas full of berry and ripe "grapey" smells. Lovely, engaging intensity. Mouthfilling. Long round flavors with a suggestion of very ripe fruit in the forward Zinfandel berry-like flavors. Good aging potential. Soft enough to drink now with Pork Roast. An exceptional value.

$5.00

CARNEROS CREEK WINERY 1974 Amador

Eschen Vineyards, Fiddletown. Dark red but not as deep as most Amador Zinfandels. Medium intensity nose of straightforward berry-like fruit and wood. Fairly full-bodied wine. Acid seems a bit high (unusual in an Amador Zin) which gives the wine a hard feel on the palate. Lasting fruit and tannin in the aftertaste. Drinkable now with Grilled Steak and Onions.
New Release.

$3.50

CORTI BROTHERS 1973 Shenandoah

A portion of Sutter Home Zinfandel purchased by Darrell Corti and aged in Russian Oak "hogsheads" coopered in Portugal. The wine displays distinct piney, minty aromas and flavors that are quite surprising. Its body and texture are pure Amador in weight, underlying fruitiness and finish.

$3.75

D'AGOSTINI WINERY NV California

Estate Bottled. In the old, old California tradition, this wine aged to near senility in ancient tanks before bottling. Old, slightly oxidized aroma and flavor. Lingering aftertaste suggests Zinfandel heritage. Nice wine with macaroni and ground beef.

$2.99

GEMELLO WINERY NV California

Lot 72-A. We reviewed this wine in the November, 1974 issue prior to its release and were quite impressed. Now on the market, the wine seems to have fallen apart and displays distinctly non-Amador character, as if it had been blended with wine from another area. Slight grassy, stinky quality and low fruit in nose and flavors. Lacks typical Amador fullness.

$3.50

HARBOR WINERY 1973 Shenandoah

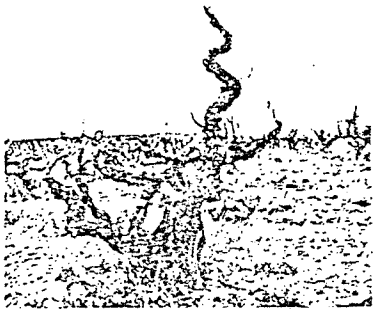
Deaver Vineyard. Fairly intense nose with ripe fruit and wood components. Full in the mouth. Young, harsh flavors with ample fruit in evidence and noticeable wood. Slightly hot, tannic finish. This wine should improve with 2-4 years of bottle age.

$3.75

purplish cast that seems to hang on even as the wine gains bottle age. As Corti states, "The flavors are more akin to Rhone wines than to Claret. It is very difficult to make an elegant wine of Amador Zinfandel." Intense flavors seem characteristic and a number of the Shanandoah Valley wines, in particular, have a grapy, jam-like aroma. As a whole, wines that display the high quality of the Amador grapes result in remarkably few flaws.

None of this surprises the grape growers. It is, however, a source of quiet amusement for experienced growers like Ken Deaver, John Ferrero and Ernest Esola to be "discovered." They knew the vines were there all the time.

As a matter of fact, the vineyards not only precede the oldest of Amador County residents but precede the establishment of the oldest of California's 523 bonded wineries. The first vines were planted in 1856 or before. Throughout Prohibition and the times of great vineyard devastation from Phylloxera, the vines of Amador continued to pump out their harvests for home winemaking enthusiasts in a market area that spread from the Dakotas to the San Francisco Bay. What the 'discovery" of Amador County means is that the richly flavored Amador County wines, which home winemakers have so long kept to themselves, are now reaching retail shelves. What's more, they are being produced by some of the best talent within the California winemaking fraternity. We heartily welcome their arrival.



Top: Eschen Vineyard near Fiddletown. Left: Gnarled vine. Right: Grower John Ferrero with Darrell Corti.

AMADOR
tasting notes

MONTEVINA WINES 1974 Shenandoah
Gott Vineyard. Very dark red. Rich Zinfandel nose with a touch of Amador "grape jam" character. Medium-full bodied. A bit harsh but with an engaging, lush, mouthfilling roundness. Fairly intense Zinfandel and ripe-berry flavors. Long, long finish. Ample tannin suggests 2-4 years of age before drinking. Could be tried now with Lamb Cutlets and Sausage. A fine value.
New Release. $2.75

MT. VEEDER VINEYARDS 1974 Amador
Esola Vineyards. Medium intensity aromas of well-ripened grapes and alcohol. The fruit is subdued. Very big and harsh in the mouth. Grapey, vanillin flavors are pleasantly rich. Slightly hot, tannic finish. Would be enjoyable with Steak Diane.
$5.00

RIDGE VINEYARDS 1974 Fiddletown
Eschen Ranch, Amador County. Deep red color. Tight nose with a full bouquet of oak and ripe Zinfandel fruit underneath. Full, lush feel on the palate. Rich, fruity entry and mouthfilling ripe-berry flavor with very evident woody components. Slight harshness in the finish will diminish with bottle age. Very enjoyable now with savory dishes such as Brisket stuffed with Minced Beef and Capers.
New Release. $5.00

RIDGE VINEYARDS 1974 Shenandoah
Amador County. In comparison to the Ridge Fiddletown, this wine seems less full and lush in the mouth. The light to medium intensity nose is pleasantly fruity with good Zinfandel character and a touch of wood. There is firmness on the palate that gives the ripe Zinfandel and oak flavors a slightly hard, not rounded quality. The finish is fruity and slightly hot. Bottle age may bring smoothness that is wanting here.
New Release. $4.75

STORY VINEYARDS 1974 Shenandoah
This wine has gained popularity for its overdone, raisiny quality that is reminiscent of Port. But Port, it isn't, and late harvest Zinfandel, it doesn't resemble.
$5.00

SUTTER HOME WINERY 1973 Shenandoah
Deaver and Ferrero Ranches. Medium intensity nose. Slightly sweet, ripe Zinfandel character. Medium-full bodied with a "hard" impression in the mouth. Grapey, varietal flavor with a touch of wood. Fairly tannic finish. Needs age to soften and round out.
$5.75

ZD WINES 1973 Sierra
71% Shenandoah Valley (Gott Vineyard); 29% Clements District. Fairly intense nose is slightly Port-like with an attractive herbal character to the fruit. Very obvious wood blends with Zinfandel character in the flavors. More claret than Amador in style.
$3.95

Vignettes

Amador County has become 'vine mine'

by Richard Paul Hinkle

Amador means "love of gold," and more than half the gold mined in the entire Mother Lode came from the mines in this small county. About an hour's drive east of Sacramento, the 125-year-old county is more a wine mine today.

Of the seven wineries that crushed grapes last fall, only two are open to the public on a daily basis: the hole-in-the-wall Amador Winery at Main & O'Neill Alley in Amador City and the oldest winery in the county, D'Agostini.

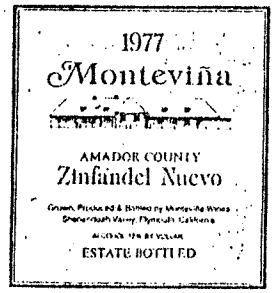
It was in 1911 that Enrico D'Agostini acquired the vineyard and winery founded in 1856 by Adam Uhlinger. Operated by Enrico's four sons, the winery still uses white oak barrels milled from trees grown on the property in the last century.

Visitors to the 225,000-gallon winery are shown the original cellar, with its stout oak beams and native stone.

Three other wineries share the secluded Shenandoah Valley with the D'Agostinis. Two, Montevina and Story, crushed their first grapes in 1973; the other, Shenandoah Vineyards, came along four years later.

On Shenandoah School Road three miles northeast of Plymouth, Montevina got its vineyard start in 1971 when banker Walker H. Field purchased the Massoni Ranch and his son-in-law, Cary Gott, began adding to the existing vineyard of Zinfandel and Mission vines.

The mood of Montevina was set [illegible] crush, in the basement of [illegible] Zinfandel [illegible], one



red, and one "Nuevo" (by carbonic maceration). The following year, a well-insulated metal building was erected.

A "Montino" Zinfandel has been added (a lighter styled wine for early consumption), as well as Sauvignon Blanc, red and white Cabernet Sauvignons, Barbera, and Ruby Cabernet.

The story at Story Vineyards is Dr. Eugene Story, veterinarian owner of the Midtown Animal Hospital in Sacramento. Story quite naturally fell into wine while attending the University of California at Davis. Also, his grandfather had raised grapes near Orangevale (a Baptist minister, he did not produce wine).

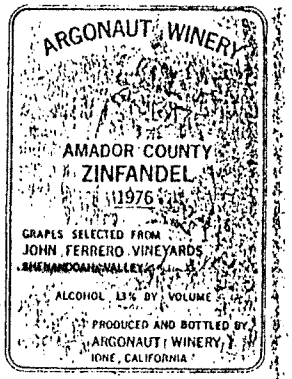
Story's vineyard and winery were initially dubbed Cosumnes River Vineyard, but he found that too many people had difficulty with the name.

Story is one of those who feel that Zinfandel should be the only variety grown in the Shenandoah Valley, though he has also produced a thick, sweet wine he calls "Shenandoah Rose" from the 10 acres of Mission on his property. He commutes to his winery on weekends in an old Cessna 172.

Just over the hill from Story is Shenandoah Vineyards, the pride of Lee and Shirley Sobon and their six children. Lee is a former research engineer (Lockheed) and Shirley is a registered nurse.

When the Sobons first planting vines they will have 25 acres of Zinfandel, Barbera, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Sauvignon Blanc. Lee loves to dabble in Sherries and has also produced a lovely dessert wine from tray-dried Mission grapes that he calls "Mission — Del Sol."

Southwest of Plymouth, about four miles north of Ione, is Argonaut Winery, operated by four Aero-Jet engineers and their families. A fifth partner



is Guild winemaker Neal Overboe. The winery and two-acre Barbera vineyard are at the home of partners, Jim and Lynn Payne.

Argonaut produces just 1,000 cases a year of Zinfandel and Barbera. The Zinfandel comes from Amador and Calaveras counties, and the Barbera is from their own cordon-trained vines.

Southeast of Sutter Creek is the StoneRidge (his spelling) Winery of Gary Porteous. Three acres of Ruby Cabernet separate his home/winery from the road. He also buys Zinfandel, some of which he vinifies as a dry white wine.

A tall, friendly fellow with a shock of brown hair, Porteous fits winegrowing between a full time job as a P.G.&E. lineman and a part-time job carving gravestones.

Four new wineries are expected to be bonded for the coming crush, all of which will be within the Shenandoah Valley. John Kenworthy is a former aeronautical engineer who is gradually restructuring a 128-year-old barn into a small winery. Further down Shenandoah Road is the new winery of Kaiser engineer Ed Baldinelli and grape grower John Miller.

Just north of those operations will be the Santino Winery (across the street from the Sobons) and the Beau Val Winery (near Story Vineyard). Both wineries have as winemaker Scott Harvey, an enologist schooled in Germany who used to work for Story.

It is encouraging to see the [illegible] pride that has stimulated the increase of winemaking capability in Amador County. If the growers work at [illegible]ing in their fruit before it becomes overripe and the winemakers equal or better their coastal counterparts, Amador County's vinous reputation can be naught but increased.

Zinfandels of The Eschen and Esola Vineyards

by Thomas R. Hill

Most California wine enthusiasts are well acquainted with the "discovery" of Amador County Zinfandel by Sacramento merchant Darrell Corti after tasting one of home winemaker Charlie Myers' wines. The big Deaver Zinfandel produced by Sutter Home in 1968 defined the genre of Amador-style Zinfandels which have since followed that success.

Less familiar are some of the outstanding Zinfandels lately produced from the Amador vineyards of Chester Eschen and Ernest Esola by Carneros Creek, Mount Veeder, and Ridge wineries. This article examines in depth the background of these wines and attempts to characterize some of their stylistic features.

THE GRAPES

The gently rolling foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains in Amador County with its red decomposed granite soil make up one of the most unique grape growing regions in California, if not the world. The area is officially classified as a warm Region III- cool Region IV by the UC Davis degree- days classification scheme, roughly equivalent to Lodi in the Central Valley. But this classification is deceptive.

Cool Spring weather significantly delays bud break in Amador County compared with coastal growing areas. The temperatures during the final ripening phase can often be quite high, resulting in a rise in sugar level of several degrees Brix in one day. This abbreviated, intense growing season is regarded elsewhere as inimical to production of fine wines, producing high sugar-low acid grapes.

Such is not the case in Amador. Cold air flows down from the Sierra Nevadas nightly, keeping the average temperature sufficiently low to maintain high acidity levels.

Even more important is the low humidity that characterizes Amador. Bunch rot is virtually never a problem. Furthermore, once the grapes reach 25° or 26° Brix, they begin to dehydrate, but not raisen. This has much the same effect as dehydration from botrytis (without the corresponding chemical and flavor changes), concentrating the sugar, acidity, and flavors. For example, the Esola grapes in 1978 came into Carneros Creek Winery with the incredible figures of: Sugar: 31.5° Brix, Total acidity: 0.80 gm/100 ml pH: 3.28. Ernest Esola has even seen grapes in his vineyard as high as 37° Brix, yet still perfectly sound.

THE VINEYARDS

The Eschen Ranch near Fiddletown was purchased in 1972 by Chester Eschen. It totals 83 acres, with 50 acres in grapes. The majority (40 acres) is Zinfandel with the remainder being Mission (5-6 acres), Muscat, and Black Muscat.

The vineyard was planted in 1924 (during the height of Prohibition) by a man named Ostron and worked with mules for many years. About two thirds of the vines are planted on grafted rootstock, the remainder being on their own roots; phylloxera not being a problem in Amador. The vines are trained by the old Italian-style head pruning method rather than more productive cane pruning. This keeps the yield down around 2 to 2-1/2 tons/acre (dropping to less than 1 ton/acre in 1977 due to the drought). No irrigation is used.

A number of home winemakers have been purchasing Eschen grapes for many years. Until recently, most of the grapes went to East-Side Winery in Lodi for their jug blends. In 1972 and 1973, the grapes went to Robert Mondavi Winery. Since 1974, the Zinfandel grapes have gone to Carneros Creek and Ridge. The other varieties presently go to Shenandoah Vineyards.

"Just as with Napa Cabernet, Amador Zins are not all stamped from the same mold."

About a mile to the west, as the crow flies, across a ridge of hills, lies the Esola Vineyard in the Shenandoah Valley, near the town of Plymouth. The ranch came into the Esola family in 1910, the grapes being planted shortly thereafter. The property is presently owned by brothers John and Ernest, with Ernest and his wife, Lena d'Agostini Esola, responsible for its operation.

The Esolas have about 90 acres under vines, mostly to Zinfandel. They also have about 7 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon, 7 acres of Sauvignon Blanc, and an acre or so of Mission and Barbera.

The Zinfandel is more than 70 years old, originating from cuttings obtained locally. The Mission and Barbera are 20 years old, and the Cabernet and Sauvignon Blanc a youthful 15 years. The vines are all head pruned. The original Zin is on its own roots with the recent plantings being grafted vines on St. George rootstock. The vineyard is dry-farmed, although several wells were sunk in 1977 to sustain their drought-starved vines.

The authenticity of the Sauvignon Blanc is somewhat clouded, the vines not coming from certified nursery stock. Bob Plaister, agricultural extension agent for Amador County, identifies Montevina as the only bearing acreage of that variety in the County and disclaims any knowledge of the exact variety of the white grapes on the Esola property. Nonetheless, Lena Esola states that the vines are definitely Sauvignon Blanc. At any rate, cognizant of the white wine boom, the Esolas plan to put in another 1000 such vines this year.

For years, the Esolas hauled their grapes down to Oakland for the home winemaking trade. The Barbera and Mission still go to these customers. In 1974 and 1975, they sold their Zin to Carneros Creek, Mount Veeder, and Ridge. Since 1976, they have been split between Carneros Creek and Ridge. Starting in 1974, all the Cabernet has gone to Carneros Creek. In 1978, the Sauvignon Blanc went to Caymus Vineyards for their Sauvignon Blanc wine.

THE AMADOR-STYLE ZINFANDEL

The string of successful Zinfandels produced by Sutter Home from 1968 thru 1972 defined the style of Amador County Zinfandels: big, heavy, tannic, intensely fruity, rather alcoholic wines. These wines display, to varying degrees, a unique smell and flavor often described as Amador dusty briary, found in no other Zinfandel produced in California.

In 1972, Mayacamas Vineyards produced the first of the Late Harvest Amador Zinfandels, a huge tannic wine at 17.5 percent alcohol, but still showing the Amador flavor. Since 1973, the Sutter Home Zins have tended towards a lighter, more drinkable style of wine and lack the power of earlier editions. Charlie Myers continues his original style of Amador Zinfandel from Deaver vineyard grapes, now under his Harbor Winery label.

The Amador-style Zin is best exemplified by those of Cary Gott's Montevina since 1974. His regular and Special Select Zins display a huge, intense, usually alcoholic style which oftentimes belies their early drinkability.

Yet even within the context of Amador-style Zinfandels, the wines all display distinct shades of differences, reflecting both the differing microclimates within Amador from which the grapes originate and also the winemaker's stylistic intent. Just as with Napa Cabernet, Amador Zins are not all stamped from the same mold.

CARNEROS CREEK WINERY

Frank Mahoney, winemaker at Carneros Creek Winery near Napa, purchased his first Zinfandel grapes in 1973 from the Eschen Ranch. Since 1974, he has purchased Zinfandel from both the Eschen and Esola vineyards.

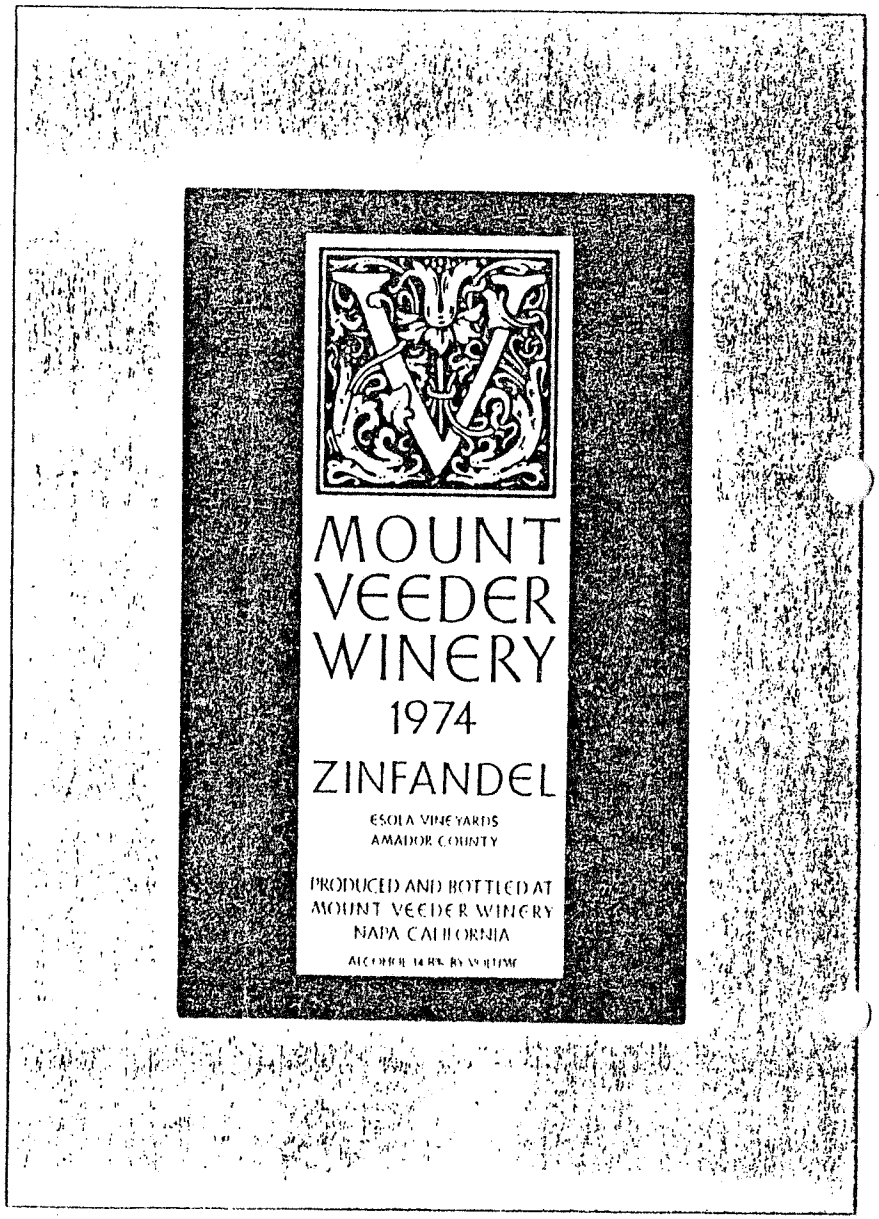
Mahoney's interest is primarily in Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon, using the Amador Zinfandels to "fill up the cracks" in his operation. The quality of his Zinfandels clearly belies his disinterest.

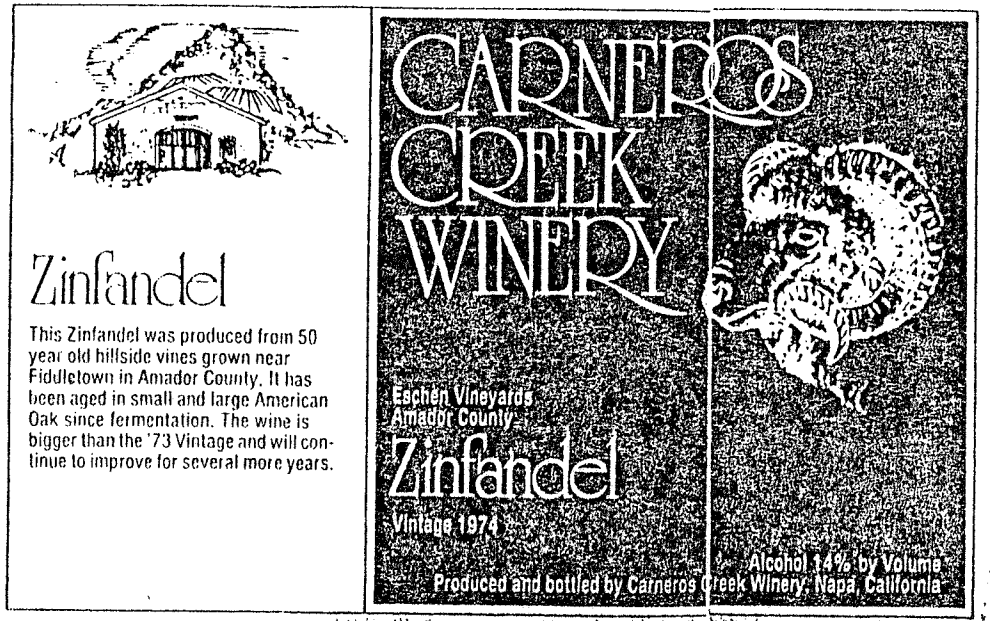
Mahoney does nothing particularly different with his Amador wines. They are fermented at about 85°F in stainless steel after innoculation with a pure yeast strain, on the skins for 8-11 days and pressed at about 3° sugar, and matured in American oak for slightly more than a year. Sometimes they go through the malolactic fermentation and sometimes not, the Esola being more prone to a malolactic than the Eschen.

Even when the grapes come in at nearly the same sugar/acid levels, the wines from the two vineyards are distinctly different. Mahoney finds a slightly greater richness in the Esola that's not in the Eschen. He contrasts the Esola and Eschen with the same stylistic differences of Château Palmer and Château Montrose.

The 1973 Carneros Creek Eschen Zinfandel was probably the lightest Amador Zin Mahoney has produced, reflecting the unusually high yield of that year. The two '74 Zins illustrate near-perfect growing conditions; big wines at about 14-1/2% alcohol, both harvested at nearly the same sugar/acid levels. The long cool growing season and the large crop load in 1975 produced two less ripe Zins at about 12-1/2% alcohol.

In 1976, a storm coming up from Southern California panicked the Eschen pickers to harvest early at about 21° Brix. Esola decided to wait out the storm but it stopped short of his vineyard. Unfortunately, the pickers had left the county and by the time he had regrouped them, his





Zinfandel was up to 27-1/2% Brix and rising rapidly.

Mahoney produced three different Amador Zins from those grapes. The first Amador County Zin was a blend of the under ripe Eschen grapes and the least over-ripe Esola grapes, at 13.3 percent alcohol. The Lot II Amador County Zin was about 20 percent Eschen and 80 percent Esola; a bigger, richer wine at 14.8 percent alcohol. And, finally, an Amador County Late Picked Zin was produced from 32° Brix Esola grapes, fermenting out to 16.7 percent alcohol.

The two 1977 Eschen and Esola Zins came in at a reasonable sugar level, fermenting out to around 14 percent alcohol. But the severe drought cut the yield down below one ton/acre, producing two intensely flavored wines.

The 1978 harvest again proved to be problematic. The Eschen grapes came in at 23.8° Brix and fermented out dry. Mahoney feels this wine is more rounded and less astringent than is typical for the Eschen wines, perhaps even his best Amador Zin yet. The Esola came in at 31.5° Brix. In the Fall of 1979, it was still fermenting slowly at about 4° Brix and over 15 percent alcohol. Mahoney tried a test batch of Port but was unhappy with the result; the wine had already fermented out too much sugar. He's not certain what kind of wine his '78 Esola will become.

Because of the heat wave ripening everything at once and insufficient fermenting capacity, Carneros Creek was unable to take the Esola Zinfandel grapes in 1979 at the time they reached acceptable sugar levels. The Eschen grapes came into the winery earlier at 24.8° Brix and Mahoney characterizes them as the best looking grapes he's seen yet from the Eschen vineyard.

The Carneros Creek Amador Zins are not the typical Amador-style Zinfandel. Although they are usually dark intense Amador-flavored Zins with a slight oak component, they are much like the Clos du Val Zins; big intense wines with a distinct elegance and breed. Certainly, they cannot be characterized as heavy-handed and clumsy.

Mahoney professes a dislike for the high alcohol Late Harvest style of Zinfandel and does not make them by design. He feels that as these wines age and lose their fruit, the alcohol overwhelms any complexity and simply adds to the dumbness of the wine.

RIDGE VINEYARDS

Paul Draper, winemaker at Ridge Vineyards, made their first Amador Zinfandel in 1974. The Eschen Ranch was labeled Fiddletown. The Shenandoah contained mostly grapes from the Esola vineyard with small amounts from the Storey vineyard and a third Amador vineyard.

Ridge treats their Amador Zins in much the same way as other Zinfandels. Fermentation is in stainless steel with a unique submerged cap, using the natural fermentative yeasts present on the grapes. Fermentation is initiated by the species Kloeckera up to abut 6 percent alcohol. At this point, the fermentation is carried briefly by the species Hansenula, immediately followed by the traditional Saccharomyces cerevisiae var. ellipsoideus (the strain most wineries innoculate with) until fermentation is completed. This fermentation chain is identical to that found in Bordeaux where use of the natural yeasts is a much more widespread practice. Although Ridge is one of a very few California wineries using the natural fermentative yeasts (others being Congress Springs, Santa Cruz Mountain, and d'Agostini in Amador County), Draper discounts this as being a significant factor in their wines. The fermentation is on the skins for 9-12 days, essentially until dryness.

The Ridge Amador Zinfandels have thus far always gone through a malolactic fermentation. No fining or filtration is done unless absolutely necessary for bottle stability. Maturation is in American oak for about a year and a half. Clarification is done by careful racking every four months. Draper credits the malolactic and their cellar treatment as the most important factors in the making of their Amador Zins, feeling this results in a more complex and refined wine.

Draper likewise finds the Eschen and Esola grapes to give distinctly different wines. He finds more richness and fruit intensity in the Shenandoah and a harder, more tannic, more backward when young, wine in the Fiddletown.

Draper admits to having little fondness for the typical intense, alcoholic Amador style Zinfandel, feeling the wines are clumsy and one-dimensional. The Ridge Amador Zins clearly reflect his dislike for that style. The grapes are harvested earlier than normal (for Amador) to make what Ridge terms a "claret" style wine, a wine less intensely fruity and lower in alcohol than typical for Amador-style Zinfandel.

The two '74 Zins fermented out to 14-1/2 percent alcohol, rather substantial for the "claret" style Draper espouses. For the '75, '76, and '77, Ridge was able to keep the alcohol down to lower levels, ranging from about 12 percent to almost 14 percent.

The exception was the Esola grapes in 1976 which, like at Carneros Creek, came in at very ripe levels. Ridge designated the resulting wine as their 1976 Late Harvest Zin-

"These wines display a unique smell and flavor often described as Amador dusty-briary, found in no other Zinfandel produced in California."

fandel. The majority of it was released as Late Harvest II, at 15.4 percent alcohol. Seven barrels of the wine made from somewhat riper grapes were given longer aging and will be released in the Fall of 1979 as Late Harvest I.

Having done the experiment with the '75 thru '77 Zins, Draper has modified his philosophy towards the wines somewhat. He now feels the Amador grapes are best harvested slightly over-ripe, around 25° Brix, to produce a wine of about 14 percent alcohol, more along the lines of the '74's. Reflecting this change in technique, Draper feels his '78 Fiddletown (Eschen), at about 15 percent alcohol, is his best effort yet with Amador grapes. Like Carneros Creek, his '78 Shenandoah (Esola) grapes came in very ripe. There are presently three distinct batches, two of which are still fermenting in early Fall of 1979. Disliking Zinfandels with slight residual sugar, Draper has not yet decided the eventual fate of this wine.

Ridge established its reputation among California wine enthusiasts in the late '60's and very early '70's with its huge, intense, tannic Zinfandels. The 1970 Jimsomare and Occidental wines probably best typify this winemaking style. Since the mid-1970's, there has been grumbling among some Ridge aficionados about the trend of recent Ridge Zins towards a lighter, less alcoholic and intense style of wine. It seems clear that there *has* been a gradual change in the style of their wines, but certainly no lowering of the quality.

Draper contends that the aim of Ridge has not changed at all. He feels the so-called "old-style" Ridge wines were sometimes too one-dimensional and did not always develop the desired complexity with bottle age. He states a preference for making the darkest and most tannic wines that the grapes will give, but not at the expense of the complexity in the wine.

MOUNT VEEDER WINERY

Mike Bernstein, owner and winemaker at Mount Veeder Winery near Napa, purchased Esola grapes in both 1974 and 1975, primarily because of a lack of Napa Zinfandel grapes of comparable quality. Since Ridge and Carneros Creek established a contract with Esola in 1976, he has not had access to these grapes. Beginning with the 1977 crush, he has two acres of his own Zinfandel vines bearing upon Mount Veeder. His '78 is a big, Late Harvest style wine at 17.2 percent alcohol and 0.6 percent residual sugar.

Bernstein's winemaking has few significant differences from Carneros Creek's or Ridge's. Fermentation is in stainless steel with frequent pumping over the cap, on the skins until dryness. Both vintages were put through a malolactic with the idea of obtaining more complexity and perhaps better bottle development. However, unlike Ridge and Carneros Creek, barrel aging for about a year and a half is done in French Nevers oak.

The Mount Veeder's are probably the closest of the three to the typical Amador style Zinfandel, but stylistically more akin to Carneros Creek than Ridge. The wines are normally more intense and tannic than Mahoney's, with a more distinct oak component. And, like Carneros Creek, they display an elegance and class not often found in Amador Zins.

Tasting Notes

RIDGE

Fiddletown 1975: Medium color, soft light spicy-oaky nose, very tart light spicy hard flavor, short spicy finish with somewhat sour aftertaste, slight tannin and at or beyond its peak, more berry-like and less Amador-like than the Shenandoah '75.

Shenandoah 1975: Medium color, strong berry-dusty-perfumey nose, soft spicy-dusty-cherry flavors, long soft spicy-earthy finish with slight tannin, nearing its peak.

Fiddletown 1974: Medium color, strong spicy-cherry-perfumey-horse collar complex nose, well glycerined, soft spicy floral developed flavors, medium soft spicy complex finish with little tannin, near its peak.

Shenandoah 1974: Medium-light color, soft spicy-perfumed talcum powder slightly oaky nose, soft rich intense fruit and Amador dusty flavors, well glycerined, long soft spicy dusty developed finish, slight tannin but nearing its peak.

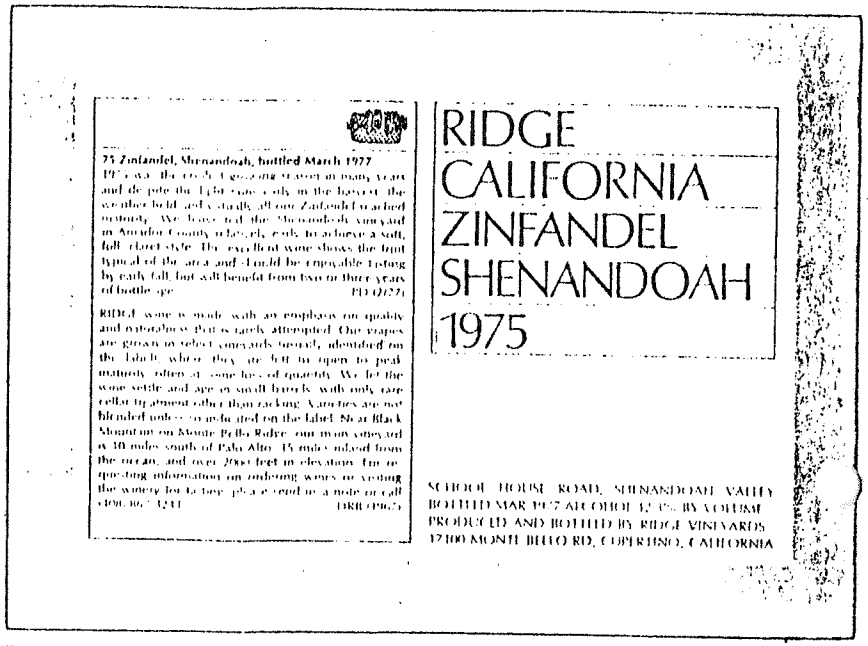
CARNEROS CREEK

Eschen 1975: Medium-dark color, intense chocolate slightly oaky-alcoholic nose, rough Amador dusty-cherry flavor, medium tannic cherry-salami finish, needs a year or two yet.

Esola 1975: Dark color, intense chocolate-cherry Amador Zin nose, soft rich spicy Amador dusty flavor, soft rich spicy dusty slightly stemmy finish, slight tannin but nearing its peak, softer richer more Amador dusty than the Eschen '75.

Eschen 1974: Medium-dark color, strong spicy perfumey cherry slightly stemmy nose, soft light spicy Amador dusty flavor, light tart some-tannic finish, nearing its peak, harder and more austere than the Esola '74.

Esola 1974: Ullaged to the shoulder, medium-dark color, light fruity developed tobacco cigar-box complex nose, soft spicy cigar-box cedary slightly rough flavor, medium



light developed spicy finish, little tannin and at or beyond its peak, a nicely developed complex wine.

MOUNT VEEDER

Esola 1975: Dark color, intense Amador-dusty spicy-salami nose, heavy intense tannic earthy cherry somewhat dusty flavor, medium dusty-cherry oaky finish with some tannin, may improve some yet, lacks the roundness and balance of the '74.

Esola 1974: Dark color, intense minty pencil shavings somewhat oaky nose, heavy body, rich oaky minty intense fruit flavor with little Amador dust, medium minty-oaky-cherry finish, some tannin and needs several years yet, seems the youngest of all the wines.

Esola 1974 (American oak): Dark color, strong spicy perfumey cinammon nose much different from the French oak but not easily identifiable as American oak, seems harder, more tannic, more Amador-style and less complex than the French oak.

Of the Ridge's, the Fiddletown '74 was the clear favorite. When the two '74's were first tasted by our group shortly after their release in early 1976, the disappointment in the wines was virtually unanimous. Most people had expected wines displaying a unique combination of the "old-style" Ridge power and the Amador-style brawn. The wines seemed light, the slight amount of fruit intensity covered by the American oak, lacking in Amador character, and low tannin levels that indicated little aging potential. The '75's a year later merely reinforced this gloomy conclusion.

Expecting somewhat enfeebled, over-aged wines in this tasting, nearly all tasters were amazed at the wonder 3-1/2 years of bottle age had wrought on these wines. The '74's were two of the best examples of mature, developed Zinfandels we have tasted. The complexity and refinement Draper strives for in the Ridge wines had indeed appeared.

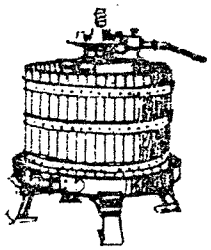
Among the Carneros Creeks, the '74 Esola appeared to be the choice of most tasters, with little preference among the other three. When this wine was tasted shortly after its release, it was a big black tannic Zinfandel for which many predicted a very long life. It, too, had developed very nicely into a complex and refined wine, but much earlier than most had expected. Perhaps the excessive bottle leakage was responsible for its early maturity.

Of the Mount Veeders, the '74 was easily most preferred; although Bernstein seemed to have extracted more from the 1975 grapes than did Carneros Creek or Ridge. The two oaks produced quite distinct wines, but there was no clear preference between the two.

Both Draper's and Mahoney's characterization o Esolas as possessing more richness and fruit was borne out in the tasting, although this difference seems to decrease as the wines age. As expected, the '74's were universally preferred over the '75's.

Among all the wines, there was a nearly even split between the Ridge Fiddletown '74, Carneros Creek Esola '74, and Mount Veeder '74. The choice was based more on stylistic preferences than on any perceived quality factors. All of the wines were fine examples of California Zinfandels, but distinctly not "typical" Amador-like Zinfandels.

Vintage Wine Merchants
HARVEST REPORT-1980



INTRODUCTION

In July of this year, when we issued our California Wine Grape Report, we quoted the comment made by virtually every winemaker and grape grower: "This is the strangest spring and early summer I can ever remember." That strangeness continued into summer, throughout the harvest, and on into the fermentation stage. The 1980 vintage, which many people thought would be the greatest of all time, changed considerably in its final phase; while we cannot count on the quality of a vintage before the wines have emerged from the fermenters, there is no question that there will be some extraordinary wines this year. The least that can be said is that it will be "very good".

Some winemakers found the vintage incredibly perfect, some found it to be a disaster. Overall, however, it has been the most complex, frustrating and one of the shortest vintages in recent memory. The multiple problems associated with the 1980 vintage have led growers and vintners to say "It was the craziest year I've ever seen; I hope to God I never have to see another one like it!"

The 1980 growing season began two to three weeks earlier than usual, due to mild winter weather. Generally, the critical "bloom" period went without a hitch, but for most varietals it was the longest bloom viticulturists have experienced, lasting 30 days or more rather than the usual ten days. At first this did not present a problem, but was responsible for uneven ripening later in the season.

The real problems began after the bloom and set period, when the weather simply refused to warm up. Summer temperatures, usually in the mid-80's by June, hovered in the low 70's. Fog was an almost daily occurrence, persisting even through July and August. At that time, heat is very much needed to push the grapes from their small green stage through to maturity; for the most part heat just wasn't there, and growers began wondering nervously if the grapes would ripen at all, and if they did, could maturity be reached before the first of the winter rains?

Vintners who had readied equipment for the usual late-August start of the crush found themselves standing around and waiting well into September until the first grapes began to trickle in. The crush did not get into full swing until the latter part of the month, when there was a very severe heat wave that sent sugars soaring. Suddenly the grapes all gained maturity at the same time.

In those high temperatures it was impossible to pick quickly enough. This fact, added to the problem of handling the overload at the fermenters, resulted in many of the grapes becoming overripe, sunburned or raisined. Some wonderful fruit was harvested by those growers who had the ability to pick selectively; those who were not able to do so just crossed their fingers and hoped for the best. Many did get almost unbelievably high acids in conjunction with excellent to very high sugar, and balances that seldom appear except in textbooks. They also got a large amoung of both underripe and overripe fruit, and it is safe to say that a large percentage of the fruit remaining was a mixed bag that sorely tested winemakers' skills.

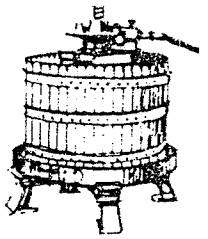
Shortly after the vintage gained full momentum, some additional problems appeared at the fermenters with "stuck fermentations", i.e., many wines refused to ferment to dryness, even with specialized yeast strains that were developed to combat just this problem. At this writing, many fermentations are still stuck, and there is a great deal of testing and researching going on to determine why. In quite a few wineries, malolactic fermentations are refusing to start at all.

Theories on the cause of these irregularities are generally centered around the very high acid and low pH of the grapes this year. But the final answer might be deeper than that and lie in the particularly unusual grapes resulting from this unique season. There seems to be a general shortage of amino acids and other nutrients needed by yeast to complete the work of fermentation. Fermentation science is a very complex subject, and it might be years before answers are available to help vintners through a similar situation.

Another problem, though less mysterious, was just as serious. Many fermentations were yielding high levels of hydrogen sulphide (H_2S) in the wines, a result of extensive mildew problems occurring throughout the State. In the Central Valley, growers were sulphuring vines every eight days and still were unable to hold mildew in check; extensive sulphuring also had to be done in most of the North Coast counties. Contrary to popular belief, mildew flourishes best in relatively dry conditions and low heat; about 78 degrees F. These were the exact conditions which prevailed in many areas. Usually, to prevent H_2S problems at the fermenters, all sulphuring is stopped at least two weeks or more prior to harvesting. This year many growers continued their sulphuring programs up until just a few days before harvesting, as they feared that photosynthesis might be interrupted. Moreover, for the first time in the North Coast there was widespread application of wettable sulphur rather than the usual dry dusting. Wettable sulphur has the advantage of sticking to the leaves and canes and is not blown away by winds. The problem is that it also sticks to the fruit, so an excess amount of sulphur could be transported to the fermenters, where yeast converts it to H_2S which in turn gives a "rotten egg" smell to wine.

To summarize, the North Coast vintage began around mid-September and ended late in October, therefore the normal vintage period of about 75 days was compressed by the heat this year to around 50 days, probably setting a record for shortness. Any definitive judgement of the wines, therefore, would be impossible at this time, but we feel our guarded overall evaluation of "very good" to be the lowest common denominator. A large number of wines seem to be excellent indeed, and there is an unusually high number of great wines. We regret that we cannot provide a more solid overall quality assessment, due to the spotty nature of this vintage in terms of quality, complexity and lateness. At this time we are only certain that 1980 was NOT the greatest vintage of all time, but it may prove to be one of the best.

In order to draw a more specific profile of the 1980 vintage, following are our observations combined with comments by various vintners in a number of the principal growing regions.



SONOMA VALLEY

As noted, temperatures in this region were abnormally low through the spring and up to mid summer, compounded at that time by a heavy influx of fog throughout August, a most unusual occurrence. However, fog usually is common during spring, which this year was without fog. This phenomenon allowed some early progress in photosynthesis by way of incident solar energy and light exposure in spite of low temperatures. Generally speaking set was fair to good. Crop size was related to vineyard location, with the same varietal setting well in one part of the valley, poorly in another. The low temperatures brought on a good deal of shot berry formation and shatter, resulting in very loose bunches particularly in Cabernet Sauvignon, and considerable wide spread crop loss. However the loose bunch condition did help control bunch rot and mildew which was very extensive this year due to dry atmospheric conditions and low temperature. A number of vineyards were not picked because of extensive rot.

The heat support of late fall brought on a rapid rise in grape sugar but without the usual expense of a sharp drop in acids. This was no doubt becuase of the very long and cool growing season. Sugar/acid balances in red wine varietals, with the exception of Cabernet, were often in the area of 26° Brix with 1.4 total acid. Similar balances were common in white varietals.

With the harvest just getting into full swing, a heat wave struck September 29th that sent temperatures soaring to record levels. The heat wave broke on October 3rd, but during the those few days sugar in the grapes had shot up as much as three-quarters of a point per day. Since the flood of grapes, virtually all having reached maturity at once, could not be handled at the fermenters, a very large percentage of the total crop became overripe and sunburned except for those vineyards that were picked selectively. Moreover, because of the cool season there had been very little irrigation of the vines. Thus when the heat struck, causing rapid moisture expiraton by the vines, there was insufficient ground water available for replacement in spite of relatively cool nights. This in turn caused serious fluid loss in the grape berries resulting in extensive raisining.

Following the heat wave very high temperatures continued through October with the exception of a brief light rain on October 12th which did no appreciable damage and in fact helped to hold down still rising sugars.

There is no question that 1980 will go down in the history books as the year of high acids. "It was unbelievable," said Richard Arrowood, winemaster at Chateau St. Jean. "The acids were holding even after a week of over 100-degree weather and sugars going up a good half point per day. I've never seen anything like it and I think we have some very interesting potential this year, expecially with Chardonnay, which accounted for about 60% of our total crush at the Chateau this year. Maturity was reached a good three weeks late, but with incredible balances such as 26.3% sugar with .95 acid, 25.3% sugar and 1.1 acid! We had nothing under 23% sugar and our lowest acid was .85, a balance we would feel fortunate to get in a normal year. The fruit we picked was literally picture perfect, but careful selection was the key. There was quite a bit of sunburn this year and with some vineyards we had to leave as much as 20% of the crop in the field. I think this might turn out to be a very fine vintage because of the extreme length of the growing season, but it certainly was scary and I'm not sure I'd welcome another vintage like it."

The combination of high acid retention and high sugar should result in very long-lived wines with big body and considerable alcohol. Most red wines are showing intense color, and Gewurztraminer had the highest degree of color ever observed. Usually good color in this varietal is an indication of considerable "spice". However the Gewurztraminer crop was off by an average of 50%.

Sonoma Valley appears to have been unique this year in developing a fairly high incidence of Botrytis cinerea. 1980 is the only year in which this beneficial mold has appeared in the absence of rainfall at the end of the harvest season. Apparently the heat in this region was not too great, while the unusual amount of cool, damp fog provided adequate moisture to trigger the Botrytis. Botrytis infected not only the Johannisberg Riesling, but Gewurztraminer as well.

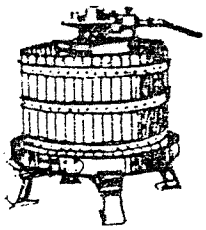
NAPA VALLEY

Conditions here were similar to those of Sonoma Valley however the amount of fog was somewhat less. That factor, combined with somewhat drier atmospheric conditions, has resulted in virtually no Botrytised wines being produced this year. Extremely cool mid-summer weather, in the 75 degree range and less, delayed the harvest by a full two weeks. In fact, for a time many were wondering if perhaps there would be no harvest in 1980 and two harvests in 1981. But then in late September the heat wave struck causing many varietals to ripen all at once. In a few cases Cabernet Sauvignon was being harvested before Chardonnay. Usually Chardonnay is picked four to six weeks prior to Cabernet Sauvignon.

The high heat, lasting about two weeks, caused a frenzy of picking and many wineries handled 50-75% of their total crush during that period by working nearly around the clock. As elsewhere, acid levels were incredibly high as was the sugar. Total crop harvested was approximately 72,000 tons, or slightly higher than last year. There was considerable overcropping in Chardonnay (which probably accounts for its very delayed maturity), while Cabernet was light due to extensive shatter last spring, although it did set to a very large "second crop". Again, selective picking seems to be the key to quality and wines will be "spotty" as a result, ranging from "good" to "great".

Some varietals set a slightly higher crop than last year, but to an extent this was offset by considerable problems (and losses) from mildew, which was rampant due to cool, dry weather. Most growers this year applied up to four times the usual amount of sulphur, but with the cool weather prevailing could not gain the control desired. One good thing that came of the cool weather in Napa and generally throughout the State, was very few insect pests to combat.

Uneven cluster development was blamed on the cool season, many bunches showing berries that in terms of maturation appeared to be close to a month apart. Mildew, which scars the skin of berries and prevents them from "sizing" could have been part of the problem, but the extremely long set duration last spring is a more likely reason.



Nevertheless, as the harvest neared, some of the less mature berries in the clusters did come close to catching up.

But as David Spaulding, winemaker at Stonegate Winery, notes, "In nearly all cases the Napa wines are turning out to be very nice and I think this is a direct result of the long, cool growing season that allowed the grape berries to build up a high level of non-sugar extracts, the flavors and aromas that separate mere sugar-water from fine grape juice. The very high sugars and almost unbelievable acids caused most vintners some concern, but it will prove out that when you balance substantial alcohol and acid with strong extracts, some great wines will be the result. Overall at this early date I'd call the vintage at least very good."

Excessive heat conditions caused a variety of problems in Napa as it did throughout the state. After such a cool year, when suddenly struck by temperatures over the 100°F mark, a good many vines began to defoliate before the crop was picked, particularly lower leaves. While this had no serious effect on photosynthesis, it did remove much of the shade and this accounted for some sunburn and heat shock to the vines. With strong heat continuing, malic acid expired through the pores of the grapes, the dominant acid of fine wine grapes, causing a rise in pH. Normally the cool nights of the North Coast regions prevent this, as opposed to the Central Valley were different varietals are planted that are dominant in tartaric acid, which is not so easily respired. The length of the season, and some dessication of the berries also may be a factor in this spotty pH rise.

A general problem that seemed to exist in Napa and to a lesser extent elsewhere, was a large number of "stuck fermentations" particularly in Chardonnay. As noted in our introduction, a shortage of certain amino acids could be the cause, since even specially developed "super years" strains have failed to ferment some wines dry.

Jerry Luper, winemaker for Chateau Montelena at Napa Valley's northern end, summed up the season's weather in one word, "Cold! One day during August, usually the hottest month, we recorded a maximum temperature of only 63°F., and there were a lot of other days that were not much warmer. Normally temperatures would be close to 90°F. We started crushing on September 22nd this year, and that's the latest I've ever begun harvesting grapes in all my years in Napa Valley. We had our anxious moments waiting for everything to get ripe, but overall I'd say this vintage has very good potential. A lot of people are trying to relate it to 1974, but I don't think you can do that because every year is totally different. The length of this season is unprecedented even in the memories of old timers, and that produces very different vine conditions. For example, the color of our Cabernet this year is the darkest I've ever seen. I think it also worth mentioning that after the high heat, moderate temperatures prevailed, allowing the vines to store good carbohydrate reserves in their root systems for next year."

We think there might be some interesting variances in Napa wines this year since because of the cool seasons, those areas that are typically a Zone II, this year were Zone I, and so forth. In other words, general climatic conditions, and there are at least three zones in Napa Valley, dropped one zone this year. Case in point might be the Calistoga area, normally achieving about 2850 degree days of heat; this year had 2375 degree days. The Carneros area, normally about 2500 degree days, this year barely touched 2000 degree days.

We believe Chardonnay production in Napa Valley might be up as much as 25% this year. Some of this increase is accounted for in new plantings, other increases are due to overcropping and a generally heavy set in this varietal. However the volume would not be as high if not for the fact that a great many vineyards were heavily watered during the heat wave. The problem was that a large percentage of the Chardonnay was climbing above 24.5% to 25.5% sugar and wineries had no room to ferment it. So water was applied to the vineyards and that dropped the grape sugar back to about 22.5% and thus bought a few days time before the grapes had to be picked. We think this technique, which was rather widespread in Napa, combined with overcropping, could result in many "thin" Chardonnays.

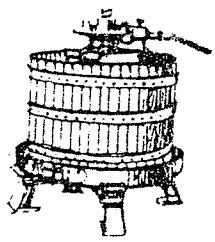
As in Sonoma, the harvest season was highly compressed. The normal duration of about 75 days was reduced to not much more than 50 days and in some instances 30 days. As Roy Raymond, viticulturist for Raymond Vineyard puts it, "this vintage is a classic example of not putting too much emphasis on conditions that exist in spring and summer. Earlier conditions did not mean very much because it can be the last few weeks in August and September that really tell the story, although this year I should say September and October". Walter Raymond, winemaker at the Raymond Vineyard, says he feels the vintage was of average to above average quality. "The numbers were some of the best I've seen and the wines, which of course still are developing, are showing really excellent varietal character. Because our own vineyards, which are next to the winery are carefully controlled by my brother, Roy, we were able to stay ahead of the rapid rise in sugar and as a result none of our wines will be excessive in alcohol. For us it was a very good year, but we wondered if we would have a vintage at all when every morning it seemed like we woke up to overcast skies."

A good deal of raisining occurred in Zinfandel, because grapes simply could not be handled fast enough by the wineries. Isolated lots of Zinfandel and some other varietals became so high in sugar they were lost. Overall, however, the vintage can be considered very good at this time. Certainly alcohols are substantial, so wines will have full body. Varietal character is for the most part excellent and acid in finished wines will be on the order of .7 or above, making crisp whites, and long-lived reds. We would speculate that those who enjoy classic European wine types will find vintage 1980 exactly to their liking.

MENDOCINO COUNTY

The exceptionally long bloom period experienced throughout the State was up to a month longer in all varietals in Mendocino County. As a result there was uneven ripening as the harvest approached and vintners found it difficult to obtain accurate sugar readings to determine picking dates.

"We had a very fine set in Pinot Noir, and nearly as good in Cabernet for a change, as well as in the white varietals," said John Parducci, winemaker for Parducci Cellars near Ukiah. "It looked like we were going to have one hell of a good year until we were hit just at harvest. We had nine days of over 100 degree weather and one day it reached 117 degrees. After such a cool season the vines just couldn't take that kind of prolonged heat and as a result everything just



stopped. Photosynthesis was arrested and both sugar and acid stuck. I guess you could say that the berries were slightly cooked. On top of that, since most vineyards are dry-farmed, there was not enough water and defoliation took place in many of the vineyards that are not irrigated. In those, maturity was reached, but in the dry-farmed vineyards any rise in sugar was due to dehydration. It's too soon for any quality assessments, but I think the white wines will be very good with plenty of acid. The red wines will not be exceptional, but nice, with medium body, alcohol, and good acid."

Sunburn and leaf burn was extensive, particularly Chardonny, Chenin Blanc and Johannisberg Riesling in the whites, Petite Sirah and Zinfandel in the reds. After the heat wave growers waited for sugars to come up in the Cabernet, the main varietal still to be harvested, but since maturation had stopped, the majority of this varietal was picked at around 22% sugar. Zinfandel was very spotty, depending on locaton, some with good sugars and others quite low. But there was plenty of acid in all varietals, easily two tenths of a percent higher than normal. Early maturing varietals fared better in the heat and some lots will produce big, outstanding wines. A typical balance in Chardonnay this year was 23.5% sugar with .9 total acid.

Mr. Parducci notes that, "This was the most trying vintage I've ever experienced. First the waiting–our harvest was three weeks late then everything coming at once. The heat fried us as well as the grapes, and then the weather turned so cold here that we had a hard time getting fermentations to start. But we can be thankful that the rains held off. If it had rained when it normally does, the whole State crop would have been wiped out."

Unlike areas to the south, very little mildew was observed in Mendocino County, perhaps because temperatures were slightly higher during summer. For most wineries the harvest began in mid-September and was completed by the first week of November, setting a record for shortness.

MCDOWELL VALLEY

While technically part of Mendocino County, this tiny viticultural microclimatic region is quite unique. Growth here in the vines was exceptional, with canes up to 24 feet long and with a heavy canopy. Perhaps for this reason very little sunburn was experienced during the heat wave. However, this is a cooler region, benefitting from strong marine air flow throughout the length of the valley. Another plus for quality was that most grapes are machine harvested and thus could be picked at night. White grapes reached the fermenters at a cool 55°F. While the season generally was cool, it was somewhat warmer than many regions, again, due to the moderating air-flow patterns. The net result was spectacular fruit with perfect sugar and acid balances. As George Bursick, winemaker for McDowell Valley put it, "The cooler ripening temperatures gave us wines of intense fruitiness, with ample, but not excessively high acid. Our Chenin Blanc came in at 23.2% sugar with .87 total acid and that's as close to textbook perfect as you can get. Red wines have extremely high color, and this was achieved fairly early in the fermentation, which was unusual and probably due to the cool season."

Cabernet, Zinfandel, and Petite Sirah will be noteworthy, with intense classic flavor and aroma. Whites will be fresh and delicate. Overall, the vintage here can be regarded as outstanding.

LAKE COUNTY

The vintage in this small viticultural area appears to be the best in the past four years. Part of this is due to a good vintage in general, and also because viticulturists are now "homing in" on the proper management of vines here. It was thought, for example, that because of the heat summation units here considerable water was necessary. This year, vineyards received far less water and as a result gained better maturity. The cooler season in general also had some bearing on quality. Contrary to other areas, very little bunch rot and mildew were experienced. Sugar/acid ratios were excellent and overall quality consiered exceptional. Lake County, which this year will begin to make itself known, has had a fine vintage to start its thrust toward recognition.

SHENANDOAH VALLEY

To some extent the growing season and harvest in this tiny microclimate followed other areas with the exception that no mildew problems existed, probably due to the altitude. Generally speaking the weather during the growing season was unusually cool with temperatures in the 70-80 degree range rather than the more typical 90's to low 100's, especially during July and August. In fact, the short July heat wave experienced elsewhere in the state did not occur in the Shenandoah Valley. However, the heat during the last weeks of September and the first week in October was experienced in this region and very welcome after such a cool season. Almost like a re-play of 1978, all of the Zinfandel seemed to ripen at once, presenting Bob Trinchero, winemaker at Sutter Home Winery, famed for its Zinfandel from this area, with some logistical problems at the fermenters. "As the grapes approached full maturity," he says, "we thought we might have some difficulities with exceptionally high acids. But as the heat wave continued and we began picking, the acid in the grapes dropped slightly. We ended up with some really lovely grapes with correct balance, although I still would call 1980 an above average year for acid." Acids were in the .7 to .8 range, a full point higher than usual. Sugars were normal, at about 23-25° Brix. Bob Trinchero notes that, "The secret this year was in selective picking. With all of the grapes racing toward maturity, we started first with sections of the vineyard that historicaly have gained correct sugar before other parts. We then moved to the sections that because of air flow or some other microclimatic influence, are always a few days behind. In this way we were able to achieve a good average balance. Had we started at one end of the vineyards and simply worked through to the other end, we would have had some badly raisined grapes. As it was, we had to run sugar tests every morning to determine which section of the vineyard we would pick that day. It was a lot of work, but it was worth it for the ultimate gain in quality".

One anomaly in this region, which is planted almost exclusively to Zinfandel, was rather uneven ripening within the

bunches. In many cases a single bunch would contain somewhat overripe and slightly dessicated berries, perfect berries at the desired sugar level, and still others a bit below normal maturity. Berry size varied widely within bunches something not unusual to this region but not to the extent observed this year. It seems likely that the extremely cool season, followed by very high heat at its end, accounts for this. While it is too soon to evaluate the 1980 Zinfandel, after primary fermentation wines showed intense color and a good, fruity nose with ample alcohol. The Sutter Home Zinfandel, for example, already is richer than ususal with a deep, tannic structure and a very high level of fruit.

LIVERMORE VALLEY

Conditions in this region appear to have produced one of the finest vintages in recent memory, though the effect of the cool weather will result in a severe drop in quantity, as much as 35% to 50% below normal. Cabernet Sauvignon and Muscats showed the highest degree of loss. However the prolonged growing season produced very small and concentrated berries resulting in a high skin to juice ratio which should create rich and long lived wines.

As elsewhere in the North Coast, acid levels in all varietals were some of the highest recorded. Another problem affecting quantity was a large number of berries in each cluster that did not "size up", yet contained seeds and therefore were not what are called "shot berries". While volume was more than disappointing, quality seems assured.

MONTEREY COUNTY

Some unusual anomalies existed in this region, which has the longest growing season of any California wine area. They began with "set", the transformation of the grape flower to a berry. Normally, as the flower begins to bloom, a tiny cap which protects it pops off to expose the pistil and stamens where pollination occurs. This year many of these caps did not eject from the flower, resulting in a large number of unpollinated "shot berries" and therefore a short crop. In many cases a grape cluster produced about 10 correct berries and 100 incorrect or shot berries ranging in size from BB's to small peas. Since most grapes in this region are mechanically harvested, there was considerable concern if the small berries would be heavy enough to pick by mechanical means and of course it was impossible to estimate tonnage. In the end most of these seedless grapes were picked and in fact of high sweetness and flavor, which came as a surprise. Winemakers presently are looking on this situation as a plus for quality, though only time will tell.

Quantity was 40-50% below normal overall, with short crops in Johannisberg Riesling, Pinot Blanc and particularly Gewurztraminer which was off by at least 70-80%. Many vineyards produced less than one ton to the acre as opposed to a normal 4½ tons, and uneven ripening was also a problem. As elsewhere, cool weather was the demon but its effects were quite variable. For example, on the west side of the Salinas Valley set was fairly good in Johannisberg Riesling and could be of the finest quality yet, while on the east side set was so bad that quantity was negligible, almost too low for evaluation. However, normally a very thin crop allows grapes to mature a bit faster, and this might have saved the day for what little crop was harvested in some varietals and locations.

Yet another anomaly was an almost total absence of Botrytis cinera infection, an unusual occurance for this region, especially in Johannisberg Riesling. Hot, rather than cool weather in September was the reason. Contrary to popular belief, cool, damp summer weather does not promote this beneficial mold; those conditions being needed at the time of grape maturity. As elsewhere, heat just before harvest was unusually high with 100 degree temperatuares being recorded in September which has not happened in recent memory. Summer temperatures were in the low 70's rather than the 85 degree range throughout the growing season.

Chardonnay was light in some areas but most red wine varietals were fairly close to normal in tonnage. All varietals showed good sugar/acid and pH balances. Vintage quality for Monterey County, and in fact for the entire Central Coast region, should be considered average, perhaps similar to 1977, but overall quantity is off by 50%.

CENTRAL VALLEY

In sharp contrast to last year's excellent vintage, the 1980 vintage in this region was only fair to good. The biggest problem was caused by a tremendous amount of mildew. The valley is prone to this even in the best of seasons, and with the cool, dry conditions this year mildew was rampant. Growers sulphured almost continually and still could not combat the mold, which seemed more extensive in some varietals than others.

Grape scarring caused by the mildew then created additional problems as the season progressed; as the berries sized, their skins broke, triggering extensive bunch rot. A rather large percentage of the crop was sold as distilling material due to severe mildew and rot damage, particularly Thompson Seedless. Petite Sirah and Chenin Blanc also had heavy rot problems.

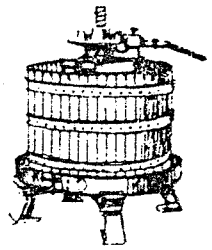
Due to the unusually cool season, (one vintner described it as "resort weather") many white varietals were delayed in maturity. Then, as the grapes hung on the vines, berry size increased tightening the bunches and again triggering rot. Another problem that will affect quality is that many growers panicked as the season wore on and sugars only inched upward. Many vineyards were picked with sugars of only 16° Brix. A considerable amount of Grenache was picked at only 14° Brix. Thus alcohol will have to be added to these wines and they will be extremely thin. A large percentage of Chenin Blanc and French Colombard was harvested at only 17-18° Brix, at least two degrees lower than normal.

Red wine varietals, generally speaking, gained sufficient sugar, but only barely. Sadly, a very substantial amount of red wine varietals were not picked at all because of borderline quality and overproduction. The Central Valley crop this year was up approximately a half million tons, easily 10% over normal, and one of the largest harvests ever, and the brutal truth is that too many of these grapes were red. Some growers managed to sell a good portion of their crop for which contracts had been made, but serious underestimation of crop size early in the season found many growers with far more grapes than contracts called for. Prices offered for some red varietals were so low that growers sold them for distilling material as the only way to recover base costs.

Overall the harvest quality was good. Grapes that were selectively picked will produce very good wines, while those that were picked in bulk will produce only fair to good wines. Wineries who picked white varietals at full maturity should have wines of good flavor with plenty of acid, as acids were exceptionally high in this region with the exception of Thompson Seedless. Red wines seem to have good color and body, particularly in those where the vintner had the patience to wait until maturity.

Since the harvest was well over half completed before any high heat was experienced, very little sunburn occurred. Fortunately, winter rains held off until the harvest was completed, thereby preventing what could have been a disaster.

Vintage Wine Merchants
WINE EVALUATIONS 1979



SONOMA VALLEY

Generally speaking, white wines from this region are of superb quality, perhaps some of the best yet produced. They are rich and of intense character with excellent fruit. Those late harvest whites not lost to rain also are of very high quality. Chardonnay is outstanding. Red wines generally tend to be big in style, high in alcohol and of deep color. However some varietals, most notably Cabernet, are spotty due to rain damage. Those picked before the rains are great, those picked after are of medium body and lighter color but nevertheless show potential.

NAPA VALLEY

Overall we consider the white wines of 1979 to be among the very best ever produced in this region, particularly Chenin Blanc, Johannisberg Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay. The latter is "greener" than usual, however, and very likely will require considerable bottle-aging to mellow and achieve full potential in taste and bouquet. There is a wide variety of styles, and many are truly outstanding. Red wines in general are showing somewhat less body than the high alcohol 1978's, are more "round", and in possession of considerable finesse. Cabernet Sauvignon is very good to excellent, depending upon whether grapes were harvested before or after the rains. While most Cabernet is still in barrels, it seems to be developing much better than everyone expected.

MENDOCINO COUNTY

While most red wines are still aging, they appear to be well above average in quality, particularly the Petite Sirahs and Cabernets which are quite big, strong in color and well balanced. Some Zinfandels have now been bottled and are very good with big body and rich flavor, similar to those of 1978. All white wines are of excellent quality, if perhaps a bit short in acid, and Chardonnay seems to be exceptional.

SHENANDOAH VALLEY (AMADOR COUNTY)

Most wines (essentially Zinfandel) from this region are still six months to a year away from bottling and still in wood. They have good color and are close to 14% alcohol. They are very reminiscent of Zinfandels from 1973 and 1975, which is to say good, round, interesting wines that probably will mature early and have a moderately long life.

MONTEREY COUNTY

This region is of course well known for high quality white wines and the 1979 vintage produced many fine examples. Until now, however, red wines have not enjoyed the same reputation. But with the 1979 vintage there is a marked reduction in the "vegetative" flavor of Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, Pinot Noir and Petite Sirah, the principal red varietals. A major factor seems to be the advancing age of the vines. As they mature, physiological changes occur, just as with humans, and the vine's true personality comes to the forefront.

CENTRAL VALLEY

Many will recall that 1979 was without doubt the finest vintage in at least a decade in this area, with very little mildew and fine ripening weather. Wines from this vintage are now emerging and are of excellent quality. Whites are delicate and fruity, with clean flavor. Reds are full-bodied, very high in color, and of excellent varietal character with fine balances.

SUMMARY

To give a graphic representation of just how late the vintage was this year, as of September 1st the total crush statewide was only 213,000 tons, as opposed to 516,000 tons at the same time last year. Total tonnage probably will set a new record of about 2.7 million tons in spite of shortfalls in some areas as noted.

Without question the most startling aspect of the 1980 vintage was its abrupt transition from estimates of "spectacularly great", and as one UC Davis professor called it, "The best year of the last twenty", to a vintage of generally average quality. We would have liked to concur with those early estimates, but the facts at the end of the vintage simply do not bear out a vintage of extraordinary quality. At this time we believe the vintage to be "very good", and as the wines develop over the next two months perhaps that evaluation could be raised to "excellent". Certainly there will be an unusual number of great wines produced. But just as certainly there will be a large number of very ordinary wines. We feel the majority will fall in the "average" quality range for California, which as wine enthusiasts around the world have discovered, is very fine indeed.

VINTAGE WINE MERCHANTS
1814 DIVISADERO ST.
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

ACTIVE FERMENT IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY

Thomas R. Hill

Like the entire wine industry, Amador County's Shenandoah Valley has been the scene of dramatic changes in the last few years.

For many years, the Valley was the sleepy domain of diversified agriculture, with the growing of Zinfandel and Mission grapes for home winemakers merely a marginally profitable sideline for these farmers. D'Agostini Winery, producing simple generic wines, was the only existing winery.

The establishment of Montevina in 1973 by Cary Gott marked the first new post-Prohibition winery.

Although specializing in Zinfandel and Cabernet, Gott also produces, perhaps, California's finest Barbera and carbonic maceration wine. His Sauvignon Blanc was the first premium Amador white wine.

He has experimented with Merlot and Chardonnay, with disappointing results. His now-discontinued Nebbiolo is the only California bottling of that varietal. A block of Mission vines are used to produce a spicy Mission del Sol dessert wine. A few Primitivo and Brunello vines complete his vineyard.

Veterinarian Eugene Story also opened his winery in 1973, making well-priced Zinfandel from an old vineyard under the Cosumnes River label, now labeled Story Vineyards.

Lee Sobon established the Shenandoah Vineyards in 1977, producing Cabernet and Zinfandel from Deaver vineyard grapes. He has planted Cabernet and Sauvignon Blanc.

His primary wines are El Dorado County Chenin Blanc, Zinfandel from Eschen's Fiddletown vineyard and Dal Porto's 85 year old vineyard, and Cabernet from the Baldinelli vineyard.

Sobon recognized the potential of the Shenandoah Valley for producing premium dessert wines. A Zinfandel Port won a gold medal in last year's Amador County Fair. A Black Muscat from Eschen grapes is probably California's best example of that varietal. A Mission del Sol passito wine and Mission Cream Sherry are made from Eschen and Dal Porto grapes, along with tiny amounts of Angelica.

Founded in 1979, the Baldinelli Shenandoah Valley Vineyards produces white and red Zinfandel and Cabernet, all from their own grapes. A 7 1/2 acre planting of Sauvignon Blanc will soon be bearing, with plans to add a few acres of Semillon.

Also a highly innovative winemaker, Ed Baldinelli feels that Amador makes perhaps too intense a wine. He plans to try toning down the Amador intensity in his Cabernet by blending in small amounts of Sauvignon Blanc, a technique often employed in Italy and the Rhone.

Scott Harvey helped launch Santino Wines with two White Zins in 1979, from purchased grapes.

Zinfandel from D'Agostini and Cowan Family Farm has produced an '80 Early Release Zin, made partly by carbonic maceration. More conventional Amador Zin is made from D'Agostini and Eschen grapes. Cabernet from El Dorado County grapes complete the line.

Relying on his experience in Germany, Harvey has released an '80 White Zin (9% alcohol, 5% sugar, .95 acid) from the Valley's Clock Springs Vineyard that one writer described as being the first California wine with the steely quality of a Mosel.

A third 1979 winery is Beau Val, managed by Nan and Bob Francis. They specialize in white and red Zinfandel from purchased Shenandoah Valley grapes, until their vineyards of Sauvignon Blanc, Zinfandel, and Barbera are bearing.

Kenworthy Vineyards will release their first wine this summer, a 14.9% alcohol Zinfandel '79 from the Potter-Cowan vineyard.

Owner John Kenworthy plans to specialize in Zinfandel, Cabernet, and Chardonnay from Sierra foothill vineyards. He does not like the traditional high-alcohol Amador Zin and seeks more a claret style in his red wines.

Ben Zeitman's Amador Foothill Winery has three different 1980 Zins from the Potter-Cowan, Eschen, and the 115 year old John Downing vineyard. An El Dorado Chenin Blanc and a white Zin were released in May.

He has eight acres planted to Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet, with an additional planting of Chenin Blanc, Barbera, and Semillon planned.

Zeitman is interested in capturing the Amador fruit in his wines without the high alcohols. All three of his Zins are less than 14% alcohol.

Karly Wines crushed last Fall Zinfandel from the Valley's Upton vineyard, and Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc from coastal vineyards. Owner "Buck" Cobb has planted Sauvignon Blanc and Zinfandel on his property in the northwest part of the Valley.

675 words

"WINE GRAPES IN AMADOR COUNTY"

by

Robert E. Plaister
County Director and
Farm Advisor

- - - - -

June 1967

THE HISTORY OF GRAPE GROWING IN AMADOR COUNTY

Almost as soon as the miners came to the Sierra Foothills in Amador County, grape growing became a way of life. The economics of grape growing had several violent fluctuations over the years. In spite of this, the industry has persisted and today is one of the most profitable crops that can be grown between the one thousand and the two thousand foot elevation. One of the earliest recorded statements on grape growing is mentioned in Sargeant's History of Amador County: "The Davis Ranch in Shenandoah Valley was settled upon in '59 by John J. Davis. He has made a specialty of pears, grapes, almonds and apricots." This ranch still has a beautiful vineyard on it and many of the original vines are still producing. By 1860 there were nearly 300,000 grape vines (500 acres) in Amador County. This is nearly equal to the current acreage of grapes.

In 1860 Woolsey and Palmer planted a large vineyard at Lancha Plana. This was later dug up when a depression hit the wine business.

In 1863 James Laughton quit the mining business and bought a farm on which he planted a fine vineyard. During 1861 to 1864 a severe depression hit the wine industry. Attempts to market the wine in the east resulted in a loss so that many persons were induced to tear up their vineyards and give up the business. At this time there were vineyards along the Mokulmne River around Jackson, Ione, and the Jackson-Ione Valleys as well as higher up along the head waters of these creeks.

In the 1880's a group of Frenchmen notably Douet, Madam Pantaloons, and Xavier Benoist planted vineyards above the Vela Ranch east and south of Jackson, in what is now the Clinton Area.

Along about this time Anthony Caminetti first engaged in grape growing at what was called French Gardens.

In 1881 J. D. Mason in his history of Amador County mentions choice grapes being grown in the Shenandoah Valley. He mentioned the Ball Ranch as being planted to grapes. Mason describes the Uhlinger Ranch (D'Agostini Winery) as having perhaps twenty thousand vines of different varieties flourishing finely. "The wine is said to be of fine quality."

"In the Drytown area wine of a fine quality is manufactured in considerable quantities, the capacity of the soil for grapes being unsurpassed."

In the description of the grape growing areas, Mason indicated that grapes are in perfection at Jackson, grapes in Volcano owing to the situation of the town and basin are liable to frost, and that grape growing at Pine Grove required sheltered situations but produced good grapes. Dentzler's flume house at 2980 feet grew grapes which were uncertain and lacked sugar.

On July 25, 1889 the U. S. Agricultural Experiment Station situated on the Creek Road opposite the Molfino Ranch east of Jackson was turned over to the Board of Regents of the University of California for experiments in agriculture, horticulture and viticulture. At a dinner on the important day honoring Professor W. E. Hilgard, wines were served at dinner including claret, riesling, and angelica. This station is no longer owned by the University, however, some of the trees and vines are still in existence and are occasionally used to collect virus free stock for University experiments.

In a newspaper article in 1889, the adaptability of this section to the production of the best quality of grapes is described. "Wine of body and bouquet and a-

fine quality and flavor of brandy were indicated to have been universally commended."

Grapes were grown at the Preston School of Industry near Ione in the 1890's. These were replanted in the 1920's.

In the late 1890's many Frenchmen became discouraged with mining and planted vineyards in the Middle Bar area along the Mokelumne River. These vineyards were planted from cuttings brought from France.

In Sargeant's History of Amador County it is mentioned that Olita's (Fiddletown) future was never so bright, thousands of vines and trees having been planted the last six years. I. P. Ostrom has one of the largest vineyards. Louis Smith and Sons a vineyard, Dennis Toomey a vineyard, and also W. D. Clark and Son. During the 1920's B. L. Jones, El Dorado County Farm Advisor for the University of California, conducted demonstrations in pruning in a Shenandoah-Fiddletown area.

Although the industry has had many violent ups and downs, in the past hundred years, it has persisted in the Shenandoah-Fiddletown-Ridge Road areas. The county at one time boasted many small wineries. All of these have gone out of existence except the D'Agostini Winery in the upper Shenandoah Valley which is discussed in another section.

In 1955 the Agricultural Extension Service's office was opened in Amador County. Since that time a continuing program of research and investigation has continued in the vineyard areas. Systematic studies and the close cooperation of the growers has resulted in the determination of proper nitrogen levels, fertilization, the discovery of boron deficiency, the identification and control of the spider mite, and the establishment of a varietal test plot.

Intense Zinfandels Of the Sierra Nevada

By TERRY ROBARDS

PLYMOUTH, CALIF.

THE rugged foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains are steeped in the lore of the Gold Rush of 1849, but now a new kind of legend is taking shape here. It is a legend involving some of the most extraordinary table wines made in the United States, wines whose fame is suddenly spreading across the country as more and more consumers experience them.

They are the zinfandels of Amador County, the biggest, richest, spiciest, most intensely flavored red wines produced anywhere in the nation, mouth-filling wines with a texture so luscious that it can almost be chewed. They sometimes convey a hint of raspberries, at other times chocolate or mint, combined with the generous fruit of the zinfandel grape.

Californians have been enjoying them for years, for home wine-makers in the area around Sacramento 35 miles west of here have been vinifying Amador grapes since Repeal. But not until the wine boom of the 1970's did the reputation of these unusual zinfandels begin reaching other parts of the country.

Connoisseurs familiar with them salivate at the thought of tasting them anew, and Amador cults are cropping up across the land. They involve people with a fierce devotion to these wines that are demonstrating just how good the zinfandel can be when cultivated under the conditions peculiar to Amador County and parts of the neighboring El Dorado County, the region that bustled with gold-mining activity more than a century ago.

"It's dry farming," says Cary Gott, the wine-maker at Montevina Wines here in Plymouth, explaining part of the reason for the local zinfandel's success. Water is a precious commodity in this part of California, so the vineyards have never been irrigated. As a result the grapes are stressed, yielding much smaller quantities of deeply colored, more concentrated juice than elsewhere in the Golden State.

"Up here, they didn't have the water anyway, so they couldn't irrigate," Mr. Gott explains. "So the dry farming grew up, and these were the grapes the home wine-makers wanted, the ones that made big, full-bodied wines high in alcohol." Montevina was begun only seven years ago, but the same dry farming is practiced here.

The intense heat of the Amador

Continued on Page C16

Wine Talk

Continued From Page C1

growing season causes natural sugar levels in the ripening grapes to rise much higher than normal, resulting in wines that commonly run 14 percent alcohol or more, compared to the 12 percent considered normal for table wines produced in most other parts of the country. The Montevina 1977 Special Selection was 18 percent, and the Sutter Home Anniversary Selection 1974 was 15.5 percent.

The Shenandoah Valley, which runs through the region and produces most of the best grapes, is old-fashioned farm country that did not even have full electrical service until after World War II. (Local residents still boast that there is not one stoplight in the county.) With the gold mines long since closed, prosperity was only a memory in the 1950's and 60's, and some of the farmers shot deer for meat until scarcely a decade ago.

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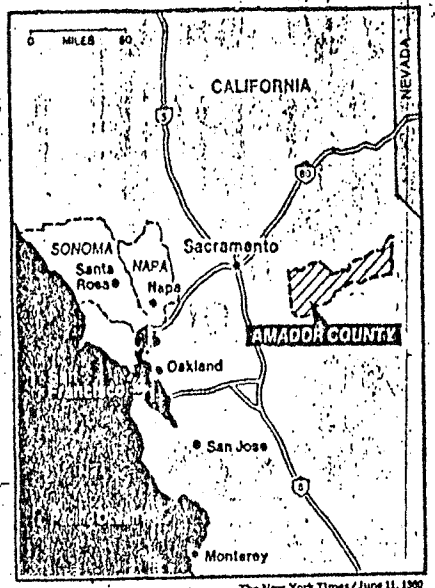
Grapes have been produced here for more than a century, but until recently they were sold mainly to the home wine-makers or to big bottlers such as Ernest and Julio Gallo. The prices that Amador farmers received were low because everyone knew that the best grapes came from Napa and Sonoma, or so they thought.

Charles Myers, a Sacramento City College instructor who made his own wine from Amador grapes as early as 1964, is credited with playing an important role in calling attention to the



The New York Times / June 11, 1980

Intense zinfandels of the Sierra Nevada.

area. His zinfandels made from grapes grown on the Deaver Ranch near here came to the attention of Darrel Corti, a Sacramento wine dealer, who suggested that Bob Trinchero of the Sutter Home Winery consider an Amador bottling.

Mr. Trinchero, who played stickball on the West Side of Manhattan before moving with his family to California in 1946, visited Amador and liked what he tasted. He met Ken Deaver of the Deaver Ranch and, like Mr. Myers, began buying Deaver grapes, the first purchases that Sutter Home ever made outside the Napa Valley.

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"In 1968 the Deavers were hoping for $63 a ton for their grapes," Mr. Trinchero recalls. "I offered them $115, delivered in Napa, and they were in business. Now they get $400 to $500 a ton." Amador zinfandel grapes are now among the most expensive zinfandels, reflecting demand from a growing number of wineries.

Today Sutter Home buys almost the entire Deaver production, and the Deaver name appears on its label. The 1968 Sutter Home made from Amador grapes is still considered a classic, and the demand for any vintage has become so great that Mr. Trinchero has inaugurated a second bottling made from grapes harvested in El Dorado County, a few miles north across the county line from the Deaver vineyards.

Only a handful of Amador zinfandels are available nationally, and they are still not nearly as well known as the zinfandels and cabernet sauvignons of the Napa and Sonoma Valleys northwest of here. Many consumers who have tasted them probably do not even realize where they came from, for the Amador County appellation usually appears on the labels in fine print.

The producers with national distribution include Carneros Creek, Concannon (with only a rosé so far), Gemello, Montevina, Mount Veeder, San Martin, Sutter Home and Ridge. Of these, only Montevina is actually vinifying in Amador, although there are several other good local wineries that primarily serve the California market.

Most of the producers have contracts with Amador growers who send them grapes by truck, and the distance does not seem to affect the quality. Sutter Home's winery, for example, stands in St. Helena in the heart of the Napa Valley, but its entire production of red wines now comes from zinfandel grapes grown in Amador and El Dorado.

The style of wine varies according to the producer. The biggest, most intense wines come from Montevina, Mount Veeder, Ridge and Sutter Home. More elegant wines come from Carneros Creek and San Martin. But all share the spicey flavor intensity that is an Amador trademark. They are best not consumed until at least six years old.

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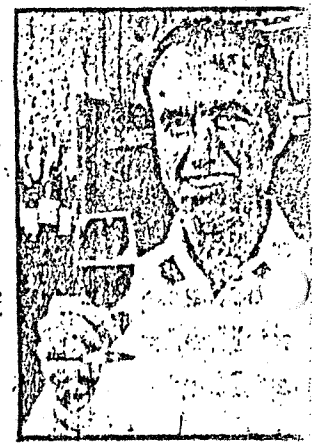
Reflecting their lack of notoriety, most of the Amador zinfandels are not very expensive. The Sutter Home 1976, from a drought year that produced especially intense wines, sells for $5.99 in New York, the San Martin 1976 is $4.99 and the Montevina 1977 is $5.99. Some stores with older inventories acquired at lower cost display Amador wines at even lower prices.

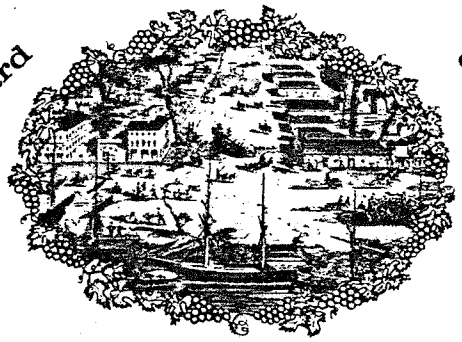
In response to the thirst for white wines in this country, several wineries — including Montevina and Sutter Home — are now producing excell white zinfandels. The red grapes a harvested earlier in the autumn bef they become too ripe. The skins, wh contain the red pigment, are hard then, and it is easy to make white wi by removing the skins before the p ment works its way into the fermento juice.

"I can't make enough of the white says Mr. Trinchero. But he also ca make enough of his Amador red eith so the Sutter Home white zinfand are now made from grapes harvest elsewhere in California.



Bob Trinchero is the head of the Sutter Home Winery.

Deaver Vineyard



Unfined Unfiltered

HARBOR WINERY

1973

Shenandoah Valley

ZINFANDEL

Produced and bottled by Harbor Winery
West Sacramento, California

Alcohol 13.5% by Volume

EXHIBET 19

EXHIBET 20

"Sutter Home"

~ 1973 ~

ZINFANDEL

Produced and Bottled By
Sutter Home Winery,
St. Helena, California
Alcohol 13% By Volume

This Zinfandel was produced from grapes grown on the K. Deaver and J. Ferrero ranches in the Shenandoah Valley of Amador County.

Located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, the climate and temperature of this area make it perfect for growing Zinfandel. Here these grapes produce a superior wine with great depth and fullness and more spicyness and richness than anywhere in California.

1975
VINTAGE

Gemello

EXHIBIT 21

SHENANDOAH VALLEY

ZINFANDEL

Amador County

ALCOHOL 13% BY VOLUME

PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY

GEMELLO WINERY

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA

CORTI BROTHERS

RESERVE SELECTION

ZINFANDEL

EXHIBIT 22

SHENANDOAH VALLEY VINTAGE 1973

This Zinfandel was produced from grapes grown on the K. DEAVER Ranch and the J. FERRERO Ranch in the Shenandoah Valley just north of Plymouth, Amador County. These family properties are situated on sloping, east-west exposures and are two of the oldest vineyards in Shenandoah Valley.

Climate and temperature make Amador County perfect for growing Zinfandel. Here these grapes produce a superior wine with great depth and fullness and more spicyness and richness than anywhere in California.

1973 could be considered a lightish year. A perfect spring made for good fruit set and a large crop. Normal harvest temperatures caused little raisining. The blend of two vineyards has enhanced the elegance and complexity of the wine. The 1973 RESERVE SELECTION was bottled in June of 1975.

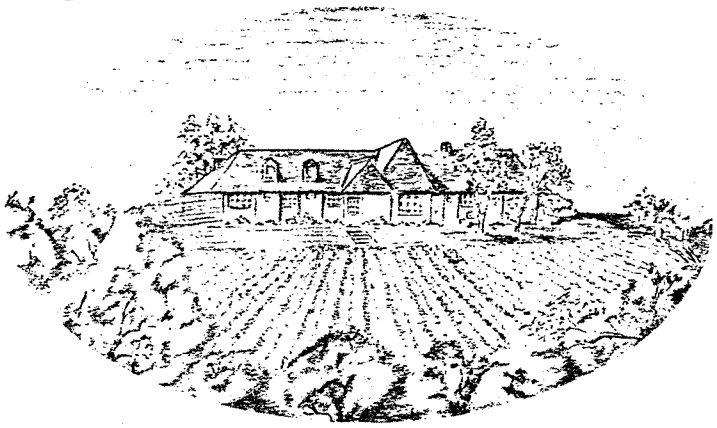
This wine has been bottled with as little cellar treatment as possible. It will throw a deposit with time and should be decanted.

PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY SUTTER HOME WINERY
ST. HELENA, CALIFORNIA
ALCOHOL 13.5% BY VOLUME

EXHIBIT 23

ESTATE 1973 *BOTTLED*

Montevina



Shenandoah Valley

Zinfandel

Grown, Produced & Bottled by Montevina Wines
Plymouth, Amador County, California

ALCOHOL 12½% BY VOLUME

EXHIBIT 24

FACT SHEET

CALIFORNIA'S SHENANDOAH VALLEY

1. Located 40 miles East of Sacramento
2. Settled and named in early 1850s
3. Agricultural community, family farms
4. Proposed viticultural area about 10,000 acres
5. Continuous wine grape production since 1853
6. Current vinifera wine grape acreage about 1,200
7. Grape cash crop in excess of $1.9 million per year
8. Wholesale value of wine about $13 million
9. Retail value of wine in excess of $19 million
10 Annual viticultural payroll $0.5 million
11. Amador County Wine Grape Growers membership of 50
12. Wineries in proposed viticultural area: 10 (Family owned)
13. Over 50 California wineries have used this area's grapes
14. Recognized nationally for its wines since the early 1970s

WINERIES THAT HAVE USED OR ARE
USING SHENANDOAH VALLEY GRAPES

NAPA COUNTY:

BURGESS CELLARS
CAYMUS VINEYARDS
CARNEROS CREEK WINERY
CHRISTIAN BROTHERS WINERY
INGLENOOK VINEYARDS
MAYACAMAS VINEYARDS
ROBERT MONDAVI WINERY
MT. VEEDER WINERY
NAPA WINE CELLARS
SATTUI WINERY
SUTTER HOME WINERY
TULOCAY WINERY
Z-D WINES

SANTA CLARA COUNTY:

GEMELLO WINERY
RICHARD LAMB
RIDGE VINEYARDS
SAN MARTIN WINERY

ALAMEDA COUNTY:

RICHARD CAREY WINERY
CONCANNON VINEYARDS
J. W. MORRIS PORT WORKS
VEEDERCREST
WINE AND THE PEOPLE

OTHER CALIFORNIA WINERIES:

AHERN WINERY
BOEGER WINERY
EASTSIDE WINERY
GEYSER PEAK WINERY
LEEWARD WINERY
OAK VALLEY WINERY
QUADY WINERY
SEQUOIA CELLARS
STEVENOT WINERY
ZACA MESA WINERY
BARGETTO WINERY
CHISPA CELLARS
GALLO WINERY
HARBOR WINERY
MONTEREY PENNINSULA WINERY
ORLEANS HILLS VINEYARDS
RANCHITA OAKS WINERY
SOMERSET VINEYARDS
UNITED VINTNERS

AMADOR COUNTY WINERIES:

AMADOR CITY WINERY
ARGONAUT WINERY
BEAU VAL
KARLY WINES
MONTEVINA
SHENANDOAH VINEYARDS
STORY VINEYARDS
AMADOR FOOTHILL WINERY
BALDINELLI SHENANDOAH VALLEY
D' AGOSTINI WINERY
KENWORTHY VINEYARDS
SANTINO WINES
STONERIDGE

Shenandoah Vineyards
Tri-Mountain
The Winery [illegible]

Petition Submitted by Twin Rivers Vineyard as a Comment
(No. 74) in Response to Notice No. 371

Attachment to Comment No. 74

TWIN RIVERS VINEYARDS
Plymouth California

17 Spencer Court Sausalito, California 94965 415 332-9396

July 8, 1981

Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Box 385
Washington, D.C., 20044

Re: Notice 371; Shenandoah Valley Viticultural Area

Sir:

In my letter of May 28, 1981, I submitted a revision to the proposed possible boundaries of this viticultural area. This was done so as to include within it those portions of sections 7, 8, 9, 15 and 16 of Township 8 north, range 11 east, MDM, lying north of the county line in El Dorado County. Those portions of the same sections lying south of the county line in Amador County are within the boundaries of the petition as submitted by the Amador County Wine Grape Growers Association. I ask that these comments and enclosures be attached to, and made a part of that previous letter.

At issue is the viticultural home of 170 acres of wine grapes, of which 40 acres are now bearing. There are no other commercial vineyards in this southernmost area of El Dorado County. Virtually the entire production of this vineyard, including its first commercial crop in 1978, has been purchased by the Sutter Home Winery of St. Helena, California. Sutter Home Winery has been a major buyer of Shenandoah Valley grapes since the 1960s. Vineyard acreage in the valley area has more than doubled since that time.

Until April 16, 1855, the entire petition area was a portion of El Dorado County. The line separating the counties of El Dorado and Amador prior to that time was Dry Creek (Fiddletown and Amador City Quadrangle maps).

The only historical, practical and legal access to this property above the present county line has always been via a ford and, since 1923, a bridge across the South Fork of the Cosumnes River at the end of Upton Road (section 8 north, route 11 east, MDM). The only bridges across the Middle Fork of the Cosumnes River near this area are at Highway 49 and at the town of Somerset. There is no access to this property, real or otherwise, from north of the Middle Fork of the Cosumnes. The local postal address of this property is Route 2, Box 28A, Plymouth, Ca. 95669, identical to that of its neighbors to the south (The Amador Couty Wine Grape Growers Association address is box number 27). Electric power service to this property, at present in the engineering stage, will come from existing lines to the south in Amador County (section 17, Township 8 north, route 11 east, MDM).

I enclose the following excerpts from the book, The Shenandoah Valley Area of Amador County, California, 1854-1904, compiled by Elsie E. Dixon, 1976:

1. Page 28, indication that the Shenandoah Valley area was for a short time called the "Jameson settlement." The subject land of these comments was owned by the Jameson family for over 100 years prior to the present ownership. Also, page 28 gives indication that disputes involving county boundaries have occurred previously in that area.

2. Page 177; the obituary of William Hynds, whose cabin still stands on the subject property, is referred to as a "resident of Shenandoah Valley." The canal he tended, known now as the Plymouth Ditch, heads on the Middle Fork of the Cosumnes River and, flowing west and south, generally follows the contour of the northern and western Shenandoah Valley boundaries.

3. Page 185; of the four references to the death of Mrs. Robert Jameson, the first notes she "lived in the Shenandoah Valley since 1873;" the second and third indicate she resided "in this neighborhood," and the last that "her home had been near Shenandoah, just across the border of El Dorado County."

Also enclosed are pages 71-73 of the book, Amador County History, 1927. The "original Jameson holdings" referred to in paragraph 2 of this section are a portion of section 8, township 8 north, range 11 east, MDM, proposed for inclusion in this viticultural area by these comments. The Robert Jameson home mentioned in paragraph 3 isslocated on the same section. The final paragraph of this chapter indicates that there was some amiable inter-county co-operation in that the Shenandoah Farm Center was originally a unit of the El Dorado County Farm Bureau, and that it was an El Dorado County farm advisor, B. L. Jones, who conducted demonstrations of vine pruning in the Shenandoah Valley in the 1920s.

Therefore, I believe it is readily apparent that the physical location, orientation, history, economy and prosperity of this property is now, and has always been, directly associated with the contiguous lands to the south and should viticulturally be considered to be a portion of that geographical area historically known as the Shenandoah Valley.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Lang


N

PLYMOUTH

TWIN RIVERS VINEYARDS
Plymouth California

17 Spencer Court Sausalito, California 94965 415 332-9396

February, 16, 1982

Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Box 385
Washington, D.C. 20044-0385

Re: Notice No. 371; Shenandoah Valley viticultural area

Sir:

I take this final opportunity to expand upon my viticultural reasons for the inclusion within the boundaries of this Shenandoah Valley viticultural area that property which has come to be known as the "El Dorado Addition" and, also, to present rebuttal comments to some of the testimony given at the Jackson hearing.

The process for the establishment of the Shenandoah Valley viticultural area which led to a petition submitted by the Amador County Wine Grape Growers Association began in the months prior to June, 1980. This county group has approximately 40 voting members, 37 of whom are from the Shenandoah Valley area and 3 from the "Fiddletown" area. There are no members from the "Ridge Road" or "Jackson Valley" areas of Amador County. Likewise, because of its El Dorado County location, Twin Rivers Vineyards was not a member of this group, however, since June of 1980, we are now "associate", non-voting members.

Upon learning that approval of the draft proposal of this petition was the major agenda item for their June, 1980 meeting, we asked for an invitation to attend. I also recommended that a representative of the ATF be invited to attend and explain the petition procedures and answer questions. Mr. Rick Allen of the San Francisco office of the ATF attended.

During that meeting, both Twin Rivers Vineyards and the growers of the Fiddletown area asked that consideration be given to the inclusion of their respective vineyards within the petition area. In separate votes, both proposals were denied, the vote in respect to the "ElDorado Addition" being tied at 12 "aye" and 12"nay." At the conclusion of this meeting it was remarked that,"...the Bureau(ATF) would have the final say as to the boundaries of the viticultural area."

The events that have followed this meeting are a matter of public record. The enclosed exhibits and comments are submitted in the sincere belief that the "final say" delimiting the boundaries of this viticultural area should rightfully include the vineyards of the "El Dorado Addition," whose vines share the same history and geography with their only neighbors accross the county line.

The history of the "El Dorado Addition," known since 1852 as the Jameson Ranch is indistinguishable from the history of the Shenandoah Valley.

Statehood came in 1850 to California, and to it in that year of gold rush came John McKnight Jameson of Virginia, believed to be the earliest settler in the area from that state. He must have liked what he saw here, for by 1852 he and his son, William T., had gone back east for the whole family and had returned again to the motherlode and purchased the Jameson Ranch. Reference is made that the Shenandoah Valley was called the "Jamerson Settlement" in 1854. (exhibit #14, the Dixon book, page No. 28) John McKnight Jameson is now credited with conferring the name "Shenandoah" on this valley that "... lies to the east and north of Plymouth."

In 1873, his [illegible]son, Robert T. Jameson took title to the place; it remained in his family for 100 years. The Jameson's, as did other valley settlers, cut four-foot pine for the boilers of the Plymouth mines, and of oak made charcoal for the same mines. They grew hay and grain, most of which was sold locally in the valley or in Plymouth. Until the 1920's and the arrival of mobile harvesters, Robert T. Jameson and his son, Paul, did much of the threshing in the valley. The ranch grew by acquisition to include property on both sides of the South Fork of the Cosumnes River. In the century 1873 to 1973 only six individuals lived on this property. Exhibit #14, Elsie E. Dixon's compilation of Shenandoah Valley Area History, contains the following entries regarding these individuals:

page 183 - Robert T Jameson; died 1934; Shenandoah Valley
page 185 - Mrs Robert Jameson; died 1901; "... who lived in the Shenandoah Valley since 1873..."
page 183 - Mabel Jameson; born 1878; Shenandoah Valley
page 177 - William Hynds; died 1907; "... a resident of the Shenandoah Valley..."
page 183 - Harvey Jameson
page 184 - Paul Jameson

The three children of Robert T. Jameson attended both the Shenandoah and Pidgeon Creek schools in different years.

With the death of Robert T. Jameson in 1934, his son Paul became the sole resident of the ranch; he was a private man of whom little is known and less is said. He died in 1959 ending the century of Jameson occupation of this ranch. It remained vacant until the present ownership received title in 1972.

I find it difficult to accept that a man who had seen both oceans by 1850, had trekked the overland trails to California by 1852, had built roads, sawmills and ranches in a frontier where none had existed before, would, in an area where the snow-capped Sierra are a constant reminder of the very real geographic boundaries he had seen and crossed in his life, use a seasonal stream as a boundary for a valley he would name.

A major and recurring reason offered at the hearing for the exclusion of Twin Rivers Vineyards from the Viticultural Area is that the grapes from this vineyard are as yet, "... new, young and unproven."

The rennaisance of the viticultural history of the Shenandoah Valley Area began in 1968 when Bob Trinchero of the Sutter Home Winery made his now famous Zinfandel from Deaver Vineyard grapes. This wine was released in 1971. The first crush at the Montevina Winery was in 1972. In 1967 there were approximately 500 acres of winegrapes in all of Amador County. Possibly 350 acres of these older vines are in the Shenandoah Area. Since that time the acreage of winegrapes in the Viticultural Area has increased to approximately 1466 acres with the vast majority of the new plantings occurring since 1974. Thus, if judged by the same criteria directed at the vines of Twin Rivers Vineyards, fully three-quarters of the total Shenandoah Area vines would, as yet, also be, "... new, young and unproven."

A similar situation exists with regard to the wineries in the Shenandoah Valley Area. The D'Agostini Winery has been in existence since 1856; indeed, vines for that winery were possibly planted prior to that year when the area was still a portion of ElDorado County. The Montevina Winery was bonded in 1972. The other nine wineries date from the late 1970's and early 1980's. They, too, are "... new, young and unproven."

An American Viticultural Area appellation of origin is a guarantee of the source of the wines, not their age or Quality. " ATF feels that the establishment of viticultural areas and the subsequent use of viticultural area names as appellations of origin in wine labeling and advertising will help consumers identify the wines they may purchase."

Some comments at the Jackson hearing voiced concern regarding the real estate status of Twin Rivers Ranch. Mr. Potter, in particular, raised questions as to the possible sale, subdivision, zoning and Williamson Act status in the area generally and Twin Rivers Ranch in particular. Although real estate concerns are not a directed subject of this notice of proposed rule making, I do feel obliged to respond to these comments.

1. Twin Rivers Ranch has been owned by the present partnership of 4 individuals since 1972; the total acreage of this ranch is 1528 acres, of which approximately 1245 acres have been proposed for inclusion into the viticultural area. We do not own the El Dorado County portion of Section 7, Township 8 north, Range 11 east.
2. The ranch is presently for sale in its entirety; it is not being sub-divided. The ¼th undivided interest of the partner desiring the sale is also separately for sale.

3. Other vineyards and wineries in the Shenandoah Valley area have also been for sale within the last year.
4. The state lands inventory referred to by Mr. Robert Long of the Soil Conservation Service in his comments is applicable to all of California. Amador, El Dorado and all California counties are using the same criteria to inventory their lands as an aid in framing land-use regulations to help preserve their highest use status.
5. Twin Rivers Ranch is presently zoned "agriculture." El Dorado County is currently writing a general plan for this area of the county which will preserve the agricultural uses of this area and enact a 40 acre minimum parcel size similar to our neighbors lands in Amador.
6. Twin Rivers Ranch is currently under a "Williamson Act" contract until approximately 1987.
7. Between 1974 and 1981 we have planted 170 acres of vines amounting to some 11% of the acreage that I propose to be included in the viticultural area. The Amador portion of the viticultural area is also approximately 11% planted to vineyards.

Mr. Potter also stated that most of the sub-divided lands in the Shenandoah Valley area were rocky, scrub areas not conducive to grape growing. This is not in accordance with the recent facts:

1. Of 11 wineries in the Shenandoah Valley area, 6 are located on parcels created by land division occurring since approximately 1972. Of the others, four more are the result of land sales since approximately 1972.
2. The sub-division of property once known as the Harvey Jameson ranch has resulted in 10 new vineyards since 1974.
3. The sub-division of property once known as the Upton ranch has resulted in 2 new vineyards since 1974.
4. The sub-division of property once known as the Steiner ranch has resulted in 5 new vineyards since 1976.
5. The sub-division of the Jameson ranch, of which Twin Rivers is a part, and which at one time occupied <u>both</u> sides of the South Fork of the Consumes River, has resulted in 3 new vineyards since 1974.
6. Thus, in less than eight years, sub-division and parcel splits have resulted in 6 new wineries and twenty new vineyards on lands that previously had neither. The Amador County Wine Grape Growers Association has 37 voting members from the Shenandoah Valley area. It was founded in aproximately 1978.

Beginning on page 62 of the transcript of the Jackson hearing, Mr. Lee Sobon referred in his comments to an excerpt from the book, History of Amador County, by J. D. West, page 226, as describing the boundaries of the Shenandoah Valley. This excerpt is also quoted on page 2, and referred to on pages 3 and 4 of exhibit # 14, Elsie E. Dixon's compilation, The Shenandoah Valley Area of Amador County California.

This excerpt, beginning with, "The tract between Dry Creek and the Cosumnes originally belonging to the El Dorado Company, was set off to Amador by act of the legislature in the winter of 1856-57..." goes on to give a graphic description of some of the geographic features of the Shenandoah Valley area. However, the boundaries of this tract are definitely not those of the Shenandoah Valley. Mrs. Dixon only states that, "Broadly speaking the Valley lies south of the Cosumnes River and north of Big Indian Creek and was originally part of the area...described..."

The actual boundaries of this tract can be determined by combining the description for the old northern boundary of Calaveras County on pages 2 and 3 of the Dixon compilation with the description of the present El Dorado/ Amador County line given in paragraph 2, page 3. I have enclosed a map of Amador County with the actual boundaries of this tract shown.

In a telephone conversation with Mrs. Dixon regarding her compilation, she related to me that because of the inability she found in the preparation of her book to determine any definitive geographic boundaries to the Shenandoah Valley, she included the word "Area" in its title.

Mr. James Cowen, in his comments on page 52 of the transcript stated that the Shenandoah Valley "...has no surveyed boundaries..."

Mr. Cary Gott, in his comments on page 244 of the transript stated that when he drew up the viticultural area boundaries for the Amador County Wine Grape Growers Association, he did not consider the possible inclusion of Twin Rivers Vineyards in the Shenandoah Valley. At that time he had "...no Soil Survey of the El Dorado Area..." He believed that the ATF was looking for "... easy boundaries..." Now, however, he states that Twin Rivers is "... viticulturally in the same area... in the same landform..."

Climate within the Shenandoah Valley is relatively uniform accross the area because of its small geographic size. Located in the foothills of the Sierra as they rise from the eastern edge of California's Great Central Valley, temperatures generally decrease with an increase in altitude, and precipitation increases with an increase in altitude. Most of the precipitation falls as rain during the winter dormant season of the vine, and in normal years, will regularly fill the soil profile of these dry-farmed vineyards to their field capacity. The summer growing season is normally dry until harvest, although on rare occassions afternoon orographic thundershowers have been known to drift down over random portions of the Valley from their more usual locale in the higher elevations to the east. There are no summer foggy days during the growing season to effect ripening of the crop. Summer wind patterns in this foothill location are also very strongly influenced by its 1000 to 2000 foot elevation on the Sierra. The central valley to the west regularly warms to afternoon temperatures of 95 to 100 degrees F. This heated air convectively rises causing westerly breezes in foothill areas. At night this effect is reversed when radiation cooling of the atmosphere causes the cooler, heavier air to subside and flow from the east down the mountansides giving rise to the "cool, breezy nights" for which this grape-growing region is well known. Geographic features in the area are not sufficient to materially affect this airflow within the valley.

At the Jackson hearing the following comments were given in response to questions regarding the geographical features of the proposed "El Dorado addition" and its [illegible] similarities to other areas in the Valley;

"...same Sierra soil." -Mr. Robert Long, Soil Conservation

"...more related to Shenandoah Valley than to El Dorado..." - Mr. Scott Harvey

"...probably some similarities... Shenandoah Valley is really defined by soil... sierra types... a really distinct ... pie-shaped wedge of that soil..." - Mr. Frank Alviso

"...more important is soil type and climate... fair to include Twin Rivers because of soils... appears the valley continues past the river..." - Mr. Terry Moore

"... soil and climate are major discriminates..." - Mr. Lawrence Cobb

"... climate and soil primarily the same..." - Mr. Don Potter

"... similar origin and association.." - Mr. Pritchard, U.C. Davis

"It meets everything...soils, climate... as an appellation, it is in the Shenandoah Valley... there is no other way..." - Mr. Tom Dillion

"...soil and topography are similar..." - Mr Gary Arnese

"...in the same land-form... viticulturally the same area." - Mr Cary Gott

"... same soil and climate, elevation and varieties... should be included..." - Mr. Jeff Rundquist

"... qualifies on soil and climate..." - Mr. Ben Zeitman

"... soil same... similar elevation..." - Mr. Herrick

Article 4.25a(e)(2)ii in 27 CFR Part 4 states that petitions for establishment of American viticultural areas should contain "... historical or current evidence that the boundaries of the viticultural area are as specified in the application." Under this heading the petition of the Amador County Wine Grape Growers Association contains two exhibits; the booklet written by Amador County Farm Advisor Robert E. Plaister, entitled "Wine Grapes in Amador County" prominently discusses the Shenandoah Valley as an area distinct from others in the county, however its boundaries are neither drawn nor referred to. Likewise, the U.S.G.S. map of the "Fiddletown" quadrangle indicates the central location of the Shenandoah Valley, but does not delimit its boundaries.

In the event of the successful establishment of this viticultural area, the boundaries so created, accepted and recognized by the ATF will be the first such determination of the boundaries of this Shenandoah Valley in its long history.

Article 4.25a(e)(2)iii: Evidence relating to the geographical features(climate, soil, elevation, physical features, etc.) which distinguish the viticultural features of the proposed area from surrounding areas. The petition submitted by the ACWGGA enclosed only the Soil Survey of the Amador Area, California and, therefore, made no attempt to distinguish their northern proposed boundary from adjacent areas that lie in El Dorado County.

The boundaries that I propose for the grape growing region known as the Shenandoah Valley enclose in virtual entirety a unique area of deep sierra-series soils. The topography is smooth and rounded to rolling. This area has the appearance of being in a basin or slight depression because it is rimmed by more erosion resistant metamorphic rocks. This feature is visably apparent on the northern and western boundaries of the area. These surrounding areas are predominently steep with very rocky, shallow soils that are mostly quite inhospitable to grape-growing. There are no vineyards located outside the perimeter of this area on lands contiguous to it.

The lowest elevation in the area is 800 feet at the confluence Big Indian Creek and the Cosumnes River; the highest point is 2258 feet at the eastern boundary of the area north of the D'Agostini Winery. The lowest vineyard is at an elevation of 1250 feet at the south-western corner of the area; the highest vineyard is at 1900 feet at the eastern boundary of the area. The majority of the vineyards in the area are at elevations of 1500 and 1600 feet.

In reference to these distinguishing geographical features, the effects of micro-climate and micro-geology were introduced by a few of those commenting at the Jackson hearing in an attempt to develope a "Camelot"-like variation in conditions conveniently occurring at the county boundary resulting in the erection of an almost mystical, invisable "thermal curtain" that would serve to deny the inclusion of our 170 acres of wine-grapes as competitive equals in this other-wise common grape-growing region.

Local conditions that have the ability to effect subtle variations in the mature crop of otherwise similar vines include, but are not limited to, variations in the soil type, its depth, slope and exposure, elevation, winds, the age and clonal source of the vine, and the cultural practices of the farmer including virus, insect and weed control, pruning system and cropping level. Variations in the availability of water to the vine because of micro-climate or micro-geology, or because of irrigation can induce significant differences in vine physiology in this predominently dry-farming region.

The "El Dorado addition" is not "on a ridge-top..," but is on a continuation of the same tabular formation that defines the entire viticultural area. Its elevation is not "higher than most...," but is rather at the median level of 1500 to 1600 feet. In a similar manner, Mr. Deaver on page 317 of the transcript refers to the 400 foot altitude change at the South Fork of the Cosumnes River and its topography as constituting a micro-climate "...so severe that grapes cannot be grown." I fully agree with Mr. Deaver's assessment of that location, however, our vineyards are not located in that micro-climate, but lie above it, in the micro-climate of the Shenandoah Valley as do the 5 or 6 vineyards on the Amador side that are also contiguous to this formation. The South Fork of the Cosumnes River and its associated topography have no measurable effect on the climate of adjacent lands in this area. There are many other such examples of "negative micro-climates" in the Shenandoah Valley that are as steep, rocky, wet or otherwise "...so severe that grapes cannot be grown." The elevation of producing vineyards within the valley has a greater variation than that mentioned by Mr. Deaver for the river area, there being a 650 foot difference in altitude between the vines of the "Southern Addition" and those of the "Eastern Addition" of the viticultural area. The combined effects of variations in topography, elevation and soil-type are greatest at the eastern-most location in the Valley.

Spring frosts are a threat to the vine in most every grape-growing region in the world. Mr. Deaver's explanation on page 326 indicates that even within his own vineyards there are variations in micro-climate that affect the frost potential of different locations. This is everywhere the same in the valley area depending greatly on slope, exposure and even the condition of the ground surface; it does not, however, serve to distinguish the area from surrounding areas. Neither does the chance of scattered afternoon thunder-showers constitute a micro-climate.

Mr. Robert Plaister, the Amador County Farm Advisor, on page 211 of the transcript, replied to a question regarding the soils of the area that, "... there are variations in the Sierra-series soils,.... (but), ...there is no variation in the Shenandoah Series..." This soil was named after the Shenandoah Valley where it is found in relatively small amounts. This is fortunate since this soil-type is found mostly in low-lying swales and drainage-ways and remains seasonally wet for long periods after the winter rains; on site inspection, or correlation of soil maps with aerial photography, will show that the majority of these few acres are unplantable, and, in fact, serve to define vineyard boundaries on adjacent Sierra-series soils.

In my opinion, the two factors having the greatest effect on micro-climate differences in the area would be changes in heat summation due to temperature differences caused by variations in elevation, and the use of irrigation water either in the dormant season to fill the soil-profile to its field capacity in a drought year, or during the growing season to enhance growth or increase the crop. However, any micro-climate differences within the valley become insignificant when it is considered that the entire Shenandoah Valley Area within the boundaries I propose is a unique oasis of vineyards virtually surrounded by land that is inhospitable to the vine. It is, therefore, in its entirety, an ideal example of the effect of micro-climate and micro-geology. Further, with these boundaries, this valley perfectly meets the definition of viticultural area as specified in Article 4.25a(e)(1)(i).

The first wine-grapes planted in these hills and in this valley were here before the creation of Amador County in the mid 1850's. Amador and its boundaries are the result of separate 130 year-old community arguments over the location of county seats in the then neighboring counties of Calaveras and El Dorado . The boundaries of a viticultural area should be based on something more substantial than the capriciousness of frontier, gold-rush politics, a seasonal stream, or the the equally variable human judgements that determine the criteria we use to confer or deny memberships in the communities of men.

The decision to be made this day is to <u>delimit</u> a <u>community of grapes, a grape growing region</u>, whose <u>current</u> boundaries are determined by distinct <u>geographical features</u> rather than by differences in the geneology of the vineyards owners, their place of residence, school location, burial plot, occupation or the demeanor of some of their predecessors in title.

Let the boundaries speak of the unity and identity of the vines.

Enclosures:
1. Amador County Map
2. Composite soil map
3. Letter from L.A. Brooks, DC, SCS, Placerville

Sincerely

Robert E. Lang

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
1024 Simon Drive, Placerville, CA 95667 phone: 622-1410

January 5, 1982

Bob Lang
[redacted]
Sausalito, CA 94965

Dear Mr. Lang:

Regarding your questions about the Sierra sandy loam (SfD2, SfC2, ShE) mapping units and the Sierra coarse sandy loam (SgC2, SgB2) mapping units, I have contacted our Area Soil Scientist and have the following information: the Amador and El Dorado Area Soil Surveys show the Sierra sandy loam and Sierra coarse sandy loam mapping units as separate soil mapping units, but they are in fact the same soil series. The difference between the two exists in the designation of the surface horizon texture. The Amador Survey shows a range of characteristics in the surface texture of coarse or fine sandy loams. This range was not included in the El Dorado Area Survey description of Sierra soils, but allowance for it exists. What this all boils down to is that the Sierra coarse sandy loams of the Amador Survey and the Sierra sandy loams of the El Dorado Area Survey are essentially the same because of the range of topsoil textures both can include.

I hope this answers your questions satisfactorily.

Sincerely,

Phillip Blake
Soil Conservationist

cc: Linden A. Brooks, DC, SCS, Placerville

SOIL SURVEY OF

El Dorado Area, California

United States Department of Agriculture
Soil Conservation Service and Forest Service
In cooperation with
University of California
Agricultural Experiment Station

Issued April 1974

Permeability of this Shaver soil is moderately rapid. Surface runoff is medium, and the erosion hazard is moderate to high. The available water holding capacity is 4 to 7 inches. The effective rooting depth is 40 inches to more than 60 inches.

This soil is used for deciduous fruits and nuts, range, and woodland. Capability unit IVe–1 (22); range site not assigned; woodland suitability group 2.

Shaver coarse sandy loam, 5 to 9 percent slopes (SbB).—This soil is similar to Shaver coarse sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes, except that it is less sloping.

Included in mapping are small areas of Holland coarse sandy loam, Musick sandy loam, Shaver rocky coarse sandy loam, and Argonaut loam, seeped variant.

Surface runoff is medium, and the erosion hazard is moderate.

This soil is used for deciduous fruits and nuts, woodland, and range. Capability unit IIIe–1 (22); range site not assigned; woodland suitability group 1.

Shaver coarse sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes (SbD).—This soil is similar to Shaver coarse sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes, except that it is more sloping.

Included in mapping are small areas of Holland coarse sandy loam, Musick sandy loam, and Chaix very rocky coarse sandy loam.

Surface runoff is medium to rapid, and the erosion hazard is high.

This soil is used for woodland. Capability unit VIe–1 (22); range site not assigned; woodland suitability group 3.

Shaver rocky coarse sandy loam, 5 to 15 percent slopes (ScC).—This soil is similar to Shaver coarse sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes, except that 5 to 10 percent of the surface is exposed outcrops of bedrock.

Included in mapping are small areas of Holland coarse sandy loam, Musick sandy loam, and Chaix very rocky coarse sandy loam.

This soil is used for woodland, deciduous fruits, nuts, and very limited range. Capability unit IVe–7 (22); range site not assigned; woodland suitability group 2.

Shaver very rocky coarse sandy loam, 15 to 50 percent slopes (SdE).—This soil is similar to Shaver coarse sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes, except that 5 to 25 percent of the surface is exposed outcrops of bedrock.

Included in mapping are small areas of Holland very rocky coarse sandy loam, Musick very rocky sandy loam, Chaix very rocky coarse sandy loam, Ahwahnee very rocky coarse sandy loam, Mariposa very rocky loam, and Josephine very rocky loam.

Surface runoff is medium to rapid, and the erosion hazard is high.

This soil is used for woodland. Capability unit VIs–1 (22); range site not assigned; woodland suitability group 3.

Sierra Series

The Sierra series consists of well-drained soils that are underlain by granitic rocks at a depth of 40 inches to more than 60 inches. These soils are gently rolling to steep on foothills. Slopes are 5 to 50 percent. Elevations range from 1,000 feet to 2,000 feet. The average annual rainfall is 30 to 35 inches, average annual temperature is 60° F., and the frost-free season is 170 to 270 days. Vegetation is annual grasses and forbs and scattered areas of hardwoods and conifers. Sierra soils are associated principally with Auberry, Ahwahnee, Holland, and Musick soils.

In a representative profile, the surface layer is brown, medium acid sandy loam about 7 inches thick. The subsoil is about 65 inches thick. In sequence from the top, the upper 15 inches is brown and yellowish-red, medium acid loam. The next 22 inches is yellowish-red and red, slightly acid clay loam. The next 14 inches is red, slightly acid sandy clay loam. The lower part is light-red, slightly acid sandy clay loam that extends to a depth of 72 inches.

Sierra soils are used for range, pasture, deciduous orchards, vineyards, and woodland.

Sierra sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes, eroded (SfC2).—This soil is strongly sloping. Erosion has removed 3 to 7 inches of the surface layer (fig 6).

Representative profile, 3 miles west of Aukum and 0.2 mile east of the center of sec. 8, T. 8 N., R. 11 E.:

A1—0 to 7 inches, brown (7.5YR 5/4) sandy loam, dark brown (7.5YR 3/4) when moist; massive; hard, friable, slightly sticky and slightly plastic; common very fine and fine roots; many very fine and fine tubular and interstitial pores; medium acid; clear, smooth boundary.

B11t—7 to 13 inches, brown (7.5YR 5/4) loam, reddish brown (5YR 4/4) when moist; moderate, medium and coarse, subangular blocky structure; hard, firm, slightly sticky and plastic; many very fine and fine roots; many very fine and fine tubular pores and common medium tubular pores; common thin clay films on ped faces and in pores; medium acid; gradual, smooth boundary.

B12t—13 to 22 inches, yellowish-red (5YR 5/6) heavy loam, yellowish red (5YR 3/6) when moist; moderate, medium and coarse, subangular blocky structure; very hard, firm, sticky and plastic; common very fine and fine roots; many very fine and fine tubular pores and common medium tubular pores; common thin clay films on ped faces and in pores; medium acid; gradual, smooth boundary.

B21t—22 to 30 inches, yellowish-red (5YR 4/6) clay loam, dark red (2.5YR 3/6) when moist; moderate, medium and coarse, subangular blocky structure; very hard, firm, sticky and plastic; common very fine and fine roots; common very fine and fine medium tubular pores; many moderately thick clay films on ped faces and in pores; slightly acid; gradual, smooth boundary.

B22t—30 to 44 inches, red (2.5YR 4/6) clay loam, dark red (2.5YR 3/6) when moist; moderate, medium and coarse, subangular blocky structure; very hard, firm, slightly sticky and plastic; few very fine and fine roots; common very fine, fine, and medium tubular pores; many moderately thick clay films on ped faces and in pores; slightly acid; gradual, smooth boundary.

B31t—44 to 58 inches, red (2.5YR 5/8) light sandy clay loam, red (2.5YR 4/8) when moist; massive; very hard, slightly firm, slightly sticky and slightly plastic; few very fine and fine roots; common very fine and fine tubular and interstitial pores; common thin clay films in pores and as bridges; slightly acid; gradual, smooth boundary.

B32—58 to 72 inches, light-red (2.5YR 6/8) light sandy clay loam, red (2.5YR 4/8) when moist; massive; very hard, firm, slightly sticky and slightly plastic; few very fine and fine roots; common very fine and fine tubular and interstitial pores; common thin clay films in pores and as bridges; slightly acid; gradual, smooth boundary.

B33—72 to 80 inches, yellowish-red (5YR 5/8) light sandy clay loam, red (2.5YR 4/6) when moist; massive; hard, firm, slightly sticky and slightly plastic; no roots observed; common very fine and fine tubular and interstitial pores; common thin clay films in pores and as bridges; slightly acid.

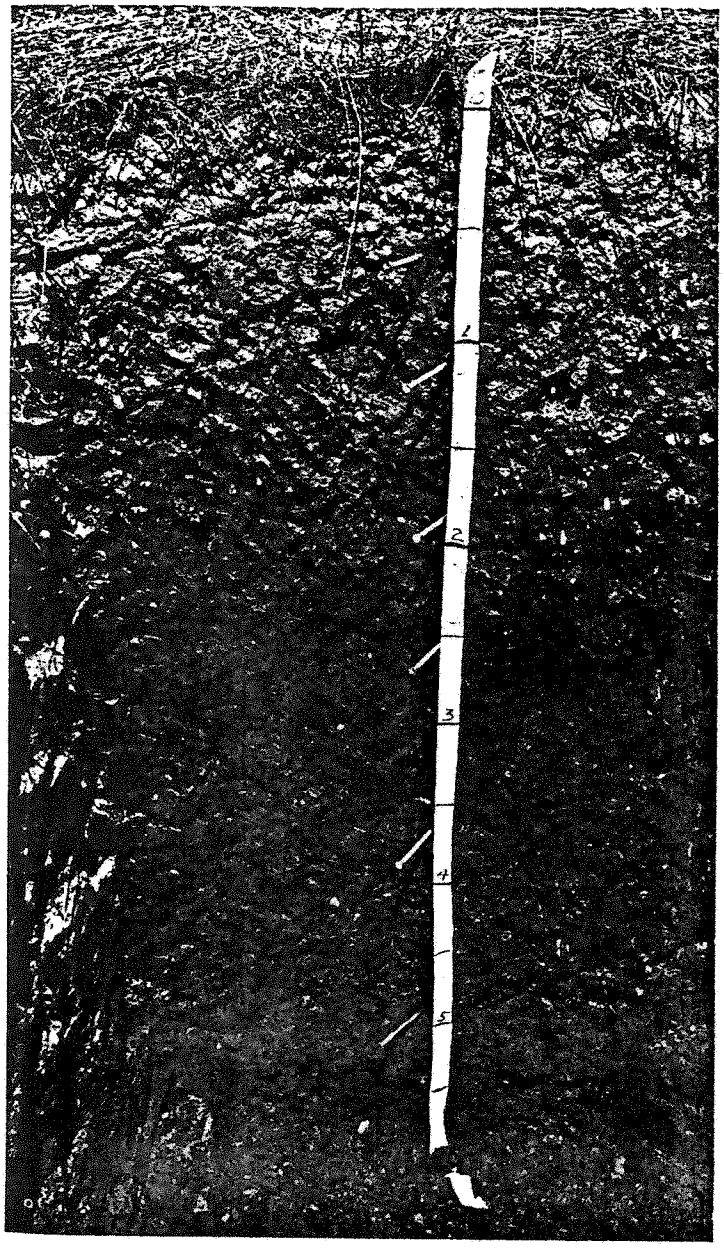


Figure 6.—**Profile of Sierra sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes, eroded.**

Depth to weathered parent rock ranges from 40 inches to more than 60 inches. The A horizon averages from 6 to 9 inches in thickness and is brown to strong brown coarse sandy loam to light loam. The B2 horizon is massive or subangular blocky sandy clay loam to clay loam.

Included in mapping are small areas of Sierra sandy loam that has slopes of 3 to 9 percent, Auberry coarse sandy loam, Ahwahnee coarse sandy loam, Musick sandy loam, and Argonaut loam, seeped variant.

Permeability of this Sierra soil is moderately slow. Surface runoff is medium, and the erosion hazard is moderate. The available water holding capacity is 6 to 10 inches. The effective rooting depth is 40 inches to more than 60 inches.

This soil is used mainly for annual range. Small areas are used for deciduous orchards, vineyards, and irrigated pasture. Capability unit IVe–1(18); range site 3; woodland suitability group not assigned.

Sierra sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes, eroded (SfD2).—This soil is similar to Sierra sand loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes, eroded, except that it is more sloping.

Included in mapping are small areas of Auberry coarse sandy loam, Ahwahnee very rocky coarse sandy loam, and Musick sandy loam.

Surface runoff is medium to rapid, and the erosion hazard is high.

This soil is used mainly for range. Some areas are used for deciduous orchards. Capability unit VIe–1(18); range site 3; woodland suitability group not assigned.

Sierra rocky sandy loam, 5 to 15 percent slopes (SgC).—This soil is similar to Sierra sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes, eroded, except that outcrops of bedrock make up 5 to 10 percent of the surface area and the surface layer is 9 to 16 inches thick and is grayish brown to brown.

Included in mapping are small areas of Auberry coarse sandy loam, Ahwahnee very rocky coarse sandy loam, Musick rocky sandy loam, and Argonaut loam, seeped variant.

This soil is used for range. Capability unit IVe–7(18); range site 3; woodland suitability group not assigned.

Sierra very rocky sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes (ShD).—This soil is similar to Sierra sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes, eroded, except that the surface is 5 to 25 percent rock outcrops and the surface layer is 9 to 16 inches thick and is grayish-brown to brown.

Included in mapping are small areas of Ahwahnee very rocky coarse sandy loam, Auberry very rocky coarse sandy loam, Musick very rocky sandy loam, Holland very rocky coarse sandy loam, and Josephine very rocky silt loam.

Surface runoff is medium to rapid, and the erosion hazard is high.

This soil is used for range and woodland. Capability unit VIs–1(18); range site 3; woodland suitability group 5.

Sierra very rocky sandy loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes (ShE).—This soil is similar to Sierra sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes, eroded, except that the surface is 5 to 25 percent rock outcrops and the surface layer is 9 to 16 inches thick and is grayish-brown to brown.

Included in mapping are small areas of Auberry very rocky coarse sandy loam, Ahwahnee very rocky coarse sandy loam, Musick very rocky sandy loam, and Josephine very rocky silt loam.

Surface runoff is rapid, and the erosion hazard is very high.

This soil is used for range and woodland. Capability unit VIIs–1(18); range site 3; woodland suitability group 6.

Sites Series

The Sites series consists of well-drained soils that are underlain by vertically tilted metasedimentary and metabasic rocks at a depth of 40 inches to more than 60 inches. These soils are rolling to very steep on mountainous uplands. Slopes are 9 to 70 percent. Elevations range from 2,000 to 5,000 feet. The average annual precipitation, including snow, is 35 to 60 inches, average annual temperature is about 55° F., and the frost-free season is 140 to 240 days. Vegetation is mainly coniferous forest and asso-

SOIL LEGEND

Each symbol consists of letters or a combination of letters and numbers. The first capital letter is the initial one of the soil name. A second capital letter, if used, shows the class of slope. Symbols without a slope letter are for nearly level soils. A final number, 2, in a symbol shows that the soil is named as eroded

SYMBOL	NAME
AaF	Acidic rock land
AcC	Ahwahnee coarse sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes
AdD	Ahwahnee very rocky coarse sandy loam, 9 to 30 percent slopes
AdE	Ahwahnee very rocky coarse sandy loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes
AfB	Aiken loam, 3 to 9 percent slopes
AfB2	Aiken loam, 3 to 9 percent slopes, eroded
AfC	Aiken loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes
AfC2	Aiken loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes, eroded
AfD	Aiken loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
AgD	Aiken cobbly loam, 3 to 30 percent slopes
AkC	Argonaut gravelly loam, 2 to 15 percent slopes
AlD	Argonaut extremely stony loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
AmD	Argonaut very rocky loam, 3 to 30 percent slopes
AnB	Argonaut clay loam, 3 to 9 percent slopes
AoB	Argonaut loam, seeped variant
ArB	Auberry coarse sandy loam, 5 to 9 percent slopes
ArC	Auberry coarse sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes
ArD	Auberry coarse sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
AsC	Auberry rocky coarse sandy loam, 5 to 15 percent slopes
AtD	Auberry very rocky coarse sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
AtE	Auberry very rocky coarse sandy loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes
AuD	Auberry very rocky coarse sandy loam, moderately deep, 9 to 30 percent slopes
AwD	Auburn silt loam, 2 to 30 percent slopes
AxD	Auburn very rocky silt loam, 2 to 30 percent slopes
AxE	Auburn very rocky silt loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes
AyF	Auburn extremely rocky silt loam, 3 to 70 percent slopes
AzE	Auburn cobbly clay loam, heavy subsoil variant, 9 to 50 percent slopes
BhC	Boomer gravelly loam, 3 to 15 percent slopes
BhD	Boomer gravelly loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
BkD	Boomer very rocky loam, 3 to 30 percent slopes
BkE	Boomer very rocky loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes
BkF	Boomer very rocky loam, 50 to 70 percent slopes
BpC	Boomer-Sites loams, 9 to 15 percent slopes
BpD	Boomer-Sites loams, 15 to 30 percent slopes
BrE	Boomer-Sites very rocky loams, 9 to 50 percent slopes
CcE	Chaix very rocky coarse sandy loam, 9 to 50 percent slopes
CcF	Chaix very rocky coarse sandy loam, 50 to 70 percent slopes
ChE	Chawanakee very rocky coarse sandy loam, 9 to 50 percent slopes
CkD	Cohasset sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
ClE	Cohasset cobbly sandy loam, 9 to 50 percent slopes
CmB	Cohasset loam, 3 to 9 percent slopes
CmC	Cohasset loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes
CmD	Cohasset loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
CoC	Cohasset cobbly loam, 3 to 15 percent slopes
CoE	Cohasset cobbly loam, 15 to 50 percent slopes
CrE	Crozier cobbly loam, 9 to 50 percent slopes
DeE	Delpiedra very rocky loam, 3 to 50 percent slopes
DfB	Diamond Springs very fine sandy loam, 3 to 9 percent slopes
DfC	Diamond Springs very fine sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes
DfD	Diamond Springs very fine sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
DgE	Diamond Springs very rocky very fine sandy loam, 3 to 50 percent slopes
DmD	Diamond Springs gravelly sandy loam, grayish subsoil variant, 9 to 30 percent slopes
DmE	Diamond Springs gravelly sandy loam, grayish subsoil variant, 30 to 50 percent slopes
GuF	Gullied land
HgB	Holland coarse sandy loam, 5 to 9 percent slopes
HgC	Holland coarse sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes
HgD	Holland coarse sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
HhC	Holland rocky coarse sandy loam, 5 to 15 percent slopes
HkE	Holland very rocky coarse sandy loam, 15 to 50 percent slopes
HkF	Holland very rocky coarse sandy loam, 50 to 70 percent slopes
HrC	Horseshoe gravelly sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes
HsE	Horseshoe gravelly loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes
HtE	Hotaw very rocky coarse sandy loam, 15 to 50 percent slopes
ImE	Iron Mountain very rocky sandy loam, 3 to 50 percent slopes
JrC	Josephine gravelly loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes
JrD	Josephine gravelly loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
JsE	Josephine very rocky loam, 15 to 50 percent slopes
JtC	Josephine silt loam, 5 to 15 percent slopes
JtD	Josephine silt loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
JtE	Josephine silt loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes
JuE	Josephine very rocky silt loam, 9 to 50 percent slopes
JuF	Josephine very rocky silt loam, 50 to 70 percent slopes
JvD	Josephine Mariposa gravelly loams, 15 to 30 percent slopes
LaB	Loamy alluvial land
MaD	Mariposa gravelly silt loam, 9 to 30 percent slopes
MbE	Mariposa very rocky silt loam, 9 to 50 percent slopes
MbF	Mariposa very rocky silt loam, 50 to 70 percent slopes
McE	Mariposa-Josephine very rocky loams, 15 to 50 percent slopes
McF	Mariposa-Josephine very rocky loams, 50 to 70 percent slopes
MfF	Maymen very rocky loam, 15 to 70 percent slopes
MhE	McCarthy cobbly loam, 9 to 50 percent slopes
MmF	Metamorphic rock land
MpB	Mixed alluvial land
MrC	Musick sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes
MrD	Musick sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
MsC	Musick rocky sandy loam, 5 to 15 percent slopes
MtF	Musick very rocky sandy loam, 15 to 50 percent slopes
PeD	Perkins gravelly loam, 3 to 30 percent slopes
PgB	Perkins gravelly loam, moderately deep variant, 2 to 5 percent slopes
PrD	Placer diggings
ReB	Rescue sandy loam, 2 to 9 percent slopes
ReC	Rescue sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes
ReD	Rescue sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
RfC	Rescue very stony sandy loam, 3 to 15 percent slopes
RfD	Rescue very stony sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
RfE	Rescue very stony sandy loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes
RgE2	Rescue extremely stony sandy loam, 3 to 50 percent slopes, eroded
Rk	Rescue clay, clayey variant
Saf	Serpentine rock land
SbB	Shaver coarse sandy loam, 5 to 9 percent slopes
SbC	Shaver coarse sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes
SbD	Shaver coarse sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
ScC	Shaver rocky coarse sandy loam, 5 to 15 percent slopes
SdE	Shaver very rocky coarse sandy loam, 15 to 50 percent slopes
SfC2	Sierra sandy loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes, eroded
SfD2	Sierra sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes, eroded
SgC	Sierra rocky sandy loam, 5 to 15 percent slopes
ShD	Sierra very rocky sandy loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
ShE	Sierra very rocky sandy loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes
SkC	Sites loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes
SkD	Sites loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
SkE	Sites loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes
SoE	Sites stony loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes
SrE	Sites very rocky loam, 15 to 50 percent slopes
SrF	Sites very rocky loam, 50 to 70 percent slopes
SsC	Sites clay loam, 9 to 15 percent slopes
SsD	Sites clay loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
SsE	Sites clay loam, 30 to 50 percent slopes
SuC	Sobrante silt loam, 3 to 15 percent slopes
SuD	Sobrante silt loam, 15 to 30 percent slopes
SwD	Sobrante very rocky silt loam, 3 to 30 percent slopes
TaD	Tailings
WaB	Wet alluvial land
WhE	Whiterock gravelly silt loam, 3 to 50 percent slopes

WC

Highways and r

Divided .....

Good motor

Poor motor ..

Trail .....

Highway markers

National Inter

U. S. .....

State or coun

Railroads

Single track .

Multiple track

Abandoned ..

Bridges and cros

Road .....

Trail .....

Railroad .....

Ferry .....

Ford .....

Grade .....

R. R. over ...

R. R. under ..

Tunnel .....

Buildings .....

School ... ...

Church .....

Mine and quarry

Gravel pit .....

Aqueduct tunnel

Aqueduct siphon

Pipeline .....

Cemetery .....

Dams .....

Levee .....

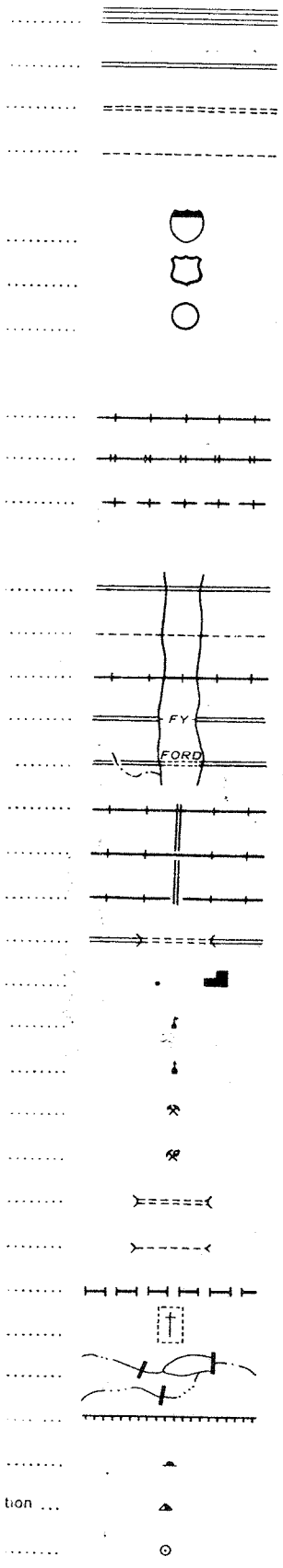
Sawmill .....

Forest fire or looko

Located object ...

CONVENTIONAL SIGNS

AND STRUCTURES



BOUNDARIES

National or state

County

Limit of soil survey

Reservation

Land grant

Small park, cemetery, airport

Land survey division corners

DRAINAGE

Streams, double-line

Perennial

Intermittent

Streams, single-line

Perennial

Intermittent

Crossable with tillage implements

Not crossable with tillage implements

Unclassified

Canals and ditches

Lakes and ponds

Perennial

Intermittent

Spring

Marsh or swamp

Wet spot

Drainage end or alluvial fan

RELIEF

Escarpments

Bedrock

Other

Prominent peak

Depressions

	Large	Small
Crossable with tillage implements		
Not crossable with tillage implements		
Contains water most of the time		

SOIL SURVEY DATA

Soil boundary and symbol

Dx

Gravel

Stoniness
- Stony
- Very stony

Rock outcrops

Chert fragments

Clay spot

Sand spot

Gumbo or scabby spot

Made land

Severely eroded spot

Blowout, wind erosion

Gully

Soil sample site

Soil maps compiled in 1971 as part of a soil survey by the United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service and Forest Service, and the University of California Agricultural Experiment Station.

Photobase from 1962 aerial photography. Positions of 5000-foot grid ticks are approximate and based on the California coordinate system, zone 2.

Land division corners are approximately positioned on the maps.

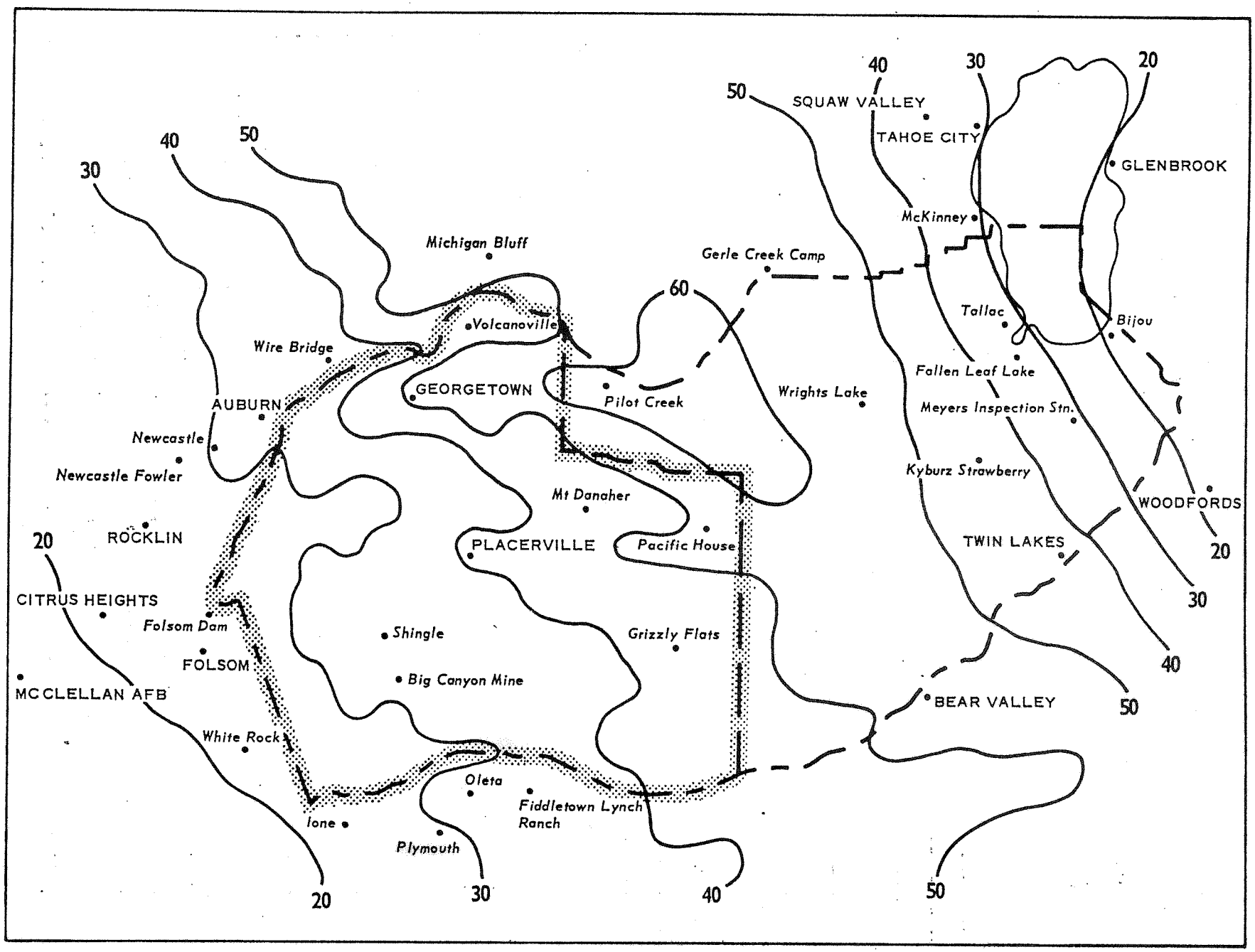


Figure 14.—Average annual precipitation.

TWIN RIVERS VINEYARDS
Plymouth California

17 Spencer Court Sausalito, California 94965 415 332-9396

February 28, 1982

Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Box 385
Washington, D.C. 20044-0385

Re: Notice No. 371; Shenandoah Valley viticultural area

Dear Sir:

Please consider these comments as an addendum to my letter of February 16, 1982.

Since the grapes of the "El Dorado Addition" have in the past not been labelled with the appellation "Amador County" or "Shenandoah" some would have these vineyards excluded from the Shenandoah Valley viticultural area. This would be an unfair discrimination against these vines since the majority of all grapes harvested in the area have, also, never known either of these appellations.

The viticultural history of this area is divided into two distinct periods. In the years prior to 1968, the only winery in the area, D'Agostini, vinified only the total production of its own 125 acres of grapes into wines using the appellation "California." The other grapes produced in the area from some 225 acres went to home winemakers and large bottlers such as Gallo. I find no record of any wines using the "Shenandoah" or "Amador County" appellations prior to approximately 1972.

In 1968 the Sutter Home Winery purchased 20 tons of grapes from the Deaver Vineyard. The resulting wine, released in 1971, has become a viticultural benchmark. The increased demand for winegrapes from this area because of the success of this wine has seen vineyard acreage increase from 350 to 1466 acres in the last ten years. However, very few of these grapes will be labelled as "Shenandoah." Most will be marketed under the "Amador County" appellation, and the remainder will be blended with other grapes to a variety of appellations.

The following is a partial history of the appellation designation applied to grapes grown in the Shenandoah Valley area.

D'Agostini Winery: Estate bottled, N.V. "California"

Montevina:
1972 to 1974; "Shenandoah Valley"
1975 to 1980; "Amador County" (The winery address includes Shenandoah Valley, Plymouth, California.)

Sutter Home:

1968 to 1971;	"California" (Deaver Vineyard)
1972;	None
1973;	Lower label mentions,"... from grapes grown in the Shenandoah Valley of Amador County... located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada..."
1974 & 1975;	"Amador County" Lower label mentions vineyard source and Shenandoah Valley
1976 & 1977;	"Amador County"
1978;	"Amador County" - Side bar mentions"... heart of the Shenandoah Valley of Amador County... climate and soil work in harmony to produce Zinfandel ..."
1979;	"Amador County" - No Vineyard or mention of valley.

A listing of "Wineries that have used or are using Shenandoah Valley grapes" supplied by the Amador County Wine Grape Growers Association, copy enclosed, lists 41 wineries from areas other than Amador County. Of that number, all used the grapes from this area for blending purposes with the following exceptions:

1. Ridge Winery ----- "Shenandoah" - used since mid 1970's
2. Sutter Home ------ see above; Shenandoah Valley used on "side bars" only
3. Monterey Peninsula Winery -- "Shenandoah" - since 1979
4. Gemello ---------- "Shenandoah" - one year only - no longer in business (small lot)
5. Harbor Winery----- "Shenandoah" - Deaver Vineyard - small lots
6. Richard Carey ---- "Amador County" - side bar identifies vineyard and Shenandoah Valley (2 or 3 years only)
7. Quady ---------- "Amador" - side bar Shenandoah Valley
8. Sequoia ----------"Amador County" - side bar identifies Deaver Vineyard (small lots)
9. Z. D. Wines ------ 1973 "Foothills"
   1974 "Amador" - back label identifies Shenandoah Valley and vineyard

Thus, with these few exceptions, most of the grapes from this area are lending their "unique, intense varietal character" to other wines without being specifically identified as to their source in the Shenandoah Valley.

Beginning with the 1980 vintage, a portion of the harvest of the Twin Rivers Vineyards, within the percentages allowed to maintain an "Amador County" appellation, will be used in the Amador County Zinfandel produced by Sutter Home Winery.

The Shenandoah Valley of California has been known since the 1850's, however, the use, awareness and viticultural importance of this name is still young and growing as are most of the vines planted here.

The greater use of the viticultural term "Shenandoah Valley" will be in the future.

The vines of the "El Dorado Addition" deserve to be a part of that future.

sincerely,

R. E. Lang

INTERNATIONAL PLANT PROPAGATORS' SOCIETY

Western Region

February 17, 1982

Chief, Regulations and Procedures Div.
Bureau Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
P.O. Box 385
Washington, D.C. 20385

Dear Sir:

I am writing this letter with reference to notice 391 of the Shenandoah Valley Viticultural Association with regards to an appellation of origin for wines of the Shenandoah Valley or Region.

My interest is as an outsider that views a discrepancy in what is included in this area (Shenandoah Valley).

I am a viticulturist having been with the Department of Viticulture and Enology of the University of California, Davis, since 1953. I have recently retired.

Last year I wrote a supportive letter for the Monterey County Grape Growers in support of their formation of a region of appellation.

This letter concerns the appellation of the Shenandoah Valley of California. In essence it is not really a Valley but more of a region extending from the vineyards near Plymouth to that of the D'Agostini Vineyard to the north--a difference of 500 feet elevation. This region takes in Amador County, although an adjacent vineyard in El Dorado County (Twin Rivers Vineyards) is excluded.

It is this exclusion that concerns me. I have been in some of these different vineyards several times. In fact I have been in the Twin Rivers Vineyards at least once a year for the last three to four years. I feel that this vineyard should be a part of this region.

Generally, for a region of appellation I consider it to be an area that has a similar microclimate. Twin Rivers Vineyards certainly meets this requirement. It is located about 1500 feet elevation which is the median elevation of the vineyards for which appellation is being requested. It is true that Twin Rivers Vineyard is not in Amador County. However, this boundary is not of a nature that would place it in a different microclimate. The soil type is the same as that of the other vineyards in the Shenandoah Region. A small canyon separates Twin Rivers Vineyards from the Shenandoah Region Vineyards, that are being considered in the appellation. Otherwise the Twin Rivers Vineyards is the same elevation, has the same soil type and is within the same overall air drainage pattern as the median of the vineyards in this appellation.

As far as the vineyards are concerned, Twin Rivers Vineyards has the same variety (Zinfandel); has a similar crop production and similar time of bud break as the other vineyards in this area of the same age and are included in the Shenandoah Region appellation. I would say that the microclimate of the D'Agostini vineyard which is 500 feet higher and farthest to the north would be of a more different microclimate than is Twin Rivers Vineyards to the vineyards adjacent to it which are within 1/4 - 1/2 mile and at the same elevation.

I strongly recommend that Twin Rivers Vineyards be considered as part of the Shenandoah Valley appellation.

Yours truly,

Curtis J. Alley

Dr. Curtis J. Alley
Viticulture & Enology
University of California
Davis, California 95616

TWIN RIVERS VINEYARDS
Plymouth California

17 Spencer Court Sausalito, California 94965 415 332-9396

4/82

Regulations

Rec'd 5-5-82

April 24, 1982

Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Box 385
Washington, D.C. 20044-0385

Re: Notice No. 371: Shenandoah Valley viticultural area

Dear Sir:

The purpose of this letter is not to emphasize differences, but to reiterate the aspects of viticultural features that bind together our vineyard with those of the original petition area in a common grape growing region.

The Shenandoah Valley of California is not a valley in the true geographic sense, therefore the determination of its boundaries becomes somewhat subjective and more complex. The resolution of this boundary conflict should be neither arbitrary nor accomodating. Advocacy must be combined with inquiry. Assumptions must be tested and implied differences must be examined so that facts are not clouded by fiction.

A viticultural area must be distinguishable by geographical features; further, article 4.25a(e)(2)(iii), Title 27, CFR requires that these geographical characteristics specifically distinguish the viticultural features of the proposed area from surrounding areas. It must be set apart as distinct, different and separate from other areas by viticultural qualities.

Sufficient geographical characteristics exist that serve to point out the essential viticultural differences that distinguish this viticultural area from surrounding areas. A fair and objective assessment of these differentiating characteristics will most certainly include our vineyard within this proposed viticultural area.

There are no viticultural features that distinguish our vineyard from other vineyards within the proposed boundaries of the original petition area.

1. The varietals we grow are the same as our neighbors, identical even to the clonal source of the vines.
2. Our grapes are sold to the same winery and are in some of the identical wines as those of the Deaver vineyard.
3. Our climate is the same as that of our neighbors; our dates of bud-break and harvest are identical to others in this small geographic area.
4. The elevation of our vineyard is 1600 feet, identical to that of the Deaver vineyard and at the average elevation of all vineyards in the petition area.

5. The topography of the "El Dorado Addition" is identical to that of the rest of the Shenandoah Valley. It is an integral part of the same tabular formation that forms the entire viticultural area. This recognizable geographical feature ends abruptly North of our vineyard at the Middle Fork of the Cosumnes River and at Spanish Creek.

6. The soil type of our vineyard is the Sierra series, identical to that of over 90% of the vineyards in the petition area. This "pie shaped wedge" of Sierra soil is unique and rare, constituting only 5% of the Amador area and less than 5% of the El Dorado area. This recognizable geographical feature ends abruptly North of our vineyard at the Middle Fork of the Cosumnes River and at Spanish Creek.

7. The sole access to our vineyard is via Shenandoah Road, identical to that of all of the vineyards in the petition area. If this road can be pictured as the central "river" this valley lacks, and its lateral roads as "tributaries," it becomes apparent that our vineyard is a part of this same geographical basin.

The South Fork of the Cosumnes River drains the entire petition area. It is a county boundary and a recognizable geographical feature. However, in our location it is not geographically a distinguishing viticultural feature. As stated previously, the Sierra soil, topography, terrain, elevation, climate and physical features of our vineyard are identical to the same features found on the Amador side of this seasonal stream. To the West and East of our location, however, this stream-bed is a genuine viticultural boundary distinguishing the viticultural features of the Shenandoah Valley from surrounding areas. In these other locations the abrupt and distinguishing changes in soil type, depth, topography, terrain and physical features are so different so as to preclude the planting of vineyards. Ours is the only vineyard North of the Cosumnes River in the petition vicinity.

The riverbed elevation of the Cosumnes between our vineyard and neighboring vineyards on the Amador side of this formation is 1280 feet. This altitude is higher than vines in three or four vineyards in the lowest, Southwestern, portion of the petition area.

Vineyards on both sides of this stream are planted at an elevation of 1600 feet, only some 320 feet above the stream channel. These 1600 foot countours are as little as 1200 feet apart. The straight line distance between our vineyard and a neighbors vineyard in Amador is 1700 to 1900 feet. There are rows in our vineyard that are longer than this distance. The 1400 foot contours, an elevation planted to vines in other petition area locations, are as little as 320 feet apart.

The petition area is not flat bottomland. Variations in geographic features such as swales, drainage channels, granitic and metamorphic rock outcrops, rocky and steep hillocks and ridges are found throughout the region. Maximum plantable acreage in this valley is limited by these "severe" features to less than approximately 25 to 30 per-cent of the area.

Elevation is the major geographic feature affecting variations in climate in the area. Temperature everywhere varies 5 degrees Fahrenheit for each 1000 foot change in altitude. Vineyards in the south-western portion of the petition area are at 1200 to 1300 feet. Those in the "Eastern Addition" are as high as 1920 feet. This 700 foot variation in vineyard elevation is more than twice as great as the 320 foot difference in elevation to the Cosumnes riverbed in our vicinity. Vines in the "Eastern Addition" of the area above 1900 feet are higher than any location in the "El Dorado Addition." Vines in the "Southern Addition" of the petition area below 1280 feet are lower than even the South Fork of the Cosumnes River at our vineyard location.

Hills and ridges surrounding the vineyards at the eastern boundary of the area rise some 200 to 480 feet above the vines in that location. Again, this variation in topographical features is greater than that which occurs between our vineyard and its neighbors.

Soil type is a second major viticultural feature. Over 90% of the vineyards in the petition area, including ours, are planted on Sierra series soils. The lowest and highest vineyards, however, are planted on Ahwahnee soils.

Soil and climate are the major distinguishing viticultural features of the Shenandoah Valley. The differences in soil type and vineyard elevation included within the petition area have known substantive abilities to effect micro-climatic variations. Each vineyard has its own identity; a unique combination of viticultural qualities and vine management that cause it to differ in some ways from some or all of its neighbors and yet, because of the underlying basic similarities, to form a part of the entire viticultural area. The viticultural qualities of our vineyard are comfortably within the extremes of all viticultural features found in the area.

The stated purpose of this notice of proposed rulemaking is to "... help consumers identify the wines they may purchase." This purpose can be meaningfully best served only by the inclusion of our vineyard in this viticultural area.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Lang