Leon Adams

CALIFORNIA WINE INDUSTRY AFFAIRS: RECOLLECTIONS AND OPINIONS

With an Introduction by
Maynard A. Amerine

An Interview Conducted by
Ruth Teiser
in 1986

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Leon Adams

Leon D. Adams, who helped create a demand for wine across all levels of American society, died yesterday of heart failure in San Francisco. He was 90.

He was born in Boston but came to California as a child. He graduated from the old Polytechnic High School in San Francisco and, in 1923, went to work for the old San Francisco News, covering the University of California at Berkeley, where he was enrolled as a student.

He went to Europe for a year, and there rekindled an interest in wine that began during a brief childhood stay in the Valley of the Moon where his mother made wine. When he returned to the Bay Area, he was assigned by the News to cover the "Prohibition beat," since the Eighteenth Amendment, barring consumption of alcohol throughout the United States, was still in effect.

In 1928, Mr. Adams left the News to join the McClatchy papers in the Central Valley. Four years later, with Prohibition clearly about to be repealed, he founded the California Grape Growers League with the goal of introducing table wine to Americans. In 1934, a year after repeal, the group became the Wine Institute.

He also established the Wine Advisory Board and developed a training course that educating thousands of restaurateurs, retailers and consumers.

In 1954, Mr. Adams left the institute and published his first book, "The Commonsense Book of Wine."

His other books included "The Wines of America," and "Striped Bass Fishing on the Pacific Coast."

Mr. Adams is survived by his former wife, Eleanor, of Mill Valley; four children, Brian Adams of Novato, Gerald Adams of San Francisco, Timothy Rittman Adams of Los Angeles, and Susan Campbell Adams of New York City.

Memorial services are pending.
Since 1954 the Regional Oral History Office has been interviewing leading participants in or well-placed witnesses to major events in the development of Northern California, the West, and the Nation. Oral history is a modern research technique involving an interviewee and an informed interviewer in spontaneous conversation. The taped record is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. The resulting manuscript is typed in final form, indexed, bound with photographs and illustrative materials, and placed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and other research collections for scholarly use. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

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It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows:

Cataloging Information

ADAMS, Leon D. [b. 1905] Wine Institute organizer, writer


Updates previous interview completed in 1974. Grape Growers League and the Wine Institute; labeling and blending wines; industry changes; distilled spirits industry; marketing orders; taxation; wine organizations. Appended: History of Society of Medical Friends of Wine; speech by Adams.

Introduction by Maynard A. Amerine, Emeritus Professor of Viticulture and Enology, University of California, Davis.

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The California wine industry oral history series, a project of the Regional Oral History Office, was initiated in 1969 through the action and with the financing of the Wine Advisory Board, a state marketing order organization which ceased operation in 1975. In 1983 it was re instituted as The Wine Spectator California Winemen Oral History Series with donations from The Wine Spectator Scholarship Foundation. The selection of those to be interviewed is made by a committee consisting of James D. Hart, director of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; John A. De Luca, president of the Wine Institute, the statewide winery organization; Maynard A. Amerine, Emeritus Professor of Viticulture and Enology, University of California, Davis; the current chairman of the board of directors of the Wine Institute; Ruth Teiser, series project director; and Marvin R. Shanken, trustee of The Wine Spectator Scholarship Foundation.

The purpose of the series is to record and preserve information on California grape growing and wine making that has existed only in the memories of wine men. In some cases their recollections go back to the early years of this century, before Prohibition. These recollections are of particular value because the Prohibition period saw the disruption of not only the industry itself but also the orderly recording and preservation of records of its activities. Little has been written about the industry from late in the last century until Repeal. There is a real paucity of information on the Prohibition years (1920-1933), although some commercial wine making did continue under supervision of the Prohibition Department. The material in this series on that period, as well as the discussion of the remarkable development of the wine industry in subsequent years (as yet treated analytically in few writings) will be of aid to historians. Of particular value is the fact that frequently several individuals have discussed the same subjects and events or expressed opinions on the same ideas, each from his own point of view.

Research underlying the interviews has been conducted principally in the University libraries at Berkeley and Davis, the California State Library, and in the library of the Wine Institute, which has made its collection of in many cases unique materials readily available for the purpose.
The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons who have contributed significantly to recent California history. The office is headed by Willa K. Baum and is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, the director of The Bancroft Library.

Ruth Teiser
Project Director
The Wine Spectator California Winemen
Oral History Series

September 1990
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley
CALIFORNIA WINE INDUSTRY INTERVIEWS

Interviews Completed by 1990

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Maynard A. Amerine, The University of California and the State's Wine Industry, 1971
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William V. Cruess, A Half Century of Food and Wine Technology, 1967
Jack and Jamie Peterman Davies, Rebuilding Schramsberg: The Creation of a California Champagne House, 1990
William A. Dieppe, Almaden is My Life, 1985
Alfred Fromm, Marketing California Wine and Brandy, 1984
Joseph E. Heitz, Creating a Winery in the Napa Valley, 1986
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Ernest A. Wente, Wine Making in the Livermore Valley, 1971

Albert J. Winkler, Viticultural Research at UC Davis (1921-1971), 1973
INTRODUCTION

This continues Leon Adams' earlier (1974) oral biography. It introduces us to his significant wine-related public relations activities. He convinces us that he still believes in table wines as a desirable, even necessary American table beverage, and, moreover, that the goal of making them so is achievable. At the same time he demonstrates his opposition to those who find this goal difficult to achieve. A part of the problem is the type of public relations program that should be used.

Leon Adams' books and his activities as executive secretary of the Medical Friends of Wine fit into his program of making wine the table beverage of Americans. All those who make and drink wine should be grateful to him for his work, especially in differentiating table wines from distilled spirits.

Tangential to his main goal of convincing Americans to drink wine is his campaign to outlaw the grey market in California. He notes that Governor Deukmejian vetoed the bill, but doesn't explain how both houses of the legislature passed it.

Historians will enjoy the internecine warfare involving the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency and the Wine Advisory Board and members of the Wine Institute. They will also wonder why Boone's program did not succeed. They will also be interested in Adams' belief that certain wineries conspired to reduce red wine production (p. 40-41). Whether it was a conspiracy or not is also an interesting point. Whether the increase in white table wine consumption was promoted or developed by itself is not clear.

In summary, this interview updates his previous interview, especially as to the organization of the Wine Institute and its many activities. Here he is not only a primary source of information but also one of the main actors. Note especially his information on taxes, limits on alcohol, vintage labeling, various types of sparkling wines, and even blue fining.

We are indebted to Leon Adams for revealing so much about the post-Repeal history of wine in this country.

Maynard A. Amerine

January, 1990
St. Helena, California
This 1986 interview with Leon D. Adams carries forward and adds to his oral history account, Revitalizing the California Wine Industry, completed in 1974. Since the earlier interview, he has continued travelling and gathering material on "winegrowing, marketing, and consumption of wine in North America," as he has noted, keeping up to date his highly influential book, The Wines of America. Three editions have appeared, and a fourth is scheduled for publication in 1990.

Among the subjects discussed in this recent reminiscence is the effect that that book, together with the talks he has given, have had upon the spread of winemaking and interest in wine across the country. Other subjects include additions to his earlier recollections of the formative years of the Wine Institute and the operations of the Wine Advisory Board; trends in the post-Repeal California wine industry; the influence wielded by various segments of that industry and the distilled spirits industry; and the growth of anti-alcohol sentiment that began in the mid-1980s.

The interview was conducted in two sessions in April and a third in December of 1986, at his Sausalito apartment. Some revisions and additions were made in the transcript, and a few deletions of repetitions, before the final typing.

Mr. Adams has deposited most of his wine industry notes in the library at the University of California, Davis.

Ruth Teiser
Interview/Editor

July 1990
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name: Leon David Adams

Date of birth: 1-1-05

Birthplace:

Father's full name: Nathan Adams

Occupation: manufacturer

Birthplace:

Mother's full name: Augusta Lager Adams

Occupation: housewife

Birthplace:

Your spouse:

Your children: Gerald, Brian, Timothy, Simon

Where did you grow up?: California

Present community: Napa Valley

Education: UC Berkeley 2 years

Occupation(s): journalist, author

Areas of expertise: grape, wine, publishing

Other interests or activities: fishing

Organizations in which you are active: Society of Medieval Friends of Wine, American Society of Enology and Viticulture
Winery Visits and Retail Sales
[Interview 1: 7 April 1986]##1

Teiser: This is an addition to Leon Adams' earlier interview. That taping was done in 1972. It was finished in 1974.

Adams: In '73 the first edition of The Wines of America had gone to press.

Teiser: Let's begin with a subject that you suggested just now, tourism to wineries before Prohibition. I didn't know it existed.

Adams: It did not. [laughs] People did harness their horses and buggies and find their way before the days of automobiles, but very rarely. The only tasting room before Prohibition of which I am aware was the one that Gustave Niebaum built, with stained glass, at the old Inglenook.

Teiser: Was it open to the public, or was it just for his friends?

Adams: There was no public! There was no tourism. After all, it was horse-and-buggy days, and occasional automobiles.

At the time of Repeal, people--wise wine users--would go to the wineries to fill their jugs and barrels. There were the "barrel houses," which were rather disreputable; they were in front of groceries, had batteries of barrels. But some people would go to the wineries to get a barrel, or fill a jug or demijohn--most likely a demijohn. There were these little roadside wineries. That's basically all we had at Repeal.

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1This symbol (##) indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes, see page 45.
Then came the large wineries' decision to abolish bulk sale at retail, to abolish the barrel houses, to put wine in packages. This required a change in the law, and our [Wine Institute] attorney, Jeff [Jefferson] Peyser, who was also a member of the [state] legislature, was the one to do this. I felt it would be too bad to put these roadside wineries out of business, so I told Peyser to preserve bulk sale for wineries, even though it would be abolished for retail licensees.

Peyser asked me, then, what would the board of directors of the Wine Institute say, and I said, "On this, we will not consult the board of directors." Because I felt that wineries out in the country would some day be profitable only if they could sell at retail. This goes back to the situation which existed throughout the United States and I suppose elsewhere, but particularly in the United states, where wine was still regarded as an intoxicating liquor, and holders of licenses didn't want anybody else to sell it unless they also held the same license. That is as important to this day.

For example, in other parts of the United States where winegrowing has been restored, in each state the problem arises that retailers and wholesalers don't want the wineries to be allowed to sell at retail or at wholesale.

The climax of all this was the day that Mr. Peyser got the law changed to abolish bulk sale in the cities, but to continue bulk sale at the wineries.

Teiser: About when was that?

Adams: That would have been about 1935. I think it's from that particular development that the tremendous importance of wine tourism, in California and across the United States and even in Canada, has evolved. It's true that there's no more bulk sale; although I did see one winery in Lodi the other day selling wine in bulk, filling peoples' jugs [laughs]. But aside from that, it doesn't exist.

There was another place up to about two years ago; at Wine and the People, on University Avenue in Berkeley, you could fill your jug. But people have become accustomed to buying wine in sealed packages and that did not continue; it was not very profitable. Peter Brehm now still has that name, Wine and the People, but he's moved to Napa and he sells mostly winery equipment.
When I first was doing my research in Canada in the sixties, wineries were not allowed to sell at retail. But today they are, and we'll eventually, I think, have wine sales in groceries in both Ontario and British Columbia. Tourism is most important from my standpoint because we have the statistical evidence that where winegrowing exists, wine consumption increases.

Teiser: And you think awareness of it is through tourism?

Adams: It's more than awareness. It is the charm, and the beauty. After all, wine grows on grape vines. And wine tastes best at the vineyard.

Teiser: Even though it costs less at some retail stores?

Adams: That's right. Oh, the wineries charge more. The wines they want to sell, of course, are the ones for which they can get the highest prices. But many wineries do have special wines obtainable only at the winery. At least many have had; I don't know to what extent this is true now. It's the difference between wine for everyday use and wine for what I call Sunday use.

Teiser: Well, you have been instrumental in having laws changed so that what you call "farm wineries" can exist and sell their wines on the premises in many states; but did the law allow them to exist earlier?

Adams: The laws were written by the spirits people and the beer people, at the time of Repeal. The grape growers were not even present when those laws were put together in the thirties. The grape and wine people in various states were not organized to do any legislative work. The one place where they had some organization was in the state of New York, but the people in charge in the New York industry at that time didn't see any reason for retailing at wineries. Tourism was something they hadn't even thought of.

The laws were written by liquor and beer people, who established license systems primarily for breweries and distilleries, and for retailers and wholesalers. The laws of virtually all of the present farm winery states did not allow a winery to sell at retail or at wholesale. And we are still struggling, in state after state, to get the wholesale privilege. Take the example of Kentucky: in Kentucky there have been two wineries established. One is on its last legs, and the other one has gone out of business because the state law only permitted one
bottle to be sold to one person in an entire year. [chuckles] So the wine industry in Kentucky is dead to this day.

Teiser: Let me see if I'm summing this up correctly. Throughout the country there were varying laws which made it difficult for wineries to even operate, much less be open to tourists. Is that correct?

Adams: Yes.

Teiser: And through a variety of efforts, yours included, these laws have been liberalized in many states?

Adams: Yes. The New York farm winery law, for example, was passed. The only state where things were relatively free, and are still not entirely free, was Missouri, because Missouri had had apparently liberal laws before Prohibition. But even today in Missouri two of the wineries which can sell at retail at their premises could not establish other premises. So these two wineries both have established what pretend to be wineries as additional sales premises. The same thing exists in Texas, for example, where Dr. Bobby Smith's winery has a pretended winery in a wet precinct [chuckles]. His actual winery is in a dry precinct.

We now have in many states wineries producing wine with the grapes they grow in thirty-nine or forty states, including California. And I look forward to the day when it will reach forty-seven of the fifty states. There was winegrowing even in North Dakota [laughs] before Prohibition.

Teiser: Do you anticipate, now, that those other states beyond California will account for a great volume?

Adams: No, I don't think so. California has climates that are extremely favorable to winegrowing. California is going to be the leading winegrowing state for the foreseeable future. The discovery that you can grow grapes successfully in Oregon and Washington, and now Texas and New Mexico--these have considerable volume; they are developing volume. They're still quite new. It's only during the past four or five years that the extensive vineyards of Texas and New Mexico have been planted.

Teiser: How do they rank now? After California, what are the major states?

Adams: New York is still second, but people in the state of Washington are confident, with good cause, of expecting to exceed New York.
This is especially because New York State has terrible handicaps. One is that it is the headquarters of imports—large, extensive imports. And New York State still prohibits the sale of wine in supermarkets. The retail licensees are responsible for that. Terribly important, these handicaps to New York winegrowing. The present trend indicates that the state of Washington will exceed New York in the coming decade.

The wine scene in North America is beginning to resemble France, where you see signs that say "Route de Champagne," and so on. [chuckles] There are signs in the towns that say "degustation"—"you can taste"; tasting is free. This wine tourism has reached a point at which the wineries may begin to charge for that taste.

The wineries with the extremely famous names don't want the tourists. They list themselves as "by appointment only," and they mean it. There was a point at which a few wineries established whole chains of tasting rooms in California.

Teiser: Brookside and Mills.

Adams: Mills was the first. And the tasting rooms' architecture, decor, gave the impression that each tasting room was actually a winery, using the charm of a winery. But that, apparently, has given way. I suspect it has given way because there are so many real wineries along the highways of California.

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Teiser: One winery told me several years ago that they poured their best wines for people who came through, which hardly seemed possible.

Adams: It would be a highly unprofitable mistake to pour the best wines, especially the older wines, because it costs a great deal to age wines. You have to pour relatively new wines, inexpensive wines.

Teiser: Also, shouldn't you be pouring wines that are available generally?

Adams: You could. Because the purpose is to build business. We had a meeting just last week at Napa, the first such meeting ever of tasting room managers, in which the point, the intention, was that tasting rooms can be profitable not only because of the amount of retail wine sales that they generate, but because of the books they sell—books and other wine-related items. Now, this was a contention that was made at this meeting.
Of course, wasn’t the meeting organized by the--

Wine Appreciation Guild.

Which sells books.

Yes. Books and other wine-related items. The reason I was there is that my old *Commonsense Book of Wine* has outsold all other books in tasting rooms since it first came out in 1958. All the other books intimidate people. And this *Commonsense Book of Wine* does the least in the way of intimidation of the reader. It makes wine simple.

But this whole trend for sale at the vineyards is extremely important and it’s purely spectacular. The other week a winery owner in the newly reviving winegrowing state of Tennessee came with his plans, and showed me how he’s going to have a farm winery on a well-traveled route so he can sell as much as possible at retail.

So the factor is the highway, not the vineyard area, is that right?

They aim at getting both. There have to be vines around. We have a nice example in the Seattle area, Chateau St. Michelle, the biggest wine company of the state. The grapes are grown in Eastern Washington, across the Cascades, but they built their winery, with its tourist operation, on the outskirts of Seattle at Woodinville. And, of course, they had to plant a vineyard. But that vineyard is not producing the fine wine.

It’s a token vineyard?

Yes, exactly. [tape interruption; doorbell rings]

The Grape Growers League and the Wine Institute

I was going to take you back to the thirties and ask you about the origins of the Wine Institute. You cited an earlier organization--

Grape Growers League.

Tell about that, would you?
Adams: All right. To clear up any confusion as to the origins of the Wine Institute (and the Wine Advisory Board), let me make it clear that during the Prohibition era it was evident, especially to me, that Repeal was due and that we needed an organization if, following Repeal, we would begin to put wine into the American diet. Since we needed an educational campaign, there had to be an organization to supply the money. I pointed this out to key individuals, such as the Rossis and Horace Lanza, who I thought would be a good president. We named the organization the Grape Growers League of California. I wanted Lanza to be the president, but Lanza said he should never be president of anything. He said, "I'm too emotional." So he named Sophus Federspiel, and it did turn out to be Sophus Federspiel.

One of the ways we got the organization operating was that we needed to have a campaign to repeal the California prohibition law, the Wright Act. So we worked both to repeal the Wright Act and for Repeal. My associate, Bob Smith, and I started wine lore, wine publicity, before Repeal. I would bill the organization, send an invoice.

Teiser: How many wineries were there in it?

Adams: Oh, perhaps a dozen. Maybe more. But then came Repeal.

I was only on the education level, on the propaganda side; I had gotten them to organize, but I was in the newspaper business and I wasn't available. They immediately needed to have contacts with the government, because it was the Prohibition Bureau, which later became the Alcohol Tax Unit, and so on--. So they chose Harry Caddow, who was unemployed at the time.

Teiser: But he had been employed--

Adams: By the old California Vineyardists Association, and before that by the California Grape Car Plan. They called their organization, at 85 Second street, the Wine Producers Association. So both organizations existed, the Grape Growers League on the educational side, and the Wine Producers Association with government contacts. But it was obvious that there would have to be a permanent organization. I went searching for someone more competent than Caddow. Our leader was the late Frederick J. Koster of the California Barrel Company, and he brought in the State Chamber of Commerce. But Koster resisted my attempts to bring in a more competent manager; he liked Harry Caddow.
Teiser: Let me ask you something about the California Barrel Company. It looks to me, from looking at just the post-Repeal records, that a lot of wineries owed money to it or had credit with it.

Adams: That sounds quite logical. There was obviously a great deal going on between wineries and the California Barrel Company. It was Koster, who was also president of the State Chamber of Commerce, who brought in the State Chamber of Commerce. But the State Chamber people, under Norman Sloane, could visualize an important wine industry developing as a source of revenue for the State Chamber. That is why and how those Del Monte conferences developed.

I think it was Koster who recognized the enormous need to convey the wine problems to officialdom. Koster, Burke Critchfield of Bank of America, and I went to Indiana in 1934 to begin the education of American officialdom in the matter of wine. At this time, Burke Critchfield was reporting to A. P. Giannini and L. M. [Giannini], and Critchfield began to imagine that he might someday become the czar of the wine industry.

Teiser: Was this under the Wine Institute, or still under these earlier organizations?

Adams: Under these earlier organizations. Actually, the State Chamber was part of it. Oh, by the way, the Grape Growers League had chosen the late Judge Marion De Vries, ex-congressman, as our lobbyist in Washington. The wine people had had excellent relationships with Congressman Frank Buck.

Everyone understood that we needed to have a permanent organization like the Distilled Spirits Institute. They said that we should have a Wine Institute. I didn’t like the word "institute," but I didn’t argue. It was agreed at the last Del Monte conference that we would need an attorney, and I brought in Peyser. He wrote the by-laws. In the meeting at this point, Critchfield was representing the bank. Anyway, our meeting was held in October of ’34, at the Clift Hotel. We had a vote to incorporate.

Teiser: Were the dues proportional to the volume of the wineries, or how did it work?

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1See also pp. 32-33.
Adams: Dues were so much per ton, so much per gallon of this, so much per gallon of that. But that was unworkable, because in the years of enormous surplus production we theoretically would be flooded with money, but the wineries wouldn't have the money. [laughs] They protested. That's why, in 1936, I had to dream up an alternate system. We used the so-much-per-ton of this and so-much-per-ton of that in developing percentages. We developed the budget and divided the budget burden among the wineries, both their proportion of sales and their proportion of the crush.

Champagne Taxes and Labels

Teiser: Why does champagne pay twenty times per gallon what table wine pays in federal tax?

Adams: It was sometime in the forties or early fifties that I proposed to the leading champagne people--there were not very many--that we should follow the example of Germany by getting the federal and state taxes reduced on champagne, since champagne is nothing more nor less than table wine with bubbles. I pointed out that a tremendous increase in consumption of schaumwein, or sekt, had occurred in Germany; why couldn't we do this in the United States? And the answer was that our champagne producers disapproved of any such campaign. I wondered why. They admitted to me--individuals admitted to me--that if we were to obtain such a reduction, it would bring many more people into the production of that product who would become their competitors. They would have more competitors. So they disapproved. We did not launch any such campaign.

Peculiarly enough, from their standpoint they were right. Their reasoning was correct. If you would get the tax down, they'd have gotten more people getting into the business. They had the market.

The bottle-fermented champagne producers and the government (the old Alcohol Tax Unit) were agreed that the bulk-processed champagne should have a different kind of label. Anyone would agree to that; it was a cheaper product. This is not because the bulk-processed product would be necessarily inferior.

Anyway, the issue reached the stage of public hearings, preceded by the organization of the Bottle-Fermented Champagne Producers; they had an organization by that name. And the Taylor Wine Company of New York was part of that. I don't remember who
else outside of California. The two groups--and I don't remember
if there was any name for the bulk-process people--we would have
them meet in our office separately.

Teiser:  "Our" meaning Wine Institute.

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Adams:  We would point out that we, the staff, were completely impartial.
The leader of the bulk-process people was the late Jimmy [James]
Vai, and I don't remember who else was with him. It finally led
to the public hearings, and those public hearings are obviously
on record. The outcome was that the labels on the bulk-processed
had to have the words "bulk process" or "Charmat process," and
"sparkling wine." In other words, champagne didn't mean
anything. The transfer process had not come into this.

Anyway, those meetings were held, and one of my chores was
writing the Wine Institute Bulletin, et cetera. It was to
communicate the news to the industry. In subsequent years, of
course, and I suppose to this day, the label design has been used
by the bulk-process people to minimize the display of "Charmat"
or "bulk process," and even the words "sparkling wine," which was
mandatory under the regulation. And to give the bulk-process
product the maximum visual display of the word "champagne."
[chuckles]

There still is no difference to this day between the label
of the transfer process and bottle-fermented, now called "méthode
champenoise." One way the more expensive products' marketers
show the difference is by saying, "fermented in this bottle."
But the people who are fermenting in the bottle, then pouring
into a tank under pressure and then rebottling [using the
transfer process], don't do anything on their labels to show the
difference. They just say "champagne."

Teiser:  I've been told that the difference in taste is negligible.

Adams:  In a new bottle-fermented champagne, there is no difference. But
when you get a higher price for your bottle-fermented champagne,
you are impelled to use better grapes; and you are not impelled
to use the best grapes in the bulk process. The bulk process was
chosen and adhered to by the late Brother John of Christian
Brothers because he could not see that there would be a real
difference, and he was correct at the time. But it was a
marketing error. In recent years the Christian Brothers, I am
told, have abandoned bulk process and have switched to "méthode champenoise."

**Vintage Labeling and Blending**

**Teiser:** What is the vintage labeling story?

**Adams:** It's true that vintage labeling was virtually nonexistent in the early years following Repeal. Today it is almost universal. Almost. Mr. Gallo has only just begun, in relatively recent years, to use vintage labeling. Paul Masson and the Christian Brothers avoided it for many years. The first Gallo vintage label was in 1978. Now, this is an interesting issue.

Everyone will admit that the highest art in fine wine is blending. It's illogical to expect grape vines to produce the perfectly balanced fine wine year after year. It is a fact, known world-wide, that the blending of wines of different ages increases complexity and balance. The old-time, European-trained people said that a wine should have the blend of the young because it would be fresh and appealing, and younger wines need a blend of the old to add bouquet. This is why there was opposition to vintage labeling as a matter of commercial practice.

The companies influenced by Alfred Fromm--that was Masson and Christian Brothers--refused. Alfred used to say that vintage labeling was dishonest, just because it obscured the need for the blending of young and old wines. Mr. Gallo showed no interest in the matter but recognized, of course, that they were right about the need for blending young and old.

**Teiser:** Let me ask who is Mr. Gallo?

**Adams:** [laughs] Ernest. So what the anti-vintage labeling people felt was that it would confuse the consumer and the trade, and it would make it necessary to keep balancing wholesale and retail stocks to different vintages. It would be a terrible burden. [tape interruption; phone rings]

On the other hand, there was only one way to tell anybody what is the age of a wine. So vintage labeling spread, first to supply what people want to know, which is how old the wine is; and second, it turned out to be one more way of showing that wine
is a special thing. Masson and Christian Brothers, when Fromm was no longer part of that scene, naturally went to vintage labeling. But in the forties and fifties it was rare; only people like Beaulieu and Inglenook would vintage label.

Teiser: When you put the year on the bottle, what percentage of the wine must come from that year?

Adams: That's a good question. Everyone knew that wine-aging needs topping in the barrel, because there is evaporation. Most other countries specified figures such as 75 percent that has to be of the year labeled. Our government was reluctant; since the public would not understand that a bottle labeled with a given vintage was not all that vintage, our government was reluctant and finally set it at 95 percent.

A similar problem existed with reference to varietal labeling. Varietal labeling once only required 51 percent of the variety named. Many of us, including myself, thought that that involves cheating the consumer, because you could fill in with 49 percent of something quite inferior and still use a varietal label. So we were all quite satisfied with the move to 75 percent. Now we're going back to the virtues of blending. The Europeans have long known that balance is best, and ideal balance is best developed by blending.

Alcoholic Contents Regulations

Adams: The story of the California standards has never been recorded--why they don't seem to matter too much now, and what are the elements. Also, how come alcoholic contents of wines came down, and whodunit? That was the late Ed [Edward] Friedrich.

The industry was agreed, before Prohibition and post-Repeal, that California had one great advantage over the East, in that California climates are warm enough that you do not need to add cane or beet sugar to reach, well, we'll say 12 to 14 percent table wine, in minimum alcoholic content. Minimum alcoholic content was recognized as existing as a problem, because the spoilage problem was major.

I realized that the original California standards were impossible to read because they were crudely written--no one knew how to write them. I had to do the writing. I called on the
only authorities there were, Al [Almond R.] Morrow and the Rossis [Edmund and Robert], as the ones to answer the question: What should these standards provide in the way of alcoholic content? Seems to me that alcoholic content was not even mentioned in the original draft at Repeal.

This was the second time I'd called on them. The first time was when we were offered the opportunity to get light wines legalized, together with beer, during the end of Prohibition. They advised me 11 percent. I wanted the maximum, so they said, well, the Congress should allow 11 percent so wine would stand up. But in writing the California regulations (I have a draft of them somewhere), the question was what should be the minimum? I wanted the least alcohol. They said you have to make it at least ten percent for white and ten and a half percent for red. And that's the way these regulations read.

Teiser: Was this partly so it wouldn't spoil?

Adams: Yes. Stability in general.

Since then they have come down. How come? The late Ed Friedrich, who only died last year, had had various jobs, but at that point he was managing the San Martin winery in the Santa Clara Valley. Ed was born and had trained on the Mosel. Ed took a vacation to the Mosel in the seventies. He retasted the wines of the Mosel and he was horrified at the alcoholic content of the California wines that he was producing under the minimum 10 percent. He felt that with the new technology, the tremendous improvements that the owners of the San Martin winery had installed, he could produce a Mosel wine in California, and he came home to do it. And he did it, at 7 percent. Mosel wines are as low as 5 percent.

Ed finished the wine and it was 7 percent. Then he awakened to the fact that the California regulation would not allow him to sell it. So he complained to me, and I said, "Ed, it can be done." He asked how, and I said, "Ed, keep protesting. I wrote the regulation, the 10 percent regulation, and I knew it was too high." Mr. Gallo had already shown, by producing "pop" wines at 9 percent, that 10 percent is ridiculous. Now, this 9 percent, the "pop" wine, was under a special paragraph of the regulation I had written that said something about specialties or something of that sort. Gallo was the only one able to sell at 9 percent. [laughs]
"Ed, I'm not in charge, except morally. You just keep protesting. Keep bothering the state and bothering the Wine Institute's board of directors, and so on. At the proper time, I will then write my letter to the state agency that you're right. There's no ground [for that high a minimum] under modern winemaking, with micro-filtration, and so on." So that's just the tactic that was used. Ed didn't really believe that he would win, but he knew he deserved to win. He kept protesting, and finally the time came for his petition (and Mr. Gallo was opposed, by the way) and that was when I sent my wire--I think it was a wire, or it might have been a letter--to the state bureau, and they went along.

Teiser: What's the regulation now?

Adams: There's no minimum. Because a minimum exists from another source. The federal definitions place wine of between 7 percent and 14 percent in one tax class. But only the minimum is 7. By eliminating the California 10, everything automatically went to 7.

Teiser: And 14 is maximum for a table wine?

Adams: Yes, but that's only for a tax class.

I knew that Ed would win if the timing were done correctly.

Teiser: But he called his wines--

Adams: "Soft wines." He thought up the word "soft." Now, that, of course--probably because the beer people were selling light beer--opened the way for other wineries to say it was either "soft" or "light."

Teiser: "Soft" generally implied somewhat sweet wines, did it not?

Adams: Yes, that's what he meant. For many years I thought we ought to erect a monument to Ed. I think it's foolish to take too much credit. You want to get things done, you don't want credit. But poor Ed died last year. It was an accident. He was injured, and cancer developed. Terrible loss.
Teiser: In 1973, just after your earlier interview, the first edition of The Wines of America was published. We would like to know what happened as a result of that.

Adams: The wine revolution, which had been brewing beginning with the farm winery law in Pennsylvania in '72, speeded up. It was very much advanced by the book.

Teiser: I know people in California were tremendously interested in the book; I think we weren't quite surprised by it, but were people in other states surprised?

Adams: Yes. There had never been any realization that winegrowing is potentially nationwide, and that wines had been grown across the country, from border to border, north and south, a century earlier. This book inspired people in many states to begin thinking of winegrowing. And that, of course, is still going on. ¹

Teiser: How did you happen to decide to do that book? It was a tremendous undertaking.

Adams: I had always wanted to do this, but it wasn't time until we could foresee the wine revolution.

Teiser: What made you foresee it? Was there any one incident?

Adams: No, no single incident. It was cumulative. There had been some little cooperation between the California, New York, and Ohio people. We had once had a Wine Conference of America. We approached issues in national terms--

Teiser: When was that?

Adams: That was during the forties and fifties. That has disappeared. As far as I can learn, there is no cooperation among the states. Within the past two months I was asked by the current leader of the Ohio industry: How can we, and with whom can we discuss national matters? And the answer, most reluctant, was, "I don't know. I don't know whom you could talk to."

¹See also p. 18.
Teiser: Would the Wine Institute take on a national position, do you think?

Adams: The Wine Institute must take on a national position. But what we've had in the last two or three years is a rivalry—personal rivalry—between [John] De Luca, of the Wine Institute, and [Robert] Hartzell of the California Association of Wine Grape Growers. They hold competing meetings with legislators, both in California and in Washington, D.C. I have bemoaned this. In fact, I pointed out, about two years ago, to the leader of the New York industry, James Trezise, in writing, that the problem of grower and winery competition on issues could never be solved if they allowed a repetition in New York state of this rivalry between Hartzell and De Luca.

I advised Trezise that his problem in leadership would be to gain the confidence of the growers who employed him, and at the same time the confidence of the vintners who competed with the growers on the issues. He took that advice, and he formed the New York Wine Council representing both. He won the confidence of both sides.

Teiser: Well, how about this new marketing order organization in California?

Adams: The marketing order. Marketing orders were always resisted by Ernest Gallo. In fact, we fought him in the courts. The Wine Institute had also been resisted by Gallo until he awakened to the fact that he needs industry intercession on issues in various states, on behalf of Gallo. So he then took this position: that he doesn't care for anything done by the Institute or any other organization, except the lobbying of the Wine Institute when he needs it.

Teiser: Does that include the lobbying for breaking down state barriers?

Adams: Yes. Well, he has shown less interest in breaking down existing barriers and most interest in dissolving barriers that develop which interfere with Mr. Gallo's marketing. That is the present situation. Now, when it became apparent to everyone that brand advertising alone could not solve the problems of wine in America, and that an industry program must be established, Mr. Gallo took this position: that he would not object because this time the growers as well as the wineries would be assessed, and are being assessed, in the present marketing order. However, Michael Boyd, Mr. Gallo's research boss, at the beginning of the new marketing order's operation, took the position which
apparently was Mr. Gallo's, that no attempt should be made in the present climate with new anti-drinking movements to convert to wine people not already consuming wine.

That was expressed by Boyd, and was the attitude of this new marketing order group. It was overcome, however, by industry members--pressure such as the speeches made by Robert Mondavi, demanding that wine education be resumed. Mr. Mondavi most recently expressed this in an address to the Grape Day at UC Davis, praising the past operations of the old Wine Advisory Board and the Wine Institute. The result apparently has been a resumption of wine education and everything needed. For example, the Wine Study Course, which I wrote in 1942, has been revived under the name of Wine Information Course. It was re-written, and not too well, and offered as we did back in the forties and fifties and sixties. It is back in operation.

Teiser: Who now put it back in operation?

Adams: The Wine Institute. It's being financed by the marketing order, the Winegrowers of California.

Teiser: Where does the Winegrowers of California stand vis-a-vis Mr. De Luca and Mr. Hartzell?

Adams: There is no attempt, to my knowledge, to bring them together. However, both have been financed in individual operations by the marketing order.

Teiser: Some of the funds of the marketing order go to the Wine Institute and to the California Association of Wine Grape Growers?

Adams: Yes. However, there's intensive pressure by the Wine Institute members on the advisory board to send everything to the Wine Institute, which has a staff and facilities, whereas Hartzell has hardly any staff.

Teiser: Of course, there is some precedent in that the Wine Institute has expertise a long way back, while the Growers has had no tradition of ability to handle such programs.

Adams: That's true. There really has been a revival of wine education by the Wine Institute. The study course, for one. And the publication of a book, the first thing of its kind about wine for health, for example, prepared by the Winegrowers of California. This is a revival, and I hope it continues.
Winemaking Continent-Wide

Teiser: I've taken you away now from what the results were, how things changed after The Wines of America was published. ¹

Adams: It immediately became apparent after the publication of the first edition that there would need to be a revision within a few years, and I resumed my research travels throughout the North American continent in time to do the second edition, which appeared in 1978. I knew that the chief barrier to winegrowing in states other than California was the existence of the state laws and regulations which had been set up in the early thirties by the liquor and beer people. It was impossible in many states for wineries to exist. Primarily, the laws had extremely high license fees for wineries, and they needed to be reduced. Second, they did not allow the wineries to sell at retail or wholesale.

The outstanding example was in Kentucky, in which the first winery found itself unable to sell more than one bottle of a wine to any person in one year. [chuckles] And the law also prohibited the winery from selling at wholesale, meaning to sell to stores and restaurants. That struggle is still continuing. The restrictive law in that state was responsible for the failure of the first winery, Colcord, which since has been for sale. When the second winery was established under the name Laine, it went out of business, unable to do business.

Subsequently, during the past few years, a group calling itself the Kentucky Vineyards Society has interceded with the legislature and has obtained passage of a law which allows wineries both to sell at retail and at wholesale. But the wholesale reference is most peculiar and exceedingly suspicious. It provides that a winery must first offer its products to the wholesalers of the state, and that if they, the wholesalers, do not sell the wine, then the wineries may sell it directly to stores and restaurants. That is such suspicious language that thus far no winery has attempted to start.

Teiser: When you're in Kentucky or other states, do you talk to the wine people about how they can free their industry, in effect?

¹See also p. 15.
Adams: That is my campaign, which has resulted in the passage of some two dozen state laws freeing in a degree the winegrowing from these restrictions. I am often credited with this, but my method is not to personalize these effects. My method has been to find leaders in the various states, individuals who, one, are capable, or seem to me capable, and, two, who will benefit by leading efforts. This has been quite effective, but I give them the credit; I tell them not to credit me.

In New York I found a man who was then employed by the state farm bureau, and had had some state position. I gave him the idea that New York should enact a law establishing farm wineries, lower the licenses, and allow them to sell at wholesale and retail. In each case I've advised these people, these leaders, that they don't have to get everything through the legislature at one time. Once the farm wineries are established they can go back to the legislature and get more. This has been done.

When New York first adopted its farm winery law, there were other things needed, such as the power to establish retail outlets of their own in the cities. This was enacted later. Subsequently, these New York leaders obtained, against the package store association's resistance, the right to sell wine coolers in food stores. That has helped save some of the vineyards of New York from extinction. They still have terrible problems.

The struggle in Georgia, for example, to obtain the right for the farm wineries to wholesale was unsuccessful for a time. In Tennessee, for a period of years, my friends the leaders have obtained improvements in each successive legislative session. But the opposition of the liquor trade is constant. The most recent defeat the growers have experienced in Tennessee was the legislature's surprise enactment of a provision that prohibits the operation of wineries by anyone who's not a bona fide resident of Tennessee. However, there is progress there. We now have two or three or four little wineries in Tennessee and another is about to be built.

We had an interesting case in the state of Kansas. Dr. [Robert] Rizza, who had a little vineyard, told me that he wished to establish a winery, but the Kansas law made this impossible. I recommended a farm winery law which Dr. Rizza lobbied throughout the state, and when I congratulated him on having obtained the farm winery law, he said, "All I did was what you told me." He intends, he told me a few months ago, to
establish a winery as soon as the additional vineyard he planted comes into bearing.

The state of Connecticut passed its farm winery law with my recommendation to the leading growers. It now has wineries that appear to be prospering. The state of New Jersey is another. And the word spread. In the past couple of years, the state of Nebraska has passed a farm winery law. These obstacles need to be overcome by the people themselves. I've only really contributed one maxim, which I first used in Pennsylvania. I convinced these people that agriculture, organized, can defeat liquor in any legislature.

By the way, I want to interject that I've never gone anywhere near a state legislature [laughs]. I've never been to any legislative house in this country except in California, and then rarely.

Teiser: You've traveled a lot and, as you've traveled, given speeches.

Adams: I go back to the fact, which I credit in The Wines of America to Herman Wente, that a farm winery can exist because of the romance, the charm, the beauty of a vineyard--the winery on the vineyard. That element, the appeal of wine tasted at the vineyard with the grape vines in sight, keeps the farm wineries profitable while other--there's depression at the moment because of the floods of inexpensive European wines. The farm wineries mostly are prospering. Curious. Makes me happy, by the way.

I give talks at key meetings. The bare fact that these appearances also help the sale of my books, that's incidental. It does not pay, I can assure you. Travel is costly. My purpose, and I really should underline this, is to increase the consumption of wine in the American diet. I point out that wherever winegrowing has come into existence, the per capita consumption of table wine promptly increases. We have to civilize drinking in all of America, not just in California.

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Adams: Americans need only to realize that table wine grows on a grape vine, and that it is a civilizing and civilized beverage. When they recognize the agricultural side of this, when they recognize that wine is food, an agricultural product, they cease to avoid table wine. They adopt table wine. Furthermore, the dry political forces in these states also join gradually on the removal of the barriers to winegrowing in their states, because
it is for the agriculture economy. The agricultural economy is key in many parts of the United States to an entire state's economy.

Another way to put this is that drys are interested in dollars. We have politically dry groups joining to remove the barriers, state by state, and to have winegrowing industries in their states. Part of the appeal to these dry-minded people is that there is no other branch of agriculture that is as immediately rewarding to a state's agricultural economy as winegrowing.

That word "winegrowing" is terribly important, and the term "farm winery." The semantics have proved to be terribly important. For example, a legislature does enact a farm winery law. However, the farm wineries are not happy with the term. This has been best demonstrated in both Ontario and British Columbia. I have recommended to them, and they have apparently accepted the recommendation, that when a farm winery becomes established, there is no semantical objection that I can see to their changing the term to estate winery. This is what you will find, especially now in British Columbia. [laughs] There was a semantical difficulty in Canada when the provincial liquor control boards first discovered how farm winegrowing helps the agricultural economy, the economy of a province. They adopted a British term. They called these wineries "cottage wineries." I objected whenever I had a chance; I pleaded with people to avoid using the term cottage winery, because cottage winery creates the vision of someone concocting wine in the basement of a cottage. I just arrived in time at a meeting a few years ago at the Summerland Research Station in British Columbia, and pleaded with the entire group.

This was at a time when the British Columbia Liquor Control Board was so appreciative of the farm wineries that it had erected billboards pointing to "cottage wineries," but the opposition of the growers at my pleading, I hope, has abolished this. I'm never quite sure [laughs].

Blue Fining

Teiser: You were going to tell about blue fining--
Adams: In the thirties, forties, and even into the 1950s, the problem was that of cloudy wines. Why were the wines cloudy? The metal fittings around wine containers were of iron and of copper. Now, iron causes wine clouding, and so does copper. The only means of clarifying these wines was the use of potassium ferrocyanide. Now, potassium ferrocyanide is not as dangerous as its name suggests. But the California State Department of Public Health's Bureau of Food Inspections was threatening not to allow the wineries to use blue fining, potassium ferrocyanide. I spent many weeks and months and days pleading with the bureau chief, Mr. Milton P. Duffy, not to prosecute wineries.

The problems apparently were solved, however, when a wine chemist, Julius Fessler, developed an insoluble form of potassium ferrocyanide and sold it to wineries. But the prejudice was international because of the fear that the term containing the word cyanide would destroy the wine industry.

Teiser: Is this product developed by Julius Fessler widely used now?

Adams: I know it has been widely used, but I do not know whether all of the blue fining is done with that compound. It just appears that blue fining is now permitted openly.

Teiser: In this country?

Adams: In this country, yes. Anyway, it was a terribly difficult issue for many years. Also, the problem of metal clouding of wines has declined because stainless steel--good quality stainless steel--began to replace the iron- and copper-containing metals. Of course, this could erupt again if the anti-drinking forces ever [chuckles] were to discover wines are blue fined with potassium ferrocyanide.

Tie-Ins

Teiser: You mentioned tie-ins. That's something in the past.

Adams: This is entirely involved with the Second World War. You recall that the government restricted the use of foodstuffs--particularly, of course, cereals--in the production of alcoholic beverages. This made spirits--whiskey, etc.--extremely hard to obtain. This is why the spirits people bought wineries at the time of the Second World War, so they would have something for
their marketing organizations, their salesmen to sell. They, of course, with whiskey being in short supply, established a policy saying that a wholesaler or a retailer could not buy a given quantity of whiskey unless he, at the same time, bought a given quantity of wine. That's the tie-in. The trade, of course, obeyed and bought wine that the wholesalers and retailers did not need. They didn't have the market for it. They stored away the wine.

In 1947 the tie-in wines were a problem because whiskey again was available, and the wholesalers and retailers, who had buried in basements the tie-in wines they had bought, brought them out and the wine market was broken by this tremendous supply of long-hidden wines.

The Medical Friends of Wine

Teiser: I want to ask you about the Society of Medical Friends of Wine. How did it get started?

Adams: My friend--you might call him the brain of the medical profession--the late Dr. Morris Fishbein, was wine-minded. He lived in Chicago. I would consult him about the overall problem of how to make America a wine-drinking country. I complained to him that the physicians might not approve of wine. Fishbein advised me that that worry was correct, that wine could never become the American beverage. You could never tell the public that wine is different from whiskey unless we would educate the physicians. He pointed out that during the entire century preceding the Prohibition law, physicians' traditional knowledge of wine had disappeared. All physicians knew was that wine was in the U. S. pharmacopoeia. As new generations of physicians appeared, the medical profession was ignorant of wine's superiority, and of wine's recommendation by the ancient and medieval physicians for centuries. He agreed with me that the first people that should be made acquainted with wine's values would be the physicians.

This was in the 1930s, the late 1930s. When the first marketing order became effective in 1938-39, I arranged for research funds to be available so that the ancient physicians' recommendations and prescriptions of wine should be tested to determine which might have value and which might not. This was with Fishbein's advice.
I was fortunate enough to enroll a bright young physician who didn’t have an office. His name is Clarence Nelson. By the way, he was a friend of Louis Petri. Petri wanted him to have a job. So Nelson and I worked together, and at the same time we had available in the Wine and Food Society the late Dr. Salvatore Lucia. [Maynard A.] Amerine was also helpful in this. The idea was to create an organization of physicians to be morally behind our program to educate physicians to the health value of wine. A whole generation of physicians knew nothing about wine. I had a fisherman friend, also from the Wine and Food Society, Dr. Charles Mathe. Mathe and I organized the Society of Medical Friends of Wine to be behind our medical research program.

The purpose was to remedy the ignorance of American physicians about wine. A number of other physicians, particularly top specialists—such names as Langley Porter, for example—. I have recently published a history in the society’s bulletin—

Teiser: A history of the society?

Adams: Yes.1 We held a meeting at the St. Francis Yacht Club and organized the society. When we assembled the proposed research projects with Dr. Nelson’s help, we submitted them to the society for recommendations. Much of this had to be done officially by the Wine Advisory Board. The research contracts had to be executed with the California State Director of Agriculture. We would have them recommended by the Advisory Board. We’d negotiate the research contracts. Actually, the first one was with the University Board of Regents, I think, for Lucia to develop a bibliography of the medical uses of wine. That was in 1939. At that time Lucia was not aware of the health values of wine. He thought that the only therapeutic values would be traceable to the alcohol contained in the wine, but in his bibliography project he learned otherwise. The recommendations and prescriptions of wine go back to Hippocrates.

When Lucia’s bibliography was approximately ready, Dr. Nelson and I sat down and wrote the first thing of its kind: "The Therapeutic Uses of Wine," a booklet—a summary; I forget how many pages. We made it available to physicians in the United States without charge. Subsequently, there have been some ten editions and retitling, with many more references. This is still available to the medical profession, although in recent years

1See Appendix I.
following my departure, very little was done to let the medical profession know about these things. One of the things we established, however, and have conducted for a few years, was advertising this booklet in medical publications very widely.

The wine people--this is after my departure--decided that this was important enough to hold symposia on the medical aspects of wine each five years.

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Adams: There is now a movement in the Wine Institute to hold another this year. The Society of Medical Friends of Wine has co-sponsored the most recent one. [laughs] The society has not had any research money since the old Wine Advisory Board died. But the society has established, I think it was in 1961, its own research award. It's small, only a thousand dollars; the society which is supported entirely by the dues of its members cannot afford a large amount. We have presented the award each two years for projects that demonstrate the health and nutritional values of wine. We have had difficulty finding research projects that will warrant the award. Our first award was to Agnes Fay Morgan, the nutritionist, for her research establishing the vitamin values of wine.

But there have been many others, such as the demonstrations of the antibiotic values of wine, of the pigments of wine. That's all condensed in my little history of the society.

The people who market wines wanted to seize upon this health value and sell wine that way. Part of my problem was to prevent them from doing this because there had been abuse of this, pre-Prohibition. We made our material available only to physicians. We never made it public. Now, with research money no longer available, most members of the society show that they value most the social and connoisseur opportunities available through the society. In fact, the society membership is precious. We have usually a seven-year waiting list of already approved applicants who want to be members for the social prestige in the medical profession. But we preserve the society's devotion to the health values of wines. And that proved to be most fortunate when the war with the distilled spirits industry developed in 1985. But that's the story of the society.
Teiser: You issue a Bulletin in which you print the speeches given at dinners. I find them very interesting. You are the permanent secretary and permanent editor, I gather.

Adams: Well, it's my work. We publish only twice a year. The principal purpose is, of course, to communicate with the members about our functions and activities; and carrying on the original purpose of the society, to educate the medical profession. We send the Bulletin to medical libraries and to physicians across the United States and in some other countries who are interested in the health values of wine. There is communication. We are often approached by physician groups in places, including other countries, that wish to establish chapters of the society, but with experience we know that unless we could keep in very close touch with such chapters, it might not be a credit to the society. So they were rejected. That is why the society incorporated, to protect its name, in 1958.

Teiser: I see that a scholarship to Davis is just now established in your honor at UC Davis by the Society of the Medical Friends of Wine.

Adams: This was not my idea. In fact, I have protested. If it does some good, all right.

Teiser: Why wouldn't it?

Adams: Well, it provides a fund that is available to, I think, graduate students in viticulture and enology, and that's fine. But I never felt that I deserved it. My family approved. [laughs]

The Distilled Spirits Industry

Adams: It was most fortunate that the society was still in existence when the distilled spirits industry declared war on wine. It was this society that sounded the alarm and called these misleading, untrue--these false advertisements about "a drink is a drink is a drink." The equivalency campaign.

The whole relationship between the distilled spirits industry and the fermented beverage industries, wine and beer,

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1Leon Adams resigned as secretary of the Medical Friends of Wine on August 31, 1989, and was elected an emeritus member.
has been a terribly important story. It will last for a long, long time. The spirits people awakened to the fact that they need wine because their spirituous beverages sell through the outlets which also handle wine. Very few people understand this, but I do, because I've known the spirits people well and I've written about them. My *Commonsense Book of Drinking*, published in 1960, enabled me to learn many things that I would not have otherwise—and nobody in the wine industry seems to understand.

I learned that the distilled spirits companies are unwillingly marketers of wine. They do not like wine. This has been explained to me by leading individuals such as the late Lewis Rosenstiel of Schenley, and the real founder of Seagrams, the late Samuel Bronfman. Bronfman became interested in me when my book, the *Commonsense Book of Drinking*, was published. He telephoned me from New York and asked me—persuaded me—to go to New York, at his expense, to discuss these matters.

His real purpose, however, was that he thought he had found a writer who might write about him, and I declined. I made it evident that I wouldn't want to do it. But anyway—and I know many people in the spirits industry and they all agree on this—it's sort of the spirits attitude toward wine. Spirits is a tremendously profitable business. It has no agricultural problems. It is so well organized that there is relatively little competition in the spirits industry. Everything is controlled—not evidently, but it is a fact. The profit margins are tremendous.

In contrast, wine is agriculture and has recurring surpluses, and the profit margins are small. But the spirits people must be in wine because wine moves through their outlets. Now, this is historic, going back now to the early 1900s, when it appeared that Prohibition was a real threat. This is recorded particularly in one of Charles Sullivan's books. He dug out the material about the attempt by the grape people to get away from the disgrace of spirits to become a separate industry, and their complete failure to do so. And they went down in Prohibition, together with spirits and beer. The brewers, toward the end of Prohibition, did make an attempt, a rather clumsy attempt, to identify themselves as agriculture, at least in California, and they tried to get the California state Prohibition law repealed, but they failed. They didn't know how. And I was in that fight, of course.

So wine has been part of the spirits industry. I treated wine as different from spirits, and I fought through many
channels to prevent people from referring to wine as part of a single alcoholic beverage industry. The spirits people, on the other hand, in their organizations, realized—and they’re clever with semantics—that they need wine as the only respectable front for themselves. And spirits are themselves disgraceful, and the immediate cause of addiction. I even carried on research into the characteristics of alcohol addicts. One or more of our projects established that skid row characters became addicted with spirits and they don’t like wine. They have to consume wine in order to stay alive. It’s the only beverage that they can afford. These things we’ve all known.

It was in the early seventies that Thomas Donovan made an announcement to the beverage trade that the term "alcoholic beverages"—which appears in laws, and which is the only legal term—must be abolished, and that the term "alcohol beverages" should be substituted. The spirits industry ordered the beverage trade press of the United States to make that substitution. The only objector was myself. Mr. Donovan’s excuse was that the term "alcoholic" was injurious to all the beverages because it is the term applied to an alcohol addict.

That was not their purpose, that was their excuse. They have continued this, and their propaganda through all these years has even reached the United States government, where the staff of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms actually adopted the term "alcohol beverages," but, upon my filing a letter of protest, they have ceased its use.

That is the basis of the equivalency campaign of the spirits industry.

Teiser: The equivalency campaign as waged by Seagrams, is that right?

Adams: But with the concurrence of the entire distilled spirits industry. In fact, some of the first advertisements were signed by Bacardi Rum. And the Society of Medical Friends of Wine—only this society was aware of the purpose. It was not understood by wine people. We filed the first letter to the bureau demanding that enforcement action be taken against those advertisements by Bacardi and by Seagrams, and that was in April of 1985.

Teiser: What is the gist of the advertisements?

Adams: That these beverages—that the normal servings [of wine, beer, and spirits] made these the same. These advertisements purposely
omitted the difference in alcoholic effect. Our research and other research showed that even the same doses of actual alcohol [from these sources] have a completely different effect.

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Adams: The federal regulation in existence for decades governs the advertising of distilled spirits, and it provided that false or misleading advertising of distilled spirits is prohibited. And part of that regulation reads, "...by omission." That was our point. We pointed out that deliberate omission of this physiologic difference made these advertisements subject to this regulation.

The political background of this is that the distilled spirits industry, earlier, had saved the bureau from extinction. Those people would have lost their jobs. One of the early programs in the Reagan administration involved getting rid of the bureau. The whiskey and wine industry, and perhaps the brewing industry, too, pleaded to the administration to save the bureau, and they saved it. But it never did its job.

The equivalency campaign seemed at first reading to be a plea to the consumer who had abandoned spirituous drinks to return to spirituous drinks. But the real purpose, I told everyone in a talk I gave earlier this year, was tax. The spirits industry wants to hold down the federal tax. Now, if the federal tax were adjusted (tax rates were adjusted only for inflation since 1951), the spirits tax today would have become approximately fifty dollars per proof gallon. Instead, it's only twelve and a half.

Beginning early last year there is press evidence that spirits people lobbied the congress to increase the taxes on wine and beer.

Teiser: Why?

Adams: Well, because wine and beer have cut into the consumption of spirits. Spirits consumption has declined each year since 1980. Now, the Society of Medical Friends of Wine this year was finally able to obtain statistics, which were unavailable, of nationwide deaths from cirrhosis. The principal cause of cirrhosis is, of course, addiction to spirits. In ten years, from '74 to '83, when spirits consumption per capita declined 6 percent, while wine consumption per capita gained 37 percent and beer consumption per capita increased 16 percent, cirrhosis mortality
in the United States declined by 30.6 percent. We published this in our own bulletin.

We don't know how the tax will come out, except we know that the spirits people are trying to get wine and beer taxes up and keep spirits taxes down; that's the basic purpose of the equivalency campaign. But the other issue is industry. The spirits people have as their purpose to make all these beverages come under a single alcoholic beverage industry which they want to call "alcohol beverage industry," and they are succeeding. If the grape people, who have two-thirds of the investment in wine, were awake, they would be campaigning for the use of the plural, "industries." I keep pointing out that a grape grower is not a part of any liquor industry.

This entire thing we approached in 1951, when the spirits people tried to get the wine tax trebled, and we defeated them. We took the approach that this is the agricultural industry involved, and it should be approached, of course, in terms of what a tax on wine means in terms of per acre of grapes, farms, per pound of grapes, and so on. We prevented the rates from being trebled.

Teiser: The "grey market"--are you interested in that?

Adams: Well, I was part of it; I helped prevent it.

Teiser: What happened?

Adams: The spirits people and foreign-owned wine people thought that they could use the police power of the state to prevent consumers from buying wine bargains, especially champagne. In the international trade, from certain distributor channels, certain beverages were available for purchase at their actual value, in competition; whereas the people who owned the distribution channels fixed higher prices. The attempt was made to use the state police power--this is Senate Bill 852--to abolish what was called the grey market, to prevent bargains from reaching the consumer--to require that only authorized distributors could sell the product.

This was so disgraceful, I thought, that I filed a letter, which was very widely quoted. I called the bill a disgrace and stated that any legislator who would vote for it should be ashamed. That letter was, I am told, highly effective. Of course, when the bill was passed by both houses of the California legislature, I thought that this was a most alarming evidence
that our legislature could be bought. It was finally the governor who vetoed the bill. It was mostly distiller money.
Frericks, Critchfield, and the J. Walter Thompson Agency
[Interview 3: 6 December 1986]#

Teiser: Would you tell me a little about Andrew Frericks and discuss Burke Critchfield further?

Adams: Andy Frericks, when I first knew of him, was employed by the late Louis Michael Martini. Later Andy showed up in a few different places, at one of which he was employed by or was doing management for the St. George Winery in Fresno. But that was not very lengthy because St. George eventually went out of business. A historic Fresno winery.

Then, when such people as Herman Wente, John Daniel, and other leaders of the table wine industry wanted standards for grapes for crushing, to lessen the use of wineries as salvage outlets for leftover grapes, I found Andy Frericks personally very much in favor of this. And this was during the era when stabilization programs were being talked about, and more than one of them went into effect, at least briefly. Andy was on the side that said, "Table wine is the principal wine and must be encouraged."

Everyone called him Andy. He would drop into my office from year to year, expressing his views.

Teiser: What about Critchfield, in retrospect? Why would people have been so loyal to him, on the one hand, and critical of him on the other?

Adams: Critchfield did a great deal of visiting around the wine country. It was the Gianninis' view that these stabilization proposals were good for the wine industry. Critchfield represented the bank [of America] as vice-president dealing with agriculture.

Of course, I knew Critchfield awfully well. We had traveled together, and we collaborated in writing a wonderful document (that I may be able to find in my files) about wine and revenue, which was presented in 1934 by Frederick J. Koster, with Critchfield and myself helping, to the National Council of State Liquor Administrators' meeting at French Lick, Indiana. There were all these state trade barriers, and first Koster thought--and Critchfield agreed--that any opportunity to tell the wine story should be seized. So Koster and I drafted (we printed a little booklet) his talk, presenting the facts about wine, and Critchfield helped.
So we all three went to French Lick, and we got Koster a speaking place on this event. I seized upon it as another opportunity to express to the nation, through the press, the wine story, which had never been told. I particularly remember I had had the talk written in advance. Early one morning, I rented a car and I hurried to Indianapolis to the offices of the press services and delivered the story. [laughs] And each of the press services—certainly the Associated Press and the United Press; I forget whether the INS had an office in Indianapolis—all carried the story, the wine story that was being presented to this powerful group, the National Council of State Liquor Administrators.

Now, how important or unimportant that group might be can be judged even today by our memories that state liquor administrators are jobholders in the ABC [Alcoholic Beverage Control] systems in their states. [laughs]

Did I ever tell you about the time that J. Walter Thompson company and I and Critchfield had quite a spectacular engagement with the State Director of Agriculture?

Teiser: No.

Adams: First, in your interview with Critchfield you obtained the secret, which was unknown to the entire wine industry. That was that A. P. Giannini, according to Critchfield's statement to you, owed some favor to the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency, and saw that it got the Wine Advisory Board account.

Teiser: I don't think Critchfield put it quite that way, but he said it was a reciprocal gesture.

Adams: What is cynically comical with this was that the Advisory Board met and received in apparent sincerity presentations from different advertising agencies, several I remember who did not know that Thompson was going to get the account anyhow. One of the presentations was by Thompson.

However, this secret, that your interview with Critchfield unveiled, did not become known to me until you showed me your transcript from Critchfield.

Teiser: There is documentary evidence, too, in the Bank of America archives.
Adams: It was many, many years that we labored under the impression that the Wine Advisory Board's hearing with these advertising agencies was honest. [laughter]

As soon as the funds from the marketing order assessments were coming in, naturally the Thompson agency rushed to present advertising proposals, both magazine ads and point-of-purchase store material. I was the only person who could sign cost estimates allowing this money to be spent and owed by the Advisory Board; I was the person who had to approve these cost estimates. They were brought not by Arthur C. Farlow, the head of the Thompson agency in San Francisco, but instead by a young man named Anderson F. (for Fred) Hewitt, a Princeton graduate and relatively inexperienced in advertising. He'd bring me the sample and the cost estimates for me to sign. When I had been operating long enough to recognize that the point-of-purchase material would be ineffective, I explained this to Hewitt, and said that these things should be improved and be made effective.

This happened a few times. At one point Hewitt and I drove together to the office of the Bureau of Markets in the Department of Agriculture in Sacramento. The next thing I knew was--and I don't remember who told me this--that the director of agriculture, Edson Brock, an acknowledged prohibitionist at that time, had decided to hold a public hearing in the San Francisco Ferry Building in a borrowed room, concerning the accusation by the Thompson agency that I had refused to approve cost estimates, and that the Thompson agency construed this as a bid by me for a bribe.

Key members of the Advisory Board were summoned--oh, and by the way, I later learned that one of the people who helped Thompson express this accusation to the director of agriculture was Burke Critchfield. He sided with Thompson. This hearing was held and lawyers were present and a transcript was recorded. For many years I retained in my safe deposit box a copy of the transcript, but I discarded it. It was quite evident that there was no possible proof that I had asked for anything.

The inference of the Thompson people--conveyed to Brock--was that not only I was seeking a bribe, but that Harry Caddow and I were jointly seeking a bribe, and that is why we wouldn't sign the cost estimate. [laughs]

Teiser: The point of all this was that you objected to their POP material? What did you object to about it?
Adams: It was hastily created, and in my long study of wine marketing and retail marketing of wine, it was evident that it would do no good. It was amateurish. It was an attempt—in fact, I later expressed this to others—by the Thompson people to get the money spent quickly so that they could collect early the commission, which was a standard 15 percent on everything; standard advertising agency commission.

I had been in the advertising business for a time, too; I'm the principal creator of the effective point-of-purchase material eventually produced by the Wine Advisory Board. I knew retailers and I knew wholesalers, the structure; whereas Hewitt had no knowledge of these things. Now, that would have been right about 1939.

During the Second World War, Andy Hewitt was lost to the Thompson offices in San Francisco. They had a new account executive named John Alden, who was objectionable in other ways.

[laughs]

The Marketing Orders##

Teiser: What about the end of the series of marketing orders that supported the Wine Advisory Board? That was in 1975.

Adams: When I resigned in 1954, the marketing order was in good shape. My staff volunteered to quit with me, and I talked them all out of it. I told them they were needed, and they stayed. Things ran on as before.

Two or three years prior to that, Ernest Gallo and Harry Serlis—Serlis at that time was heading the Schenley investment—helped by Louis Petri, challenged the methods that the wine study course and the dealer service program were using. We urged and achieved the retail display of wines by type; they said no, it should be by brand.

Teiser: What effect would your encouragement or discouragement have upon a store, though?

Adams: Well, there always were marketing people calling on stores, and a little persuasion could get the store's permission to change, say, from display by brand to display by type. Anyway, they complained. By the way, Serlis was helped by John Alden of the
J. Walter Thompson company, but I didn't fight this point. They won.

Ernest Gallo had long maintained that there was no need for an industry program, other than the Wine Institute conducting trade barrier work. And so at one point these gentlemen were questioning the effectiveness of the dealer service operation. In the early 1950s they, and particularly Ernest, urged that the dealer service staff be brought together in San Francisco so they could interview the staff members. We did have that, because I felt that it would be beneficial to the effectiveness of the dealer servicemen to meet Mr. Gallo and the other marketers. They might learn something from them, too. So I brought them.

The result was that Mr. Gallo chose which ones he would hire, and he did hire. He hired men away from me! [laughs] But all along I had realized that that was bound to occur; that members of the staff, after we trained them, were going to be able to earn much higher incomes when they were hired away from me. So that occurred. At any rate, they weren't all hired, because some of them were not quite that valuable. In the meantime, one of our top men, Russel Douglas, left voluntarily at one point to work for Louis Petri—the Petri distributorship—and later he went to work for the Taylor Wine Company of New York and built for them the most effective single company marketing operation in the United States. Restaurants, consumer, everything. Anyway, he was my trainee.

But without me, I fear the industry enthusiasm for the accomplishments of the program lapsed. I had chosen as my successor Don McColly, who had been with the California Farm Bureau Federation. But McColly finally was too independent to please Mr. Gallo, and Mr. McColly was dropped. Various applicants for the job of heading the Wine Institute were not effective. But one of them was Harry Serlis, a Schenley character.

I had known from Ernest Gallo that Gallo had very little respect for Serlis. But Serlis went to see Gallo, urging him to help him become hired as head of the Wine Institute, and Gallo achieved this for Serlis. In my opinion, Gallo achieved this for Serlis in order to damage the program, to which Gallo at all times was opposed. He wanted it discontinued, and he won, because it didn't take too long before the program finally was discontinued in 1975—the whole program, the whole board. Gallo never wanted anything more than the Wine Institute, and he told many people, including me, that the only thing he valued was the
trade barrier program. And to this day the members of the trade barrier staff have been reporting to Ernest Gallo in Modesto instead of to John De Luca. [laughter]

Teiser: What about the new marketing order, the recent one?

Adams: It was apparent to many people, after they no longer had the program, that the wine industry was suffering without it. Suffering without such things as the wine study course; suffering without the many, many promotions that we conducted. Take even the little matter of how we used to promote wine coolers that you would mix yourself. Well, they just lapsed.

So a program began under the California Marketing Act. It was proposed and put to a vote of both growers and vintners, jointly supported by them. That marketing order went into existence and chose the name--of which I happen to be especially proud, since I once popularized the word "winegrower" as a single word--"Winegrowers of California." That was 1984.

Teiser: Do you think that's a sound basis for a marketing order, to have both growers and winemakers?

Adams: Mr. Gallo, and I repeat, at all times opposed anything other than the Wine Institute. But when it was pointed out that the growers were willing to pay part of it, Mr. Gallo said that convinced him in favor of continuing the order, with both growers and vintners. However, rivalry promptly developed between the principal executive of the Wine Institute, Mr. John De Luca, and Bob Hartzell of the rival organization, the grower association--California Association of Wine Grape Growers. They would hold competitive events, both in the California legislature and in Washington, D. C. The growers' organization would invite the other states to participate and put on great tastings for congressmen and others to annoy poor Mr. De Luca, who would go to Washington and say, "Come accept the hospitality of the Wine Institute." [laughs] They were competing.

That was so unfortunate that I, in writing, advised the beginners of the New York state program, especially Mr. James Trezise. I said, "Whatever you do, never let a rivalry between grower leader and vintner leader develop in public. You can only have one story to legislators and administrators." Mr. Trezise has achieved that.

Teiser: Do you think that the Winegrowers of California is going to stick together?
Adams: At this point everyone knows that the renewal of the program, which has to be done this coming year, is in doubt. Some think that it cannot be renewed at all. Others think it can only be renewed as a vintner-only operation; and others think that it could be grower-only.¹

In recent years the fresh grape—table grapes—sector of the grape industry has operated as a table grape commission, a state commission renewable by the vote of the growers; but as a commission, subject to a less degree from the bureaucratic interference of the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Markets. It, as of now, has been a highly successful program for the table grape industry. So those who would not enjoy another sign-up for a marketing order extension have obtained acts of the legislature during '85 and '86 authorizing a state wine commission which would still require a vote by either growers or vintners or both, continuing the same operation. And that is up in the air at present.

Teiser: The only spectacular thing that seems to have happened in the life of the Winegrowers is that Steven Boone took his efforts to his wife's agency.

Adams: The contract with Boone's group [Hamlin Associates], headed by his wife, actually duplicates certain aspects of our dealer service program, and it is more efficient than my dealer servicemen were because Boone operates with retailing and restaurant groups at a high level. My men had to reach the medium as well as the high levels, and they didn't have the stature that Steven Boone, with his very successful Liquor Barn history for Safeway, had achieved. It's very promising. It may be one of the very best, one of the most productive elements of the program.²

Wine Organizations

Teiser: There are numerous wine-related organizations with which you are affiliated. Nobody has really discussed them: their value, or

¹It was not renewed. It expired in 1987.

²This program expired in 1987.
if there is really any value. You are Grand Conseiller of the Académie du Vin de Bordeaux. What does that mean?

Adams: [laughs] Wine districts' promotions; I call it propaganda. Sometimes they’re referred to as winegrower brotherhoods. They don’t mean anything, really, although they get publicity. Perhaps the best known of all was the Confrérie de Tastevin, Burgundy, with an international membership, but it’s only to promote Burgundy wines. Well, so is the academy in Bordeaux. It’s just a promotional route to welcome wine-interested visitors to Bordeaux. They have no real significance, and they’re examples of successful publicity promotion by wine groups.

Teiser: Wine and Food Society--how about that?

Adams: The Wine and Food Society is historically quite significant. It’s covered, incidentally, in my Commonsense Book of Wine. André Simon, a champagne salesman living in England, realized about the time that Prohibition in the United States would be repealed, that wine could be made much more popular than in the past if the consumers were organized to have banquets and to study and publish books and so on, so he realized the opportunity to be a writer--and this would be profitable--of wine books. As such, he organized the Wine and Food Society and named himself the permanent president. He explained to me one day that he wanted no one else ever to have the title of president, but the branches of the society might have a chairman.

He was a very effective person. He caused the formation of such groups throughout the western world. Wherever you look there’s a regional wine and food society. It has operated for many years successfully with mostly wealthy members. It has helped to spread the gospel of premium-priced wine.

Teiser: What does it do? How does it function?

Adams: At first it mainly sold, from the society’s office in London, André Simon books [laughs]. But later each branch (some of them call themselves chapters, but that annoyed André Simon) held frequent dinner meetings, with accompanying wines, focusing on premium-priced wines in many regions, and by this means built virtually from the grass-roots what I call the wine snob establishment. The Wine and Food Society has achieved more since 1933 in this country, certainly, than any other organization. I’m still a member of the San Francisco branch, and I claim to be the member in North America who’s had the longest number of years
of membership, although I have a challenger in New York state who claims he has; he may have one more year. I joined in 1934 or '35.

Teiser: How often do you attend dinners?

Adams: Occasionally. After all, the Society of Medical Friends of Wine operates in a manner similar to that of the Wine and Food Society, so I don't have time to attend as many Wine and Food Society events, which are almost always black tie.

Teiser: What about the Society of Bacchus?

Adams: I was a member of that for a time. It's comparable, but it's made up only of restaurateurs and hotel, club people. It does the same thing, but mostly to discuss their mutual interests.

Teiser: The Confrérie Americaine des Trinquers de Cognac?

Adams: Oh, the Cognac people, like many others, have awakened to the snob appeal of organizations of limited membership. Cognac people operated through a publicity organization of New York, which subsequently lost the account. It holds tastings, popularizing Cognac.

But there are other groups, many others. The German Wine Society is very active in the United States.

Teiser: As I remember, the Confrérie de Tastevin dresses up in medieval robes.

Adams: Yes. I have attended many of them. You don't have to own the robes; you borrow. When I was photographed in this Bordeaux organization, I was wearing the robe. But of course I gave it back after the picture was taken. Clever promotion. These things in these other countries led to the formation of the Knights of the Vine, an imitation in California that has many chapters. I've attended many of their functions.

These things fit into American taste. Have a fine dinner, some rigamarole. I think some of it may be in the process of replacing some of our old fraternal and--what's the female word? Well, we'll call them sisterly organizations.

Teiser: What about the Society of Wine Educators?
Adams: The Wine Educators is an organization of people who are making a profit by teaching the lore of wine. I think it was clever. Well, first: Americans of given cultural level awakened during the wine revolution to realize that they lacked an education in wine. Wine had become a cultural subject, comparable to art, literature, and music. And Americans unable to discuss wine felt they must learn something about wine. Now, I have participated in this; I have studied, I taught wine for a fee, organized lectures in two or three colleges, made a profit.

Then the people all over the United States, finding they could make profits in their spare time by teaching wine classes, decided that perhaps they should organize. Now, there's a compliment I have to give to the Wine Institute, which recognized that these people should be helped to organize their own society of wine educators.

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Adams: It held its first national meeting at UC Davis in September, 1976, at which I was the principal speaker.

Teiser: What did you tell them?

Adams: [chuckles] I have a copy of my talk, in which I pointed out that wine education is fine for people who want to study wine, but that most of the wine consumers in the world--the principal consumers--don't know anything about wine. But that I still thought it would be a great idea. Somehow, we must civilize American drinking, and this would help.

I gave a talk at the Ten Years After meeting that was also held at UC Davis, in September of this year, in which I pointed out the same things. I pointed out that wine was becoming too much a study and not enough an element of healthful food and drink. But that there might be hope.

Teiser: Do you think that the organization in its ten years has done some good?

Adams: Oh, yes. Has it done good? Now we have to go back to the 1930s for the question, "Does wine education do any good?" It runs like this:

Here we were, at the beginning of the Wine Advisory Board advertising program. I, of course, felt--and the J. Walter Thompson company agreed--that the advertising should be in favor
of table wine. However, the winery people, who were selling mostly port, sherry, muscatel, Tokay, 20 percent alcoholic content, couldn't understand this. In fact, some of them came to me (and I could name you a few) and said, "Why are you wasting our money? You're advertising dry wine"—of course, this was before I got the term "dry wine" changed to "table wine," legally; they meant table wine—"and we're not selling dry wine. You know what we're selling. The only people who like the dry wines are the people like the Wine and Food Society, those wine snobs. Why don't you expose those wine snobs?"

And my answer was, "No, I will not expose them. I will use them." Which is just what we did. For many, many years we used the wealthy, highest cultural level people in these organizations. We encouraged them to remove from wine the "skid row" association and to concentrate the cultural, sacred, historic, and, I might add, the medical and therapeutic values of wine. Those snob groups could do the most to make these things understood. We had to counteract skid row.

So that kind of reasoning explains the Society of Wine Educators and the dozens and dozens of comparable groups which feature premium wines mostly.

**Red Wine Versus White**

_Teiser:_ Would you discuss your ideas about red versus white wines?

_Adams:_ Ah. We could use a headline on this one. I maintained, and a number of studious observers of wine in America in this century state to me their agreement to this, that the wine industry of America shot itself in the foot during the early 1970s and since. Now, shooting itself in the foot was by attempting to, and partially destroying the consumption of red table wines to encourage instead consumption of white table wines. The story is all verifiable in statistics, as well as by recollection.

I don’t think this has been published, but it will be confirmed by any number of, let’s say, winery executives: the wineries, either during the late sixties (in California) and also during the seventies, learned that producing and bottling and marketing white table wine cost them less than producing and marketing red table wine. Why did it cost them less? Because the red must be retained at the winery for a little additional
aging, and that is costly. The principal costly aspect was not in the raw material used but in the delay in the flow of money. The wineries say, "Oh, well, you've gotta have cash flow." And they would tend to blame their banks for wanting money earlier.

Anyway, it was that red wine cost them more, so they decided to push white wine. The only way that we had of observing this (what I call) sentencing to death of red wine is in the statistics which are published by the Wine Institute. The Institute created a periodic survey using the figures to be contributed by, originally, I heard, twenty-eight wineries. If you look in the Bulletin--statistical bulletins of the Wine Institute—you'll find all these.

It began in the seventies. It was found in the reports of these twenty-eight wineries (sometimes one or two wineries would be late or something) that the principal wine type by color was red. The first surveys showed red wine in the lead. And the subsequent surveys showed red declining, rose almost holding its own, but white growing rapidly.

In the meantime there were a number of wineries which actually announced, "We're going to stop producing red wine. We're going to sell only white." One example is Callaway at Temecula, and another one is Glenora in New York state. They just stopped producing reds. I claimed that this caused the wineries to sentence to death the consumption of red wine.

The publicity was the announcement by many companies that America's tastes in wine had changed from red toward white. By checking the dates of those statements against the quarterly surveys, it is evident that that was a lie at the time; that the tastes had not changed. Red wine was leading white at the time that news went out to the public, and particularly to the trade.

Now, the trade believed this. Distributors and retailers reduced their displays of and sales pressure for red wines because they believed that Americans' tastes had changed from red to white. When you reduce the sales pressure of red and give it to white, you're causing red wine to decline and white wine to increase.

When these quarterly surveys were made, the evidence was clear, up to the most recent survey which I have on the shelf here, that red was down to 14 or 16 percent, whereas it used to be way up.
They went a little farther, by the way. There was an effort made to obtain red-white statistics on imports, and imports were found to be a much higher proportion red; but subsequent reports indicate a decline in the proportion of red.

The lie was making itself come true. Early in the 1980s I went on an Italian government-sponsored visit to Italy for the press. When we arrived at the individual luncheon and dinner places, we were served good Italian food, but with white wine! There was no red wine! Now, most Italian foods require red wine to be palatable, but they were served to us, the press, with white only. When I inquired where the red wine was, they said, "Oh, we understand that Americans no longer like red wines, so that's why we're serving only white." I had to insist to get a bottle of red wine so that I could enjoy the meal. This lie had actually spread abroad.

The progress of wine is most readily measured by the per capita consumption in gallons, in this case, in the English-speaking countries. When a new consumer of wine is won, that consumer, he or she, ordinarily begins by having a taste of and liking a white wine. Now, that first taste that converts one into a, let's say, more frequent consumer follows the schedule prescribed to me back in the 1930s and repeatedly afterwards by the old pre-Prohibition winemen. That is, they said, "You can create a new wine consumer by introducing him or her to haute sauterne," meaning sweet white. "After the individual continues drinking the sweet white, the individual's taste changes toward dry white. And eventually it changes to favor dry red. One who drinks dry red wine will require dry reds; he or she is a faithful wine consumer."

A white wine consumer is not faithful to wine at all. There is so relatively little flavor in most whites, and one can readily change to soda pop or to liquor, or almost anything. But the red wine consumer is a faithful wine consumer.

When the wine industry told its lie and made it come true, the wine industry thereby shot itself in the foot. It destroyed the opportunity to build, during the time from the early seventies to today as the eighties are approaching their end, vast numbers of faithful wine consumers.

The unsoundness of that twenty-eight-company survey can also be pointed out. The wineries that agreed to send their confidential figures for computation were all large, jug wine-specializing wineries. Omitted were the very large numbers of
smaller wineries, many of whom sell more red than they do white, and several of whom sell only red. They were not represented. So that survey, that is continuing to this day, is misleading the public. There is nothing to indicate this in the publication of the survey.

Teiser: I have one final question. Is there a basis for real cooperation between the distilled spirits industry and the beer and wine industries?

Adams: Great leadership could bring it about. Great leadership can do lots of things. I don’t have any great examples for you, but I can visualize. Supposing a leader who is able in these elements of leadership were to point out that wine, beer, and spirits have a common enemy, and that the common enemy is making enormous progress, and that regardless of our differences with one another we can only reduce the effectiveness of this common enemy by joining in some efforts? That really should be done now, because the emotional appeal of the opportunity to spoil other peoples’ pleasure is very great. It brought about Prohibition and today it’s bringing about other elements of Prohibition, approaching the real Prohibition.

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TAPE GUIDE -- Leon Adams

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"A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY"

Address by Leon D. Adams, Executive Secretary of the Society of Medical Friends of Wine and Editor of its Bulletin, at the One Hundred Fiftieth Quarterly Dinner Meeting, held June 3, 1983 at the Stanford Court Hotel in San Francisco, California

At this one hundred fiftieth quarterly meeting of the Society, I’m called upon to condense into a few minutes the history of its past forty-six years. Having condensed in my latest book the four-centuries history of wine in North America, I suppose I’m the logical one to try.

On February 4, 1939, twelve leaders of the medical profession in San Francisco met at the St. Francis Yacht Club to discuss a different problem in communication. An entire generation of American physicians had lost touch, during the thirteen years of National Prohibition, with the health values ascribed to wine during the preceding four thousand years. To communicate those values to the rest of their profession, these San Francisco physicians organized this Society, adopting these objectives:

"To stimulate scientific research on wine, develop an understanding of its beneficial effects, and encourage an appreciation of the conviviality and good fellowship that are part of the relaxed and deliberate manner of living that follows its proper use."

Dr. Charles Pierre Marché, the first President, supplied the Society’s name, translating it from that of Les Médecins Amis du Vin, which had been founded earlier by Professor Georges Potemman at Bordeaux.

I attended the inaugural meeting because through the Wine Institute, Wine Advisory Board, and the California Department of Agriculture, we had begun raising funds to launch a modern research program to test and measure the health values credited to wine by physicians since ancient times. Members of the Society would guide the research program. Members have guided the research for many years.

Our first research project was to compile a bibliography of the medical and chemical uses of wine, undertaken in 1939, by Salvatore Lucia at the U.C. Medical School.

In 1942, Advisory Board medical consultant Clarence Nelson and I used the bibliography to assemble the first compilation of The Therapeutic Uses of Wine, a 40-page summary with 205 references and a foreword by Dr. Lucia. Copies were made available without charge to the medical profession in this country. It since has gone through ten editions, now with 74 pages and 438 references, titled Uses of Wine in Medical Practice, A Summary, and is available to physicians from the Wine Institute.

The research program declined after I left the Institute in 1954. The wine industry, characteristically shortsighted, allowed the Advisory Board to go out of existence in 1971. Occasional projects have been financed since by the Institute. A new advisory board was established last year, but thus far it has begun only grape-growing, winemaking, and wine market research.

In 1961, the Society of Medical Friends of Wine established its own small biennial Wine Research Award, presenting it first to UC nutritionist Agnes Fay Morgan for her work in identifying the vitamins of wine. Subsequent awards were made for Dr. Lucia’s A History of Wine as Therapy, of which I was the editor; for research conducted in this country and Europe on clinical applications of wine, for identification of wine components having physiologic activity, for measuring the influence of wine versus that of alcohol on nitrogen and mineral balance in adult males, for studies of wine, psyche, and the aged, for measurements of how moderate alcohol consumption may protect against heart disease, and, most recently in 1983, for an innovocative investigation of the allergic reactions attributed to some wines. These all have been reported in the Society’s semi-annual Bulletin, fifty-seven issues of which have been published since 1956. The Society sends its Bulletin, without charge, to medical libraries and to physicians who have expressed an interest in the therapeutic values of wine.

A key research need since the Society’s inception has been to differentiate the physiologic effects of wine from those of distilled spirits. That need was best expressed by President Thomas Jefferson when he wrote that "No nation is drunken where wine is cheap, and none sober where the dearness of wine substitutes ardent spirits as the common beverage."

One of the research projects in 1942, by Henry W. Newman at Stanford Medical School in San Francisco, was among the first to demonstrate that absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream is much slower from wine and reaches only half the peak reached by ingesting spirituous drinks. Supported by many subsequent studies, this refutes the current multi-million-dollar "alcohol equivalence" advertising campaign by whiskey, rum, and vodka distillers challenging wine’s age-old recognition as the temperate alcoholic beverage. It made necessary the Society’s letter in April, since joined by the Winegrowers of California, including the Federal Government to take enforcement action against the false and misleading advertisements published by the distillers. Thus far the Government has not acted on the request.

To this evening’s meeting I have brought, and invite your inspection of, a historical calendar of all the Society’s meetings, vintage tours, and speakers heard since 1939, and the articles of incorporation and bylaws, adopted in 1938 and amended in 1972 and 1981. Available for inspection at my office are the menus of all our 145 great dinners and tours, and all of our semi-annual Bulletins, which reproduce 103 of the 150 addresses delivered to the quarterly meetings by academic and wine and food authorities.

In concluding this exceedingly brief history of the Society, I wish to pay tribute to our legal counsel, Jefferson E. Payne, who has served without compensation since 1939, and to the articles of incorporation and bylaws, adopted in 1938 and amended in 1972 and 1981. Available for inspection at my office are the menus of all our 145 great dinners and tours, and all of our semi-annual Bulletins, which reproduce 103 of the 150 addresses delivered to the quarterly meetings by academic and wine and food authorities.

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"Wine is light, held together by water." —Galileo

"I fast on wine and bread, and feast they are." —Michelangelo
"What's Going on Here Anyhow?"
A talk by Leon D. Adams to the Twelfth Wine Industry Technical Symposium at Santa Rosa, California, January 18, 1986

My subject title -- "What's Going on Here?" -- might suggest that I have fault to find with what's going on in wine nowadays. Instead, I want to congratulate everybody in the grape and wine industry, a good representation of whom are attending this meeting, on some great achievements. For decades they have been adding to the distinction of wine as the most praised, most admired, most civilized of all beverages, the favorite accompaniment of fine food in the most respected sectors of our society. And American wines have become the finest in the world and are becoming even finer with each passing year.

Wine consumption per-capita -- the only sound way to measure consumption -- has grown steadily, from a gallon in the 1960s to two gallons by the late 1970s, and has continued to grow every year since. The 2.35-gallon per-capita level reached in 1984 was 42 percent greater than in 1974.

Winegrowing is spreading across the United States. Where wine is grown, wine consumption grows. Districts where winegrowing flourished a century ago, but where Prohibition killed the vineyards, have come back to life. More than a dozen leading European winegrowers have begun planting their own vineyards and building their own wineries in this country.

Wine is civilizing drinking in America and in other English-speaking countries, too -- in Canada, in Great Britain, and especially in Australia, which already has reached five and a half gallons (21.4 liters) per-capita, up 4.9 percent over the year before. That is almost two and a half times as high as the per-capita wine consumption in the United States. It is even higher than California's rate, four and a half gallons in 1984.

Wine is also being challenged. The challenge is by the distilled spirits industry. It was to be expected, because spirituous beverages' sales, partly replaced by wine, have been dropping during the past six years. Everyone is familiar with the challenge, the spirits industry's so-called "equivalency" advertising campaign that "a drink is a drink is a drink," which is a lie. It deliberately conceals the difference between wine and hard liquor in their physiologic effects on consumers. It also violates the law against false advertising, which the BATF thus far has failed to enforce.

Congratulations to Bob Hartzell for being the first to join our Medical Friends of Wine in exposing "equivalency" as a lie, and to the brewing industry for joining in the defense of fermented beverages, and to the Wine Institute for joining it, too.

The attack on wine by the distilled spirits industry actually began 14 years ago, but few wine people noticed it because it was a semantical attack, an especially dangerous kind. It was launched in 1972. The liquor people announced a change in our language, from "alcoholic beverages," which is the factual and legal term, to "alcohol beverages" and "beverage alcohol." The beverage trade press was ordered thenceforth to call wine and beer "alcohol beverages" and to call the wine and beer industries parts of a single "alcohol beverage industry." Most liquor trade publishers obeyed, and they should be ashamed because that, too, was a lie, but not WINES & VINES and other good friends of wine. Grape growers don't grow alcohol and have no connection with whiskey, vodka, rum, or beer. The key purpose of the semantical attack was the liquor industry's campaign, which it is still carrying on, to get higher taxes levied on wine and beer and to get the spirits tax reded. Actually, this country's tax on distilled spirits has been the lowest in any country in the world.

That isn't all. Now they're spreading rumors that Americans are no longer drinking table wine, which is an obvious fib when per-capita wine consumption keeps going up year after year. They say the statistical evidence is only being delayed by the explosive growth of wine-cooler sales. Actually, the surprising thing about wine
coolers is that we could have been producing them at the end of Prohibition in 1933. Nobody had thought of adding benzoate of soda. In fact, we could have had them in 1932, when Congress legalized 3.2 percent wine and beer. Three-point-two wine was made then, but it blew up on the store shelves. We called it "McAdoo wine" for the senator who was responsible for the law.

Wine consumption rises when table wine, an article of food, is sold in supermarkets. Holders of liquor-store licenses have been the principal opponents to that. A Wine Institute summary counts 26 states as allowing wine sale in grocery stores, but look more closely and you'll find that many of those states limit foodstore wine licenses to one to three per licensee entity. That keeps wine out of many supermarket chains. That is why table wine is barred from supermarkets not only in New York State, where liquor stores have a fifty-year-old monopoly, but from such other populous states as New Jersey, Florida, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, Kentucky, and even from the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. Only one Safeway store in the District of Columbia is allowed to sell wine.

Wine consumption goes up wherever wine is grown. Thus far we have 39 winegrowing states, although Kansas and Nebraska have adopted farm winery laws and soon will make it 41. Eventually the total should reach forty-seven.

Look at the per-capita wine consumption growth in the states that have increased their numbers of vineyards and wineries. Per-capita consumption growth is usually gradual because of many trade barriers left over from Prohibition. But just the other day, I copied from Wine Institute Statistical Bulletins the per-capita wine consumption rates of twenty-six states that are blossoming with new vineyards and farm wineries. Of course, population numbers, laws, and per-capita figures are revised from time to time, but I found that in ten years, from 1974 to 1984, those states' per-capita wine consumption had risen steadily. The gains ranged from 2 percent in New Mexico, 12 percent in Mississippi and 36 percent in Arizona to 42 percent in Maryland and North Carolina, 45 percent in Rhode Island and Ohio, 53 percent in Virginia and West Virginia, 56 percent in Tennessee, 60 percent in New Jersey, 61 and 62 percent in Missouri and Georgia, 63 percent in Texas, and 89 percent in Indiana. Taken together, those twenty-six states had gained in per-capita consumption by an average of 47 percent in those ten years.

What encouraged me especially in my mail this week was an item from Oregon, a notable winegrowing state in which per-capita consumption has grown by 19 percent in ten years. A task force of the Oregon Legislature has undertaken to formulate a reciprocal proposal to be considered by the other wine-growing states. The proposal is that each participating state adopt legislation permitting wine shipments on common carriers to or from any state that adopts similar legislation. It would make it possible for wineries in California and other states to accept orders for their wines to be delivered to individuals in any participating state.

The wine revolution, which began in the late 1960s, has had pauses, as you recall in the 1970s, when some grape surpluses developed and growth in per-capita wine consumption didn't always show important gains. But since 1974 the national growth in per-capita wine consumption has been 42 percent and is on the way to greater gains.

The wine revolution hasn't ended, as some people would have you think. It has only begun.
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