

To Deacon Elijah Fay has been given the credit of introducing the grape growing industry to this section. In 1818 he first started with the fox grape which grew wild in his native state of Massachusetts, but they grew more to the vine than fruit. Four years later he obtained a few roots of Borgonda, Sweetwater and Hamburg with poor results. Yet in 1824 he obtained roots of Isabella and Catawba, these two varieties covering about one tenth of an acre. This first vineyard was upon land north of Main Street Opposite the wine house which is now occupied in part by a gasoline station. A few other farmers had a few vines. In the fall of 1830 Deacon Elijah Fay made from five to eight gallons of wine which was the first made from cultivated grapes west of the Hudson River. About three hundred gallons a year were made by him each year during the last few years of his life. His cellars contained fifteen hundred gallons at the time of his death in 1860.

#### ISABELLA GRAPE

About the first grape grown in this section was the black grape known as Isabella. It was first introduced to the Horticultural Society in 1816 by William Prince of Flushing, Long Island. He stated that he first saw it at the home of Mrs. Isabella Gibbs, the wife of George Gibbs a Brooklyn merchant, and gave it her name.

#### Catawba Grape

The origin of catawba is not known but was supposed to have been along the Catawba River in the Carolinas. It was introduced to the American Horticulturist about 1823 by John Adlum and soon after in this section and was quite extensively grown. It is an excellent grape for wine as stated by the poet Longfellow when he wrote:

"Very good in its way is the Verzenay  
Or the sillery, soft and creamy  
But the Catawba wine has a taste more divine,  
More dulcet, delicious and dreamy.  
There grows no vine by the haunted Rhine  
By Danube or Guadalquever;  
Nor Island or Cape that bears such a grape  
As grows by the beautiful River."

It was brought into this section by the Fays and became quite popular. A vine of Catawba was set at the southeast corner of Elisha's stone house soon after it was built in 1828 and flourished for over a century. Many thousand of roots were raised by Elisha's son Lincoln and distributed through this section.

#### CONCORD GRAPE

"The seeds of a wild grape were planted in the fall of 1843 by Ephriam W. Bull of Concord, Mass. from which fruit was borne in 1849" the vine from which the seed came grew where "at least another grape grew, the catawba and the wild vine was opened to cross pollination." One of these seedlings was named concord. The variety was exhibited before the Massachusetts Horticultural Society in the fall of 1852 and was introduced to vineyardist in the spring of 1854 by Hovey & Company of Boston. During the same year it was placed on the recommended list of the American Pomological Society as "one of the new varieties which promises well". It has certainly fulfilled its promise. It soon became very popular and one of our country's Sons, Horace Greeley, once said "It is the grape for the Millions".

At one time a few years ago there were Eight thousand acres in the Town of Portland. For a number of years when picking and packing was done with more care and skill it was considered an excellent table grape and sold in the markets at high prices. Thousands of cars were shipped to San Francisco. There are a great many kinds grown here. On a two acre plot then owned by the late Irvin Wilcox the state set one hundred varieties, and at the state experimental station near Fredonia new ones are being propagated annually by Prof. F. E. Gladwin.

In the decade from 1865 to 1875 a number of small vineyards were set with Clinton vines for wine makers. It was of vigorous growth, hardy and its roots were immune from the deadly attacks of Phylloxera. And as the great wine industry of France was nearly ruined in 1873, France contracted with T. S. Hubbard for one million of bud cuttings of Clinton vines for root stock to be grafted with their wine grapes.

He sublet half of the contract to my father. I trimmed nearly all the Clinton vines from Millford to Westfield to obtain the brush and with four hands, my brothers, O<sup>W</sup> & Will and two others cutting and bailing we had the five hundred Thousand delivered at Fredonia by the first of March, on time.

Among the later varieties the Niagara became quite popular and was grown by many with success. It was produced by C. L. Hoag and B.W. Clark of Lockport, N. Y. They stated that the variety was grown from seed of a concord fertilized by Cassady, planted in 1868 and that it fruited for the first time in 1872. It was introduced about 1882 by the Niagara Grape Company and by 1885 was well established here. When it is fully ripe I consider it the best table grape grown in this section.

In 1859 Joseph B. Fay, a son of Elijah, (who later was commissioned Captain of Company G-154 Reg. N. Y. State Volunteers) and his brother-in-law Rufus Haywood together with Garrett E. Ryckman, a grandson of Elijah Fay erected a wine house 50 by 30 feet with a cellar and sub-cellar each ten feet deep for the manufacture and storage of wine. Two Thousand gallons were made that fall. It was estimated that there were but twenty acres of bearing vineyards in the Town of Portland at that time. But with the prospect of a market more vines were set and by the end of the war in 1865 sixteen thousand gallons were made. J. B. Fay withdrew from the company in June, 1862 to join the army and Ryckman and Haywood continued the business until 1865. There were 400 acres of vines in the town at that time.

In 1865 a stock company was organized under the name of Lake Shore Wine Company with a capital stock of \$100,000. fully subscribed and fifty percent paid in. The officers were Timothy Judson, president, Joseph B. Fay, Secretary and Albert Haywood, Superintendent. This company purchased the building and stock of wine from Ryckman and Haywood and erected a brick building 70 by 40 feet two stories with cellar 20 feet deep adjoining the old one. The Lake Shore Wine Company lasted but three years and was succeeded by Ryckman, Day and Company in 1868 and has shifted many times since. For many years it was owned and operated by Garrett E. Ryckman, until his death which occurred at Melbourne Beach, Florida April 10th, 1909.

Since the death of G. E. Ryckman the making of wine has declined and the manufacture of the unfermented grape juice has largely taken its place and while some of the companies were glad to get them at \$100. per ton a few years ago last fall the average price was about \$28.00 which is lower than it costs to produce them. By the constant reduction of price the companies are "killing the goose that laid the golden egg." As there were eight thousand acres in Portland twenty years ago, conservative observers say at least fifty percent have been pulled out or abandoned, and unless better prices are assured the grower more will be pulled and other crops grown instead. One qualified observer said that there were but 3500 tons raised in Portland last year instead of 8,000 tons a few years ago.

The old Ryckman Wine Cellars are now owned by the C & E Company manufacturing wine and grape juice. Last year they used 2,750 tons of grapes and as there were about 27,000 tons raised in the entire belt they consumed over one tenth of the crop.

*B. S. Sweetland  
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