1600s (Corse, 1935 p23,26), presumably due to the influence of Spanish missionaries. [We can assume grape growing was attempted, since similar Spanish cargo bound for South America and the West Coast eventually resulted in thriving grape industries elsewhere in the New World, even El Paso, later part of Texas (Hendricks, 2004).]

An early indication of Florida grape observations/activities can be gleaned from articles appearing in the Florida Historical Quarterly (http://palmm.fcla.edu/FHQ/) Search for grape*). This publication offers excellent articles covering all historical aspects pertaining to the state, practically from time zero. Relevant grape information is detailed in the TimeLine Section.

After over 200 years of strife and starvation, the agricultural situation improved somewhat due to English settlers encroaching from the north and eventually, to England gaining temporary possession of the Florida territory in 1763. These settlers were more agriculturally oriented and engaged in serious farming. They were joined by English immigrants from the northern United States who, due to their loyalty to the Crown, were displaced by the Revolutionary War. At last grape growing, even a grape arbor in St. Augustine was mentioned – circa. 1767, it was probably muscadine (Cresap, 1982, Chapt.3 pg 25; Pinney, 1989 pg.60.; Fairbanks, 1868 pg. 96). Later, “..grapes of all kinds..” were reportedly growing in St. Augustine prior to U.S. ownership (East Florida, 1819).

Figure 3. Grape Harvest in Florida, 1871 (FlaStateArchives)

These activities spread down the east coast to New Smyrna and west to Pensacola. In any case, imported grape vines were reportedly flourishing by 1770 (FlaHistQuarterly: 62(1)70 July 1983).

The resulting mix of successful and failed English colonization efforts ceased in 1783 when Florida was ceded back to Spain and not much progress was reported until Florida became U.S. territory in 1821. Nevertheless, insights into successful agriculture had been gained and persistent settlers and settlements had survived.

As the territory was settled, turbulent times continued. In the interim between the conclusion of the Seminole War in 1842 and Civil War hostilities, Florida entered the Union in 1845. Agriculture progressed dramatically. Implicit in these activities were the expansion of water, rail, and road transportation and the opening of the less accessible interior. By 1865 the stage was set for Florida agriculture development and grapes came on the scene.

IV. EARLY INTRODUCTIONS – SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

Ever since the initial colonization of Florida, settlers have attempted to grow grapes from their native regions of origin. Indeed, even recent arrivals attempt the same, with similar dismal results. Initial introductions were Vitis vinifera from Europe. Although this species barely survived in the north and did spectacularly well in California (due to a comparatively dry growing season and mild winters), Florida plantings from the 1500 to present were largely...
unsuccessful. Nevertheless the people involved and their trials and tribulations are well worth emphasizing.

The first recorded mention of grapes in what is now Florida, described wine made from wild grapes by French Huguenots near present Jacksonville (Adams, 1985). Actually, this may be the first written mention of wine produced in the New World - the entire Western Hemisphere. Neither the Huguenots nor the wines did well, since neither survived the Spanish colonial epoch. The grapes involved were undoubtedly muscadines and little is known regarding their propagation. They were probably collected from vines growing up tree trunks (Figure 4).

![Figure 4. Muscadine Covered Oak. ~1900](image)

Of course, Florida was not the only southern region experiencing grape industry development, just the most extreme and difficult. An excellent description of parallel viticulture and wine development throughout the Southeast, including some in Florida, is presented by de Blij (De Blij, H. J., 1987). Neighboring Southeastern states were likewise subjected to similar demographic and political trends and their respective industries also progressed by fits and starts. However, grapes did much better in these other states, particularly in the highlands, where even some vinifera varieties at least survived.

The record becomes much clearer in the latter half of the 19th century, essentially after the Civil War. Here “The French Connection” merits attention (Thompson, 1987; Paisley, 1968). As a reward for his services during the Revolutionary War, the Marquis de Lafayette was given a large land grant in the Florida Territory around Tallahassee by the U.S. Congress in 1824. Lafayette, with the encouragement of the Florida Territorial Governor W.P. Duval, chose a group of 50 to 60 Norman peasants to settle on the shores of Lake Lafayette in 1831. Their farming endeavors included the planting of grapes [presumably French varieties] with the intent of producing wine. These efforts failed and the surviving participants either returned to France or settled elsewhere – around Tallahassee or New Orleans.

![Figure 5. Lafayette Grant, 1831. (Alvers and Mahaffey, 1995 pg. 25)](image)

There was some mention of grapes as early as 1875 pertaining to successful vineyards. Jno. A. Craig, Tallahassee spoke highly of his experience with some labrusca varieties. He cited local success and mentioned that grapes were introduced on Merritt’s Island in 1875 (Semi-Tropical 1: 18-20, 1875). Craig and his partner, Bradford in 1882 sold some of their Tallahassee vineyard property to a prominent individual who soon made his mark. Craig’s article provided cultivation suggestions, called Florida “The Italy of America”, and closed with a poem honoring Florida and wine.
Beautiful Florida! Land of our dreams
Earth’s fairest daughter; beside thy bright streams,
Ponce de Leon wandered in search of the truth
Of that mythical water, the “Fountain of Youth.”
We erect to the altar garland with flowers,
Around which are clustered the vine laden bowers,
And ask for thy children, where they can find
This fountain of youth, the desire of mankind!
We fill high the goblet, whose roseate hue,
Vies with thy flowers, in their setting of dew;
We drink to thy hillocks, we drink to thy plains,
To thy sparkling rivulets and flowering vales;
We drink – thou hast answered, we feel it incline,
Our hearts to their Spring time; ‘tis thy own native wine.

In an accompanying article, also speaking highly of Florida and its grape potential, Col. Malachi Martin was doing well selling scuppernong wine at $2.25/gallon and making $1,000/acre. E.H. Mason and A.I. Bidwell, Duval County and W.K. Cessna, Alachua County confirmed his view. Bidwell indicated that his bunch grape, ‘Hartford Prolific’ was making $400/acre and other non muscadine were valued at $300/acre (Semi-Tropical 1: 23-28, 1875). Martin’s Gadsden County grape plantings were initiated in 1869 and his vineyard and wine business continued successfully after his death (Davidson, 1889 pg 153).

A.J. Bidwell, a prominent horticulturist who merits attention later, provided a useful overview of the Florida viticulture situation around 1875 (Bidwell, 1876 pg 263). He settled near Jacksonville in 1867 and successfully planted a labrusca vineyard that served the local market. He mentions several vineyards on the St. Johns River prior to 1860 that existed but were abandoned during the Civil War. [Bidwell’s presentation was a paper read before the Florida Fruit Growers Association Convention in 1875 and curiously appended to (Lanier, 1876) – a fascinating yet convoluted description of: “Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, and History”.

A number of bunch grapes (primarily labrusca) and muscadines were recommended for various regions of Georgia (FlaDispatch 2(14)1, 1877), although Florida was not ignored (Figure 6). Around this time throughout the South there was interest in attracting immigrants, especially those with agricultural experience and financial resources. So a very rosy picture was painted to attract people of means. Of course the Scuppernong was well known and popular from Pensacola to Ocala with residents, if not with those brought up on vinifera or labrusca (FlaDispatch 2(26)1, 1877; FlaDispatch 3(11)2, 1878; FlaDispatch 3(12)2, 1878; FlaDispatch 3(28)1, 1878). Bunch grapes were also grown, but local availability was apparently somewhat limited. An 1878 list of seedmen were exclusively in the North (FlaDispatch 2(39)1, 1878), since the state nursery industry was just getting started. However, that soon changed as Agriculture Associations were initiated and nurserymen from the North settled in.

Figure 6. Valdosta Ad (FlaDispatch 2(15)4, 1877)
Note dupious claim of total Florida adaptability.

Growers in East Florida were actively planting vinifera and labrusca and experimenting with native rootstock. The Florida Fruit Growers Association meetings discussed grapes and areas such as Welaka, Indian River, and Duval County were mentioned. Topics such as varieties, grafting, pruning, and soil requirements were discussed. Most importantly, results, ideas, and opinions (often strong and conflicting) were communicated. Transportation was becoming easier and the rail lines now connected East and West Florida (Figure 7).

**Figure 7. Rail System in 1877** ([FlaDispatch 2(1)3, 1877](#))

Where there are grapes, wine can’t be far away, and that was certainly on the mind of growers. Many **Timeline** and **Bibliography-Chronology** articles mention wine, and Florida growers were looking enviously at California statistics and harboring enological ambitions ([FlaDispatch 2(35) 1878; FlaDispatch 1(1)12, 1882](#)). [The Florida Dispatch began a new series in 1882, hence volume numbers started over, but volume numbers didn’t match years.] With Florida wine statistics at 83 acres and 11,000 gallons to California’s 33,000 acres and 14 million gallons, there was a long way to go. California had 2/3rds of total U.S. wine production – and was just getting started ([FlaDispatch 1(7)108, 1882](#)). In 1882 a person arrived in Florida with ambition, skill, and modest resources. Fortunately, he didn’t choose to settle in California, although there are indications that he evaluated other U.S. locations prior to settling on Florida.

**Figure 8. Pensacola ‘Scuppernongs’** ([FlaDispatch 3(11)2, 1878](#))

It is unknown if there was any connection or prior information about the 1831 fiasco, but about 50 years later, after that **Lafayette** farm enterprise around Tallahassee, in 1882 another group of French settlers arrived. Prominent among them was **Emile DuBois** who came “with the intention of testing her [the South, specifically Florida’s] capability as a grape growing country” ([Paisley, 1967 pp 49-51; Wood, 1970](#)). DuBois’ diligent efforts met with more success than those before him, and his influence extends to today.

**DuBois**, who presumably had the necessary financial resources, proceeded to purchase part of the Andalusian Plantation from partners **John A. Craig** and **John Bradford** who operated a nursery and had been experimenting with ‘Concord’ grapes since 1871 ([Craig, 1875](#)). These growers had already established a vineyard and in 1875 were offering vines and boxed ‘Concord’ and ‘Ives’ grapes for sale. Around the same time Col. **Malachi Martin**, Chattahoochee prison warden, reported successful sales of Scuppernong wine (at $1.25/gallon) [later $2.25/gal] from his 160 acre vineyard in Mt. Pleasant ([Paisley, 1968](#)).
DuBois then bought the old San Luis Mission Fort west of Tallahassee, which he named Chateau San Luis and started viticulture in earnest. [The Mission had an interesting history before DuBois’ involvement and is now a 48 acre “Living History” museum and park http://www.taltrust.org/san_luis.htm. The Mission’s history and DuBois’ role is very well documented in an interesting and informative article by Julie Bettinger, a Tallahassee writer and distant relative of Emil DuBois, GrapeHistoryProject/SanLuisVineyardHistory_Bettinger.pdf.]

In a few years DuBois was a significant producer and marketer of wines from his Vitis labrusca plantings, and shipping vines to other locations in Florida and elsewhere (Figures 10 to 14). DuBois became a vocal spokesman and champion of Florida grapes by reporting on his experiences in the existing agricultural publications. His wines were recognized in competition, achieving prizes as the best of Florida in an Ocala competition.

DuBois exhibited grape and orange wines at the 1893 Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition and served as chairman of the judging committee. When, after six years the Exposition Official Report was not published, he took it upon himself to publish his report, “Wines and Brandies of the World at the World’s Columbian Exhibition” in 1900 (DuBois, 1900). Perhaps at his prompting the the entire 1700 page, two volume “Report of the Committee on Awards of the World’s Columbian Commission” was published in 1901. It is fascinating in it’s relevance to the 21st Century - emphases, similarities, and differences. DuBois’ 29 page article (similar to his book), “History of the Vine, the Grape, and the Wine”, is a marvelous snapshot of the 1893 wine scene (DuBois, 1901).

DuBois exhibited 11 Florida wines, but did not submit them to competition (to maintain impartiality). He was quite disappointed that French wines were withdrawn from competition (award system disagreements) and not more prominently displayed. His quote, “A wine jury without the wines and brandies of France is about like a boat without a rudder”, reflects DuBois’ pride in the wine reputation of his native country (Pg. 1026). [Would he have similar feelings about today’s Florida wines? And what would he think of wines from the ‘Blanc DuBois’ variety, named in his honor?]
In fact, Emile DuBois was involved in the foundation of the Florida State Horticultural Society (FSHS). Much of the information pertaining to grape developments in state can be derived (or inferred) from the Proceedings of the Florida State Horticultural Society, founded in 1888. By this time, DuBois was a frequent contributor of articles and comments pertaining to grapes in the Florida Dispatch. During the First (initial) proceedings of the FSHS, DuBois was listed as Vice President and a Committee on Grapes was formed, undoubtedly with his involvement (FlaStateHortSoci 1:3-4, 10, 1888; Table 1). The 2nd proceedings in 1889 didn’t mention the Grape Committee, but a paper by DuBois, as Chairman, was read (he didn’t attend) providing a comprehensive overview of grape varieties growing in Florida, (FlaStateHortSoci 2:24-28, 1889).

In these intriguing narratives grape euphoria is evident and we can see that there were quite a few individuals, organizations, and publications involved. Available literature from the latter half of the 19th century onward provides a reasonably detailed look at the pulse of Florida grape developments. In addition, news clipping from Loren Stover’s scrapbook and others provided valuable insights decades later. Combined they tell an interesting story and identify key grape contributors. Some of the earliest publications are very difficult to decipher, as indicated in Figure 17.

These early FSHS, and to some extent FD reports were either oral presentations or submitted papers read at the meetings (if the author was not attending), usually by a member of the appointed committee – in this case Grapes (Table1). Presentations, mostly based on antidotal experiences, perhaps with some attention to formal experimentation (the Scientific Approach), were followed by questions and informal discussions, which were recorded. The scientific rigor involving replication, statistics and 3rd person narrative evolved later. Nevertheless, the personal discourse provides an excellent insight into the speaker’s perspective and opinions, in contrast to the impersonal presentations expected in technical papers today. Some of the discourse might
today be termed a Blog, slower moving but with the same motive. In contrast, from the start, Agricultural Station reports were mostly factual and impersonal.

The accompanying Bibliography-Chronology contains the cited articles and relates to the Timeline which summarizing pertinent details.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grape Committee Members</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Committee formed, but members not yet appointed</td>
<td>Emile Dubois FSHS Vice President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Members not identified</td>
<td>A paper by DuBois read in his absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Members not identified</td>
<td>Grape Committee reports read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Members not identified</td>
<td>George A. Wright FSHS Vice president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>H. Von Luttichau George A. Wright G. P. Healy</td>
<td>George A. Wright FSHS Vice president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>G. W. Peck L. E. Haynes E. C. Hammond</td>
<td>George A. Wright FSHS Vice president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Emile DuBois Frank E. Boncher H. P. Walker</td>
<td>No Grape Committee members were FSHS Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>H. Von Luttichau I. B. La Montague James Carnell</td>
<td>No Grape Committee members were FSHS Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>C. A. Bacon O. R. Thatcher W. A. Emmons</td>
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<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>I. B. La Montague J. H. Leslie L. Q. Kermode</td>
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<td>1898</td>
<td>E. E. Pratt L. H. Armstrong A. V. Clubbs</td>
<td>C. A. Bacon Vice President</td>
</tr>
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<td>1899</td>
<td>Standing Committee on Grapes Figs and Kaki W. S. Hart A. B. Harrington W. H. Mann</td>
<td>C. A. Bacon Vice President Committees on Grapes, Figs, and Kaki combined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Standing Committee on Grapes Figs and Kaki H. Von Luttichau W. D. Griffing</td>
<td>No Grape Committee members were FSHS Officers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Committee Name</td>
<td>Members</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------</td>
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<td>H. Von Luttichau, Irving Keck, C. F. Barber</td>
</tr>
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<td>J. Earle Bacon, Wm. H. Earle, C. M. Terrell</td>
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<td>P. J. Westes, W. C. Steele, J. E. Bacon</td>
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<td>1907</td>
<td>Standing Committees were reorganized more along discipline lines. Grapes combined with Peaches and Deciduous Fruits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Grapes not mentioned much except in passing</td>
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</table>

At the 3rd FSHS meeting, DuBois made several cogent statements on wine. His average wine yield/acre was 250 gallons. [Seems to be a very low by today’s standard of ~140-180 gallons/ton and at least 3 tons/acre.] Although he had made a scuppernong [muscadine] wine and liked it, he could sell 40 gallons of common [bunch grape] wine to one of muscadine. Furthermore, the muscadine required the addition of water and sugar to extract the juice, and in DuBois’ opinion, that wasn’t wine ([FlaStateHortSoc 3:10, 1890](https://doi.org/10.2307/flashtsos)). Interestingly, a surviving wine recipe from a DuBois descendent (Table 2) provided an indication of Scuppernong wine production at that time – with plenty of sugar!
Table 2
Etienne (Stephen) Beroud’s Recipe for Scuppernong Wine
San Luis Vineyards, Tallahassee, Florida, [Undated and combined from several sources]

Large amount
1 Barrell (sic) (about 4 bushels) Grapes
[Crush Grapes]
Put 45 lbs of sugar in ten gallons of water and dissolve it. Pour water over grapes and let ferment three days and nights. Every day pushing the grapes back from the top of the water.

Small amount
1 peck [crushed] grapes, fully ripe
2 ½ lbs. of sugar
2 ½ quarts of water
Strain
To each gallon of juice add 1 ½ lbs. of sugar.
Cover with cheese cloth.
Let ferment until bubbling stops (one to three weeks).
Skim occasionally but be careful not to disturb it.
Siphon off to bottle.
Leave an air space in top of bottle and insert tube (rubber) in this. Do not let the tube touch the liquid.
Seal tube entrance into the cork with parrafin. Put other end of tube in a bottle of water. When gas bubbles stop passing into water it is ready to bottle in smaller amounts. Siphon off, then seal.

This should be done in a cool dark place.

Recipe acquired from
Maybelle Beroud Folson, daughter of
Etienne (Stephen) Beroud

[Stephen Beroud, brother of Marius managed San Luis Vineyards for Emile DuBois in the early 1900s. See following descriptive paragraphs.]

[Note that inoculation with yeast is not mentioned (standard practice today), so relying upon wild yeast was necessary. Pasteur’s classic research was only recently reported ~1870 and pure strains were probably unavailable. Indigenous yeast sometimes ferment OK, but to follow this recipe successfully, we recommend a pure strain of quality wine yeast.]

By the 4th FSHS Proceedings in 1891 DuBois reported (again, paper read, since he didn’t attend) on his viticulture experiences and cogently summarizing data from other publications (FlaStateHortSoc 4:7-12, 1891). [Did Dubois’ viticultural/enological duties keep him too busy, or was it travel difficulties?] DuBois participated regularly in FSHS meetings and correspondence published in the Florida Dispatch up to about 1894. He was last mentioned in the FSHS membership list in 1896 (FlaStateHortSoc 9:vii, 1896) after which DuBois (Figures 18-20) disappeared from print, except being quoted and recognized as Florida’s first premium winemaker and viticulture pioneer.
Sadly, Emil DuBois’ pioneering efforts in Tallahassee didn’t prevail. Leon County voted dry in 1904 and without a wine market, he moved to New Jersey and later returned to France, where he died. [Nevertheless, there is evidence that DuBois was in Tallahassee on August 28, 1906, by his signature on a check (Figure 22).] There is some indication that these extensive plantings were experiencing difficulty before DuBois left. Etienne Beroud, the brother of DuBois’ son-in-law, Marius Beroud (died in 1903), continued to manage the vineyard before it faded (Figure 21). Even before 1904, wine production in Leon County was decreasing, probably due to vine decline. Despite this abrupt ending, around a century after DuBois left Florida, his dream is being realized and his influence still felt.

At about the same time that DuBois was promoting viticulture near Tallahassee, other progressive grape growers were active in East Florida near Gainesville, around the St. Johns river south of Jacksonville and in the Orlando area (South Florida). The generalized distribution of vineyards from 1870 to 1900 is well depicted in Figure 23 (Lewis, 1979). Note the concentration of bunch grape cultivation around Tallahassee and Alachua County and the Jacksonville – Orlando – Tampa Corridor, reflecting the more publicized activities in these regions. Muscadine growers were more broadly dispersed, smaller, less vocal regarding their activities, and addressed the local demand for grapes. [They were also more likely to be long time, established Florida residents, in contrast to recent arrivals from the Northern U.S. or Europe - who did not yet appreciate muscadine grapes.]

Developments around the Orlando area were spearheaded by Haynes, Young, and Bailey, who had experience with ‘White Niagara’ in New York. They migrated from Rochester New York in 1885 and initiated a vineyard planted to ‘Niagara’ the following year (FlaDispatch 8(14)268 1888; Gore, 1891, Grapes pp. 39-45; FlaStateHortSoc 2: 28, 1889). Their success, where others had failed, resulted in a 30 acre Niagara Villa vineyard and formation of the Niagara Vineyards Company and the Orlando Grape and Fruit Company (Figures 24 & 25). Ink & Babcock vineyard also came in and other local and northern interests resulted in around 500 grape acre

Figure 21. Possibly DuBois’ Vineyard in 1906 (FlaStateArchives)

Figure 22. Check cashed by E. DuBois, 1906. Courtesy, Gary Cox.

Figure 23. Vineyard Locations 1870-1900 (Lewis, 1979, pg 630)
planted or planned (FlaDispatch 4(28)545 1892, FlaDispatch 4(29)565 1892; FlaGrower 34(5)5,10 1926).

Adjacent regions were also promoting grapes, or at least reflecting pride in the fact that grapes, among other crops, grew well in their respective area. The plug for Alachua County has frequent, but general mention of grape suitability (Myers, 1882 pp 2, 6, 11-12). And grapes fair even better in an Ocala publication calling for not only varieties from Spain and Italy, but transplanted viticulturist and enologist to accompany the grapes (Neck, 1888).

An early text, “Florida Fruits and How to Grow Them” appeared (Harcourt, 1886). A chapter on grapes dealt reasonably accurately with varieties and cultivation practices. ‘Bullace’ or Vitis vulpina were cited as native and canopy management advice was provided, with labrusca needing to be handled differently. Some labrusca and muscadine varieties were recommended, and a promising future for raisins and wine was predicted. [Raisin production was soon recognized as quite inappropriate for the rainy, humid Florida environment.]

In addition, a prominent winery almost came on the Orlando scene. Emil DuBois observed the Orlando plantings and, although he didn’t think much of northern labrusca for wine, was confident enough to plan a winery. The idea was to use cull and late season fruit, since market price dropped substantially once California and other regions harvest began. DuBois’ partner was C.G. Frasch, winter resident from New York, who had produced a notable Orange Champagne (Gore, 1891 pg 45). What became of this planned wine venture is unknown, since nothing more was heard. Both DuBois and Frasch were quite capable viticulturists/enologists, so an Orlando winery would have been quite logical – and potentially successful, even if they had to resort to other fruit.

Frasch felt that the freeze of 1895 opened the door for grapes to replace citrus in North Florida and promoted both muscadine and bunch grapes for wine. He suggested that Florida should become the equivalent to Italy in grape and fruit growing. He also opined that “The temperance cause would be largely advanced if a light wine became the national drink instead of whiskey.” (FlaAgriculturist 29(13)194, 1902) [Interesting observation – Perhaps this approach could have softened the absolute nature of prohibition several decades later.]

Figures 24 & 25. Niagara Villa Vineyard Orlando (Gore, 1891)

Grape presentations and articles during the last 2 decades of the 19th century were extremely upbeat. L.E. Haynes, Garey, G.A. Wright, Mott all cited favorable experiences with certain labrusca varieties in the Orlando area. The Niagara Villa was a Show Place that impressed visitors and viticulturists (FlaDispatch 4(26)504, 1892). By this time other dedicated viticulturists were likewise reporting their experiences. Most importantly, these presentations and the discussions that followed led to the exchange of cultivation information and grape germplasm among viticulturists. Words of caution were in the minority. W.C. Steele, a nurseryman in Switzerland, FL, reminded participants that the laws of supply and demand affected shipped fruit, using strawberries as an example. If grape growers expanded production in anticipation of a lucrative northern market, economics would be sure to change. He also
cautioned that bunch grapes required more care and attention than muscadines (FlaDispatch 8(16)306 1888).

The 3rd Proceedings of the FSHS in 1890 contained quite a few grape articles and discussions. A presentation titled “The Past and the Future of the Grape in Florida” by Rev. James H. White of Island Home provided a useful summary of past grape activities. He mentioned that A.I. Bidwell was growing bunch grapes near Jacksonville in 1867, followed by E.H. Mason who planting several thousand vines in Duval County a few years later. White referred to George W. Atwood’s 1867 success near St. Augustine and cited the 1874 Florida Fruit Growers Convention (FlaStateHortSoc 3:21-26, 1890).

White also brought up the Indian River Horticultural Society. The discussion then turned to economic potential, wine and Florida opportunities. A cited quotation by Bidwell is worth noting today, “The bunch grapes themselves are too valuable to make them into wine.” One member, Mann, “made an earnest prohibition protest against making the society a wine-making one. (Applause and hisses in about equal measure.)” (FlaStateHortSoc 3:10-11, 1890).

A presentation on “Grapes in South Florida” by George A. Wright of Chuluota followed (ibid, pp 21-27). He described land and vineyard preparation and vine planting and care. [Curiously, Chuluota – near Orlando would hardly be classified as South Florida today. Middle Florida was the northern section around Leon County.] A few pages later, a note of skepticism (letter) was interjected by Livingston, who apparently had little success growing grapes in Waldo. The response by H. Von Luttichau of Earleton suggests strong differences of opinion between the two and even involved DuBois (ibid pp 29-35 [a 19th century Blog?]).

Baron Hans Von Luttichau (1845-1926) came on the scene in 1887. This influential German botanist created the “Collins-Belvedere Azalea Gardens” in Earleton and introduced Formosa azaleas to Florida. He was the son-in-law of General Elias B. Earle, founder of Earleton, about 12 miles west of Gainesville (See <Earleton> in: http://www.flheritage.com/preservation/markers/markers.cfm?ID=alachua ).

It is unclear from where in Germany or his title of Baron came from, but Von Luttichau played a very active and vocal role in Central Florida grape developments, as a participating member of the FSHS Committee on Grapes and contributor to the Florida State Horticultural Society Proceedings and Florida Dispatch. Von Luttichau planted his first vines in 1880 (FlaDispatch 1(19)243-45, 1889), experimented extensively with labrusca, researched the northern markets, but was only guardedly optimistic regarding vinifera (“Foreign grapes”, as he called them). In subsequent proceedings he liberally offered his insights into all aspects of grape breeding, cultivation, and marketing.

However, by 1893, Von Luttichau had a distinctly negative opinion of northern market potential and later led off a grape discussion in 1896 by stating, “I had to give up grapes: they did not pay me well.” (FlaStateHortSoc 9:67-69, 1896). Despite these comments, he didn’t drop grapes completely. Von Luttichau was the 1900 and 1904 FSHS grape representative and in 1901 he reported on the Grape Experiment Station set up on his Earleton property in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture, Division of Pomology. The main focus was on a careful evaluation of numerous V. vinifera grown on native rootstock. The USDA representative was George C. Husmann, son of George Husmann, the noted viticulturist, enologist, and author.
G.C Husmann, as representative of the USDA, was cooperating with (certainly providing stock, encouraging and advising) Von Luttichau in the operation of the Government Viticultural Experiment Station at Earleton. This is a good example of private industry – government joint research. It preceded the establishment of the University of Florida and the Agricultural Experiment Station in nearby Gainesville by over a decade. By his 5th year, certain varieties were doing quite well and Von Luttichau was preparing to release some for dooryard use, although not for large scale planting. He noted some vine decline after the fifth year, but attributed it to location and improper vine management. After this 1904 report there was no further mention of Von Luttichau, or the experimental vineyard cited in FSHS proceedings, except indirectly in 1907.

The FSHS Proceedings listed a Catalogue of Fruits annually from 1895 to 1907 and included grapes. Species mentioned were labrusca, aestivalis, and rotundafolia. Curiously ‘Cynthiana’ and ‘Norton’ were listed as separate varieties, both recommended for wine. [They are the same grape.] Vinifera (European) varieties were cited as an “entire failure” in 1895 (FlaStateHortSoc 8:XIII-XIV, 1895). However, in 1907 citing Luttichau’s experimental planting of 550 vines of 175 varieties on riparia or rupestris rootstock, the vinifera were deemed, “so far are remarkably successful” (FlaStateHortSoc 20:XIII-XIV, 1907).

It would be of interest to describe the grape input of the other individuals participating in grape developments at this time. Most seemed articulate and knowledgeable viticulturists, but the records of their contributions and accomplishments are less well known than DuBois’ and Von Luttichau’s. There are bits and pieces of information regarding some of these grape pioneers in the various accumulated reports, so we can infer in a general way their contributions and, to a lesser extend their backgrounds and contributions as part of the first sustained Florida Grape Community.

A good many of those horticulturists mentioned were nurserymen involved in citrus and a number of fruits besides grapes. The ads suggest the scope of their businesses; Figure 26 (FlaDispatch 7(33)688-9, 1887) illustrates their wares. Note the names associated with these businesses, they come up continually in noted reports and conversations.

Figure 26. Typical Nursery Ads circa 1885-87

Now we’ll digress. The last three decades of the 19th Century saw dramatic grape developments all over the nation. In 1870 T.V. Munson (Figure 27) initiated his epic career leading up to the Munson Hybrids. By 1883, George Husmann, of the Talcoa Vineyards in Napa Valley, California (Pinney, 1989 pg 346 +) had published the second edition of his landmark book, “American Grape Growing and Wine Making: with Several Added Chapters on the Grape Industries of California” (Husmann, 1883). G. Husmann, came out of the Herman, Missouri German wine tradition. He wrote the first publication on winegrowing, Grape Culturist, was involved in viticulture and enology practices as a winery principal, and founded the Mississippi Valley Grape Growers Association. He was also quite instrumental in supplying phylloxera-resistant rootstock to France, thus saving the French wine industry. Husmann ultimately brought
his experience and talent to California, where he battled phylloxera and contributed significantly to the burgeoning grape industry. His page 78 note on our old standby, the Muscadine, bears mention:

Figure 27. T.V. Munson (Munson, 1907 preface)

Hussmann’s vinifera chauvinism didn’t extend to his son, George W. Husmann, a prominent viticulturist in his own right who, as a scientist with the USDA, played a key role throughout the U.S. by systematically evaluating the grape potential of various regions, including Florida. He was instrumental in Baron H. Von Luttichau’s Earleton experimental vineyard and spearheaded the U.S. Agricultural Department’s long term research commitment to grapes nationwide.

The initial demise of grapes is evident from the attention paid the crop in the FSHS Proceedings (Table 1). In 1899 the Standing Committee on Grapes was combined with figs and kaki (Japanese persimmons), still with a prominent grape spokesman represented. As early as 1894 problems were surfacing and a mix of good and bad experiences cited (FlaStateHortSoc 7:25-34, 1894). Poor condition of fruit and shipping problems were blamed. Lyman Phelps, Orlando with viticulture experience in central New York tried growing in Orange County, but after 4 years he lost money, saw the light [darkness?] early, and got out of grapes. By the 20th meeting in 1907, the Standing Committee no longer mentioned grapes, although there was a report from the grape, fig, kaki committee. P.J. Whister spoke on vine decline and urged a breeding focus on wild species. W.C. Steele commented on unfavorable shipping rates (FlaStateHortSoc 20:27-34, 1907).

Then from 1908 until 1920 “the FSHS line went dead”, except for F.P Henderson’s 1910 observation that past varieties and cultivation errors were problems amenable to solution (Henderson, 1910). Nevertheless, grapes received some attention as reflected in sporadic Florida Grower reports from the first volume in 1911 up to present issues.

The downfall of grapes in Welaka might have been not been solely due to vine decline, as the following narrative suggests (Reeder, 1976 pg. 13):

“Madame De Breast of France had a grape vineyard northeast of town. She made wine and shipped it to Jacksonville. In the early days, some of the people made their living from huge grape vineyards, often consisting of forty or fifty acres. Wine was made from these grapes and sold and nearly all of the fine homes had wine cellars.”
“The “Big Freeze” in 1895 came, killing overnight the grape vines, orange groves, even the swamps were frozen. Entire families moved away, leaving their homes and everything they had in them. The forgotten homes soon decayed and fell.”

Wine was a popular home and business pursuit, spearheaded (at least in Welaka) by another French compatriot, Madame De Breast. Thus, although DuBois was the predominant grape grower and wine producer in state and some distance from the east coast, the folks in East Florida didn’t lack for grape euphoria nor wine made from local grapes. Apparently, government control of wine was far from strict, so distribution, sales, and consumption were prevalent. Local grapes were put to good use, but not indefinitely. It’s unusual that the cited freeze that would surely have decimated the maturing citrus crop, would have affected dormant grape vines so severely.

In any case, if the “Big Freeze” of 1895 didn’t do it, the even worst one in 1899 certainly put a stop to semi-tropicals in Putnam County. Still, barring spring freezes of budding vines, grapes throughout Florida are surprisingly hardy. A century later, grapes did quite well in the December 1989 freeze. This was the worst of the 20th century and pushed the Citrus Belt further south. [In fact, in the last third of the 20th Century - even before 1989, it is almost inconceivable that tropical fruits could have survived, let alone flourish near Jacksonville.]

Extrapolating from the recorded experiences, thoughtful discussions, insight from early growers, and, of course, with the benefit of hindsight, it is clear what went wrong. Growers, for the most part had dismal experience with vinifera. The more adapted labrusca did better, especially on native rootstock. Growers were experimenting with a number of vine management systems, in various soils, overcoming or at least handling many insect and disease threats. They were juggling a lot of variables, combining trial and error, gradually moving to a more systematic approach.

When initially successful plantings failed, viticulturists or interested observers could point to one or more contributing factors, often reflecting, for better or worse on the viticulture skills of the grower. Just about the time that the influence of one major grape cultivation variable – variety, rootstock, soil, location, insect attack, disease occurrence, etc. - was reasonably understood or at least felt amenable to control, something else cropped up to complicate the viticulture scene. Stoner (1952) provides useful insights into grape disease epidemiology and explains why even experienced horticulturists were confused by this mysterious vine decline.

Nature bats last, and the yet unrecognized Pierce’s disease (PD) bacterium, Xylella fastidiosa and its vector, Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter (Figure 29). Xylella fastidiosa progresses slowly but almost inevitably (Adlerz and Hopkins, 1977, 1979, and 1981a,b; Adlerz, 1980). The modifying term is “almost”, because the sharpshooter vector for PD was not too prevalent in marine environments. Hence, susceptible vine on the Keys and barrier islands lasted longer (Mortensen and Knight, 1967). Even recently, isolated plantings of less rugged, PD susceptible grape varieties/species may survive inland for some time, giving rise to the assumption of vigor. Eventually Nature catches up and these vines decline, to the dismay of the optimistic viticulturist.
Ultimately, even the more progressive, technically skilled viticulturists, cognizant of the challenges of the Florida environment, saw their vines decline. Many were nurserymen with a firm business commitment; they could and did emphasize other horticulture crops that fared better than grapes. Citrus, of course, was dominant, although freezes punctured North Florida optimism in 1895-6 and for good in 1899. In contrast to the struggling bunch grape species, rotundifolia and native species were thriving. Nevertheless, disappointed viticulturists didn’t take the next logical step which might have saved the industry – switching to PD resistant muscadine varieties, but vinifera chauvinism (to be mentioned later) prevailed.

**H.T. Fisher**, FGGA President 1922-25, provided an insightful review of the rise and fall of grape growing in this period (Fisher, 1924). Later, an excellent description of the psychology behind these grape expectations is given in “Cultural Conservatism and Pioneer Florida Viticulture” (Lewis, 1979). However, we would certainly qualify the author’s theme, which she presents quite cogently. That is: Immigrants to Florida from other regions brought their culture with them (in this case, homeland viticulture practices) and maintained them until forced to adapt to the new environment. This was possibly the case with inexperienced grape growers or those influenced by fly-by-night realtors. In contrast, serious viticulturists with homeland experience were well aware of climatic differences facing them in Florida. Although they led with the vinifera and/or labrusca from their native areas, they soon modified strategies by introducing wild rootstock and native germplasm and carefully screening varieties for adaptability.

Also, those grower who committed large acreage in anticipation of the northern market were faced with high shipping rates, irregular transport of a highly perishable crop (mechanical refrigeration had not yet arrived), and unscrupulous buyers, which made early efforts a money losing proposition (FlaStateHortSoc 7:25-34, 1894). The logistics of coordinating harvest, packing, transport, etc. are challenges even for experienced grape producers today. It is possible that with a better marketing system and distribution infrastructure the debacle could have been avoided, or at least slowed down. What if these early shippers had adequate profits to direct research into variety improvement, even renewing vineyards, or switching to muscadine varieties? Access to the more hardy Munson hybrids was just beginning, and the science of agriculture progressing rapidly.

After reading the reports and following the efforts of these pioneers, we have a much greater respect for what they accomplished. Aside from the euphoria and hype generated by rank amateur growers and real estate interests, serious growers fought back. They could and did respond fairly effectively to unforeseen challenges such as phylloxera and Florida-unique pest, insect, and disease problems. Actually, the better selections thrived and bore crops that exceeded expectations. The unseen enemy which eventually caught up with even the most astute grower, including more knowledgeable viticulturists three decades later (who had the benefit of the more adaptable Munson hybrids) was Pierce’s Disease and its helpful vector, the sharpshooter. It wasn’t until the 1950s that the epidemiology of PD infection was understood. Even today
apparent resistant vines can last a number of years in isolation, but woe be the grape grower who expands plantings without PD trials or without listening to the voices of experience.

By about 1910, the naysayers were proved right. So, what did these very early grape pioneers accomplish? Quite a lot - Perusal of the cultivation practices at the time show that many were sound, and growers amazingly prescient. Attempts to reach the early season northern markets were nominally successful. Rail transport systems were evolving, quality control was emphasized, and economic studies developed. Arguably, the developments of the 1920s and the momentum of the 1950s would not have occurred or been substantially diminished had it not been for these viticulturist and enologists pioneers who labored in Florida from 1565 to about 1920.

V. THE SECOND GRAPE BOOM- Realists, Optimists, and Scientists

Shortly after the turn of the century FSHS emphasis devoted to grapes faded along with the progression of vine decline. A few general grape articles were noted in the early issues of the Florida Fruit and Produce News (Later called the Florida Grower). These were answers to questions and pertained mostly to muscadines. Grape interest in state was resurrected about two decades after the first decline, thanks to the availability of the Munson hybrids - promoted by F.J. Zimmerman as early as 1913 (FlaGrower 9(3)4 Oct 18, 1913). A new generation of inspired viticulturists came on the Florida scene a few years later.

Grapes again surfaced in the FSHS Proceedings in 1920 with a key presentation by Charles Dearing, USDA Washington, DC. In “Muscadine Grape and Grape Products”, he provided a very comprehensive overview of the USDA Muscadine Grape Project, commenting on his research with muscadines 11 years earlier around Ocala, New Smyrna, and Glen St. Mary (Dearing, 1920). The Ronnoc grove vineyard was still yielding practical results after 20 years (Rhoads, 1926 p.76). The aim of the USDA Bureau of Plant Industries was to develop a fruit industry in Southeast states, in cooperation with other Agriculture entities – State, Industrial, and Educational. This consisted of Production Investigations (Dearing’s paper) and Muscadine Grape Utilization Investigations, the subject of a following paper (Partridge, 1920). Considerable discussions regarding propagation and varieties followed Dearing’s talk. [Although not mentioned, George C. Husmann was probably a prime mover in these USDA efforts, since he was still active and referred to later in the 1920s.]

Charles Dearing’s breeding research with muscadines had long term relevance to Florida and is well described in a fascinating text by Thomas DeWolf (P9-15: The Lure of the Vine) dealing with muscadine – vinifers hybrids. DeWolf follows the development and pedigree of these crosses terminating in P9-15 (male progeny to ‘Southern Home’, Mortensen, John A., J.W. Harris, and D.L. Hopkins).

Despite Dearing’s plug for attention to muscadines and the experiences of many decades attesting to their greater ruggedness and ease of cultivation, bunch grapes were seen as the wave of the future. Leading this surge were growers in Central Florida. The Zimmerman brothers F.J. and E.L. of Oldsmar, having worked with the Munsons in Texas, were familiar with the characteristic of those hybrids. Consequently, they introduced some of the preferred selections to
Florida and described their durability and quality after eight years of observation (Zimmerman, 1920). Other growers demonstrated impressive result and the second Grape Boom was on.

Figure 30. The Sylvester Vineyard, Lakeland. (FlaGrower 27(23)6, 1923)

Figure 31 & 32. Mathison’s (or Mathewson's) Vineyard, DeFuniak Springs, July 1926. (FlaStateArchives). [Mathison was elsewhere identified as the Walton County Agriculture (Extension) Agent, so that’s probably the spelling.]

Several years later Dearing again recommended muscadines and cautioned about lack of long term Florida experience with even the better hybrids (Dearing, 1922). However, other opinions favored select Munson hybrids, so bunch grapes prevailed (Lord, 1922; Fisher, 1922). By this time, the Florida Ag Station was accumulating information on improved grape disease control and cultivation practices. So with the benefit of Munson’s research and growers’ enthusiasm, bunch grape acreage again exploded around Orlando. Grape progress in the 1920s was based on a more sound technical understanding of and experience with Florida viticulture, as reflected in technical and vineyard articles in the FSHS Proceeding – more sound, but not infallible.

This grape boom was accompanied by a lot more publicity and more aggressive advertising, Figure 33. Compare the ads with those of the late 1800s- Figure 15 & 16.

Figure 33. Grape /Land Promotional Ads. (Primarily Zimmerman Bros. Ads ~1923-24)

Following Zimmerman’s lead several progressive growers– George Burnham and the Sylvesters in Lakeland; Paul Hawkins, Eustis; E.E. Truskett, Mt. Dora; H.T. Fisher, Eustis initiated vineyards (FlaGrower 34(5)5.10 1926). Their success led to talk about shipping carload lots for the Northern market. This was achieved before or on July 1926, when Demko Bros., Altoona shipped a well publicized lot (Figure 34). [Was this the first shipment or simply a promotional announcement?]

Figure 34. 1926 July - Demko Ad- Altoona Station Atlantic Coast Line.
More followed, as the Dickson-Truskett vineyards, Montverde and the Stover & MacKenzie vineyards, Lady Lake and Fruitland Park, were supplying grapes to a packing house cooperative in Montverde. The Panhandle growers were also expanding and shipping to the Chicago and New York areas (Truskett, 1929). The Montverde region cooperative developed marketing standards and even provided ice packing for grapes headed long distances by rail (Figures 34, 35, 36).

Figures 35. Florida Commercial Grape Operations circa 1926. (FlaStateArchives)

Figures 36. Grape Packing, Montverde ~1927. (FlaStateArchives)

Along with increasing grape production to meet existing or anticipated market demands, the more progressive growers were diligently conducting research to improve upon existing varieties. In their experimental vineyards W.A. MacKenzie of Leesburg and Col. W. J. Stover of Fruitland Park in 1924 started comprehensive studies of most grapes known in America in order to find varieties appropriate for Florida. Shortly thereafter Dr. Charles Demko initiated similar endeavors in Altoona, along with vigorously pursuing the commercial market. (Truskett in Williams, 1988).

This enthusiasm was evident from Pensacola to the Keys, as many Counties provided glowing reports from growers, county agents, and/or chambers of commerce (Figures 37-40). Although not as well reported as in Central Florida, where the FSHS, and later the FGGA served as focal points for grape interests, similar developments were underway in the Panhandle, with reference to a potential fresh grape demand in Birmingham (FlaTimesUnion 58 Aug12 Pg.4 1924). By 1929 it was reported that Bay County’s Seminole Plantation shipped 8 carloads of grapes, equivalent to about 45,000 gallons of juice (FlaTimesUnion 64 Aug19 Pg.3 1929). Individuals active in West Florida were not identified and it is unlikely that they actively participated in the FGGA. Nevertheless, they were closer to the Central U.S. market, and after 10 years of Prohibition, there were a lot of very thirsty mid westerners to whom early season Florida grapes would have been quite welcome.

Figure 37. Grape Activities, plantings or promotionals in Florida Counties 1920-29
(FlaStateArchives)(L to R - Bay County harvest; Ockaloosa County new planting; Taylor County promotion; ‘Carmen’ vines, Oldsmar; Gamble’s farm, Medart; Razier vineyard, Milton)

With the initiation of a Grape Growing Club in the 1920s, grape activities resurfaced again in Putnam County - as in the 1890s before “The Big Freeze” of 1885 (Michaels, 1986). The enthusiasm of this club is evident in articles in the Palatka Daily News. On June11, 1928 a
motorcade of 25 cars and 111 people from Putnam County traveled to Marion and Lake Counties to view vineyards, notably the Dickson-Truskett operation. All cars survived the 305 mile journey with only a few tire problems delaying the caravan. [Consider the Florida road system in 1928!] (PalatkaDailyNews 38 June 12 1928)

Subsequently, the Club planned 57 additional acres and ordered over 30,000 ‘Florida Beacon’ for planting (FlaTimesUnion 64 Jan27 Pg.6 1929). The idea was for club members to systematically follow plantings in 25 vineyards, collect data, and plan to eventually join the FGGA. [This would have been the first County Chapter, had it occurred.] W.J Stover, a respected viticulturist in Fruitland Park, visited Putnam vineyards, found growth to be impressive, and commended these efforts (FlaTimesUnion 64 Apr7 Pg.6 1929; NewsClip PomonaGrapeClub 3-22 1928).

By 1930, there were well over 3,000 (some say ~5,000) acres of grapes planted or bearing in state, primarily the Munson hybrids ‘Beacon’ and Carmen’, with some ‘Florida Beacon’ and ‘Csaba’ (A Hungarian grape on ‘Beacon’ rootstock) available. [There was some confusion regarding variety naming. ‘Florida Beacon’ was later found to be Munson’s ‘Extra’ and not his ‘Beacon’. The ‘Carmen’ variety designation was also questionable. DeVries stated that the variety was named by Munson to honor a contributing New York horticulturist, Prof. Carmen. In contrast, a New York labrusca variety was developed and named ‘Carman’ – far less hardy and Florida-adaptable than Munson’s ‘Carmen’ (FlaGrower 18(18)18-19, 1918). Later, the opposite opinion was also given by Mrs. Slyvester, citing Munson’s friend as E.S. Carman, Editor of the Rural New Yorker and a prominent horticulturist (FlaGrower 27(23)6-7, 1923). [We’ll side with Slyvester, and it was definitely the Texas hybrid, not the New York variety.]

Concurrently, land development companies were getting into the act, selling land, much in areas or topography completely unsuitable for grapes to outsiders, some with no clue on grape cultivation or agricultural experience, just wild hopes and cash. The flames of Grape Euphoria were fed and fanned by prominent ads in the Florida Grower. Figure 33 shows some from the 1923-26 issues. The aggressive sales thrust was in contrast to ads in Florida Dispatch 40 years earlier (Figure 15 & 16) that advertised vines. The mid 20s ads inferred, even guaranteed easy riches with little effort. In hindsight, these “Get rich quick” inducements certainly went too far and didn’t enhance the image of Florida grapes or Florida land. Even an individual with national stature, Roger Babson was cited as an inducement (FlaGrower 29(15)23, 1924). [This renowned economist was credited as predicting the crash of 1929, but not the accompanying Florida Grape Bust.]

It is not surprising that with all the emphasis on grape cultivation and utilization there was no mention of wine. Prohibition was in full swing, so wine was certainly a “politically incorrect” topic, more so than a generation earlier when grape proponents had mixed emotions regarding wine making and consumption. Nevertheless, the major focus of efforts to establish fresh grape markets in the north was to satisfy the demand for juice – not necessarily as “unfermented wine”. This is a curious designation, talking around the obvious; grape juice is highly perishable. If not carefully processed and packaged, juice is one small, simple, almost inevitable step from wine, albeit rather mediocre - unless carried out by skilled practitioners. The strong demand for early season grapes in the north was certainly not driven by an unquenchable thirst for grape juice.