

Florida Grape History: PeopleLine

<http://mrec.ifas.ufl.edu/grapes/history>

Last but not least - In the process of describing the people behind grapes in Florida, we are attempting to compile pertinent biographical information on the cited individuals, and put their activities and contributions into perspective. Unfortunately, there are many gaps that our perusal of the historical record has not filled, although we're continuing to work on it.

Any information that interested readers may have, or suggestion as to sources, people to contact, or surviving relatives will be most appreciated. We especially need information on individuals indicated by asterisks*. Of greatest importance are those involved after the formation of the FGGA - around 1920, even up to the present.

We need details on:

Origin – where they came from

Background – profession or avocation

Location – where in Florida or elsewhere they were prominently involved

Grape or FGGA involvement – what role they played in or for the Association

Period of activity and final status – business or personal

Photographs – nice if they exist

The Florida Grape Growers Association Presidents and Term

* Indicates information being sought

<u>President</u>	<u>Term</u>	
*W.E. Bolles?	1921 or before?	
*Col. Hiram T. Fisher	1922? 1923-24	
*Mr. E.L. Lord	1925-1937	
*Mr. A.E. Pickard, Sr.	1938-39	
*Dr. Charles Demko	1940- 1954	
*Mr. Joseph Fennell	1955-58+?	
*Mr Charles Demko (son)	1961-2	
*Mr. C.L. McCormick	1968	
*Mr. Thomas J. Hughes, Sr.	1972-74	
Mr. Esmond Grosz	1974-76	
*Ms. Florence Hall (Jack)	1977-1978	
*Mr. Levin Darden	1979-1980	
*Ms. Clara-Jane Smith (Bill)	1980-1981	
*Mr. Harold Crevasse	1982	
*Mr. Jim Eckhart	1983-1987	
*Mr. Gary Ketchum	1987-1988	
*Mr. John Holloway	1989-1990	Tom Hughes program coordinator
*Mr. Joe Spinelli	1990-1994	
*Mr. Joe Stephany	1995-1996	
*Mr. Byron Biddle	1997-1998	
Mr. Gary Cox	1999-2000	
Mr. Bob Paulish (BJ)	2001-2006	

Mr. Donnie Nettles

2007-2008

Other Notable Grape Pioneers

*Col. W.J. Stover

*Baron H. Von Luttichau

Tom Hughes, Jr.

Foster Burgess

*Warren Adlerz

Frank & Carroll Ascolillo

Jeanne Burgess

*George Comer

*Doyle Conner

*Charles Cowart

George Cowey

*Jim Crall

*Robert Dunstan

Antonio Fiorelli

*Earl & Mike Kiser

*Joe Midulla

Bill Nesbitt

*Robert E. Norris

*Tony Pizzo

*Bob Price

Max & Rob Rittger

Dee Roberson

*Mary Studt

Felicity Trueblood

*Jack Varick

Don & Mary Johnson

*G.W. Husmann

Loren Stover

Tom Hughes, Jr.

A. Grape Families

One of the most serious problems facing the Florida Grape Community is continuity. No matter how dynamic an individual or important his/her contribution, when that person leaves the scene lots of experience and some momentum is lost. Fortunately, there have been and are a number of grape pioneers whose influence extends past a single generation, and the family connection bears mention.

- **The Hussmanns** are one. It is unclear if this **George Husmann**, Missouri viticulturist who later became prominent in California ever visited Florida, but his son certainly did, and had quite an impact. **George W. Husmann** was a prominent viticulturist with the USDA for many years, authored many publications on grapes, and oversaw USDA efforts to promote grape

introduction and commercialization in appropriate states. **G.W. Husmann** was a close cooperater with **Baron Von Littichau** in his early vine introductions experiments at Earleton, 1899-1905, and closely followed Florida viticulture thereafter (until at least 1929).

- A nearer father-son Florida relationship was that of Col. **W.J. Stover** and his son **Loren**. The Stovers migrated in the other direction – Originally from Canada, **W.J.** spent some time in Australia and Jamaica, then California, accumulating viticulture experience, then east to Florida. Col. **W.J. Stover** (died in 1937, **Loren Stover** 1/12/85) disappointed that his grapes withered [Where did title Col. come from?]. **W.J. Stover** together with partner, Dr. **W.A. MacKenzie** operated a commercial and experimental vineyard in Lady Lake around 1924. The experience gained there by **Loren Stover** surely contributed to his dramatic breeding breakthrough several decades later.
- A longer family viticulture tradition is that of Dr. **Charles Demko** and his son, **Charles W. Demko**. Both were FGGA presidents, and the line goes way back. The **Demkos** were said to be grape growers and wine makers in their native Hungary for 5 centuries. The **Demko** family operated a vineyard in Missouri prior to and concurrent with Dr. **Charles Demko** settling in Altoona. As described elsewhere, the **Demkos** were major players in the Florida Grape Community from the mid 1920s to the late 1960s. [Is or was there any continuing family involvement in either Florida or Missouri?]
- More recently we have **Tom Hughes**, FGGA president 1972-74. His son, **Tom Hughes, Jr.** worked the family U-Pick vineyards near Tampa and attended FGGA meeting with his father (who covered these events as Editor for the *Florida Grower and Rancher*). **Tom Hughes, Jr.** later became the FGGA Program Coordinator. As such he played a prominent role in refining FGGA administrative procedures and the successful development of the annual Florida State Fair Wine Competition. The [cover of the August 1963 Florida Grower and Rancher](#) shows another member of the **Hughes** family. **Mary Jane Hughes**, niece of **Tom Hughes, Sr.** is shown with ‘Blue Lake’ from **Tom**’s small homestead vineyard. The vines together with ‘Lake Emerald’ and ‘Stover’ were later moved to the **Hughes** commercial vineyard and survived for at least 20 more years.
- The grape business isn’t exclusively a male vocation. Although women received scant mention in the early literature, they were certainly quite active and supportive, albeit practically invisible in the old records, but certainly not now. **Foster Burgess**’ daughter, **Jeanne** is a very prominent and highly visible example as the most successful wine maker in Florida and essential member of the Grape Community both in and out of state. We’ll have more to say about the **Burgesses** in the **PeopleLine** which follows.
- Mentioning wineries and the **Burgess** brings up another father-son pair. **Gary Cox**, cofounder of Lafayette Vineyard and Winery in Tallahassee, brought his son, **Charles Cox** into the business at a young age – well before he could consume the family efforts. Gary announced one day that the family was going to put in a vineyard. Even before the vines were ripe, the idea of a winery replaced U-pick and fresh market plans and Lafayette was in operation by 1983. Thus **Charles** learned the business from the ground up – literally and figuratively. **Gary**

Cox is currently President and CEO of Seavin Corp. which operates both Lakeridge and San Sebastian wineries and **Charles** is Program Director at San Sebastian Winery.

- Also, recently in the wine business we had Dr. **Bob Thropp** and his wife **Ruthann** who were proprietors of Log Cabin Vineyard and Winery in Satsuma. Their daughter, **Kellie Thropp** is winemaker at that newest Florida Farm Winery. All are active in the FGGA, **Ruthann** is secretary and both **Kellie** and **Ruthann** are on the FGGA Board of Directors. Sadly, **Bob Thropp**, after retiring from a successful dentistry practice and contributing much to the Florida Grape Industry, passed away in 2009. In 1999, he started the Vineyards and later obtained a versatile machine harvester for FGGA member use. In 2008 the **Thropp**s began the Log Cabin Winery. Both **Ruthann** and **Kellie** remain active in the FGGA and the Log Cabin winery is an impressive testimonial to **Bob Thropp** and the **Throop** family commitment to grapes.
- Another family link that must be mentioned is that of the **Mortensens**. Dr. **John Mortensen**, who spent a very productive career at the Leesburg Station and developed most of the successful Florida grape varieties now in use, came from Texas. There, his father, **E. Mortensen** a county extension agent planted out grapes for **T.V. Munson** in evaluations that eventually led to Munson hybrids and the resurgence of grapes in Florida in the early 1900s. It is fitting that the **Mortensen** endeavors and Texas strategies played a role in Florida grape developments that continues today.
- **F.W. Loucks**, Plant pathologist at the Leesburg station was actively conducting research on diseases affecting grapes and developed important control methods. It was he who initially gathered and propagated the wild grapes, one of which was a parent of 'Lake Emerald'. **Loucks** left University service in 1942 to join the citrus industry in a similar capacity. We speculate that he was related to the **Loucks** mentioned in a Villa Franca Nurseries, Dunedin ad for insect control ([FlaDispatch 8\(19\)382, 1888](#)) more than a generation earlier than when **K.W. Loucks** joined the Leesburg Station in 1929.
- **Ray** and **Gladys Shook** and their son **Vince** operate the Florida Orange Groves Inc. and Winery, a family owned business that had its beginnings in the packing and shipping of fresh citrus in the early 1970's in St. Petersburg, Florida. Their location eventually grew to include retail sales of fresh squeezed juice and a gift shop. The winery opened its doors in 1997 and is Florida's original tropical fruit winery. Florida Orange Groves, Inc. and Winery manages 10 acres of muscadine vineyards in Altoona, Florida. Using the Nobel variety of muscadine grown there, the Shook family makes a sweet and a dry red muscadine wine called "Sinfully Noble." The winery also makes 33 other unique tropical, citrus and berry wines (35 varieties total) including Key Lime, Mango, Blueberry, Kiwi, Guava, Pineapple and Passion Fruit. To date, the winery has won over 200 medals (including 7 Best of Shows and 3 Best of Class) for its wines. Given the popularity of their "Sinfully Noble" wines at their tasting bar, the winery looks forward to the day when Florida muscadine wines are as popular outside the state of Florida as they are in select locations within the state's borders. Vince Shook is currently FGGA Treasurer, Viticulture Advisory Council Secretary and is an important participant in FGGA Conferences.

- **Max** and his son **Rob Rittgers** operate the environmentally friendly Dakota Vineyards and Winery in Chiefland. Dakota is a family business, initiated in 1985 when **Max** established the vineyard with a planting of 200 muscadine grape vines. The first grapes produced were sold onsite from a board across two five-gallon buckets. Today Dakota Winery is a 12-acre site with over 6,000 grape vines. Originally, the Rittgers intended only to sell fresh grapes to the public. But, as the business grew over the years the making and selling of wine became the focus. First operating out of an 8 x 10 shed, then a barn a finally a "Florida Cracker style" tasting room with adjoining wine cellar. The tasting room is decorated with historical agricultural/winery related items collected by **Max**, while the adjoining wine cellar is comprised of the latest in wine making equipment. Dakota winery is honored to continue the tradition of families making wine commercially in Florida. For visitors, winery ambience and the **Rittgers'** cordial greeting is a pleasant and effective introduction to Florida grapes.
- **The Kiser Family** first planted vitis vinifera bunch wine grapes in Lee County, Florida in 1967, in a three-acre experimental vineyard. After learning about Pierce's Disease, first by experience and then in consultations with Profs. **Lauren Stover**, **John Mortenson** and **Donald Hopkins**, UF, IFAS, Leesburg, Fl, the **Kisers** planted ten acres of the Florida developed Lake Emerald (hardwood cuttings from Leesburg mother vineyards) in the mid 70s. Those vineyards flourished under the watchful eyes and efforts of "grape farmer" son, **Mike Kiser** and reached their peak in 1989 when twenty seven (27) acres were planted in Lake Emerald and other Florida developed hybrids.

In the late 80s, early 90s, during the early stages of the outbreak of PD in California, officials in Florida were aggressively consulted and Eden Vineyards was the first vineyard, outside Calif. to become a member of the PD Task Force. Through the years Eden Vineyards has progressed and benefited by its association and collaboration with UF, Leesburg and later as the new laboratories were constructed in Apopka, Fl, as Dr. **Dennis Gray** guided Florida into a leadership position in genetic engineering. From 1999 through 2007, major flooding and multiple hurricanes caused major damage in south Florida and left only remnants of the former vineyards. In 2008, Eden again began planting test vineyards, this time with a grape still in development and unreleased by UF, IFAS.

Eden's wine interests have grown as the family partnered to form with the new Florida Estates Winery in Pasco County. Today, Eden Winery makes six wines and is the oldest operating Florida Farm Winery in the state. Several of Eden's wines have been featured and served at Florida's finest four-star restaurants, including Disney's Grand Floridian, the Palm Beach Breakers Hotel and the Ritz Carleton. Conducted tastings and sales are held every day, by **Mildred Kiser** and daughter **Lynn**; the Winery is open 11AM- 4PM, 7 days a week (except major holidays). For directions and additional info see our websites at www.edenwinery.com and www.flewn.com

Grandsons **Taylor, W.E.**, and granddaughter **Shelby** can be seen, in the cellars, vineyards, lab and bottling rooms at Eden. They are each engaged in promising careers, but obviously are at ease in the winery and as Granddad says. "Who knows what the vineyards can produce".

[What other grape family connections should we mention here?] There are undoubtedly other cases of families with a multi-generation connection to grapes with relevance to Florida. We'd like to learn about and recognize them.

B. Grape Individuals

- **Leon Adams** – now here's a very special late friend worthy of a toast every time we raise a glass of Florida wine. Leon and I (RPB) share the same birthplace – Cambridge, MA, albeit a few decades apart. As a journalist, he migrated to California and wrote extensively about wine. He predicted the "Wine Revolution" of the 1970s, formed the "Medical Friends of Wine", and championed local wines as a normal part of good dining. I had the honor of accompanying Leon as he researched southern wineries for his classic book, "Wines of America" (Adams, 1985). Florida is well covered in his 3rd edition. Entering a winery with Leon was an unforgettable experience. All winemakers knew and respected his reputation and anxiously awaited his appraisal of their wares. None were disappointed, as he always had something positive to say (even if it related less to the wine and more to label or venue). Most importantly, Leon encouraged all wineries in their endeavors and provided extremely valuable technical and business suggestions. He vigorously championed wine as a food, to be sold wherever food is available and considered an integral part of fine dining – a focus well worth noting today. In my trips to or through California, I always brought sample from Florida, which we'd thoughtfully evaluate together (along with some of his magnificent inventory).



Leon Adams visiting Midulla Vineyard – L to R **Bates, Newbern, Adams, Midulla**



Early 1970s Experimental wines. Shared with **Leon Adams** in Florida or California



Leon Adams visiting **Felicity Trueblood**, Meadowmere Farm 1982



Leon Adams visiting **Malinda Grosz** and **Dan Mills**, Malinda's Vineyard 1982



Leon Adams visiting **Rebecca** and **Foster Burgess**, Alaqua Vineyard and Winery 1982

Figure 55. Photographs related to Leon Adams

- **Warren Adlerz**
- **Frank/Carroll Ascolillo 352-249-9116**
- **Byron Biddle 1997 850- 535-9463**
- **Bidwell** Came to FL in 1867 FSHS 3,22,1890
- **Jeanne Burgess** was trained in viticulture and enology at Mississippi State University. She worked with **Dick Vine** (appropriate name for an enologist), well respected wine consultant

and author of “Commercial winemaking, processing and controls“ (**Vine, 1981**). **Jeanne’s** first job was winemaker at Florida Heritage Winery in Anthony. As that operation ran down, she joined Lafayette Vineyards and Winery in Tallahassee, where she gained a reputation for excellent wines. She particularly impressed **Leon Adams** with her ‘Stover’ champagne. With the same firm **Jeanne** later moved to Lakeridge Winery and Vineyards in Clermont where, as Vice President of Winery Operations, she supervises enology activities at both Lakeridge and San Sebastian Winery in St. Augustine – by far the largest wine producer in-state. Jeanne was involved in the initiation of the FGGA Florida State Fair Wine Competition and still plays an important role in orchestrating this annual event. She also garners impressive awards at the Florida competition, as well as similar competitions in other states. A visit to the Lakeridge showroom graphically displays these many medals. (Wine judging is conducted as objectively as possible, with judges unaware of the identity of the wine until after they have scored it, so administrative involvement does not influence results.) Jeanne is also a member of and chaired the Viticulture Advisory Council for many years and plays an important role in FGGA affairs.



Florida Heritage Winery ~1982



Jeanne Burgess evaluating wine at Lafayette Winery 1987



FGGA Wine Competition Staff – **Robbie Roberson, Mary Studt, Jeanne Burgess, Bob Paulish**

Figure 56. Photographs relating to Jeanne Burgess

- **Foster Burgess, Jeanne Burgess’** father is a respected viticulturist and enologist in his own right. A physicist by trade and real estate developer, Foster operated the Alaqua Vineyard and Winery at Niceville for many years, producing exceptional muscadine wines from his seven acre vineyard. His September Welder, made late in the season from the second crop, was one of the most phenomenal muscadinewines some have tasted. Foster and his wife did it all – planted the vines, managed the crop, conducted the harvest, made and bottled the wine, and sold it on premises and locally. The latter is the most difficult part and the combination of so many duties caused **Foster** to cease his operation, although he continued to consult for other in-state wineries.
- **George Comer**, a former marine bought property in Grandin and planted his muscadine vineyard in the early 1970s. **George** brought his marine tenacity to the vineyard and soon established a popular U-Pick operation. He built a small jelly plant and experimented intensively with wine and jellies. Based on his experience, he offered wine making sessions for visitors. **George** was extremely proactive within the FGGA, serving many years on the Board of Directors, and later as an active member of the Viticulture Advisory Council. He was instrumental in founding the Putnam County Chapter of the FGGA and, by his enthusiastic support of grape growers everywhere, also helped form the Highlands County FGGA Chapter. Based on his wine making skills, **George** demonstrated that quality wines could be made from muscadines. His teaching, encouragement, and leadership resulted in the inclusion of a hobby wine division as a popular part of the FGGA Florida State Fair Wine Competition, along with the Commercial division. Submissions now reach several hundred amateur and several thousand commercial entries. **George’s** wine won frequent awards and

his students continue to present wines of exception quality. In fact several wine makers, impressed by **George's** skill and enthusiasm have either gone commercial or influenced colleagues to take that step. His dedication to grapes over 3 decades certainly impact many of the developments we see today.



Figure 57. George Comer at Meadowmere Farm

- **Doyle Conner**, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture from 1961 to 1991 was a prominent supporter of the grape industry. Under his administration the Viticulture Policy Act was passed and farm vineyards and wineries encouraged by favorable legislation. Doyle was a frequent visitor and/or speaker at FGGA events and he demonstrated a genuine personal interest in grape growers and their programs. The close cooperation between the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which administers the Viticulture Trust Fund and the Viticulture Advisory Council which sets project priorities was to a large part due to Commissioner Conner's advice and efforts.



Figure 58. Doyle Conner Florida Commissioner of Agriculture 1961-1991

- **Dan Carroll**, Food Scientist at North Carolina State University, conducted grape research in cooperation with **Bill Nesbitt**. Much of the early information on muscadine chemical profile, pigment composition, processing and utilization was obtained by **Dan** and his Food Science colleagues. He was active in promoting wineries in the South and helped form the SERA-14 Grape Information Exchange Group. **Dan** is a long time judge of both Amateur and Commercial divisions at the FGGA Florida State Fair Wine Competition and a valued member of the Florida Grape Community.
- **Gary Cox** ended the long wine hiatus in Leon County when he initiated plantings and cofounded Lafayette Winery and Vineyard in 1983– about 100 years after **DuBois'** efforts in the same area – Leon County. **Jeanne Burgess** was hired as the winemaker and impressive wines and appealing Harvest Fests soon followed. Lafayette Winery closed in 1990 and the facility now houses the FAMU Viticulture research labs. **Gary** then initiated the Lakeridge winery in Clermont in 1989, a popular, well located tourist attraction and the largest winery in Florida. He followed up in 1996 with San Sebastian Winery in St. Augustine, adjacent to the historical section – highly appropriate, since it was north of here that wine was first made in the New World, certainly in Florida. Trained as an accountant, **Gary** has a keen insight into grape and wine economics which he readily shares with FGGA members. His wineries contract grapes from other growers and encourage quality production of both bunch and muscadine grapes. **Gary** served as FGGA President in 1999-2000 and frequently on the board of directors and VAC, where he is now Chair. **Gary Cox** has done as much, if not more to promote Florida grapes and wine than his predecessor **Emil DuBois** a century ago. What's more his wineries are still thriving and prohibition is now a very unlikely damper.

- **George Cowey** has been the winemaker at Chautauqua Winery in DeFuniak Springs since its founding in 19???. George is a Razorback out of **Justin Morris**' viticulture and enology program at the University of Arkansas, and a classmate of **Charlie Sims** at UF. As well as obtaining sound training at Fayetteville, George was exposed to the business earlier, since in 19?? his father founded and successfully operates a winery in Paris, Arkansas. Chautauqua produces muscadine wines and blends that consistently receive awards at the Florida and in other state's competitions. George's versatility is evident in the range and quality of wine and juice products that he has developed. He is a frequent speaker at FGGA functions and a respected Florida enologist.
- **Jim Crall** joined the Leesburg station as a plant pathologist in 1952 for a productive 25 years during which grape and melon research played a vital role in the success of both crops statewide. As director of the facility **Jim** was instrumental in hiring and supervising most of the key scientists and staff over that critical three decades and beyond. His encouragement and support of **Loren Stover** and **John Mortensen** led to the development of those bunch and muscadine varieties that support the industry today. He played an important part in obtaining funds and legislative support to move the Whitney research facility to larger quarters south of Leesburg in 1958. A listing of grape publications over his tenure indicate **Jim Crall**'s direct and indirect influence ([Gray, 2001](#)), as did his strong involvement in FGGA programs and administrative efforts that made the Leesburg Station the focus of Florida grape research and development during his tenure and beyond.
- **Harold Crevasse** planted a 7 acre muscadines vineyard on family property in Archer in 1978. He joined the FGGA and actively promoted fresh marketing by forming the Florida Grape Marketing Association. Thanks to his tireless efforts in contacting distributors and markets, a modest trade developed. Harold conscientiously emphasized quality and uniformity in his picking and carefully harvested, inspected, and refrigerated his grapes. He followed the local market closely, communicated well with buyers, and incorporated their needs and observations into his delivery system. Unfortunately, some other growers did not follow his example nor adhere to the high quality standards that he preached, so the market eventually went to (and still resides with) larger growers in Georgia. As president of the FGGA in 1982, Harold encouraged meetings throughout the state and frequently visited fellow viticulturists. He was a prime mover in expediting the Viticultural Policy Act, active in the VAC, and a vocal voice for Florida grapes.

Harold's vineyard was on family property, which figured in local railroad history and noted in historical archives as Cotton Wood Plantation, the original owner being David Yulee <http://www.afn.org/~archer/> and <http://www.yuleerailroaddays.org/>. There's a legend that Civil War Confederate treasure is buried on the property <http://www.afn.org/~archer/arch014.htm>. Our treasure was **Harold Crevasse's**, friendship, FGGA leadership, grape marketing knowledge, and the numerous grapes samples he so generously supplied to UF over several decades. He was a well appreciated, perceptive critic and reliable contributor to our research program.

- **Tim Crocker** was the statewide Extension Agent with the Horticultural Science Department, University of Florida. Although he had responsibilities for many other crops, he served grapes well as FGGA secretary, program planner, and speaker. Tim's expertise was of value to countless grape growers and his grape publications are still primary references for growers. He could invariably answer their technical questions, direct them to authorities who could, or initiate research to address the issue. Extension professionals are behind the scenes of many professional organizations and rarely receive the recognition they merit. **Tim Crocker's** efforts over 3 decades certainly qualify him as a respected colleague and grape pioneer.

- **Dave DaCasto**

- **Charles Demko, Sr.** (1893-?) was one of the most prominent grape growers from the 1920s to the 50s. The **Demko** grape tradition was said to go back five centuries in Hungary and extended to Missouri where around 1884 his father set a 15 acre vineyard in St. Louis County. It was still family operated 45 years later in 1929 ([FlaGrower 36\(6\)7, 1928](#)). [Does the Demko grape tradition still exist anywhere?] A 1922 optometrist (his profession) meeting in Florida, provided the incentive for a vineyard in Altoona. For awhile **Demko** practiced in St. Louis, Missouri and farmed in Florida but later devoted full time and more to grapes. By 1928 he had a 33acre vineyard, 3 experimental acres, and 77 acres in citrus. A year later the **Demko** vineyard was probably the largest, most successful commercial operation in Florida. He also actively conducted grape propagation and breeding research in cooperation with state and federal viticulturists. **Demko's** tenure as FGGA President lasted over 14 years, from 1940 through 1954. His brother, Dr. **William Demko** was a partner in the Altoona operation. His son, **Charles W. Demko, Jr.** was active in his father's Altoona vineyard and serve as FGGA President for an undetermined period from the late 1950s into the 1960s (This period is the major gap in characterizing FGGA activities.) Dr. **Demko** published a comprehensive, well regarded treatise covering his impressive grape experience, <http://nsdl.org/resource/2200/20061002153857719T>
- **Thomas DeWolf** is a good example of the "Romance of the Vine". A Florida attorney by profession, **Tom** has an absorbing interest in horticulture as a hobby. Grapes in particular sparked his interest in breeding. One result was his laborious research on the people involved in grape breeding pertinent to Florida, culminating in his fascinating, informative text, "P9-15: The Lure of the Vine" (DeWolf, 2003).
- Here we see an example of the camaraderie, dedication, and influence of the grape breeding community – both amateur and professional. The results are impressive and continue to advance viticulture globally.
- **Dewolf** describes his efforts to trace the background of a breeding selection, P9-15, which subsequently led to 'Florida Home', released by **John Mortensen** in 1994 ([HortScience, 1994](#)). **Tom** provides a detailed look into the trials, tribulations, and rewards of grape breeding. Figure 59 depicts the trail persistently followed to successfully recover and propagate this selection. It goes back to **Dearing** in 1916, **Fennell** in the 1930s, and **Mortensen** in 1990s – with involvement of **Dunstan** and other breeders. We owe much to the efforts of folks like **Tom DeWolf** and those he mentions ("Grape Nuts" as he calls them) – truly, a labor of love.

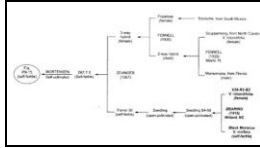


Figure 59. Chart tracing the breeding selection P9-15. (DeWolf, 2003)

- **Robert T. Dunstan** is a noted grape pioneer who came to viticulture by a circuitous route. As a linguist student at Old Trinity College (now Duke University), he was exposed to grapes when his major professor returned from France with prized wine grapes. **Dunstan** was intrigued and became involved in propagation efforts. This sparked his life-long interest in plant propagation and led to remarkable accomplishments in plant breeding. As a proficient language professor at Greensborough College in North Carolina **Bob Dunstan** continued grape breeding work. He was fluent in 6 languages and soon became fluent in horticultural science and plant genetics.

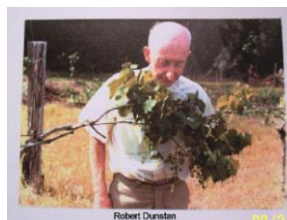
Consulting with **Haig Dermen**, a noted USDA cytologist, **Dunstan** made a major contribution by successfully hybridizing of bunch and muscadine grapes. He overcame the chromosome incompatibility by inducing chromosome doubling with colchicine, which promotes polyploidy in plant cells during cellular division ([Dunstan, 1962, 1964](#)).

Unfortunately, the vinifera: muscadine crosses lacked disease resistance and cannot be effectively propagated in Florida. Nevertheless some material was used in IFAS breeding work (DeWolf, 2003); their exceptional characteristics and high quality are the basis for fruitful grape breeding efforts in more benign environments. **Dunstan's** grape plasm is still highly valued and actively employed by professional and amateur grape breeders worldwide. His legacy is renowned and he is held in honor by those continuing his efforts (http://www.grapebreeders.org/Gb/Articles/Bob_Zehnder/Bob.htm). An impressive bio by his daughter covers **Bob Dunstan's** career quite well.

<http://floridagrapes.com/dunstan/dunstanbio.html>

<http://floridagrapes.com/dunstan/dunstanlist>

Upon retirement, **Dunstan** joined his daughter and son in law **Aurelia** and **Al Wallace** (late UF scientist and IFAS dean) in Alachua, Florida to continue his productive breeding research, including many crops - grapes, apples, persimmons, and chestnuts. Actually, his early work with chestnuts in Greensboro led to overcoming the chestnut blight that had decimated billions of mature trees throughout the Eastern U.S. in the early 1900s. After crossing surviving American chestnut with germ plasm from blight resistant Chinese chestnuts in the 1950s and patient backcrossing to emphasize the desirable characteristics of the American species, the revival of the chestnut tree and industry in the U.S. is well underway. In fact, the family tradition is continuing in Alachua under the direction of **Dunstan's** grandson, **Bob Wallace** <http://www.chestnuthilltreefarm.com/History.html>.



Robert Dunstan

Figure 60. Bob Dunstan in his Alachua, FL vineyard ~ 1980s

- **Jim Eckerd**

- **Gary Elmstrom**

- **Joseph L. Fennell**, formerly Chief, Division of Food Crops, Interamerican Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Turrialba, Costa Rica was with the USDA in South Florida when he first reported on his grape breeding efforts ([Fennell, 1938](#)). Based on his experience in Central America and the Caribbean, he began his studies in 1935 and, recognizing the potential of native wild species, aggressively pursued breeding work as a hobby. Later he operated commercial and experimental vineyards in Lady Lake, where he continued breeding studies, emphasizing grape durability to hot humid climates. Some of his breeding stock survives in current lines ([Figure 59](#)) and DeWolf, 2003). **Joe** published extensively on his research and was FGGA President in 1954-56. **Fennell's** efforts were recognized by [C.O. Foerster, Jr.](#) of the Vitis Research and development Center (~1991) <http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/EAD/htmldocs/RMM06763.html> .
- **Antonio Fiorelli (941) 322-0976** and his wife **Rosa** own and operate the Rosa Fiorelli winery near Bradenton. In the Italian tradition, Antonio is a superb grape grower, producing 'Blanc Du Bois' grapes of the highest quality which he turns into appealing wine. He also does well with muscadines, to which visitors to his winery attest. Antonio is quite active in the FGGA and served on the board of Directors. He is one of the founders of the Manatee County Chapter. Antonio participated in the FGGA hobby wine competition before turning professional.
- **Dennis Gray** joined the UF/IFAS grape program at Leesburg as an Assistant Professor in 1984 and was eventually promoted to Associate, then Full Professor. He was charged with applying the emerging field of biotechnology to grape improvement and, in this, he worked directly with **Mortensen** to integrate breeding with biotechnology. The Grape Biotechnology Laboratory is in operation today at the Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, Apopka. The laboratory pioneered the genetic engineering of disease resistant grapes and is applying biotechnology to develop seedless muscadines. With an eye towards commercialization, **Gray** and colleagues have patented much of the foundational technology. Through efforts of the laboratory, the University of Florida holds approximately 50% of US patents in the field. **Dennis** is active in the FGGA as a member of the BOD, frequent conference presenter, and resource for inquiries concerning grape breeding and cultivation. He brought to Apopka and continues the impressive tradition of service to the Grape Community started by the staff of the Leesburg Station almost 80 years ago.
- **Esmond and Malinda Grosz** came to Florida with the intent of operating a vineyard complete with a winery and restaurant. They previously owned a U-Pick operation in Tennessee and anticipated taking advantage of the expanding Gainesville-Ocala community and winery appeal. In this pursuit **Esmond** and **Malinda** visited many vineyards and wineries throughout the country, advising them of his plans and publicizing Florida grapes. These visits

led to many valuable contacts and reciprocal visits by influential viticulturists and enologists, some of who later became active in-state. **Malinda Grosz** was FGGA secretary where the **Grosz's** business expertise was valuable in putting the FGGA management on a more efficient bookkeeping and financial basis. As well as procuring land near Orange Lake and planting an extensive vineyard, **Esmond** also volunteered to assist in ongoing grape research in the University of Florida Food Science Department. In this role he contributed significantly in the evaluation of many breeding lines for wine. As FGGA President in 1974-76, **Esmond** was involved in early ideas to develop wine making workshops and eventually to the Commercial and Hobby wine competitions.

- **Florence and Jack Hall** operated a successful U-Pick vineyard in Lake Wales. As FGGA President in 1977-78, **Florence** had a keen sense of what FGGA's role should be in Florida Agriculture and political matters. She focused all her time and talents to that end in the service of the FGGA. She was instrumental in getting the FGGA into the Florida Agricultural Council – the organization which meets with legislators, Commissioner of Agriculture, and the FDACS to promote Florida Agriculture and deal with issues affecting its viability. After her term as president, **Florence** maintained her position as grape representative to the Ag Council. Her inquiry into the grape funding, or lack thereof (and persistence in extracting reasons why) resulted in the FAMU grape program and eventually the Viticulture Policy Act. While FGGA President and after she devoted considerable time and effort in organizing an FGGA sponsored Southeastern Muscadine Grape Growers meeting with like mind growers in Georgia and put together a symposium devoted to that topic. Her aim – to develop a southeast association to coordinate fresh marketing of regional grapes – was successful and resulted in a viable fresh grape marketing organization in South Georgia and North Florida that lasted for many years. Health reasons caused **Florence** and **Jack** to leave state, just about the time her legislative efforts began to bear fruit.
- **John Holloway** served as an engineer with the Florida Public Broadcasting and was involved in televising Legislative proceedings from Tallahassee. He got interested in grapes and operated a small U- pick vineyard in Leon County. John's commitment to grapes lead him to serve on the FGGA Board of Directors, Viticulture Advisory Council and as FGGA President in 1988. These were difficult times, since the Viticulture Trust Fund was in danger of oblivion. **John's** quick thinking and persistent involvement with FGGA members and legislators resulted in the preservation and efficient administration of the Viticulture Trust Fund.
- **Don Hopkins**
- **Thomas J. (Tom) Hughes, Sr.** was introduced to Florida grapes as the editor of Florida Grower & Rancher magazine, based in Tampa. After covering a Grape Field Day in Leesburg in the early 1960s, he caught the Grape Bug and it never left him. Tom became a very successful U-pick grape grower at his vineyard on I-4 at McIntosh Rd., just east of Tampa. The easy access and visibility from the Interstate gave him a wide area market with a very large population. He was unique, at the time, in treating grape vines as ornamental plants and developed a thriving retail vine business in compliment to fresh fruit in his beautiful vineyard. Tom specialized in muscadines, which reminded him of his Georgia youth, and provided field

testing of Dixie, Triumph and other varieties before release. Tom Hughes' Vineyard utilized micro emission irrigation and fertilization early on and enjoyed substantial yield increase for doing so. He served in as an FGGA officer, including an effective term as President 1972-1974. **Tom's** thriving operation inspired many to enter grape growing. **Tom** continued to promote U-pick operations, resulting in a number vineyards devoting acreage to that use, as well as to fresh market distribution. After a number of years as happy grape growers, the Hughes family sold the vineyard to commercial interests. Even after leaving his vineyard, **Tom** kept his grape clippers always near.

- **Tom Hughes Jr.** inherited his father's interest in grapes by working in the family commercial U-Pick vineyard - Tom Hughes Vineyards, east of Tampa, founded in 1967. As a youth, Tom accompanied his dad to FGGA and other grape events and visited (prowled) the vineyards, thus gaining practical grape experience. **Tom** also acquired editorial and promotional skills in writing about the vineyard, since the quality of grapes, attractive vineyard layout and efficient business operations brought much favorable publicity to local grapes. With this impressive background and a law degree, **Tom** was well suited to serve as the FGGA Program Administrator. He defined the position and functioned effectively in that capacity until offered a challenging opportunity to join the Florida State Fair Authority. **Tom's** commitment to grapes didn't end there, since he continued on the FGGA Board of Directors and was instrumental in the success of the FGGA Florida State Fair Wine Competition, now in its 20th year. There are few people with **Tom Hughes, Jr.**'s tradition, understanding of, and commitment to the Florida Grape Community.
- **George Husmann, 1883 p.78** and authored "*American Grape Growing and Wine Making: with Several Added Chapters on the Grape Industries of California*". New & Enlarged Edition 1883 (presumably 2nd) had 189 pages on grapes, 110 pages on wine making. The 4th Edition, revised and rewritten in 1907 didn't have the cited derogatory section on *V. rotundifolia*, but did include 136 pages on grapes and 126 on wine.

- **George W. Husmann son**

- **Gary Ketchum**

- **Earl/Mike Kiser** The Kiser family began planting fine bunch wine grapes, developed by the University of Florida, over thirty years ago. Today, Eden Winery makes six wines and is the oldest operating Florida Farm Winery in the state. Several of Eden's wines have been featured and served at Florida's finest four star restaurants, including Disney, the Breakers Hotel and the Ritz Carleton. Conducted tastings and sales are held every day; the winery is open 11AM-4PM, 7 days a week (except major holidays).

Edens Florida wine interests have continued to grow, as the Kiser family partnered in the establishment of Florida Estates Winery in Pasco county in 2001. Many of the wines from Eden's "sister" winery can also be purchased at Eden in Alva. For directions and additional info see our websites at www.edenwinery.com and www.flewn.com.

- **Johanne Lauchman** was one of the sparkplugs behind the rapid evolution and success of the Highlands Chapter of the FGGA. She served as Chair of the chapter and FGGA Treasurer. Most importantly, Joanne and her husband Chris King initiated Henscratch Farms in 1999.
- **Steve Leong**
- **Jiang Lu**
- **Malachi Martin** is one of the few early grape pioneers for which there is detailed information - albeit due to his notoriety, not his wine skills. "He was born in Ireland in 1822 and immigrated to New York in 1847. After a brief time in the dry cleaning business, he joined the U.S. Army as a second lieutenant and was an assistant quartermaster by the end of the Civil War. He moved to Gadsden County in 1868 and was elected to the legislature in 1872. In 1874, after aligning himself with Democrats and some other white Republicans who didn't want blacks to hold power, he was elected to the speakership of the House. During his tenure the House approved a series of constitutional amendments which reformed the state judiciary, put state finances on a sound footing, and provided for the legislature to meet every other year. He sought the speakership again in 1875, but Democrats had won a majority in the 1874 elections. The House elected Thomas Hannah, who started a 122 year run of Democratic speakers.

Martin used his connections in Tallahassee to win appointment as warden of Florida's prison in Chattahoochee, a position he held until 1877. He earned a reputation as a cruel and corrupt warden who used prisoner labor for his own benefit. "The American Siberia," a book written in 1891 described the prison as a place of almost unrelieved barbarity. Martin used inmate labor to build his home in Mt. Pleasant, west of Tallahassee, and to assist in his vineyards and winery from which he made a vast fortune." (Florida State Archives)

A later treatise on **Martin** provided additional details and softened somewhat his poor reputation ([FlaHistQuarterly: 56\(3\)329, 336, 338 Jan 1978](#)).



Figure 61. Malachi Martin ~1873
Early Florida winemaker and infamous prison warden

- **Joe Midulla** was the proprietor of the Tampa Wholesale Liquor Distribution Company. In the 1970s he also established Fruit Wines of Florida, devoted to wine from Florida fruits, including grapes. Joe planted a vineyard near New Port Richie in the late 1970s. He expanded to 50 acres, mostly 'Stover' and 'Lake Emerald' and an experimental plot of research vines from the Leesburg Station. His winemaker, **Mary Studt** collected data for possible use as wine varieties. 'Stover' excelled and the first vintage was introduced in 1981, named Lorenzo Blanc in honor of **Loren Stover**. He generously supplied grapes, bottles, and other equipment and supplies for the University of Florida grape research program. The **Midulla** commitment to grapes was well publicized and led to a substantial increase in vineyards, wineries, growth in FGGA membership, and general public interest in Florida grapes. **Joe's** business insights and familiarity with political matters made him a valuable ally in obtaining legislative support for the industry. He was a valued member of the VAC and given an award recognizing his contribution by the FGGA in 1988. A promotional video depicting his winery operations aired

on local TV stations and provided a classic view of those days in Tampa. When Joe later retired from the family business, the distributorship and winery property was sold and is now part of Harbor Island.



Joe Midulla receiving Midulla Award from **John Holloway**-FGGA President, **Vince Petrucci**, and **Harold Crevasse**



Joe Midulla (R) and son with Midulla Award



Midulla Vineyard and Wine display Legislature Appreciation Day, Tallahassee

Figure 62. Photographs related to **Joe Midulla**

- Justin Morris** is another special friend of the Florida grape community. Justin is a renowned viticulturist, enologist, and food scientist, and founder of the Institute of Food Science and Engineering at the University of Arkansas. He works closely and consults with the grape and wine industry nationally and internationally. Even areas he's not directly involved with probably have graduates from his productive program which turns out top notch viticulturists and enologists. We're fortunate to have a number in Florida – including **Charlie Sims** at UF and **George Cowey** at Chautauqua Winery, DeFuniak Springs. His graduates are prominent in most grape regions. **Justin** first looked at grapes in Florida in the late 1970s and served on a consultant team consisting of him, **Len Mattock**, Cornell University, **Vince Petrucci**, Fresno State, and **Bruce Zeocklein**, VPI in 1984. Their charge was to evaluate the status and needs of the Florida Grape Industry. They did their job well as the results show. From then on we've called upon **Justin** regularly as a participant in FGGA programs, advisor to academic programs and valued judge in the FGGA Florida State Fair Wine Competition. **Justin's** expertise in mechanization of vineyard operations from pruning to harvest is well recognized world wide. He also organized and administrates the USDA-sponsored Southern Extension Research Activity-14, Grape Information Exchange Group. This consists of grape researchers from most all southern states who meet annually to exchange ideas and address problems of common interest throughout the region. (See <http://sera-ieg-14.tamu.edu/>). Many successful southern vineyards and wineries, particularly in Arkansas, Missouri, and including Florida owe a debt of gratitude to **Justin Morris**.



Justin Morris with wife **Ruby** receiving The Nesbitt Award



**Justin Morris and Harold
Crevasse**



L to R

**Justin Morris, Charlie Sims,
Vince Petrucci, Joe Midulla,
Joe's wife, Bob Bates**

Figure 63. Photographs related to **Justin Morris**

- **John Mortensen** [Grape Times Dec. 1992 p.5.](http://www.florida-agriculture.com/news/john-mortensen.htm)
Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame-<http://www.florida-agriculture.com/news/john-mortensen.htm>.
- **T.V. Munson**- See narrative for comments about this noted grape pioneer.
- **Bill Nesbitt** served on the faculty of the Department of Horticultural Science, North Carolina State University, from 1966 until 1983. His grape breeding efforts produced numerous *Vitis rotundifolia* cultivars, including 'Noble', 'Carlos', 'Dixie', 'Sterling', 'Regale' and 'Doreen'. Dr. **Nesbitt** was extremely dedicated to his breeding work, research and furthering agricultural advantages for growers in North Carolina and throughout the Southern Region. 'Dixie' was a joint release with **John Mortensen**, UF Leesburg Station. 'Noble' is still the premium red wine grape in the South.

The Nesbitt Award is designed to honor the career of a professional member of the SERA 14 grape working group for significant research and/or extension contributions to the grape industry in the Southern Region. The Award is named in honor of **William Belton Nesbitt**, 1932 - 1983. Fittingly, **Justin Morris** earned the Nesbitt Award in 2007.

Bill was a classmate of **Justin Morris** at Rutgers University, both had **Norm Childers** (prolific author of many horticulture publications, including "Modern fruit science: orchard and small fruit culture", which went through 10 editions) as their major professor. **Norm** later came to UF as an Emeritus Professor. Since Justin was **Charlie Sims'** professor and, **Norm** was **Justin's** professor, that makes **Norm Charlie's** Grandprofessor.

- **Donnie Nettles**, 2007 president of the FGGA, has been known to wine judges of the Florida State Fair hobby competition through the impressive number of awards that his wines have achieved. Over the years he has consistently submitted wines that the judges find to be outstanding. Donnie has garnered more medals at this competition than anyone else. He and his wife **Betty** are active FGGA volunteers in the competition and also on the board of directors.
- **Bob and Bonnie Jean Paulish** brought their collective talents to the FGGA fairly recently, but with very impressive results. Both **Bob** and **Bonnie Jean** had a strong computer and information technology background. They arrived and set up Blue Heron Vineyard at just the right time – when the Internet was expanding and computer use became essential in running any business. **Bob** was President of the FGGA for 6 years, from 2001 to 2007 and is presently Editor of the FGGA Newsletter, *Grape Times*. **BJ's** talents were dramatically displayed by

Winery in Action, a winery management computer program that she developed in cooperation with commercial interests. This comprehensive program allows wineries to follow all operations, from the legal reporting requirements to following harvest, wine making, even inventory. **BJ** offers the program free to Florida wineries and it is well received both in and out of state. The **Paulish's** contributions go further. The Florida State Fair Wine Competition is a fascinating event to watch or participate in. It takes the full effort of more than three dozen FGGA volunteers – judges, stewards, glass washers, and data recorders for 4 days, not counting receiving and delivering entries to the Fairgrounds. Each bottle submitted must be recorded, categorized, and given an identification code. When submitted for judging by 3 experienced judges every single sample generates 3 separate evaluation forms, also requiring recording. If a medal is earned, more paper work follows. Then the Best of Show requires more categorization. Finally, the results for all submissions from both Hobby and Commercial divisions are listed and Competition participants notified. **BJ** with her computer skills has refined this procedure to a fine art – and earned the gratitude and respect of all involved, especially those who battled with this chore in the dark ages – BC, Before Computers. Both **Bob** and **BJ** work tirelessly from the time the competition wines are received for flight assignment and identification until the final judging results and best of show chosen. Minutes after the competition ends judges have a complete rundown of all results; contestants are notified soon after. Recent FGGA newsletters – *Grape Times* also reflect the **Paulish's** commitment to our industry, as does a news article describing their vineyard operation ([2008 Blue Heron Vineyard Article](#)). [Would that similar information could accompany all worthy Grape Pioneers!]



Florida State Fair Wine Judges 2009



1999 FGGA Commercial Wine Competition Judging,
Florida State Fair



FGGA Wine Competition Judging, Florida State Fair
Upper left – Hobby judging, Center seated, **Joanne Lauchman** and **Bob Walker**

Figure 64. Photographs of Wine Competitions

- **Vince Petrucci** is another great friend of the Florida Grape Community. Vince, Professor Emeritus and founder of the Viticulture Research and Education Center, California State University, Fresno, has been instrumental in the growth and prosperity of viticulture in California, and likewise contributed to viticulture progress around the world. As a teacher, mentor, and researcher his impact is truly global. Vince was brought to Florida to help initiate the FAMU program. Later he teamed with **Justin Morris** and others in advising the UF program. He continued to consult with Florida and regional wineries and serve as an esteemed judge in the FGGA Florida State Fair Wine Competition. During his illustrious career **Vince**

has worked with practically all the prominent figures in the grape industry. Still, he gladly donated his time and talents to the needs of the smallest, even amateur, grape grower. His boundless optimism and genuine feeling that Florida grapes have an unrecognized potential was contagious and carried many wavering growers over the hump. His friendship and loyalty to FGGA folks is extremely important to all of us.



Vince Petrucci, Mike Kiser, Mary Studt
1992 Pruning demonstration Eden Vineyards



Vince Petrucci receiving FGGA recognition
from **Bob Bates**



Micky Parish, Vince Petrucci, Marie Griffin,
Justin Morris -FGGA Hobby wine competition
judging Florida State Fair

Figure 65. Photographs related to **Vince Petrucci**

- **Tony Pizzo** was **Joe Midulla's** Right Hand Man at Fruit Wines of Florida and vitally involved in developing the winery, vineyard, and dealing with legislative matters. Furthermore Tony was an accomplished historian who helped put Ybor City on the map. There is a statue of him in Ybor City attesting to his dedication to that area.
- **Max/Rob Rittgers 352-493-9309**
- **Dee Roberson** is Executive Secretary of the Home Wine and Beer Trade Association, representing proprietors of those supply shops that serve the local needs of hobby brewers and vintners. Members also provide information and conduct workshops for their clientele. **Dee** and her husband **Robbie** operate a shop in Valrico and have been involved in the FGGA competition since its initiation. As well as being knowledgeable in commercial and hobby wine standards, **Dee** and **Robbie** have instilled this interest in their two daughters, who also volunteer for competition duties. **Dee's** exceptional organization skills are vital in FGGA Conference planning and execution. The **Roberson** family is strong supporters and promoters of the FGGA, Florida grapes for wine, and local supply businesses.



Figure 66. Dee Roberson, Joe Spinelli, Bob Bates
FGGA Wine making workshop, Florida State Fair

- **John** and **Lois Sirvent** started a small 3 acre vineyard, U-pick, and nursery in Florahome in 1992. They soon branched out to include a home wine and beer supply operation that complements the vineyard quite well. Not only can customers obtain fresh grapes, but all

other equipment at one place. There is an additional service available. **John** is not only an accomplished viticulturist who willingly advises customers and competitors regarding all aspects of grape growing, he is also an experienced winemaker. Through wine making workshops and tasting session, the **Sirvents** have attracted many to grape growing and wine making. Several of their clients have started commercial wineries. **John's** own wines consistently win awards at hobby competitions. The **Sirvents** are strong supporters of the Putnam County FGGA chapter and involved in Harvest Festivals, initiating popular events at their vineyard



2008 Tastings at the **Sirvents**



Lois and John Sirvent

Figure 67. Photograph related to the **Sirvents**

- **Clara Jane** and **Bill Smith** are long time Tallahassee residents who had a local vineyard and for many years supplied grapes to the wineries and for fresh market. As president of the FGGA in 1980-81, **Clara Jane** worked with other growers to promote the fresh market. The **Smiths** were instrumental in obtaining increased legislative support for grape research, the initiation of the FAMU grape program, formation of the Viticulture Advisors Council, and survival of the Viticulture Trust Fund. **Clara Jane** was quite active in the annual Legislature Appreciation Day, where the FGGA set up a display with information for legislators and their staffs. **Bill Smith** was appointed by Doyle Conner 1984.
- **Joe Spinelli**, a restaurateur, viticulturist, wine maker, and wine columnist brought together the main features of fine wine and dining. Wine food pairings and tastings at either of his two restaurants, St. Cloud and Kissimmee were an entertaining and informative treat. **Joe** was accomplished in both viticulture and enology, not to mention journalism. An industrial engineer by training, he operated Spinelli Vineyards and Nursery in St. Cloud. He was appointed to the FGGA Board of Directors in 1989 and Secretary in 1990, elected as president from 1991 to 1994. He served as Chairman of the VAC from 1990 to 1992 and was the driving force behind innovative FGGA programs until his untimely death in 1995. As a successful businessman, **Joe** understood the need to motivate and applied those skills to the FGGA. His newsletters were inspiring and well written and workshops that he organized for members brought favorable attention.

An impressive indication of **Joe's** commitment to fine wine was his response to achieving the Wine Spectator Grand Award in 1983. This prestigious award was given to only 11 restaurateurs throughout the U.S. Spinelli's Restaurant was the only one recognized east of the Mississippi.

Joe stated, "I consider myself a serious restaurateur; serious enough to offer my customers only the finest available products adaptable to my concept of total uniqueness. I also consider myself very serious with regard to the complex and diverse subtleties of wine and its vinification. I refuse to offer the simplistic and ill defined domestic "jug wines or the over-priced imported "brand-name" wines

which are highly advertised and promoted for national distribution. I find the principal of the price-value relationship difficult to accept.”

True to his principals, Joe served wines from 10 states, including CT, NY, PA, VA SC, ID CA, OR, WA, and of course, Florida. His house wines were French-American hybrids from Virginia and South Carolina. These diverse selections reflected a serious commitment when most eastern U.S. restaurants would hardly acknowledge wines of local or regional origin, let alone non-vinifera varietals.



Joe Spinelli being recognized by FGGA, Bates presenting(L) **Tom Hughes, Jr.** officiating(R)



Joe Spinelli presenting pruning demonstration FGGA Grape Day, Florida State Fair



Figure 68. Photographs related to **Joe Spinelli**

- **Joe Stephany** ended an impressive career as Captain in the U.S. Coast Guard and later as civil director of emergency services in several Florida Counties. Upon phased retirement from public service he developed a vineyard in Altoona on property previously owned by the **Demkos**. ([FGGA Grape Times, Spring 1995](#)). He was Chair of the VAC in 1993 and on the FGGA BOD from 1993 on. As FGGA President in 1995, Joe effectively consolidated the records and operations of the FGGA at the location in Lake Wales of the USDA National Resource Conservation Service’s Central Florida Resource Conservation and Development Council. The FGGA and Council shared office space and help. Mrs. **Jerrie William** very effectively operated the FGGA office for many years. It is these files, centralized in Lake Wales and later added to by later FGGA officers that are now lost. **Joe** orchestrated or expanded valuable grape activities such as Internet training, Harvest Festivals, Regional workshops, and U-Pick promotional programs. His devotion to Florida grapes was exceptional. **Joe** served FGGA as a conscientious, thoughtful voice on administrative matters well into his terminal illness ([Grape Times, September 2002](#)).
- **W.J. Stover** was **Loren Stover**’s father. **Loren**, cited as the “Grandfather of Florida Grapes” is so prominently mentioned, and his accomplishments so central to our theme, that he receives brief mention here. However, Col. **W.J. Stover**, his father [“Great Grandfather of Florida Grapes”?] merits more attention that our current sources of information have provided [[Where did title Col, come from?](#)]. **W.J. Stover** graduated from Ontario Agriculture College, spent 10 years in Jamaica as a Horticulture Specialist for United Fruit working with tropical fruits, worked in the California Imperial Valley, then Australia, and migrated to, Fruitland Park, Florida in 1921. He supervised Dr. **MacKenzie**’s 15 acre experimental vineyard, plus his own 3 acres, developed field packing for fresh grapes ([FlaGrower 33\(10\)10,11, 1926](#)). **W.J. Stover** also perfected a process for canning grapes without seeds ([FlaGrower 38\(6\)5-6,20-21, 1930](#)). **Loren Stover** remarked that his father died in 1937, dispondant because of the failure of his breeding experiments ([1985 News Clip about L. Stover](#)). **Loren** himself pursued an active, productive retirement for several decades and was well lauded in his obituary ([1995 News Clip](#)).

- **Mary Studt**, one of **Vince Petrucci**'s premium graduates from Fresno State, was winemaker at Fruit Wines of Florida from 1980 to 1985 and involved in both grape, fruit and dessert (fortified) wine manufacture. She developed Lorenz Blanc, the 'Stover' based wine honoring **Loren Stover** and an exceptional champagne (In deference to French dictates, it now must be called sparkling wine.). Later Mary joined Eden Vineyards, where her broad experience with Florida grapes, and other fruit resulted in an impressive line of popular wines, many from 'Lake Emerald'. This variety was not well thought of for wine, but at Eden, Mary allowed the grape and wine to come into its own. She also developed a special natural wine from Carambola (Star Fruit), a very challenging task, given the fruit's composition. Carambola wine is a boon to that industry, since it provided a welcome use for misshapen but otherwise sound, palatable fruit. **Mary** excelled in matching wine styles to the chemical profile of the specific grape – which changes depending upon harvest time, season, and vineyard location. Florida lost an experienced enologist when **Mary Studt** left Florida in 1995, but not completely. She returns each year in February as Judge Coordinator to manage the FGGA State Fair Wine Competition. This means organizing all volunteers, assigning judges, arranging the tasting schedule, working closely with **BJ Paulish** and **Jeanne Burgess**, and settling judging disputes. This is no mean task, as it requires a keen palate, comprehensive knowledge of wine styles, and a certain amount of diplomacy.



Figure 69. Mary Studt and Jeanne Burgess
Acknowledged for FGGA State Fair Wine Competition Management

- **Felicity Trueblood** has played a key role in FGGA activities for many years. Developer of Meadowmere Farms and Vineyard in Melrose, **Felicity** has served on the FGGA Board of Directors in the capacity of Secretary and as Treasurer. In these positions, her organizational skills and keen perspective regarding FGGA administrative policies, needs, and priorities helped many presidents and officers through successful tenures. She initiated Harvest Festivals and Workshops on all aspects of grape production and utilization at her popular vineyard well before these were FGGA programs. These get-togethers emphasized fresh grapes and products, including wine and sparked interest in viticulture. Many participants planted vines and continue active in the Putnam County Chapter of the FGGA, in which **Felicity** and **George Comer** were instrumental in founding and supporting; their vineyards were where the grape action was (in **Felicity**'s case, still is) before, during, and after harvest. Over the years many quality hobby viticulturists and/or winemakers and several commercial vineyards wineries came out of these sessions. **Felicity** also promoted grapes at other events - on the University of Florida campus, at Youth Fairs, and local community events.



Figure 70. Felicity Trueblood

Hosting wine tasting at Meadomere Farm

- **Don and Mary Johnson** are the type of FGGA members that attract others to the FGGA and spark everyone's interest in Florida grapes. The **Johnsons** became involved through the Master Gardner program in Highlands County and were founding members of the Highlands County Chapter. As willing volunteers in the State Fair Wine Competition their friendliness and grape enthusiasm is contagious with members and attracts many visitors. Their presence at local and state FGGA events always contributes to its success.
- **Jack Varick**
- **Bob Walker** called himself "hobbyist grape grower and winemaker", but he was much more. As an active and enthusiastic founder of the Highlands County FGGA Chapter, Bob typified the best of FGGA members. His reports of Chapter activities in the FGGA Newsletter (*Grape Times*) were interesting and informative and surely enticed readers to get involved. **Bob** organized several Chapter wine competitions and successfully submitted his own award winning wines to the State Fair Competition. Sadly, for health reasons his tenure was short, but his contribution significant and continuing.
- **James H. White** is one of the few really old timers from the 1880s about which there is sufficient information for more than a sentence. Due to his prolific pursuit of and reporting on diverse agricultural enterprises there's quite a record. After researching Florida grapes by communicated with **Craig** (Tallahassee viticulturist circa 1870s), Rev. **Jas. H. White** came to Merritt's Island in 1875 from Tennessee, as an invalid, around 60 year old with little money ([FlaDispatch 4\(10\), 1979](#)). Three years later he demonstrated an impressive planting of quality grapes, citrus, and pineapple at his Island Home plantation and was active in, if not founder of the Indian River Horticultural and Pomological Society. Pineapples were **White's** primary source of income and in 1883 he initiated a comprehensive treatise in a series on pineapple ([FlaDiapatch 2\(43\)722, 1883](#)). He experienced a serious illness in 1885 that delayed the writing for about 6 months and then concluded a very impressive 12 chapter series ([FlaDispatch 5\(3\)41, 1886](#)). This amazingly versatile agriculturist also wrote perceptively on sweet gum, livestock, and poultry. However, he didn't ignore grapes and commented cogently on grape nomenclature, indicating that illness had preventing him attending the Orlando meeting [[FSHS preliminary meeting?](#)] His paper, "The Past and the Future of the Grape in Florida" ([FlaStateHortSoc 3, pp21-26, 1890](#)) is a fine summation. **Jas. H. White** was a volunteer weather observer for the U.S. Signal Service and disappeared from the FSHS membership rolls in 1895.
- **W.C. Steele** bears mention as one of the more vocal spokesman for grapes in the late 1800s. He was in the nursery business in Indiana, New Jersey, and Long Island and came to Florida in 1883 ([FlaDispatch 7\(13\)338, 1887](#)). He had a nursery operation in Switzerland and routinely offered advice on varieties, propagation, marketing, and other matters – often contrary to other stated opinions. **Steele** was somewhat more cautious than others in the business, provided warning about forcing vines and over production. He managed ([owned?](#)) the Switzerland Nursery in St. Johns County offering a range of fruit plants – peach , plum,

grapes vines, blackberry, and strawberry ([FlaDispatch 7\(33\)688, 1887](#)). [Steele was associated with the Florida Dispatch probably as a frequent contributor and editorial advisor.]

- **T.V. Munson** was another grape pioneer with a significant impact on Florida Viticulture, indeed throughout the world. Those of you into viticulture are well aware of this pioneer's grape breeding work in Texas. He set the stage for European/Native American grape crosses that made grape cultivation practical in the South. Although his hybrids did not survive extensively in Florida, they contributed to the Florida grape boom in the early 20s. The **Munson** breeding strategy was successfully applied in combating many grape diseases, even slowing down Pierce's Disease. Munson's classic work, "[Foundations of American Grape Culture](#)" is still revered today. In fact, although this text is available on line, from the **Bibliography- Chronology** ([Munson, 1909](#)), certain sections are so relevant and reflect on the early Florida grape pioneers that they merit quoting below.

It's disappointing that nothing can be said about four Floridians who were enough involved and committed to grapes in Florida that they are prominently mentioned by **Munson** (below). These are: **G. H. Norton**, Eustis who provided him with specimens identified as *Vitis coriacea* from near Lake Eustis and other samples from Ashtabula; **J. H. Simpson**, Manatee who supplied numerous grape specimens and cogent observation from his collection; Prof. **Curtiss**, Indian River; and **G. S. Rowley**, contributing from Lake Worth. **Simpson** was particularly active in collecting, classifying, and forwarding grape specimens. So valuable was his contribution that **Munson** named *V. Simpsoni* in his honor. Curiously, none of these evidently knowledgeable grape enthusiasts were mentioned in grape literature. And how about the environs from which these wild species were collected - Do the vines still exist?

C. Excerpts from "Foundations of American Grape Culture" By Munson, 1909

[The following material merits mention and is derived from ([Munson, 1909](#)). It pertains to **Munson's** philosophy and the native grape species of Florida.]

Dedication (Page4)

At beginning of mans civilization, ages old,
When the Sumerian, Canaanite savage, dark,
Strolled along the banks of Euphrates,
And, tired of wandering, settled Nippur town,
He longingly remembered the wild sweet grapes.
That climbed the trees upon the hills he left,
And which, all lovely, fringed the Caspian, so grand.
He sought a holiday and hied himself away to seek
Among the dear old hills of Ararat, for grapes,
Where Noah landed safe, and later got so drunk, poor man!
(His better sons, walking backward, to hide his shame,
Soft spread in charity over him a lions skin.)
Reaching the loved old haunts, all weary and worn,
He ate his fill of many juicy grapes so sweet,
As long before, when roving wild in Bactrian.
And then on camels back great loads of grape-filled vines
He took to treat his wives and babes in Nippur town.
The seeds were scattered round the huts of mud;

Some grew and clambered up the walls, and bloomed all sweet,
 At length bore fruit, and cooled the huts with shade;
 Some few bore better grapes than from the wilds he brought;
 Such vines he loved and saved and kindly trained, betimes.
 He always gathered from the new and better vines,
 And planted vacant places with their seeds, select;
 He gave to kith and kin, who likewise grew and gave.
 Thus on and on, through old, ten thousand years,
 Have come adown to all mankind the twining vines
 Of Ararat, in Muscats, Flame Tokays and Cornichons.
 The sons of men still hand them on with loving care,
 Well mingled with those from our free American hills.
 And now, to all who love the vines and grapes and wines,
 This book is dedication fruit of one of Noahs sons,
 Who wishes cause no more to backward spread the lions skin,
 But plant and eat and drink, and neer get drunk.

Preface (Page 5)

For so great a nation as ours, both in expanse of territory and demand for every variety of vineyard product, the foundation of grape culture should be laid most intelligently broad and deep. It is quickly apparent to any practical vineyardist, that the chief material structure of American Viticulture must necessarily be, The Native Grapes of America

The Passion for Experimentation with Grapes Aroused (Page 5)

In the fall of 1873, the writer visited the vineyards of Dr. **Robert Peter**, residing near Lexington, Kentucky. In these vineyards were all the leading and nearly all the then introduced varieties of American grapes.

The vines were bearing generally, and the fruit on nearly all was ripe or ripening. The Doctor, having been my instructor in Chemistry in Kentucky State Agricultural College, in which I had completed the scientific course in 1870. The Doctor gave me clusters of all wished, some thirty or forty kinds. The seeds of these were carefully saved, separately labeled, and noted as to varieties standing near the vine which bore the seeds. These seeds were planted at my new home in Nebraska, but the season and other conditions being adverse, all were lost, yet the kindled flame of passion for experimentation continued to burn. The timbered belts along the streams of that bleak country were ransacked for the few wild grapes

Coming to Denison, Texas, in April, 1876, a rough piece of dark limestone, timbered land on the bluffs of Red River was improved. In the woods surrounding, innumerable wild grapevines grew. On the higher sandy lands, covered with post-oak, black jack, hickory, scarlet oak and other timber, grew many Post-Oak Grape vines (*V. Lincecumii*), generally climbing the post-oak trees, hence the name of Post-Oak Grape.

Along the ravines of the uplands, and in the river bottoms, were numerous vines of the Mustang Grape (*V. candicans*), the Sour Winter Grape or Frost Grape (*V. cordifolia*), (Page.6) and Sweet Winter Grape (*V. cinerea*), the latter penetrating and growing luxuriantly in the lower bottoms, where the others were seldom found. Directly along the high banks of Red River were found vines of the Sand, or Bush Grape (*V. Longii*), drifted down from the Texas Pan-Handle regions, where it grows in great profusion. Hybrids of it with the Mustang Grape are often found along Red River. Occasionally are also found vines of the Riverside Grape (*V. vulpina*, or *riparia*), along Red River banks. There were rarely found on the high bottoms of Red River and larger creeks in this,

Grayson County, when the writer came to the State, wild vines of the Southern Muscadine (*V. rotundifolia*), and this appears to be its western limit of distribution along Red River. Here were six or eight good species of wild grapes, several of which had not been seen by me previously. I had found my grape paradise! Surely now, thought I, this is the place for experimentation with grapes!

Viticultural Observations and Remarks (Pages 30-31, relating to a description of *Vitis coriacea*)

Germination medium to late, little earlier than *V. candicans*, nearly with *V. Simpsoni*, feeble; foliation at Manatee, Florida, about February 20. First species after *V. Munsoniana* there to leaf out, the other species being *V. Simpsoni*, *V. rotundifolia*, *V. cordifolia*; inflorescence at same place, about April 25th to May 1st; fruit ripens there about July 15th. At Denison, Texas, it foliates, flowers and ripens late, about with *V. Lincecumii* or a little earlier than *V. cestivalis*. Cuttings grow with the greatest difficulty. Young plant slender, feeble, but becomes vigorous with age, stronger than *V. cestivalis*, not so strong as *V. candicans*, but of similar habit; endures drouth and heat well but very sensitive to cold, about the same as *V. -vinifera*, not enduring the harder winters at Denison, Texas, without protection; resistant to Phylloxera. It appears to me that this species offers good material upon which to base a valuable strain of table and wine grapes for the Gulf regions where few northern varieties succeed. A variety) with lobed leaves, found by **G. H. Norton** near Lake Eustis, bears fruit nearly as large as the Concord, clusters of medium size, quality fair. Birds in Florida are very fond of the fruit of this species, scarcely allowing it to ripen.~This species, in characteristics, stands between *V. candicans* and *V. Simpsoni*, with smaller, more leathery, more generally not lobed leaves than either, but more nearly allied to *V. candicans* than *V. Simpsoni*. This species has been found often naturally hybridized with *V. cordifolia*, var. *sempervirens*, *V. Simpsoni*, and *V. cinerea*, var. *Floridana*, in Manatee County and other parts of Southern Florida. One of these hybrids with *V. Simpsoni* found by Mr. **J. H. Simpson** and sent to me is very vigorous, bears well, of a medium sized, good very late fruit, ripe here at Denison, Texas, in September. Found naturally in rich woods of south half of Florida where nearly all the lands are more or less sandy.

(Page 50) VITIS CORIACEA, Shuttleworth. Leatherleaf Grape. Of Florida.

Viticultural Observations and Remarks

Germination medium to late, little earlier than *V. candicans*, nearly with *V. Simpsoni*, feeble; foliation at Manatee, Florida, about February 20. First species after *V. Munsoniana* there to leaf out, the other species being *V. Simpsoni*, *V. rotundifolia*, *V. cordifolia*; inflorescence at same place, about April 25th to May 1st; fruit ripens there about July 15th. It has been found hybridized naturally with *V. cordifolia*, *V. cestivalis*, *V. coriacea*, *V. cinerea*, var. *Floridana*.

It is confined almost entirely in Florida, and with *V. coriacea* and *V. Munsoniana*, is abundant all over the southern half of that State.

One vine growing at Ashtabula, Florida, appears to be a hybrid of this species with *V. cortacea*. It was brought to my attention by **G. H. Norton**, of Eustis, Florida. Young vines of it with me have borne abundantly a very good grape, little inferior in appearance or quality to Norton Virginia, and might furnish the basis for a noble strain of extreme southern grapes. Another from **J. H. Simpson**, of Manatee, Fla., found wild by him, appears to be of same hybrid character, with later and larger, good fruit. It is a valuable

species for experimentation in the extreme. At Denison, Texas, it foliates, flowers and ripens late, about with *V. Lincecumii* or a little earlier than *V. cestivalis*. Cuttings grow with the greatest difficulty. Young plant slender, feeble, but becomes vigorous with age, stronger than *V. cestivalis*, not so strong as *V. candicans*, but of similar habit; endures drouth and heat well but very sensitive to cold, about the same as *V. -vinifera*, not enduring the harder winters at Denison, Texas, without protection; resistant to Phylloxera. It appears to me that this species offers good material upon which to base a valuable strain of table and wine grapes for the Gulf regions where few northern varieties succeed.

(Page 64) **Viticultural Observations and Remarks**

So far, except where noted otherwise, this description is made from specimens of leaves, branches old and young wood, and fertile flower cluster in bloom, collected for me near Kingston, Jamaica, by Dr. **D. Morris**, Director of the Botanical Gardens at that time, and others collected in Honduras by Mr. **A. Bauer**. These specimens bear every evidence of being the typical *V. Caribea* of DeCandolle. After the most diligent inquiry for this form in various parts of Florida and other Southern States and securing specimens of the vine which Prof. **A. H. Curtiss** has taken to be *V. Caribea* (sent me by him for examination), I am unable to discover the slightest traces of this species in the United States. Prof. **Curtiss** vine seems to be a hybrid between *V. Simpsoni* and *V. cinerea* (?). It is said to produce a medium sized fruit of fine quality, while *V. Caribea* is small and acid. I place this species here as it is so nearly allied to *V. cinerea* and is found well- distributed according to **Planchon** along the coast of Mexico, Central America and among the West Indies, but not in the United States, as classified by Dr. **Engelmann**, from Prof. **Curtiss** Indian River (Fla.) specimens; nor according to **Durands** Report of finding it in Arkansas, which Prof. **A. Millardet** speaks of with doubt in his work upon American vines.

I find in my Arkansas specimens of *V. cinerea* forms approaching *V. cinerea*, var. *Floridana*, and further eastward the change becomes very marked, and finally the Florida variety prevails, which latter Mr. **J. H. Simpson**, botanist of Manatee, Florida, took for a time to be *V. Caribea*; but upon receiving and comparing the true *V. Caribea* sent me by Dr. **Morris** from Jamaica and sharing the specimens with Mr. **Simpson**, he at once agreed with me that what he had found and sent to me as *V. Caribea* was distinct and he is now positive that in many years residence in Florida he has never seen the true *V. Caribea* (as described by Mac Fadyen and illustrated by Dr. **Morris** specimens) in Florida. Certainly the species offers nothing interesting or valuable to viticulturists in the United States.

(Page 68) I have noted as *V. cinerea*, var. *Floridana*, Munson, with the following synonyms:

V. Caribea, Engelmann, and Curtiss, *Bushberg Cat.*, p. 15, 1883.

V. Caribea, Millardet, *Especies des Vignes*, p. 231.-

V. Simpsoni, Munson, *Proceedings S. P. A.* 5., 1887, p. 59.

Having grown numerous fully developed, fruiting vines of this form, it proves to be identical with *V. cinerea*, Engelm., except that the young tips are always red, rusty, tomentose, and the lower surface of leaves rusty cinereous, instead of light cinereous, as in more western and northern forms, and is very much less enduring in cold than the more northern form. Leaf-folder defoliates it at Denison, Texas; difficult of propagation from cuttings. This variety has been found by **J. H. Simpson** (the discoverer of its distinct character), naturally hybridized with *V. coriacea*, *V. Simpsoni*, and *V. cordifolia*.

It is native in Florida and Southern Georgia, proceeding westward along the Gulf Coast and northward, gradually taking the form of *V. cinerea*. It is quite probable that the vine reported from Arkansas and described by Durand as *V. Caribcea*, was this form of *V. cinerea*.

The following notes are arranged from Mr. **Simpsons** pen:

The fruit is useless for the table, but would make fair wine. The best grape I have found in this section was one of its hybrids with *V. coriacea*, the vine being the most vigorous one I have seen, the bunches and fruit of good size and flavor, ripening earlier than the species pure, an excellent bearer, and I have no doubt if the vine were properly cultivated it would be far superior to any native grape we have in the State. Another hybrid with *V. coriacea* grows a short distance from it, and might prove valuable in cultivation, though it is later and not so valuable in other respects. This form resembles *V. cinerea* in many points, in others *V. Caribcea*, of the West Indies, while there are often vines that resemble *V. Simpsoni* so much that it takes close observation to tell them apart by the leaves alone. It is very abundant in Southern Florida in the hummock woods and seems to prefer moist land. In some cases the vines grow with crowns but a few inches above water, even during the dry season and where the roots must occupy ground perfectly saturated during the rainy season.

Viticultural Observations and Remarks (Page 77, relating to *VITIS CORDIFOLIA*, var. *sempervirens*, Munson.)

Germination early to medium, those from Florida (b) quickest; foliation early, medium to late, usually with or a little earlier than *V. Lincecumii* and after *V. labrusca*; inflorescence just after *V. labrusca*, before *V. Lincecumii*; ripening of fruit very late, long after *V. cestivalis*, about with *V. cinerea*; foliage and wood mature in a very early, about the first of our native species, leaves turning yellow before frost, falling and exposing the fruit for ripening, while in b the leaves persist very late. Vigor great; plants attain an immense size, one in Kentucky was measured by the writer, which at six feet from the ground was sixty-six inches in circumference; endures cold about equally with *V. cinerea*; found in same locality, those native in Illinois a, being very hardy, while b is quite tender in Northern Texas; resists Phylloxera fully, also mildew and rot. Its hybrids with *V. rupestris* have been found eminently resistant to Phylloxera by Prof. **A.**

Millardet. Some of its wild hybrids with *V. labrusca** and *V. Lincecumii* show much amelioration. Cuttings grow with difficulty. The immense size and age it may attain well suit it for graft-stocks, though the difficulty of rooting the cuttings makes it less desirable than the

easier rooting hybrids with *V. rupestris* and *V. vulpina*; mixed with *V. Longii* and *V. Doaniana* it doubtless would be most excellent, as stocks in dry soils, and with *V. Champini* would be most excellent in very limy soils, though may be no better than pure *V. Champini*. Numerous natural hybrids of this species with *V. rupestris*, *V. vulpina*, *V. Lincecumii*, and *V. cinerea* were found by **H. Jaeger** in Southwest Missouri; in Northern Texas by myself with *V. cinerea* and *V. Lincecumii*; by **J. H. Simpson** in Florida, with *V. coriacea*, *V. Simpsoni*, *V. cestivalis*, and rarely even with *V. Munsoniana*, and it has been obtained from Virginia and Georgia hybridized with *V. cestivalis*, *V. labrusca* and *V. cinerea*. The foregoing analysis is from specimens obtained from Virginia, Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma, many parts of Texas, Georgia, and Florida, which show its range. Its northern limit is about 40 degrees, its westward, is through eastern Kansas, central Oklahoma and the Trinity River in Texas.

Viticultural Observations and Remarks (Page 109-110, relating to VITIS
MUNSONIANA, Simpson)

Germination early to medium; foliage begins about February 5th, continuing to March 15th, at Manatee, Florida; inflorescence at Manatee continuously from May 15th to October, **J.H. Simpson**. At Lake Worth, Fla., commences blooming earlier and continues still later, having flowers, green and ripe fruit on same vine into December, **G. S. Rowley**. Hence it is called Everlasting Grape. This everbearing characteristic does not belong to *V. rotundifolia* only in a limited degree, and in the same region it begins blooming 6 to 7 weeks later and ceases blooming earlier, **J. H. Simpson**. Fruit begins to ripen about August 1st at Manatee; exfoliation very late. In the open ground at Denison, Texas, *V. Munsoniana* holds its leaves much later than *V. rotundifolia* and is the last species among all the rest to have the leaves killed by frost. It there begins blooming and ripening about a week later than *V. rotundifolia* and continues to bloom and make fruit much later, often till stopped by frost. Vigorous but slender, more upright when young than *V. rotundifolia*, which is less branched and more sprawling in young vines, but becomes much more drooping, or weeping on trellis than *V. rotundifolia*, the lateral branches very slender, almost filiform. The ever-blooming character of this species, with its smaller seeds, larger clusters, more vinous and acid than *V. rotundifolia*, and its freedom from disease, may render it an excellent material with which to hybridize the finer *V. vinifera* varieties to secure valuable grapes for the extreme south and the tropics. Hybrids of this with *V. coriacea* and probably with other species have been found. It is often intermingled with *V. rotundifolia* in Central Florida where the two coalesce. It has been regarded by Dr. **Chapman** as being only a variety of *V. rotundifolia** but a comparison of the characteristics of each, and their distribution as here given from extended observation, demonstrate that these forms differ as widely, if not more widely, especially in a most vital point, berry and seeds, than *V. rupestris* and *V. vulpina*, which are well acknowledged, and than *V. cestivalis* and *V. Lincecumii* now separated by Planchon. *Flora of the Southern States, p. 71. I at first thought this might be Rafinesques *V. Floridana*, but after writing Dr. **A. Gray** and Prof. **Thos. Mechan** concerning it, their opinion written me in reply was to the effect that Rafinesques description is so meager and indefinite that it had no certainty of application. Prof. **P. Viala** (in *Une Mission Viticole*, p. 166) expresses the opinion that it is Rafinesques *V. Floridana*, but is in doubt and no means of identifying it as his species, and as Planchon recognizes *V. Munsoniana* and M. Viala also gives *V. Munsoniana* preference, I still hold to it. *V. Munsoniana* is rarely found north of Central Florida, but in all Southern Florida it is by far the most abundant species. It grows equally well in various locations and soils in South Florida from near streams to the poorest pine soils, though found chiefly in rich woods. It is not found native in pine lands until it is cleared and cultivated, when it springs up along fences, etc., where birds drop the seeds, hence called Bird Grape, **J. H. Simpson**. It has grown and borne well here at Denison, Texas, several years, proving nearly as hardy as *V. rotundifolia*.

The above excerpts indicate Munson's familiarity with Florida wild grapes and his interactions with Florida, Southern, and Tropical viticulturists. In addition, he promoted a brilliant idea that, despite the vast urbanization of Florida, might well be pursued today, albeit with a prize worth more than \$10. The winning vine was used in subsequent successful breeding work.

(Page 184) **TEN DOLLAR PRIZE**. In 1882 I offered a prize of \$10 to the one who

would show the best ripe wild Post-Oak Grape (section of vine in fruit), on a certain day in August, with the understanding that I was to become sole owner of the vine getting the prize. A committee of five good grape and wine judges was selected. There were Concord and Delaware sections of vines, full of full ripe fruit, supplied as standards of comparison. The day came, bright and fine. The show was grand. All around the hall were hung the vines full of fruit, and foliage, some twenty or thirty kinds. The committee tasted long and repeatedly, showing some close competition. The decision fell on a variety growing in the grounds of Mr. **John Hopkins** (deceased Oct. 20, 1883), living a mile southeast of the city. It was named Ten Dollar Prize, and in November following, was moved into my vineyard, and from this many hybrids have been produced, some now in the third generation just completing most rigid test of several years, a few of which will be described further on. (, -h). The vine of Ten Dollar Prize was vigorous, stocky, perfectly healthy in leaf and fruit, exceedingly prolific; cluster large, shouldered, cylindrical, compact; berries of good medium size, round, black, very persistent, skin thin, tough, pulp meaty, but tender, and juicy, of pure, high quality, tho somewhat astringent, seeds small, ripe exceedingly late. Original vine lost.