Cornell University Library’s Eastern Wine & Grape Archive

In 1998, Cornell University established the Eastern Wine and Grape Archive (EWGA) to collect the archival records of grape growers, wine makers, and associated industry participants. The goals of the Eastern Wine and Grape Archive are to:

- Collect and preserve the history of the wine and grape industries in the Eastern United States;
- Develop awareness about the importance of preserving these historical records;
- Ensure that these materials remain available to scholars, industry members, and the public.

The history of grape growers and wine makers is under-documented. Despite the steady growth of the American wine industry over the 19th century, and its explosive growth during the last decades of the 20th century, Cornell University is the only institution with an ongoing program to document the history of the production and consumption of wine in the United States.

What are Historical Records?

The EWGA seeks letters, account books, diaries, scrapbooks, pamphlets, posters, memorabilia, field notes, scientific reports, winery publications and marketing materials. Other relevant materials may include drawings, photographs, videotapes, and oral histories, or any other documents that help tell the story of grape growing and winemaking in the United States.

What is in the Archive?

During the years since its founding, the Eastern Wine and Grape Archive has grown to include the records and papers of several businesses, individual growers, viticulturists, and wine makers, such as:

- George Remaly (papers 1970-2000)
- Nelson Shaulis (papers 1941-1986)
- Philip Wagner (papers 1934-1997)
- Hammondsport Wine Company (1920-1928)
- Pleasant Valley Wine Company (1860-1953)
- Urbana Wine Company (1867-1882, 1900-1918)
- Widmer Wine Cellars (1906-1963)

How is the Archive Supported?

The Eastern Wine and Grape Archive is a cooperative project between Cornell University Library’s Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, and the Frank A. Lee Library at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station (NYSAES) in Geneva, New York. Cornell received early seed money for the Archive from the American Society for Enology and Viticulture - Eastern Section (ASEV-ES).

The ASEV Eastern Section provides continued support to the Archive. Additional gifts have come from the New York Wine and Grape Foundation, the Vinifera Wine Growers Association, and the estate of Philip Wagner, among others.

Historical Records Survey Project

Cornell University Library has received funding through the New York State Department of Education’s Documentary Heritage Program to conduct a survey of historical materials and business records from grape growing, juice and wine making, and related industries in New York State.

The survey project will identify and describe records and other information owned by individuals and businesses; develop awareness of the importance of these historically relevant materials; and offer to help in planning for their future preservation and access.

Cornell’s project archivist will identify materials through surveys, discussion and in some cases on-site review and in-person interviews.

The Importance of Acting Now

By taking a little time today, it is possible to ensure that your contributions to the wine and grape industry, or the contributions of someone you know, will endure. All too often, important letters, diaries, documents or photographs disappear or are discarded when someone important to viticulture or enology passes away or can no longer store older materials. Invaluable documents about the individual’s accomplishments are sometimes irrevocably lost.
We Need Your Help

If you have or know about materials that could help tell the story of grape growing, wine or juice making, we would like to hear from you.

Please contact us at Cornell University Library, Eastern Wine and Grape Archive.

Telephone: 607 255-3530
Email: RareRef@cornell.edu

EWGA Survey Project Advisory Board

Hudson Cattell, Editor, Wine-East Magazine.
Elaine Engst, Director, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University.
Timothy Martinson, Finger Lakes Grape Program, Cornell Cooperative Extension.
Abby Nash, Lecturer, School of Hotel Administration, Cornell University.
Bruce Reisch, Professor, Grape Breeding & Genetics, Department of Horticultural Sciences, NYSAES.
Marty Schlabach, Director, Frank A. Lee Library, NYSAES, Cornell University.

Contact Us

If you would like to donate or discuss the donation of materials to the Eastern Wine and Grape Archive, please contact:

Katherine Reagan, Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, 2B Carl A. Kroch Library, Ithaca, NY 14853.
Tel: 607 255-3530 | Email: kr33@cornell.edu

OR

Marty Schlabach, Director, Frank A. Lee Library, NYSAES, Cornell University, 630 West North Street, Geneva, NY 14456.
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Your support will ensure our continued efforts to preserve the history of Eastern United States wine and juice making and grape growing.

Website: rmc.library.cornell.edu

Image credits

- Rare books in EWGA collection at Lee Library, NYSAES, Geneva, NY.
- George Remaly Papers, Coll. # 6665.
- Pleasant Valley Wine Co. Records, Coll. # 6599.
- Philip Wagner Papers, Coll. #6928.

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