

District of Ross Mills

Ross Mills Newsletter

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Concord Grape Harvest



A number of years ago I met up with a man that was building the first grape harvesting machine. My regret is that I never got his name. He was telling me of some of the trial and errors that went along with developing a working machine. I remember him telling that the hydraulic system was a big bugaboo to figure out. I would like to know all of his story.

~Emory Holmquist

GRAPES Vineyards, where grapes are grown, have been common for many centuries. The Bible mentions them. Probably the grape was one of the very first fruits men learned to raise.

Today there are more than 2,000 kinds of grapes. They have all come either from the wild grapes of the Near East or from those of North America. The picture shows a few of the many kinds.

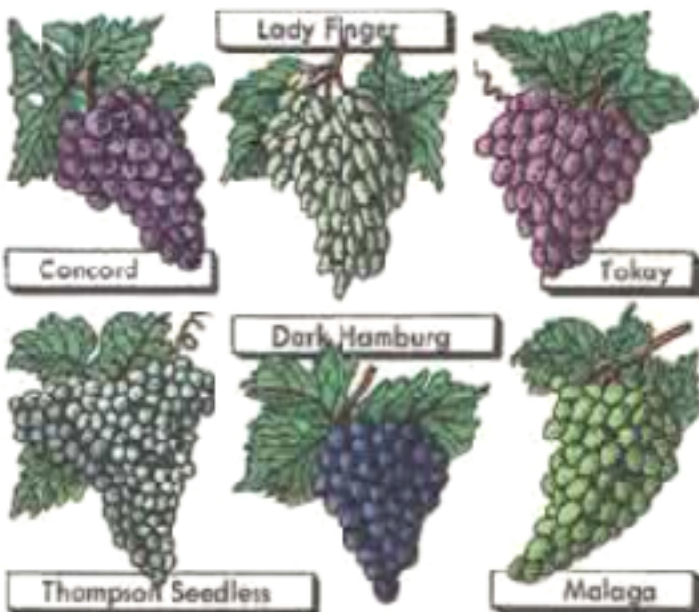
Grapes grow on vines. The vines can be cut back till they are like bushes. But in most vineyards the vines are given wire fences to grow on. Even when the vines are on fences they are trimmed every year. Trimming them makes them bear better.

Some grapes are raised for raisins. Raisins are simply dried grapes. Some grapes are raised to be eaten in hand. Some are

raised to be made into grape juice or jelly or jam. And a very great many are raised for wine. Making wine from grapes goes back many centuries.

In the grape-growing region near the Great Lakes many of the grapes grown are Concord. In Concord, Mass., there is a monument to the first Concord grapevine. This vine grew from a seed that was planted by accident. It probably was a seed of the wild fox grape, but its grapes were different from any other grape and were very good. All the other thousands of Concord grapevines have come from cuttings from this first Concord vine.

The greatest enemy of vineyards is a disease of the roots of the grapevine. Early settlers in America brought grapevines with them from Europe, but this root disease soon killed the vines. The disease was carried back across the ocean. Many vineyards in Europe were almost ruined. Then it was found that the wild grapes of America do not have this disease. Now many European vineyards have vines that have been grafted on to American roots. (See FRANCE; FRUITS; VINES.)



COLUMBUS, CHRISTOPHER (1446-1506) It was Friday, the 3rd of August, 1492. Three small ships set sail from Palos in Spain. They were the "Santa María," the "Pinta," and the "Niña." Fewer than 100 men were on board them. The ships were on their way over an unmapped sea to find a new route to the Far East. Their commander was Christopher Columbus.

Columbus was born in Genoa, Italy, a city of seafarers. By the time he was 30 he had gone to sea many times. On one voyage he had sailed as far as Iceland.

In those days every nation in Europe wanted to find a short trade route to the Far East. Spices and gold and silk had to be carried over long land routes from Asia to Europe. Perhaps a shorter and easier route by sea could be found.

No one knows exactly when Columbus first had the idea of sailing west to find the Far East. But at least by the time he was 30 he was eager to try out this idea. Along with many people of his time, Columbus was sure that the earth is round. Since the earth is round, he thought, and since Asia stretches so very far eastward, it must curve a large part of the way around the earth. China and India, he argued, could not be very far to the west. He did not guess how big the earth is.

Columbus first asked the King of Portugal for men and ships. The King said no. He favored finding a way around Africa.

Then Columbus went to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. They were interested, but they thought that Columbus wanted too much reward if he was successful. He wanted a tenth of all the riches he brought back. He also wanted to be made "Admiral of the Ocean Sea." At first they,

too, said no. But as Columbus was on his way to ask help from the King of France, they changed their minds and gave him the ships he wanted.

After leaving Palos, the little ships sailed to the Canary Islands. From there, on September 9, they headed due west into unknown waters. The winds blew steadily and pushed them on their way.

For weeks the ships sailed westward. The crew grew restless. Never before had they been out of sight of land for so long.

As time went by with no land appearing, the men threatened to mutiny. Columbus is said to have urged them on by crying "Adelante! Adelante!" ("Sail on! Sail on!")

Columbus kept a journal on the voyage. For October 10 it reads, "Here the people could endure no longer." But once again he persuaded the men to sail on. Two nights later they sighted land. At daybreak they landed. Columbus named the island where they landed San Salvador. It is in the group now called the Bahamas.

Columbus sailed from island to island. His men were disappointed that they found no great, rich cities. There were only a few villages. Dark-skinned people lived in them. Since Columbus thought he was close to India, he called the natives Indians. After two or three months of sailing among the islands, Columbus returned to Spain.

The rulers of Spain were excited. In a short time Columbus was on his way back with 17 ships and over 1,000 men. But again he found only islands.

Ross Grange Welcomes New Member

Tom Boire was welcomed as a new member when Ross Grange met Sept. 23 at the Falcon's Nest. Betty Wakefield was hostess for the buffet meal preceding the business meeting .

Mary Jane Griffith reported the scholarship committee will review applications and make suggestions to the Southern Chautauqua County Community Foundation for those to receive Ross Grange Scholarships.

The annual Holiday Happenings Craft Show will be November 23. Ideas concerning this were shared. Donations were made to Falconer Fire Department and State Grange Capital Campaign Fund.

Veterans Day cards were distributed to be signed by members and returned at the next meeting. They will be sent on to Buffalo and Erie VA hospitals.

Mrs. Wakefield and Opal Sprague will be voting delegates to the State Grange annual session in Watertown in late October.

Cards were signed for members sick or shut in. Lecturer Wakefield gave information on ways to show appreciation in life instead of griping. Ideas on how to take care of ourselves were shared to keep out of the Emergency Room.

The next meeting will be October 14 with a dish to pass meal at 6:00 PM. Mrs. Griffith will be hostess. A business meeting will follow the meal.



There was a Ross Mills Community Picnic in September at the Ross Mills Church of God pavilion. There was nice fellowship and much laughter to be shared. It was a beautiful summer evening. Many children shared time on the play-set.