



## Indiana Wine: A History

*James L Butler, Matthew Thomas James, John J Butler*

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""During election years in the early 1800s, touring politicians would often stop at Vevay in an effort to gather votes. On one such occasion the governor, Jonathan Jennings, was visiting Vevay with his entourage. They all stopped at Father Morerod's home to taste some of his wine. The governor and one or two others from abroad, being unaccustomed to wine, became considerably befuddled, as did some of the 'Vevay boys.' The way back to town was blocked by a large growth of dog fennel, a yellow flowering weed. The politicians passed through this field wearing white trousers and shirts. In their confused condition they soon emerged and presented to the townsfolk an amusing spectacle of the governor and fellow dignitaries wearing yellow pants and yellow spotted vests."" -- From Indiana Wine: A History

John James Dufour arrived in America in 1796, looking for land for a colony of 'vinedressers.' They first settled in Kentucky, but then purchased land in the Indiana Territory on the north bank of the Ohio River. Here, in the town they called Vevay, the Swiss winegrowers successfully produced America's first commercial wines. In *Indiana Wine*, a richly anecdotal history of wine production in Indiana, James L. and John J. Butler relate a vintage story of early triumph, followed by precipitous decline, and ending in present-day success.

Though the economic decline of the 1820s ended the first flowering of Indiana vineyards, John James Dufour continued his work, and in 1826 he published the first book written about American grape growing and winemaking. Thereafter the heart of America's wine production was centered near Cincinnati, Ohio. That industry collapsed in the 1870s, but small wineries could still be found scattered across southern Indiana. With the coming of Prohibition, the idea of Indiana wine was lost. It was not until the passing of the ""Small Winery"" law in 1971 that winemaking began anew in the state. Today some 25 wineries, large and small, produce a wide variety of Indiana wine.

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