



THE ELECTROLIER

Newsletter of the St. Helena Historical Society, Winter 2010, Vol.8 No.1

THE JACKSE FAMILY, AND S. JACKSE WINERY & DISTILLERY (New home of Napa Valley Vintners)

By Mariam Hansen and Shannon Kuleto

The Jackse Winery was a significant part of early twentieth century winery development in St. Helena. The large wine storage building was an important example of the agricultural outbuildings that contributed to the success of St. Helena's wine industry. The building is one of the few remaining large wood-frame winery buildings in St. Helena's main business district.

Stephen Martin Jackse was born on December 26, 1870 in Austria and immigrated to the United States in 1886. He and Mary Ann Lamuth, also a German-speaking Austrian immigrant, married on August 26, 1890 in Tower, Minnesota. Their three eldest children were born in Tower: Stephen (1893) and twins Mary and Anna (1898). In 1897, both Jackse and his wife became naturalized US citizens.

The family migrated to California and settled in Crockett, where Jackse was a foreman at the C&H Sugar Refinery for ten years. Josephine (1904) and Albert (1907) were born in Crockett.

In 1909, the family purchased property on Railroad Avenue from Mary Gagetta. Mr. Jackse came to St. Helena on weekends with his son Stephen to work on the house. The family moved into the remodeled home in 1912. Jackse made many improvements on the property, including construction of a wine cellar. It is probable that builder Wilbur Harrison constructed the winery, or at least worked on it. By 1911, Jackse was making wine from about seventy tons of his own and neighbor Domenico Martinelli's grapes.

The Jackse Winery was officially closed by Prohibition, but became a known spot to purchase bootleg wine. Ac-

cording to Steven Navone's "Interviews and Reminiscences," Stephen Jackse was the victim of a robbery when high rollers from the city packed their car trunk with bootleg "samples" of wine then drove off without payment.

By 1931 the mood of the country had shifted significantly towards repealing the prohibition laws, but law enforcement actually tightened as the frustrated lawmen saw their window for justice slipping away. Jackse was one of those targeted in this last crackdown. After stepping up raids and even wire-tapping phones, over a dozen Napa Valley men were arrested for making wine. One of these was Stephen Jackse.

Throughout 1933, as repeal traveled its winding bureaucratic path, the civic-minded former wine-growers (and reluctant lawbreakers) of St. Helena, including Stephen Jackse, were in the forefront of finding effective ways of joining efforts to revive the industry. Jackse was a founding director of the Wine Producers Association, composed of 15 large Napa County wineries and about two dozen smaller ones, all in all employing roughly 500 people. This was when the Napa Val-



Jackse Winery in 1967. Photo courtesy of Napa County Historical Society

ley Co-op got organized.

The winery was enlarged to a capacity of 80,000 gallons in 1944. It produced red and white table wines in bulk, customers providing their own jugs. Jackse was an important contributor to St. Helena's business community, and was connected with the Wine Producers Association, Wine Institute, Lodi Farm Center, and St. Helena Chamber of Commerce.

St. Helena was full of German (and Austrian) immigrants who were at great pains to demonstrate their loyalty to the United States. Any scent of sedition, such as a history of being an anarchist or an IWW (the "Wobblies") supporter or even simply being a pacifist had the citizenry or even the sheriff at your door. The Jackse family, having been naturalized in 1897 and with a son who volunteered in World War I, was above reproach.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

The big news this month is the upcoming release of the St. Helena history book published by Arcadia. The book is a pictorial history of St. Helena and its environs, with lengthy and informative captions accompanying each of the great old photos. I've got an advance copy of the book and I can testify to the fact that it's very difficult to put down. Mariam Hansen, with the able assistance of Susanne Salvestrin and Kim Farmer, has put together a definitive picture of our town – most of the photos have never been published before. I encourage you to attend the book release event to be held at Krug Winery on March 14, and I know you'll want your own copy of this beautiful compilation.

This winter our board of directors is holding a series of meetings aimed at determining greater coordination of our programs, an overall game plan for the next 18 months and a business plan for the Society. Its an ambitious agenda, but one we feel we need to confront if we're going to both expand the activities of the Society and plan for the eventual building of a History Center.

Because the library is involved in an extensive remodel, we had to find another home for our large antique Napa County map. The Halls of Longmeadow Ranch kindly offered space in their new tasting room/restaurant development project at the corner of Main and Charter Oak. If you get a chance, drop by their tasting room and see the map in its new space.

We are in dire need of a few volunteers. We need someone to help out with the newsletter, and we could use some additional help in the areas of website design and maintenance. If you'd be willing to help out in any of these areas, or would like to see what other opportunities are available, please call me at 967-6210.

We've got some great monthly programs coming up – hope you can attend.

*Skip Lane,
President*

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Officers and Directors

Skip Lane, President
Tricia Westbrook, VP, Planning
Donn Black, VP, Legal
Susanne Salvestrin, Secretary
John Sales, Treasurer
Kim Farmer
Mariam Hansen
Frank Harrison
Helen Heibel Nelson

Committee Notes:

The **Collections Committee** coordinates and manages the acquisition of new materials. It generally meets on the last Monday of the month at 9:30am in the library meeting room. Current chair of the committee is Susanne Salvestrin. Email her at Susanne@salvestrinwinery.com

The **Program Committee** plans and presents programs and events to teach the public about our local history. If you would like to volunteer or want more information, please call Mariam Hansen, 963-5748.

Questions? Comments?

Call or email the Newsletter editor,
Kim Farmer, at 963-0630,

I'd like to join the St. Helena Historical Society!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Individual \$30 Family \$50

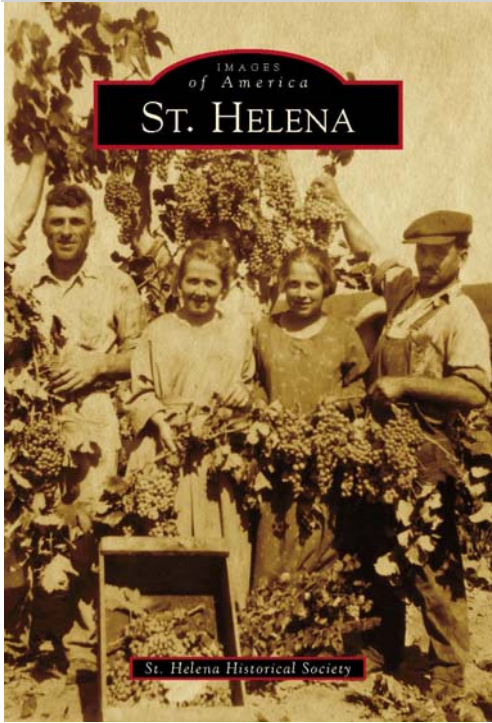
Business/Organizatoin \$150 Life \$500

I would like to: Volunteer _____ Make a donation to the Society _____

In Memory of Toni Nichelini-Irwin

We were saddened by the death of Toni Nichelini-Irwin in January, 2010. Granddaughter of the founder of Nichelini Winery, Toni was an active member of the Historical Society and will be sorely missed by all. The Society is grateful to all who have made donations in her memory.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY ACTIVITIES



Book Release Party for St. Helena Historical Society's publication *Images of America: St. Helena.*

Sunday, March 14th, 2-4pm

Charles Krug Winery's Carriage House, 2800 Main Street, SH

Join us for the book release party of the St. Helena Historical Society's latest publication called simply *Images of America: St. Helena*. Come to this gala event celebrating nearly 100 years of St. Helena history—from the 1880s to the 1960s. Relying on numerous family, private and historical society photograph collections, the book presents a pictorial overview of what life was like from the town's beginnings until the mid-20th century. The book is organized by the following subjects: Making Wine, Downtown, Fun & Movies, People, Historic Homes, Religious Life, Schools, and Outlying Areas.

Meet the book project team and hear a presentation on the founding of St. Helena, with a vintage photo slideshow at 3:00. Purchase your book and have it signed by the authors.

The book is part of Arcadia Publishing's *Images of America* series and sells for \$21.99 plus tax. The event is co-sponsored with the St. Helena Public Library and is free. RSVP requested, but not necessary to shstory@shpl.org or 707-967-5502.

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In 1940 Stephen and Mary Ann Jackse celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a party at their home attended by their children and numerous friends. Many congratulatory gifts and messages were showered on the couple. The parlor of their home on Railroad was decorated with a wealth of flowers. Only six years later (1946) Mary Ann died at the age of 73. She was a member of St. Helena Catholic Church and buried in Holy Cross Cemetery. Her husband lived another 24 years at his home at 1621 Sulphur Springs. Stephen died on December 14, 1972 at the age of 101. The last years he became infirm, but sat on his porch singing Austrian songs. Josephine and Stephen, Jr. cared for him.

Stephen Jackse, Jr. graduated from high school in Crockett in about 1911. He was one of a dozen enthusiastic young men to enlist in the Napa Ambulance Corps in 1917 in WWI with Louis Cavallini, Joseph Cheli (later St. Helena's fire chief), Henry Navone and John Money. Later, he worked for his father, taking over the vineyard and winery. He ceased wine production in 1951, as did many small wineries who sold bulk wine. Stephen Jr. died in 1978 at the age of 84.

Josephine graduated from St. Helena High in 1922. She was said to be very pretty with red hair, a fashionable dresser and very sociable. This earned her the title of Miss Napa Valley in 1927. She worked at Goodman's Store, Steves Hardware, Napa County Schools office and Basalt Rock Company. She retired in 1944 and died in 1977.

Albert was on the executive committee for student government at St. Helena High School and graduated in 1926. He was very smart and entered UC San Francisco Pharmacy School. He accepted a job in San Francisco upon graduation. Sadly, he died soon after in an auto accident on August 19, 1929 in the city.

Mayme (or Mary) graduated from high school in Crockett. When her parents moved to St. Helena in 1912, she came also. Julius Goodman trained her to be the bookkeeper at his store in town, a position she held until ill health forced her to retire in 1943. Mayme was very active in St. Helena Catholic Church, Young Ladies Institute, and American Legion Auxiliary. Mayme volunteered to help crippled children in San Francisco, being very fond of youngsters. She died at 51 in 1949 of a heart ailment.

Ann (or Anna) graduated from high school in Crockett and went on to Business College in San Francisco. She worked for an import-export firm there for many years, commuting from San Francisco almost every weekend to visit her family. Ann had a heart ailment, forcing her to move back home. She died at 53 in Jan 30, 1952.

None of the Jackse children married. It is said that upon the last death in 1978, relatives came from Austria to settle the estate.



Josephine Jackse, 1927. Photo courtesy of Dave Kernberger, Historic Photos.

CALENDAR

Call our voicemail to reserve a space: 707-967-5502 or email shstory@shpl.org

**Apr
20:**

March

Mar 14: Book Release Party, 2—4 pm, Charles Krug Winery, 2800 Main Street, St. Helena. See below and page 3 for more info.

Mar 16: Board of Directors meeting 5pm, Library Meeting Room. (Open to members.)

April

Apr 10: Lunch at Aetna Springs Clubhouse, 11am, followed by tour of historic Pope Valley Store & collection. RSVP required. Space is limited, so reserve early. Lunch includes tri-tip steak, pasta, salads, dessert and beverages. Wine and beer available for purchase.

Board of Directors meeting, 5pm, Library Meeting Room. (Open to members.)

May

May 12: Program at 7pm on Native American (Wappo) Basketry, co-sponsored with St. Helena Library.

May 18: Board of Directors meeting, 5pm, Library Meeting Room. (Open to members.)

June

Jun 1: Save this date for the Annual Pot Luck Picnic.

Mission Statement

The St. Helena Historical Society is a public educational organization. Its mission is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and provide access to historical materials of all kinds from our community as well as to promote public awareness and participation in the collection of such materials.

Images of America: **ST. HELENA**

Book Release Party

Co-sponsored by
St. Helena Historical
Society and St. Helena
Library

Sunday, March 14
2 to 4pm

Charles Krug Winery
2800 Main St, SH

Complimentary appetizers
and wine! Book purchase
and signing by the author
and her team. Enjoy a
slideshow of vintage pho-
tos. Get a glimpse of life in
St. Helena from the 1880s
to the 1960s. RSVP to
shstory@shpl.org or phone
967-5502

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