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A NEW DAWN (I)

The Northern and Central States

NEW YORK

At the beginning of the 1960s things had never been so good at the Taylor Wine Company. Founded in 1880 in the little town of Hammondsport at the foot of Keuka Lake, where winemaking began in New York, Taylor had survived Prohibition, the Great Depression, the war, and the postwar collapse of the wine market. Shrewd management and a good sales network now began to receive their reward as the sales of American wine started to grow. Taylor had always been a family business: the founder, Walter Taylor, had passed the winery on to his three sons, Clarence, Fred, and Greyton; they had run the business since Repeal, and now a third generation was at work in the winery. The Taylors were used to taking the lead among the winegrowers of the Finger Lakes: “innovators” and “pacesetters,” Philip Wagner called them:

> They are the pacesetters on wages. They are the pacesetters on prices paid for grapes to independent growers and on premium payments for superior quality. They are the pacesetters in establishing Seaton Mendall’s extension service for growers. They are pacesetters in assuming a large share of the chanciness in grape growing by buying vineyards and installing the former owners of them, as employees on salary, in their own homes. They are pacesetters in applying modern processing techniques to the ancient art of converting grapes into wine.[1]

Taylor was now, at the beginning of the ’60s, by far the largest of the upstate New York wineries, and therefore by far the largest winery in the country outside California. Sales