

FAMILY HISTORY

We feel privileged to grow our grapes on land that has been passed down through five generations. Like many others, our family came to California as part of the westward migration, and they participated in the early development of the Napa Valley.

The Taplin Family

Seeking new opportunities, John Orange Taplin came west to San Francisco during the Gold Rush, where he did what he knew best: raising cows. By 1871, San Francisco became too crowded for him, and he moved to St. Helena. Our logo is based on the handwriting in a book his sons used for logging milk deliveries around town from the Taplin Brothers Dairy.

Our grandfather, Albert Taplin, was the third generation to live on the Taplin Brothers Dairy, along Silverado Trail near where Taplin Road is today. He didn't want to go into the dairy business, but he was a farmer like his father. When he joined the Lewelling family through marriage, the Taplins moved across the valley to where we are now. Back in those days the land was used for grapes, hay, walnuts, prunes, and turkeys, but our focus is now exclusively on winegrowing.

The Lewelling Family

John Lewelling was a fruit farmer from a Quaker abolitionist family. His family had tree grafting skills, and the persistence to fill a wagon of fruit trees and cart them over the Oregon Trail to establish a nursery along the Willamette River in Milwaukie, Oregon. His brothers Henderson and Seth Lewelling, along with Chinese nurseryman Ah Bing, developed the Bing cherry there and worked with our great-great-grandfather to spread fruit trees up and down the west coast.

Eventually the Lewellings came to California, where they established a successful nursery in the East Bay. Lewelling Boulevard is still there, commemorating this history. According to family lore, John Lewelling's asthma became a problem and his doctor advised moving to a drier climate.

We're lucky he did. John came to St. Helena and purchased land from George C. Yount that would pass to us, his descendents. We now share some of this ancestral land with our cousins the Wights (also Lewelling descendants) to this day. We agree that the fresh air up here has its medicinal qualities.

Two Pioneer Families Unite

Our family moved across the valley from Taplin Road to Lewelling Lane when our grandfather, Albert Taplin, married our grandmother, Ethel Lewelling.

Our father, Ken Taplin, is the person in which the Taplin and Lewelling families converged. Dad grew up in St. Helena, where he met our mother, Alice Gaylord. They had known each other since elementary school, and played in the percussion band together. When they grew up she became his high school sweetheart, and they married on the day the United States invaded Normandy during WWII. After a short honeymoon, he flew to France where he was a tail gunner in the Allied Air Force, supporting troops advancing from Normandy to Germany. He survived and returned home to his wife, and they raised us in St. Helena.