

When Geneva Cox Mercer Made Wine

By Missy Jones

This was written by Geneva Cox Mercer for her cookbook "Recipes and Memories from the Heart". Our family is fortunate to have tapes of her talking about this wine making, and many other things and stories from her life. She married Alton Mercer in 1936, and this probably happened about 1938.

Alton and I had probably been married 2 years and it was cold, cold, with snow and ice on everything. Mr. and Mrs. Yantis lived west of Grannie and Granddad Mercer, a house with a little dairy barn set up behind where the Wilson house was. Mr. Yantis heard about Alton being sick so he came and brought a jar of wine and came to cut wood for us. And he cut the wood and put it on the porch. That wine really did help Alton with his coughing, so the next year Alton said, "I want you to get Mrs. Yantis' recipe and make some of that wine". And I did.

Well, of course, the grapes came off at the time when it was revival time, which was the first of August when we always had our revival. I had the grapes going and the wine was doing good. We lived down there on the creek, and hot, oh, my goodness, it was hot and I looked out and here came our preacher, the visiting preacher and the song leader. I had never asked men in the house before with Alton gone, but it was so hot. We didn't even have a cover over the porch for them to stand in the shade.

And, I thought, Oh well, I'll invite them in and they didn't get through the door until I thought about the wine. Oh, My goodness. SMELL!!!! We had four cane bottomed chairs and we all set there, and I didn't offer them any water or anything. They sat there and talked a little bit, and I could just have cried when they left and I am sure they laughed until they cried leaving out of there. But, anyway, the wine did turn out real good and everyone we gave a jar to just went on about how good that wine was.

But, that is not the end of the story about the wine. Years and years after that, Missy and I decided that we would make some wine. Alton and Darrell were working. We had made our wine, we went to town and got us some white cotton socks, and put some of that wine on them and let them dry. They were nice and purple. When the men came in for supper that night, we had those socks on, walked out on the porch, no shoes, and stood there with purple feet. Yes, we had been stomping our grapes. Anyway, we enjoyed that wine.

Mrs. Yantis' Wine Recipe

Mash grapes, cover with water in a large crock jar (not a metal container). Cover with white dish cloth, and keep covered tightly. Let stand 4 days and stir every morning. Strain the grape juice, and add 1 gallon water to 1 gallon of grape juice. To each gallon of juice, add 3 lbs of sugar and let stand 3 or 4 days. Skim and stir every morning. Put in sterilized jars and seal with sterilized rings and lids. Tighten lids on jars. Good, Good.

(Geneva Cox was my sister. Our parents were William Cornelius Cox and Minnie Steward Cox).