

Linfield earns Oregon Wine Board grant to preserve wine history

May 7,
2014

Linfield College's work preserving the history of Oregon winemaking will continue to grow this year thanks to a grant from the Oregon Wine Board. The grant will help Linfield's Oregon Wine History Archive (OWHA) preserve the grape-growing and winemaking heritage of the Columbia Gorge, Columbia Valley and Walla Walla Valley American Viticultural Areas (AVA).

"The growth of the wine industry in these regions over the past three decades has been incredible," said Rachael Woody, Linfield College archivist. "The grant allows us to begin collecting their history now and establishing relationships that will benefit the preservation of winemaking history into the future."



The project represents the third winemaking region where the OWHA has launched efforts to preserve history. OWHA began with the Willamette Valley, and in 2013 received a grant from the Oregon Wine Board to collect information on winemaking in Southern Oregon. For that project, they performed a collections survey of the area wineries, visited 14 wineries, conducted 18 oral history interviews, and hosted two receptions for the industry and community members to bring awareness to the preservation work.

Linfield is partnering with The Penrose Library at Whitman College and The History Museum of Hood River County. Whitman College is collecting similar information about winemaking on the Washington side of the Walla Walla AVA. In addition, Linfield has secured the assistance of Leigh Bartholomew, a consulting vineyard manager and member of the Oregon Wine Board, and Lonnie Wright of The Pines, a winery located in the Columbia Valley, as project advisers.

"As a newer entrant to the Oregon Wine Industry, we have learned so much from the living founders of the industry," said Bill Sweat, chair of the Oregon Wine Board and proprietor of Winderlea Wine Company. "The preservation of their history and experience will ensure that these lessons are available to others for generations to come."

Similar to the Southern Oregon project, the grant will allow Woody and Linfield student Mitra Haeri '14 to visit the Columbia and Walla Walla regions over the summer to record oral histories and collect historic documents and memorabilia from area winemakers. They will be in the Hood River area June 11th to the 16th, including a reception for the wine industry on June 13th. In addition, they will work from The Dalles through Milton-Freewater July 14th to the 18th, with an industry reception on July 17th.

The Oregon Wine History Archive, started in 2011, is home to collections from some of the most significant wineries in the State of Oregon. It includes journals, artifacts and memorabilia from around the state and from the earliest days of the wine industry. Artifacts from the archive will be featured in the upcoming Oregon Historical Society exhibit Clink! Taste of Oregon Wine (June through September 2014) and were used for the Oregon Public Broadcasting documentary "Grapes of Place" in 2012.

Items in the Oregon Wine History Archive, including the oral history interviews, can be viewed online at <http://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/owha/>. Many of the historical items from the Southern Oregon research will be available beginning the summer of 2014.

For more information on the project and the Oregon Wine History Archive, contact Rachael Woody at 503-883-2734 or rwoody@linfield.edu.

