

PROHIBITION AND PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONS: OLD WORLD STRATEGIES IN A NEW WORLD ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

Recent research at the Garzini Winery in northwestern California indicates that the winery was the scene of boot-legging and wine making between 1910 and 1936. The winery owner, a first generation Italian immigrant, was critical to the development of the local economy through his private financial affairs. The patron-client relationship, found throughout southwestern Europe, fits the winery owner's social and financial operations, and it is suggested that this network also applies to locally important figures throughout the American west. It is also suggested that, given the scarcity of documentary evidence common to this phenomenon, archaeological investigations can be ideal for arguing significance of sites associated with these individuals.

INTRODUCTION

The Garzini Winery, CA-SON-1183, is located on United States Army Corps of Engineers property in Mendocino County, California. Initial research and testing of the site by Fredrickson (1977) did not suggest the presence of archaeological deposits on the site. In 1997, in response to vandalism and increasing safety concerns at the site, the Army Corps provided a research grant to the author to evaluate the architectural remains and historical significance of the site. Through historical documentary research, consultation, and oral history, the following historical context and interpretation were created. In the process, two possibly undisturbed buried privies were identified. It is suggested that excavation of these privies may reveal information that could substantially contribute to the understanding of the economic stability and social standing of Battista Garzini.

THE GARZINI WINERY: A HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, California in general, and San Francisco in particular, were fast becoming centers of Italian immigration (Cinel 1982: 199). The Piedmontese and Lombardese Italians were noted as businessmen and merchants throughout San Francisco; this influx of Italians may have drawn Battista Garzini to this region. Battista Garzini was born near Cuneo, Italy in March of 1879 (MCR: DC#32681). Around his eighteenth birthday, Battista fled Italy to avoid the draft. Battista arrived in New York in November of 1900 (Garzini 1977; SFSC 1912 :489). Battista then made his way via ship to San Francisco, where his cousin, Pete Ponza, sponsored his stay (Garzini 1997).

Battista worked in lumber and milling jobs that Ponza arranged for him throughout northern California. Battista saved enough money to purchase 120 acres in Coyote Valley, just east of Ukiah and Calpella, on May 28, 1907 (MCR: 108:346). Battista bought the property because it, and the surrounding hillside, reminded him of

the Piedmont hills (Garzini 1997). Ukiah Valley had been a popular grape growing and exporting region since the 1850s, and by the time Battista was starting his winery, the railroad line had been installed and could be used to transport produce (Latimer n.d.:3). Non-Italian immigrants had previously planted vineyards in the valley, but Battista opened the first Piedmontese vineyard and the first winery in the valley (Peri and Patterson 1977). Battista's brother Claude arrived from Italy, and the two of them cleared 85 of the 120 acres for growing grapes (Garzini 1997; Peri and Patterson 1977). Claude's name likewise appears on the property deed; the two of them not only worked the land but co-owned it.

The Garzini brothers then either purchased or were given grape clippings from the Massoletti vineyards in Calpella (Garzini 1997). These clippings were of the zinfandel and carignano varieties, and these plants were virtually the only grapes grown for the business until all grape growing was ceased in the 1950s (Peri and Patterson 1977). The winery was operating by 1910, and quickly becoming profitable. Claude and Battista had built a house in the valley during these early years, but when Battista's fiancé Lucia was sent for in 1911, a new house was built at the current winery site (Garzini 1997). This site had a spring and was on the main road into Calpella. Battista and Lucia married and moved into the new house; it is unclear whether Claude lived with them or in the old house.

A number of other Piedmontese families immigrated to Coyote Valley, slowly at first, but by the mid-1950s, at least nine different Italian families had moved into the valley (Peri and Patterson 1977). When Prohibition was passed in 1920, the Garzini continued to grow grapes and make bootleg wine and distilled alcohol on the property, taking it either by car or rail, well disguised, to San Francisco (Garzini 1997). Battista would put the wine into empty storage containers, disguising the wine as either gasoline or water. In San Francisco he would sell the wine to family, friends, and restaurant owners. Battista was arrested at least twice for violating federal law prohibiting alcohol sales, and his property was raided at least four times, but this did not deter him (Dispatch Democrat 1927: March 15; Dispatch

Democrat 1931: September 18; Garzini 1997). Claude, during this time, contracted tuberculosis and moved to an outbuilding near the main house. He succumbed to the disease in 1924 (Garzini 1997).

The hill on which the winery operated, and on which the Garzini family lived, became known as Vinegar Hill, a popular name which the site still holds today. The Garzini continued to run the winery successfully, branching out into a variety of other enterprises, and were apparently the only Italian family in the valley to do so (Peri and Patterson 1977). However, when Prohibition was repealed in 1933, and as the Great Depression continued to clamp down on local economies, the Garzini Winery suffered. Battista continued to be optimistic, building a new addition to the winery in 1935 and making it the first bonded winery in Coyote Valley (bonding application form 1935; Ukiah Republican Press 1935: March 27). Competition with newly created wineries, and a bad growing year, forced the winery into a decline. In October of 1936, possibly from the rapid turn in fortune that had overcome his finances, Battista took his own life on the property (Dispatch Democrat 1936: October 23).

The Garzini children had little interest in continuing making the wine, though Lucia continued selling the stock on hand until the wine was either all gone or had gone sour (Garzini 1997). The family continued to grow grapes on the property and expand their business into other areas around the Ukiah, Coyote, and Redwood Valley area until the Army Corps purchased the property in the early 1950s. The winery was dismantled by Babe Garzini, Battista's oldest son, and the family moved off the property into the surrounding area (Garzini 1997; Peri and Patterson 1977).

It is unknown where Battista learned to grow grapes. There are no grapes or evidence of grape growing on the old Garzini family estate in the Piedmont (Hallman 1997). Battista does not appear to come from a grape growing family, and neither the zinfandel nor the carignanes grapes are varieties traditionally grown in the Piedmont region (Gleave 1989; Layton 1961). Having purchased the grapes from the Massolettis, he

may have also learned to grow grapes and ferment wine from them.

During grape harvesting, neighbors and people out of Ukiah, or perhaps migrant workers, would be hired to help pick grapes. Grapes were brought, by mule in the early years and then perhaps by truck the last two or three, to the old winery. There, family and employees would weigh the grapes and run the grapes through a crusher. From there, the pulp went to a three-ton hand press (Garzini 1997; bonding application form). The remaining "dry" grape pulp was then removed and used to fertilize the fields for the next year. The fermenting took place in large redwood tanks.

After the wine had fermented for one or two years, the wine was transferred to the lower storage tanks for either another year of fermentation or for immediate sale. They had five large storage tanks, allowing the winery to store up to two years' worth of wine and have a third year fermenting if necessary. In addition to this, five other "puncheon" vats could individually store 175-195 gallons. In the early years, the wine went unfiltered; by 1935, the winery had purchased a filter (bonding application form).

Sales for the wine were performed one of three ways. In one method, Battista would take wine all over northern California and southern Oregon, selling the wine and grapes to lumber camps; it would appear that Battista kept some of his acquaintances and used his knowledge of the lumber industry to locate these camps and sell the wine (Garzini 1997). The year of Battista's death, one of the sons took up this method of selling and continued the tradition of taking the wine to Susanville, Redding, Shasta, and southern Oregon (Garzini 1997).

A second method for selling wine, and the most frequently used, was to sell it right out of the winery. The winery was in an excellent location for such sales; it was relatively far from authorities in Ukiah, yet on a road used by agricultural laborers and local families. The road was also frequently used by lumber companies, and loggers could stop by on their way in or out of the logging camps or after work. Wine was typically sold in one gallon jugs, though in later years a smaller bottle was

used and a label was made. The lower portion of the main house was used as a "sales" room (Garzini 1977). Prices for the wine ran about \$0.25 a gallon before Prohibition, but jumped to \$1.00 to \$1.50 a jug during Prohibition (Peri and Patterson 1977).

The third method used for selling wine was to pack it up by freight or take it personally to San Francisco, where the wine was served in restaurants and "speak-easies" in the city. Battista was often gone two to four months out of the year on these "business" trips to the city, and apparently shared an office above a restaurant (Garzini 1997; Dispatch Democrat 1927: September 18). It is unclear as to how much money Battista made from these dealings; wineries from all over northern California were already sending their products, both wine and distilled alcohol, en masse to San Francisco three years before the official enactment of Prohibition. Yearly return on this booze early on was over \$112,500 (Moore 1984:5).

This, then, was the main source of income for the Garzini family during the Prohibition years. The price of grapes per ton varied greatly throughout the depression, as the industry found ways to produce grape "bricks," which could be re-hydrated at home, and, when mixed with sugar and allowed to ferment, produced wine (Garzini 1997). Early in the depression the value of grapes soared, but as the business boomed, grape prices fell to below pre-Prohibition prices due to an overcrowded market, and the grapes rotted on the vine (Tesconi 1993: December 6). However, wine making increased during Prohibition (Teiser and Harroun 1984: 50).

Battista did sell grapes wholesale; he had at one point acquired property in New Mexico, which was then swapped for local land, through the sale of grapes (MCR 1927: 24: 275; Garzini 1997). Nevertheless, Battista made his money in the illegal wine and alcohol sales. This freedom from the capricious, and competitive, grape market, his founding of the Italian community in Coyote Valley, and, as described below, the steady increase of family income, land purchases, and personal loans, may have allowed Battista to fulfill a community role found in a wide variety of western

Mediterranean countries, that of the rural patron, or don.

PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONS AND COMMUNITY

For at least the last century and a half, the patron-client relationship has existed throughout the western Mediterranean (Schneider, Schneider and Hansen 1972: 336; Bell 1979). Sydel Silverman, in his "Patronage and Community-Nation Relationships in Central Italy" (1965:176), defines patronage as, "an informal contractual relationship between persons of unequal status and power, which imposes reciprocal obligation of a different kind on each of the parties." The nature of such a relationship involves skilled workers, business men, and local government officials making public economic and political policy at social, non-official events, such as parties and dinners (Schneider, Schneider and Hansen 1972: 328-329). These individuals would deal with the government on behalf of the community, and *vice versa* (Silverman 1965: 172). The creation of these independent transactions, and the people who run them, appears with either one or both of the following two criteria (Schneider, Schneider and Hansen 1972:332):

- (1) The community has to have a long period of political and economic autonomy.
- (2) The community has to have its own connections to foreign markets.

Separate studies in Spain, Sicily, and central Italy produced similar institutions of community patronage (Blok 1974; Schneider, Schneider and Hansen 1972). In a sense, this pattern of mediation and patronage had already been witnessed in California for centuries in the form of the Spanish and Mexican period *alcalde*, a local land owner who assumed the role of community leader, and in the form of the wealthy land baron, the *ranchero* "don" (Bean and Rawles 1993: 54-55, 63). The seclusion of California in the early years forced first the missions, then the *rancheros*, to be both politically and economically autonomous; San Francisco and Los Angeles were already described in contemporaneous accounts as international ports by the start of the

1800s, through which trade took place without Spanish or, later, Mexican economic or political support (see, for instance, Khlebnikov 1990).

The patron operates on two levels; a local level, and a larger regional or national level. On the local level, the patron needs to be of high enough status to carry on his dealings in the national level on behalf of the community. Silverman describes the patron, or "mediator" as an individual who takes on his role, "because of previous possession of a higher rank, or (who) may achieve a higher rank as a result of assuming the mediator role" (ibid: 173). When dealing with individual members of the community, the patron-client relationship commonly, and most importantly, comes in the form of the *mezzadria* relationship, in which an informal relationship develops from a formal contract:

A peasant might approach the landlord to ask a favor, perhaps a loan of money or help with the law, or the landlord might offer his aid knowing of a problem. If the favor were granted or accepted, further favors were likely to be asked or offered at some later time. The peasant would reciprocate- at a time and in a context different from that of the acceptance of the favor, in order to de-emphasize the material self-interest of the reciprocative action- by bringing the landlord especially choice offerings from the farm produce, by sending some member of the peasant family to perform services in the landlord's home, by refraining from cheating the landlord, or merely by speaking well of him in public and professing devotion to him" (Silverman 1965:176).

On a regional or national level, the patron struggles to keep autonomous from, yet also to benefit from, the national government. By being involved with international markets, the patron carries weight to the bargaining table, and can be a powerful asset to the government (Schneider, Schneider and Hansen 1972:332). If the market for a particular resource is high, and the national government attempts to regulate it, "a black market materializes and thrives" (ibid:332). When this

demand falls, the "regional elites then turn to the state for support" (ibid.:332).

This pattern no doubt applies to the Piedmont region in Italy as well. So close to, and tied with, the markets of Switzerland and France, and at the same time far enough removed from major cities, the Piedmont is an almost archetypal example of a region that would have the institution of community patronage. Battista Garzini, upon his arrival in San Francisco, may very likely have come from a culture that practiced the widespread institution of patron-client relationships.

BATTISTA GARZINI AND PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONS IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Garzini family quickly became a major land owner in Coyote Valley. It is interesting to note that, of the Piedmontese owning property in Coyote Valley between the years 1907-1933, the Garzini's owned 30% of the total property; by 1955, this total became 52%, even though the number of Italian families almost doubled (Peri and Patterson 1977). The family remembers Battista lending money or purchasing land on the basis of "a handshake," and were somewhat surprised to find that Battista had recorded any of his purchases or deeds. This may be because Battista treated local Piedmontese different than other Italians, and in fact, other Americans.

During the period of significance for the site, 1911-1936, there is not a single instance recorded through the Mendocino County Registrar of Battista lending money to any family in Coyote Valley. There are, however, at least thirteen loans and six major property purchases made to individuals outside of Coyote Valley which Battista did register with the county. It may be that Battista felt compelled to initiate the "formal contract" part of the patron-client relationship with people not living nearby. This allowed him some legal recourse for transactions not within his immediate sphere of influence. Given that Battista left no formal written contracts with clients living in Coyote Valley, other means of finding his relationship with his neighbors need to be addressed.

David Peri (1997) said that the handshake arrangement was more than a method of convenience between two parties; by not recording transfers, taxes might be avoided with sales, and individual parties were free to negotiate, or re-negotiate, any deal they wanted. Property purchase could be traded for labor, loans could be paid off with produce, and money paid to parties without the "hassle" of contracts (Peri 1997).

For instance, in January of 1936, Battista bought what would become "Bob's Bar," both the building and property, from the Frassinello family for surprisingly low sum of ten dollars. The Frassinellos owed the Stitt family \$1500 on the mortgage, yet legally, the Garzini's were under no obligation to pay off the mortgage, having signed no documents which stated they were taking over the debt (MCR, 58:171). Bob Garzini purchased the bar from his father in June of that same year, for the same ten dollars (MCR, 106:242). Again, no mention of the mortgage. When Battista died in October of 1936, the Stitt family tried to file a claim against Battista's estate for the \$1500, but dropped the suit, probably after finding out that Battista no longer owned the building (MCR 1936, 5946:215). Nevertheless, Bob paid the Stitt family the \$1500 in January of 1938 (MCH, 121:176). Battista made similar arrangements with the Pickle family (MCR 1925,170: 450), the Waldteufal family (MCR 1927, 24-275), and the Giannini family (MCR 1929, 46:487),

Battista also entered into "swap deals," or loans in trade of a percentage cut of a crop yield, such as a \$400 loan to the Cinquinis, at 8% interest and 50% of the grape yield from the land E. Cinquini was leasing (MCR 1932, 66:469). Again, Battista is making these arrangements all with people outside of Coyote Valley, and by the time he died, had ranches and property in Talmage, Ukiah, and Redwood Valley, as well as over 120 acres in Coyote Valley (MCR 1919, 158:18)(MCR 1925, 5:416)(MCR 1927, 24:275). It would seem unusual for Battista to be so involved with the economics of the broader community, and yet not involved with the economics of his neighbors, considering their common heritage, and that, like the patron-client relationship described earlier, many of the local families worked the Garzini fields.

The general pattern of loaning and investing money in traditional Italian families rarely involved banks (Cinel 1982: 238). Italian immigrants coming into San Francisco in the early part of the 1900s were, "skeptical of banks and bankers, and generally refuse[d] to deposit money with people they [did] not know personally" (Cinel 1982: 238). This role was already being fulfilled through family and through land investments. Similarly, Italian immigrants were, "not considered reliable borrowers; though banks welcomed their savings, the banks rarely made loans to them" (Cinel 1982: 236). Yet immigrants starting out still needed jobs, food and money to purchase land and goods. Battista used his social network to get his start, and it seems unlikely that a large portion of Coyote Valley became Piedmontese by chance; the other immigrants to the area probably had similar networks that they could tie into, and similar debts which would be owed.

Upon arrival in Coyote Valley, the immigrants found a landowner who had an established family, who lent money, who had ready cash on hand, exchanged cash for labor and crops, and who came from the same region and may have been already known to the immigrants (Peri and Patterson 1977; Garzini 1997). On one hand, the banks were hesitant to lend money, and the immigrants were hesitant to borrow it. On the other, Battista was a local landowner who could purchase property, pay off \$2,500 mortgages or lend \$3,300 without borrowing money from the bank, and who was generally willing and able to work deals with starting families (MCR 1929:46:487; MCR 1934:91:447).

Not only was there a social network ideal for the development of the patron-client institution, but also the two basic guidelines for development of such an institution were also in place: an autonomous community and a foreign market. It can be expected, based upon the nature of family gardens and local agriculture, and a local lumber industry, that building goods and food supplies were at least partially locally available. Ukiah, while being a lumber center, was not governmentally organized or managed to the extent that it could exert totalitarian control over the surrounding rural communities. That Battista was arrested for selling alcohol did not seem to deter him, and it is

apparent that labor, property purchases, and marketing occurred with little interaction from local or federal government agencies.

Similarly, San Francisco and the eastern United States provided a "foreign market," one to which goods could be sent and money received, but who again could exert only economic pressures and not governmental pressures on the community. The railroad line could take goods and money in and out of the area without the locals being required to organize, and invest in, a transportation system themselves. The patron-client relationship in Coyote Valley fits the general pattern, though somewhat miniaturized, of the patron-client relationship described by Schneider, Schneider and Hansen (1972).

Battista's "handshake deals" outside of Coyote Valley follow the pattern of patron-client relations and indicate that he may have been a local patron. However, his rapid decline in finances, loans from the bank, and unpaid bills and taxes show a progressive change in the situation. The Garzini were hit hard by the Depression, as described earlier, and Battista's tenuous grasp on power in Coyote Valley seems to have slipped.

Even his decline follows the patron template. The repeal of Prohibition was likely the biggest economic disaster Battista had faced. Local wineries started everywhere, and the Great Depression set in almost immediately after Prohibition's repeal. When demand fell for his wine and competition increased, as a regional elite, Battista, "turned to the state," in this case borrowing \$11,000 from the Mendocino County Savings and Loan. This debt was to be paid off in one year (MCR 1936: 5946:215). While such a debt still seems high even by today's standards, it is even more unusual considering that the average yearly income of the family, based on the probate, was \$13,000 (ibid. 5946:215).

Given Battista's repeatedly displayed skill in investment and money handling, it seems highly likely that the amount of money he reported making, and what he actually made from loans and crop shares went unreported. At the time of his death, Battista had recorded no new major purchases in property, no new loans made, yet the

.\$11,000 is gone. Several unpaid bills, including county taxes, hardware and feed stores, and the still outstanding mortgage to the Stitts had not been even partially paid (ibid. 5946:215). The disappearance of the \$11,000, as well as of the cash usually on hand to pay off these accounts, may never be resolved. However, the Garzini finances, as had many family finances at this time, had taken a turn for the worse.

While a large part of the financial dealings, perhaps most of them, that Battista engaged in may be inaccessible, there is one other aspect of being a "patron" that holds potential for research at the winery site. This is the social aspect. A defining trademark of the patron, and of the patron-client relationship, is the negotiation of deals made during social occasions, particularly parties and large dinners (Schneider, Schneider and Hansen 1972:328-329). As many of the families may not have had the resources, both food and houses, to properly entertain, it seems certain that the Garzini's, with two houses, two kitchens, acres of property, an arbor, gardens, and money, could throw such parties. If Battista was intent on becoming a patron, he had to have taken the initiative to throw these parties. The family remembers Battista bringing groups of workers, neighbors, and friends home for large dinners and drinking after work; sometimes these people would stay many days (Garzini and Garzini 1997). The service needed for these groups would have to have been equally as large, and food bone remains would have to be in large, discretely disposed quantities per each event.

While the family hauled their trash to the dump, individual episodes of broken dishes or bulk bone dumping might be found in the privies. Studies of ceramics, bone and liquor found in privies have effectively tracked the rise, change, and fall, of upper, middle and lower class families in the public light (see, for instance, Felton and Schulz 1983; Mrozowski *et al.* 1996). One might predict that purchases simply for family use may be more utilitarian, but purchases for public entertainment may reflect the social image that Battista was attempting to maintain. The family states that at least one, and perhaps both, privies were kept open after the introduction of indoor plumbing (Garzini 1997). The remains of the

ceramics and bone may be represented, at least in part, within these privies.

Though it would not be unusual for the family to be purchasing fine ceramics in the early years of Prohibition, when the winery and Battista were financially successful, high cost purchases after Prohibition and during the Great Depression, when the family's finances dwindled, may indicate an attempt to live up to a social image rather than simple subsistence and use of the family. This attempt at maintaining a high social status could confirm the theory that Battista wasn't simply making money for his and his family's benefit; he had a social role to fulfill, and was obligated to at least appear capable of fulfilling that role. Excavation of the privies may be the only means by which this information is gained.

CONCLUSIONS

The period of significance for the property starts with the construction of the winery proper and the marriage to Lucia in 1911 and ends with Battista's death in 1936. Before this date the winery was not in full operation, and part of Battista's importance would be as an established family patriarch. While the family continued to sell wine, though no longer produced it, after Battista's death, and while the Garzini's continued to live on the property, the Great Depression and the repeal of Prohibition had taken their toll. Battista conceivably could have still retained his social role, however, as he was still lending money in 1934; thus, it is convenient to use his death as an end point for the period of significance.

The two intact privies could provide an excellent, and unique, opportunity to test the theory of the Garzini family's continued purchase of high quality ceramics and food goods even though their personal finances were dropping considerably. According to the 1995 National Register Bulletin 15, a site can be nominated for its information potential under the following conditions: (a) "The property must have, or have had, information to contribute to our understanding of human history or prehistory," and (b) "the information must be considered important" (21-23). Both of these conditions

appear to apply to the Garzini Winery, based on the lack of written documentation of Battista Garzini's local financial dealings and the potential to contribute to the understanding of the economic development of, and immigration to, the west.

Furthermore, given that western Mediterranean communities can be found throughout the west, and in fact throughout the U.S., the results of this research may have implications outside of this project. The role of the patron in small, rural western Mediterranean communities can be suspected to be very similar. How this role is expressed within the financial activities of these different communities may vary, however, and a researcher will need to explore a variety of sources inside, and outside, the realm of legal records of the time period in question. As a social, economic, and political network, the patron-client relationship can exist outside of elections, bank records, and newspapers. Archaeological investigation, oral histories, family documents, and comparative records between families and the local or county government records, may be more fruitful avenues to research what seems to be an important local figure who nevertheless shows up rarely in the larger public record.

The Garzini Winery was a way for Battista Garzini to rise in social stature as well as achieve financial stability for himself and his family. When he acquired money, it appeared to have either been invested in property or loaned out to the community. Banking at this time, for Italian immigrants, was a relatively unconventional means by which one could invest or borrow money. The traditional pattern was to borrow money from a community figure who had the ability to lend it and had the clout to retrieve it. Given Battista's rise to financial success during Prohibition, his dealings and connections with illegal operations, and his duration of occupation and establishment of a large family in Coyote Valley, Battista had earned the respect of his local community. He had, for at least awhile, seemed to successfully fulfill the role of community patriarch. However, the decline of the value of alcohol after Prohibition, the increased competition throughout the California wine industry, a possibly bad growing year, and increasing debts all combined to keep Battista

from permanently holding this role. The local history of Ukiah, Calpella, and Lake Mendocino would benefit from further research of Battista's importance in the community and the degree of his success, and could help define a historic theme, the patron-client relationship, as it exists throughout California and the west.

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