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## Inventory of the Paul Masson Records

Finding aid created by Manuscript Archivist Elizabeth Phillips.

Department of Special Collections

General Library

University of California, Davis

Davis, CA 95616-5292

Phone: (530) 752-1621

Fax: Fax: (530) 754-5758

Email: [speccoll@ucdavis.edu](mailto:speccoll@ucdavis.edu)

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**Creator:** Paul Masson (Firm)

**Title:** Paul Masson Records

**Date:** 1872-2000

**Date (bulk):** 1872-1929

**Extent:** 2.8 linear feet

**Abstract:** Correspondence, ledger books, scrapbooks, and photographs from Masson's Santa Clara County, California, vineyards. Collection also includes notes on Masson by UC Davis Professor of Viticulture and Enology Harold P. Olmo.

**Physical location:** Researchers should contact Special Collections to request collections, as many are stored offsite.

**Repository:** University of California, Davis. General Library. Dept. of Special Collections.

Davis, California 95616-5292

**Collection number:** D-357

**Language of Material:** Collection materials in English

### History

Paul Masson (1859-1943) was born into a family of winemakers in the Burgundy region of France. Throughout the 1860s, European vineyards had been devastated by a severe infestation of Phylloxera, and Masson's best option for finding work was to join other winemakers who had left for the United States. He set out for California in 1878.

Once in California, Masson was introduced to fellow Frenchman Charles Lefranc and began working with him at his vineyard, Almaden, in the Santa Clara valley. In 1888, Masson married Lefranc's daughter Louise and the business officially became the Lefranc Masson Wine Company. During this time, Masson began pursuing his dream of developing a California Champagne.

In 1900, Masson's Champagne won the Paris Award. The wine's popularity took off, and in 1905 Masson built his own winery, La Cresta, in Saratoga, California. Masson's reputation as a Champagne master continued to grow. Even during Prohibition, Masson was able to continue making Champagne for "ceremonial purposes."

Masson's profits during Prohibition were small, and by the time of Repeal in 1933, he had lost a great deal of his fortune. He sold off his portion of the Lefranc-Masson property, but held on to La Cresta as long as possible. In 1936, Masson sold the Saratoga winery to local stockbroker and aspiring winemaker Martin Ray.

Now known as The Mountain Winery, Masson's vineyards have become a popular sites for events and concerts. The Mountain Winery still sells both Champagne and non-sparkling wines from the vineyards' grapes.

Sources:

Mountain Winery History

[http://www.mountainwinery.com/winery/winery\\_history.asp](http://www.mountainwinery.com/winery/winery_history.asp)

(Accessed 14 January 2010)

Balzer, Robert Lawrence. *This Uncommon Heritage: The Paul Masson Story*. Los Angeles: Paul Masson Vineyards, 1970.

### Scope and Content

The Paul Masson Collection documents the operation of the Masson vineyards in Santa Clara County, California. The collection includes correspondence, notes, ledger books, scrapbooks, and photographs from Masson's Saratoga winery. Also included are some notes from UC Davis Professor of Viticulture and Enology Harold P. Olmo's research on Masson's life and work.

Additional materials related to the Masson winery may be located in the Harold P. Olmo Papers, D-280.

### Related Collections

The following collections at Special Collections may also be of interest:

D-335, Martin and Eleanor Ray Papers, 1902-1993: Martin Ray purchased the Paul Masson Winery and produced wine there from 1936 to 1942. The collection includes: correspondence; manuscripts; business files; clippings; public relations files; and subject files relating to quality control, grape varieties, and vintages.

D-280, Harold Paul Olmo Papers, 1909-2006: This collection contains faculty papers including correspondence, research files, slides on grape varieties, grape variety reports by county, and materials relating to Olmo's activities in symposiums, conferences, and advisory boards.

[D-363, Frederic T. Bioletti Papers, 1881-1935](#) : This collection includes correspondence, research material on grape varieties and viticultural practices, publications on a variety of agricultural topics, and a small series of specimen photographs.

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D-060, Maynard A. Amerine Collection, 1911-1998: This collection contains correspondence, manuscripts, wine labels, and pamphlets pertaining to the production of wine and spirits. Collection also includes travel diaries, menus, photographs relating to the Viticulture and Enology Department, California wine industry, and wine research.

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Paul Masson (Firm)

Wine and wine making--California

Viticulture--California

Champagne and other sparkling wines

**Access**

Collection is open for research.

**Processing Information**

Elizabeth Phillips, Manuscript Archivist, processed the collection and created the finding aid.

**Acquisition Information**

Separated from Harold Paul Olmo Papers, D-280. Gift of Richard W. Hoenisch, 1999.

**Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Paul Masson Collection, D-357, Department of Special Collections, General Library, University of California, Davis.

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Box/Folder 1:1	<b>Abstract of Title 1872</b>
Box/Folder 1:2-11	<b>Correspondence and Notes 1979-2000</b> <b>Scope and Content Note</b> Some folders include notes by Harold P. Olmo.
Box/Folder 1:12-13	<b>Correspondence Books 1894-1895 1897</b>
Box/Folder 1:14, 4:1-3	<b>Ledgers 1872-1893</b>
Box/Folder 4:4	<b>Ledger (Almaden) 1929</b>
Box/Folder 4:5	UCD.PIC.D357.2009.0001 <b>Photograph: Cellar No. 5 undated</b> <b>Physical Description:</b> Two photographic prints
Box/Folder 4:6	UCD.PIC.D357.2009.0002 <b>Masson Building Over Cellar, San Jose (After Earthquake) 1906</b> <b>Physical Description:</b> One photographic print
Box/Folder 4:7	UCD.PIC.D357.2009.0003 <b>Old Masson Ranch (Now Masson Co., Martin Ray) undated</b> <b>Physical Description:</b> One photographic print
Box/Folder 4:8	UCD.PIC.D357.2009.0004 <b>Paul Masson (About 40 Years of Age) undated</b> <b>Physical Description:</b> One photographic print
Box/Folder 4:9	UCD.PIC.D357.2009.0005 <b>USA Universal Exposition Grand Prize, Paul Masson Champagne Company [1904]</b> <b>Physical Description:</b> One photographic print

Box/Folder 4:10 UCD.PIC.D357.2009.0006 **Vineyard Building? undated**

**Physical Description:** One photographic print

Box 2-3 **Scrapbooks undated**

**Physical Description:** Two scrapbooks

**Scope and Content Note**

Contain clippings and wine menus.