

Charles Schumann pamphlets on cultivating American grapes in 1850-1860

Charles A. Schumann was one of the pioneering German-American viticulturists in the Cincinnati area during the 1840s, just as the Ohio River Valley was becoming the center of the American wine industry. Although his pamphlet is less well known today than those by Nicholas Longworth or Robert Buchanan, contemporaries regarded it as one of the foundational works on cultivating American grapes.

Schumann's 1845 pamphlet

The work is generally referred to as:

"A Pamphlet on the Cultivation of the Grape" (1845)

It was published in Cincinnati and focused on the successful cultivation of native American grapes—particularly the **Catawba grape**—for wine production in the Ohio Valley. The pamphlet itself is now quite rare.

Robert Buchanan, in the introduction to his influential 1850 (expanded 1852) treatise, specifically credits Schumann's work:

"...from Mr. Schumann's pamphlet, published in 1845..."

Charles Cist likewise wrote in *Sketches and Statistics of Cincinnati* (1851):

"In 1845, a pamphlet by C. A. Schumann..." and listed it among the only significant Western publications on grape culture before Buchanan's work.

What Schumann advocated

Based on Buchanan's extensive references and later summaries, Schumann emphasized:

- Planting **native American varieties**, especially **Catawba**, rather than European vinifera grapes.
- Selecting **well-drained hillsides** with southern or southeastern exposure.
- Heavy attention to **pruning and training** vines.
- Good air circulation to reduce mildew and rot.
- Careful vineyard management rather than simply planting vines and letting them grow.
- Producing wine suited to the Ohio Valley climate rather than attempting to duplicate European methods.

Historical importance

Schumann's pamphlet appeared during Cincinnati's rapid rise as the nation's leading wine-producing region.

Between about **1840 and 1860**, Cincinnati became known as "**the Rhine of America.**" Nicholas Longworth's sparkling Catawba wines gained international acclaim, and German immigrants such as Schumann helped develop the practical vineyard techniques that made commercial grape growing successful throughout the hills around Cincinnati.

Related publications of the period

Year	Author	Significance
1826	John James Dufour	First important American manual on vineyard culture in the Ohio Valley.
1845	Charles A. Schumann	Early Cincinnati pamphlet on practical cultivation of American grapes.
1850	Robert Buchanan	Comprehensive vineyard guide incorporating Schumann's ideas.
1852	Robert Buchanan	Expanded edition, <i>The Culture of the Grape, and Wine-Making</i> , which became the standard American reference.