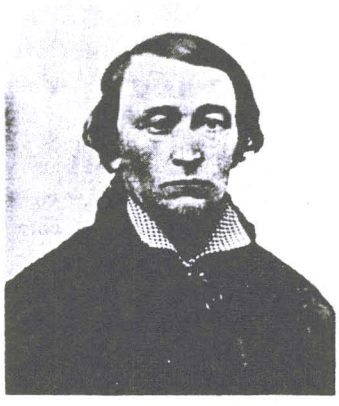
A GRIGSBY ODYSSEY - VIRGINIA TO CALIFORNIA.



Terril Lindsay Grigsby, whose name is still associated with the wine industry of Napa County, California, was one of the several Grigsby families to 'go west' in the mid-1800's. From material gathered by Olive Grigsby Bush and photographs of T. L. and Cynthia Faires Grigsby (left) supplied by Marylin L. Parker (CA), the story of this early fearless traveler begins with his grandfather:

Aaron Grigsby, who was born in Virginia, 1752. During the period of the American Revolution, Aaron was a colonial seaman aboard the U. S. Privateer, "Grand Turk". Captured by the British, 1782, he was imprisoned on Barbados, an island of the West Indies, until his release 1783 (Newsletter, Jan. 1983 p. 22). Phoebe Harrison, Aaron's wife, has been the subject of speculation that she may have been related to the prominent Harrison family of Berkeley Plantation, Charles City Co., Virginia. This has not been confirmed. Aaron, a Revolutionary War pensioner, died in Giles Co., Tn. about 1841. Children of Aaron and Phoebe Harrison Grigsby include, George, Amos and Samuel Harrison Grigsby.

Samuel Harrison Grigsby was born in Virginia, 1794 and is said to have served in the War of 1812 under Gen. William Henry Harrison. Harrison was elected the 9th President of the United States in 1841. Samuel Harrison Grigsby lived for a time in Roane County, TN where he married Mary Lindsay, but by 1818 he had moved on to middle Tennessee's Giles County where he established a residence on Lynn Creek - (Lynnville). They lived in Giles County until the mid-1830's when they moved on to LaClede County, Missouri. Marjorie B. Helmholz (AZ) has added an interesting comment in her profile (M-1, p.270), "A group of settlers from Giles Co., Tennessee settled Dec. 6, 1836 at Onyx, on Osage Fork of Gasconade River, Pulaski Co., Mo. These included the leader, John W. Alexander and wife Rebecca Brownlow; her brother with his Grigsby wife and son, William Grigsby Brownlow and daughters; Samuel H. Grigsby and children; George Grigsby and children; sons of Jesse Grigsby; Robert Faires and family - and others related and not related." Among the children of Samuel H. and Mary L. Grigsby are: John M., Lillard Harrison, Achilles Fine and Terril Lindsay Grigsby.

Terril Lindsay Grigsby was born February 3, 1818 in Giles Co., Tennessee, and would have been about 17 years old at the time of the group migration from Giles County to Missouri. A 1912 History of Solano & Napa Co., (CA) says, " At the early age of 20, in 1838, T. L. Grigsby was married to Cynthia Faires, who was born in Mecklenburg County, N. Carolina, July 25, 1817. Her father, Robert Faires, born Aug. 15, 1798 and died Nov. 22, 1855 and her mother, Susannah (Orr) Faires, born Oct. 21, 1793, died May 11, 1857, were also natives of N. Carolina. Eight children were born to T. L. & Cynthia Grigsby: Robert F., a miner, Darwin, a farmer in Contra Costa County, Alphonzo D., a farmer in San Diego Co., Mary S. who died at 22, Lura Jane Trubody, Orlena E. Edington, Thomas A of Napa and James P of Sacramento.

Terril L. Grigsby made his first trip from Missouri to California by ox-team in 1850 (See Oregon-Overland trail used p. 110, M-2) where he purchased 257 acres of land in Napa County's eastern foothills known as the Occidental Valley. After two years of preparation, he returned to Missouri, this time by way of the Panama Canal zone, where he made plans for his second overland trip west - this time with his wife and family as well as his parents, Samuel H and Mary L. Grigsby. The wagons in the caravan were again drawn by oxen but also included a band of cattle which formed the nucleus of the stock business which he established upon his arrival in California. Although Mary L. Grigsby died soon after arrival in California, Samuel H. Grigsby lived in Napa until 1873. Finally settled with his family in California, Terril turned his energy toward the development of his ranch, a part of which was planted in grain and pastures and about 80 acres in grapes.

With the success of his stock business and vinyards assured, Terril L. Grigsby turned his interests toward the development and proposed construction of a railroad between Napa and Lake County and advanced his own funds to carry out the initial work. Due to country-wide economic conditions in the 1880's the plans were abandoned. However, it was the vinyards and the three story winery built of native stone carrying a date of 1878 that became a landmark. This is still a beautiful building, 58 X 112 feet, constructed of light tan to yellow stone known as 'lava' quarried from the adjacent foothills. The first and second floors were used for storing wine, while the third was devoted to its fermentation. A large spring on the hillside above supplied water for the plant. It is noted that brandy was made in the stone cellar. The Occidental Wine Cellar and Vinyard now carry an address of 5584 Silverado Trail and from time to time **'Old Grigsby Winery'** is the subject of articles relating to the Napa Valley Wine Industry.

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EPILOGUE - TERRIL LINDSAY GRIGSBY.

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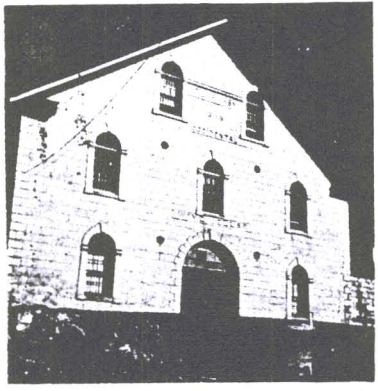

While the exact details are not available, it seems that by 1885 the ill-fated railroad in which he was a partner had incurred heavy financial obligations and in order to discharge them, Terril was forced to dispose of his ranch and vineyards. Ownership of the Occidental Winery passed on to the Bank of Napa and for many years thereafter it was known as the "Bank Ranch". T. L. Grigsby retired from active business life and made his home in Napa; however, from newspaper notices appearing in the Pulaski (Giles Co) Citizen, he made at least two visits to his native Tennessee in 1881 and again in 1886 which stated that "Mr. Grigsby came in on the [railroad] cars to visit his cousin William R. Grigsby of Lynnville after an absence of almost 50 years." Terril L. Grigsby died in Napa, CA Jan. 18, 1892, Cynthia, his wife, on Sept. 4, 1898. About 50 years ago (1934) the winery was purchased by the Regusci Family in which ownership continues under the management of a son, Angello Regusci. A part of the winery building and 120 acres of vineyard have been leased to the nearby Clos Du Val Winery. The wines, Cabernet and Zinfandel are made by Bernard Portet, son of the wine-maker at Chateau Lafite in Bordeaux, France and are representative of some of the most elegant wines produced in the Napa Valley. The front of the winery, pictured above, is inscribed "T. L. Grigsby - 1878 - Occidental Wine Cellar.". . . . . Orval R. Grigsby (CA).