The production of fermented alcoholic juice from grapes has been scientifically dated as far back as 8,000 years, in the form of residue found in ancient ceramic pottery. Throughout history, wine has been celebrated, revered and feared for its unique attributes and intoxicating effects. Today, it is a half-trillion dollar worldwide industry.

This exhibit looks at wine from the perspective of postal history and philately. All of the examples of mail and stamps presented here are related to the American wine industry. The items are grouped into the following general categories:

**Colonial Wine Trade**

**Early 19th Century Wine Trade**

**19th Century Wine Merchants**

**Vineyards and Nurseries**

**Taxation**

*This exhibit experience will be enhanced if accompanied by a glass of your favorite wine.*
Colonial Wine Trade

London to Boston,
September 26, 1722

Regarding the loss of a ship’s cargo, including “Fayal Wines”

New York to Madeira,
September 10, 1764

To the famous Madeira exporters, Newton & Gordon (still in business)

Business correspondence during the Colonial period was frequently carried by ships’ captains without involving any government postal system. The two letters above are related to the Madeira trade.

Le Cap (Cap-Haitien), Haiti, to Bordeaux, France, 1772

Carried to the port of La Flotte (north coast of France) where the “COLONIES PAR LA FLOTTE” Fleurs de Lys marking was applied to indicate the letter arrived from a colony. It was charged 12 sous due.
ON Monday the 2d of December, 1816, the Congress of the United States convened at Washington. On Wednesday following, the President transmitted, by his Secretary Mr. Tons, the following MESSAGE:

In reviewing the present state of our country, our attention cannot be withheld from the effect produced by peculiar seasons, which have very generally improved the animal gifts of the earth and threatened scarcity in particular districts. Such, however, is the variety of soils, of climates, and of products, within our extensive limits, that the aggregate resources for subsistence, are more than sufficient for the aggregate wants. And, as far as an economy of consumption, more than usual, may be necessary, our thankfulness is due to Providence, for what is far more than a compensation, in the remarkable health which has distinguished the present year.

Amidst the advantages which have succeeded the peace of Europe, and that of the United States with Great-Britain, in a general invigoration of industry among us, and in the extension of our commerce, the value of which is more to commerce than to commercial men, that a depression in foreign branches of trade, a portion of our marine, and even a considerable part of our imports, and in consequence a fall of our trade, has been a source of anxiety to the government, and to the public in general, has now become, to a great extent, a matter of public concern.

The President of the United States is, therefore, resolved to address Congress on the subject of commerce, and to call attention to the important question of the necessity of taking measures to stimulate and encourage the growth of our commerce, by the adoption of such means as will tend to increase our trade, and to promote the prosperity of the country.

In conclusion, the President again expresses his deep gratitude to the American people for their support and confidence in his administration, and assures them that he will continue to work for their welfare and happiness, and to promote the interests of our country, with devotion and perseverance.

New York to Madeira, December 21, 1816

This folded sheet is a printed copy of the "President’s Message to Congress", the complete presidential address given by James Madison to the U.S. Congress on December 2, 1816, following the peace treaty which ended the War of 1812 between the U.S. and Great Britain. It is addressed to Newton & Gordon, the Madeira wine exporters (who still exist today). The sender used the regular mails to send it to Philadelphia, where it was forwarded outside the government mails to Madeira.
Early 19th Century Wine Trade

Philadelphia to Indian Key, Florida, May 3, 1842
Addressed to Lt. John T. McLaughlin, Commander of the U.S. Schooner Fleet
(Florida Expedition)

The sender, Jacob Snider Jr., was a Philadelphia wine merchant and supplier to the U.S. Army. This letter dated May 2, 1842, provides copies of earlier correspondence (February 28), detailing a large shipment of wine to Florida. After receiving no payment, the merchant wrote to the commander to ask for “early remittance.”

The Florida Expedition was a response to attacks on settlers by Seminole Indians (the Second Seminole War of 1835-42). The U.S. Schooner Fleet led by Lt. McLaughlin did not face a maritime adversary, but launched attacks against Indians along the coast.
19th Century Wine Merchants

James Butler, Greenwich and Duane Streets, New York City, circa 1854

William S. Corwin & Co., 639 Broadway, New York City, circa 1858
19th Century Wine Merchants

Hanford & Taylor, 87 Pike Slip, New York City, circa 1854
Carried to the post office by Swarts’ Dispatch local post.
2¢ stamp at top center for local service.

Joseph Staples, 132 Bowery, New York City, circa 1859
Carried to the post office by government carrier. 1¢ carrier fee plus 3¢ postage.
N. B. Moseley, 54 South Front Street, Philadelphia, January 22, 1856

Cameo corner card printed on envelope and on billhead for one barrel (44 gallons) of “Port Wine”
19th Century Wine Merchants

Barrel cameo corner card designs from merchants in Norfolk, Petersburg and Pittsburgh
Corneau & Son, Catawba Wines, No. 2 Burnet House Stores, Cincinnati, June 1852
10¢ rate to Canada underpaid by three 3¢ 1851 Issue stamps.
Addressed to Supervisor of Cullers Department at Quebec.

F. Sarran & Co., 88 East 2nd Street, Cincinnati, August 1868
45¢ triple rate to France paid by 30¢ 1861 and 15¢ 1866 Issue stamps.
19th Century Wine Merchants

Albert Laue, 499 Greenwich St., New York City, December 8, 1872
10¢ rate to Germany paid by 10¢ 1870 Issue stamp.

J. Gunlach & Co., San Francisco, April 1889
10¢ rate to Germany plus 10¢ registry fee paid by American Bank Note Co. stamps, including two different colors of the 4¢ Jackson.
19th Century Wine Merchants

Karstendiek & Co., New Orleans, December 1861

Confederate States 10¢ rate over 500 miles to Nashville, Tennessee (photo of back).
Dr. H. Schroder’s Grape Vines and Wines Corner Card
Overprinted on Obsolete Seymour & Blair 1868 Presidential Campaign Design
Sent from Bloomington, Illinois, to Prussia in August 1870.
10¢ rate to Germany paid by 1869 Pictorial Issue stamp.
Vineyards and Nurseries

F. Trowbridge, Dealer in Trees, Plants, Roses and Vines, New Haven, Connecticut
Circa 1860

10¢ rate from New York City to San Francisco paid by 1857 10¢ Type III. New York Ocean Mail datestamp with integral grid used to cancel stamp.

Ellwanger & Barry, Mount Hope Nurseries, Rochester, N.Y., May 1864

10¢ rate to Canada paid by 1861 Issue stamp.
Vineyards and Nurseries

Speer’s Vineyards, Passaic, New Jersey
Circa 1866 (top) and 1899 (bottom)
State of Massachusetts Custom House Embossed Seal (Scott RM511), February 1805
Applied to show payment of tax on 55-gallon cask of “claret” imported from Bordeaux.

5¢ Certificate Revenue (Scott R24c) on Pleasant Valley Wine Company Sight Draft, August 1868
Stamp pays 5¢ tax on a financial document, one of the many taxes enacted during the Civil War.
Taxation

**Tax Paid on Wine, Series of 1872, One-Quart (Ulysses S. Grant)**

**Wine Stamp, Series of 1942, $1.44 Missing Denomination (Scott RE147a)**
Used pair showing black printing on back from foldover (photo at right).

**Wine Stamp, Series of 1951, $1.60 4/5 Missing Denomination (Scott RE196b)**
Unused block of four (rejoined horizontal pairs) from the discovery multiple.