

This Day in History... January 26, 1973

First US Love Stamp

On January 26, 1973, the USPS issued its first Love stamp.

In 1962, the Post Office issued its first Christmas stamp after numerous calls for a stamp honoring the holiday. After the Christmas stamps proved popular, they turned their attention to a new holiday in the 1970s.

A holiday with a close connection to greeting cards, Valentine's Day was a natural choice to receive its own special stamp. For the design, the USPS turned to artist Robert Indiana. Indiana had come up with the now famous design in 1958. Then in 1965, he provided the design for the Museum of Modern Art Christmas card. That card was the most popular card

they ever produced. The following year, Indiana created his first LOVE sculpture. In the years since the sculpture has been replicated in different colors and cities all over the country and the world.

The new Love stamp was issued on January 26, 1973, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, "The City of Brotherly Love." The USPS didn't call it a Love stamp and didn't see it as the start of a new series. They called it "A Special Stamp for Someone Special." They printed more than 320 million stamps. It was generally very popular, though some called it a "Hippie stamp." When the first-class postage rate was raised the following year, the USPS received



The second US Love stamp, issued in 1982.

many requests to issue the stamp at the new rate, but they didn't.

Requests for another Love stamp began to pour into the USPS. Finally, in 1982, they released a second stamp, with the word Love spelled out in flowers. Two years later, the third stamp was released. Like the stamp before it, these Love issues weren't considered part of a series and were issued in higher quantities and available for longer lengths of time than standard commemoratives. As the USPS described it, the stamps were "not just for Valentine's Day, but for special occasions throughout the year, such as weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, and letters to loved ones."

Love-themed stamps continued in this way until 1987. That year the USPS officially announced that they would issue a new Love stamp every year. By the following year, annual production of Love stamps neared one

billion. 1988 also marked an interesting first. It was that year that the USPS first issued two Love stamps. One was for the one-ounce first-class rate and the other for the two-ounce rate. Love stamps had become popular on Wedding invitations, so this gave couples the opportunity to use matching stamps on their invitations and RSVP envelopes. In 2006, the USPS issued the first stamps specifically designated for Weddings.

There wasn't a Love stamp in 1989, but there was a Love stamped envelope. This was the first of a handful of stamped envelopes the USPS would issue in the coming years.

The Love Series continues to be popular today, with both Love and Wedding stamps issued on a regular basis.



The first Love stamp issued on this day in 1973.



First-class stamp for use on wedding reply cards



Two-ounce stamps for use on one invitations.

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