

## This Day in History... November 23, 1889

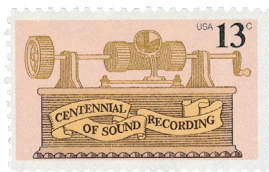
### Debut of World's First Jukebox

On November 23, 1889, the world's first jukebox was displayed and used at the Palais Royale Saloon in San Francisco, California.

In the early and mid-1800s, coin-operated music boxes and player pianos grew increasingly popular. Requiring a coin payment, these music devices used paper rolls, metal disks, or metal cylinders to play music on one or more instruments inside the machine.

In the late 1870s, a man named Louis Glass grew tired of his job manning telegraph lines for Western Union. Therefore, he left his job in search of more exciting prospects. At the time, the telephone was an emerging new technology, so Glass invested in a few California phone companies. He ultimately became the general manager of the Pacific State Telephone and Telegraph Company.

Even as a successful businessman, Glass wasn't satisfied. He soon caught on to another popular craze of the time, the phonograph. He bought the Pacific Phonograph Company, and several others in California, Washington, and Oregon. Learning more about this new device, Glass had an idea. He and his partner, William S. Arnold, tinkered with the phonograph to create something new. Their new device could play songs from a wax cylinder phonograph, but only if a nickel was inserted into the machine. Because of this, they first called the device, "The nickel-in-the-slot phonograph." Their first design used an Edison Class M Electric Phonograph with a device they patented as "Coin Actuated Attachment for Phonograph."



*Issued for the 100th anniversary of Thomas Edison's invention of the phonograph.*

Glass and Arnold installed their new machine in San Francisco's Palais Royale Saloon on November 23, 1889. Little is known of the events of the day or what followed, as the saloon closed down within a year or so, and the 1906 San Francisco earthquake destroyed much of the area. At an 1890 conference however, Glass claimed he'd installed 15 such machines that earned him over \$4,000 (about \$648,000 today). While Glass is often credited as the creator of the jukebox, there were other inventors working on similar devices in England at around the same time.

As this new device appeared to be popular, many other businessmen soon developed their own versions. Some included listening tubes (similar to headphones). These early players usually only played one song, so several devices would be set up in one place so people could listen to multiple songs, each on its own machine. It wasn't until 1918 that Hobart C. Niblack patented a part that could automatically change records. This ultimately led to the first selective jukeboxes in the 1920s.

Although the machines had been around for decades, they didn't get their popular name until the 1940s. The word jukebox was based on the term "juke joint," from the Creole word "juke" for disorderly, rowdy, or wicked.

As the years went on, the technology in the machines improved. The machines could hold more and more records, while not taking up as much space. Some machines were fitted with song counters, keeping track of the most-requested songs, so the unpopular ones could be replaced. Early, plain wooden jukeboxes were eventually replaced with stylishly lighted, colorful jukeboxes made with marbled plastic. However, when the US entered World War II metal and plastic were needed for the war effort and no new jukeboxes were made until 1946.

Jukeboxes were at their most popular between the 1940s and 1960s, with about three-quarters of American records eventually being put into jukeboxes. Jukeboxes are still produced and used today, though most people use CDs or MP3s, but they often feature the flashy styles and lights of the jukeboxes of the 1950s.



*Stamp issued to pay the postage for the first-class, presort letter rate.*



*Discovery of San Francisco Bay stamp issued for the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition.*



*Stamp Venturers coil*



*1996 self-adhesive coil*



*1997 self-adhesive coil*



*1997 linerless coil*

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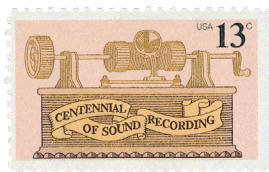
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