

# This Day in History... February 28, 1973

## American Arts Series

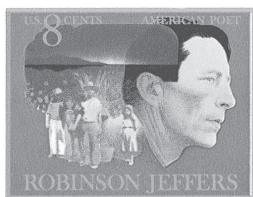
On February 28, 1973, the USPS issued the first of seven stamps in its new American Arts Series. The stamps in the series honored artists from several different genres, including painting, music writing, and filmmaking.

The first four stamps were issued in 1973 and all featured a similar style and format. With artwork by Mark English, each one pictured the artist and an image capturing a scene from or inspired by their work.

George Gershwin was the first honoree in the series, with his stamp being issued on February 28, 1973, in Beverly Hills, California. In addition to a profile of Gershwin, the stamp pictures a scene from his folk opera, *Porgy and Bess*. Gershwin composed the much-performed "Rhapsody in Blue" and his *Of Thee I Sing* was the first musical comedy to win a Pulitzer Prize.



*The first stamp in the series honors George Gershwin.*



*Poet Robinson Jeffers*

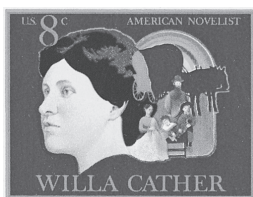
took frequent trips to Rainbow Lake in the Adirondacks for his health and inspiration. As the son of a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, most of Tanner's works centered on Biblical themes.

The second stamp in the series honoring Robinson Jeffers was issued on August 13, 1973, in Carmel, California. Beside his portrait, the stamp pictures a man with a burro and a young boy and girl, representing the people of Carmel who Jeffers wrote about in rich detail in his poetry. Jeffers's poetry has been described as "hard to love, hard to forget." The most famous of his poems was "Be Angry at The Sun."

The third stamp was issued on September 10, 1973, and honored professional painter Henry O. Tanner. Beside Tanner's portrait is a painter's palette with a rainbow on it. Tanner



*Painter Henry O. Tanner.*



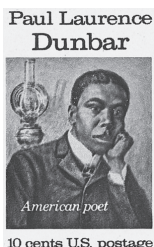
*Novelist Willa Cather*

The fourth stamp in the series honored Willa Cather and was issued on her 100th birthday, September 20, 1973, in Red Cloud, Nebraska. Cather is remembered as one of America's finest novelists and Nebraska's best. Cather won the 1922 Pulitzer Prize for her novel, "One of Ours."

The series continued in 1975, though the stamps took on a different look. The first stamp of 1975 honored Benjamin West and was issued on February 10 in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. The stamp features a 1763 self-portrait of West. He was the first American artist to go abroad. West gained critical acclaim when he was

just twenty years of age and went on to become historical painter to King George III.

Paul Lawrence Dunbar was the sixth honoree in the series. His stamp was issued on May 1, 1975, in Dayton, Ohio. The stamp features a portrait based on several historical photos of Dunbar. The son of an escaped slave, his writing greatly contributed to a more sensitive understanding of African Americans. His popular story *The Sport of the Gods* was later turned into a movie.



*Poet Paul L. Dunbar*

The final stamp in the series honoring David W. Griffith was issued for his 100th birthday on May 27, 1975, in Beverly Hill, California. The stamp pictures Griffith and a movie camera in front a landscape. Griffith was a pioneer of the silver screen. He refined movie techniques, like close-ups and fade-outs, and discovered the talents of stars such as Lillian Gish and Mary Pickford.



*Artist Benjamin West*



*Filmmaker D.W. Griffith*

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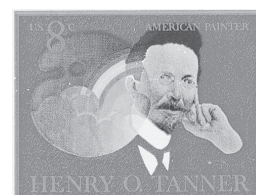
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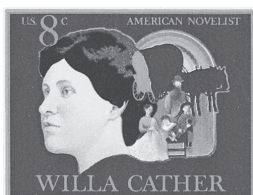
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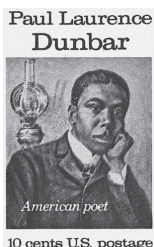
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