

This Day in History... March 30, 1939

First Batman Comic Released

On March 30, 1939, *Detective Comics* #27 was released, introducing the world to the caped crusader – Batman.

In April 1938, Superman first appeared in *Action Comics* #1. He proved popular with readers and launched what's been called the "Golden Age of Comics," a 20-year period that saw the rise of superheroes.

Witnessing Superman's popularity, National Publications (later DC Comics) asked its creative department to come up with more superheroes. Artist Bob Kane was excited by the idea and quickly created "the Bat-Man." He sketched his idea for Batman wearing a black and red costume, a

small facemask, and wings. Kane shared his drawing with writer Bill Finger, who suggested he wear a bat-shaped cowl to cover his head, as well as gloves so he would not leave fingerprints.

Finger created the name Bruce Wayne from Robert Bruce, a Scottish patriot and chief of the Knights Templar, and Mad Anthony Wayne, a Revolutionary War general. They gave Batman a double identity inspired by The Scarlet Pimpernel and Zorro, playing the hero in secret and "playing the fool" in public. They also made Batman a master detective, based on Dick Tracy and Sherlock Holmes.

A week before Batman's debut, National ran a small ad announcing his adventure in the next issue. Batman's first appearance came in the story "The Case of the Chemical Syndicate," which was published in *Detective Comics* #27 on March 30, 1939. The comic had a May cover date, which was actually used to signal sellers to remove the book from sale.

The story was so popular that Batman had his own comic books by the following year. The introduction of the Batman TV series in 1966 reinvigorated the comic – and increased sales for all other comics as well. After the show was canceled two years later, the comics took on a darker tone that has come to define Batman today. He began using more advanced weapons, sophisticated technology, and swarms of bats to fight the city's criminals.

In the years since his creation, Batman has appeared in over 11,300 comics plus movies, cartoons, and video games. Batman is consistently ranked as one of the greatest superheroes. This is even more impressive considering he possesses no superpowers.



Stamp from the 2006 DC Comic Superheroes sheet



Stamp pictures Batman #1, first published in April 1940



Stamps issued for Batman's 75th anniversary. The stamps show four eras in the history of the "Caped Crusader" and the Bat-signals from each time period.

Mystic Stamp Company • Camden, NY 13316

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