

This Day in History... October 9, 1940

Birth of Music Legend John Lennon

On October 9, 1940, John Lennon was born in Liverpool, England, as the city endured the German air raids of World War II. Within a little more than two decades, he would help form the Beatles and become one of the best-known songwriters and performers of the rock era.

Lennon was born at Liverpool Maternity Hospital to Julia Stanley Lennon and Alfred Lennon. His parents' relationship was unstable, and he was largely raised by his aunt, Mary "Mimi" Smith, at her home in the Woolton section of Liverpool. His mother remained part of his life and encouraged his interest in music. In July 1958, however, Julia Lennon was struck and killed by a car near Mimi's home. John was 17. The loss affected him deeply and later appeared in songs such as "Julia" and "Mother."

Music gave Lennon an outlet. In 1956, at age 16, he formed a Liverpool skiffle group called the Quarrymen. Skiffle mixed American folk, blues, country, and early rock-and-roll influences. On July 6, 1957, the Quarrymen performed at a church fête in Woolton. After the show, Lennon met 15-year-old Paul McCartney, who impressed him by playing guitar and remembering the words to rock-and-roll songs. McCartney soon joined the group.

McCartney later introduced his friend George Harrison, a talented young guitarist. Harrison joined in 1958. The band went through several names and lineup changes before settling on the Beatles around 1960. Drummer Ringo Starr completed the famous four-man lineup in August 1962.

The Beatles built their early skills through demanding live work. They played clubs in Liverpool, including the Cavern Club, and made extended trips to Hamburg, West Germany. In Hamburg, the group often performed several long sets a night. The experience sharpened their playing, broadened their song list, and helped them become a tightly rehearsed live band.

In 1961, Brian Epstein saw the Beatles perform at the Cavern Club and became their manager. He helped secure a recording contract with EMI's Parlophone label. Producer George Martin worked with the group at EMI Studios in London and recognized both their musical ability and the value of the Lennon-McCartney songwriting partnership.

The Beatles released their first single, "Love Me Do," in Britain in October 1962. Their next single, "Please Please Me," became a major British hit. On February 11, 1963, they recorded 10 of the 14 tracks for their first album, *Please Please Me*, in one long day at EMI Studios. Lennon had a bad cold, but saved the demanding vocal for "Twist and Shout" until the end of the session. The album reached No. 1 in Britain in May 1963 and remained there for 30 weeks.

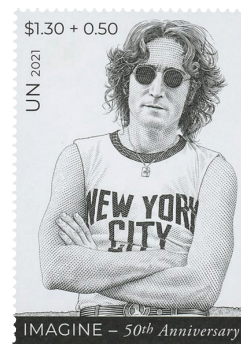
The Beatles' popularity in Britain soon became known as Beatlemania. Their breakthrough in the United States came in early 1964, after "I Want to Hold Your Hand" became a hit. On February 9, 1964, they appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show* before an estimated 73 million viewers. Their American success did not result from *Please Please Me* alone; it came after a sequence of popular singles, intense publicity, and the group's first US visit.

From 1963 through 1970, Lennon and McCartney wrote or co-wrote most of the Beatles' songs. Lennon's work included "Help!," "In My Life," "Strawberry Fields Forever," "A Day in the Life," and "Come Together." His writing could be playful, personal, skeptical, or reflective. As the 1960s progressed, the Beatles moved beyond their early pop sound. Albums such as *Rubber Soul*, *Revolver*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and *Abbey Road* used more complex arrangements, studio techniques, and varied musical influences.

By the end of the decade, the four members were pursuing increasingly separate interests. Lennon's marriage to Cynthia Powell ended in 1968. He began a creative and personal partnership with Japanese artist Yoko Ono, whom he married in 1969. The Beatles formally ended their partnership in 1970.

Lennon continued recording as a solo artist. His best-known solo works include "Give Peace a Chance," "Instant Karma!," "Imagine," "Jealous Guy," and "Watching the Wheels." His 1971 album *Imagine* became one of his most recognized releases. In 1980, he returned to recording with Ono on *Double Fantasy* after several years away from public music-making.

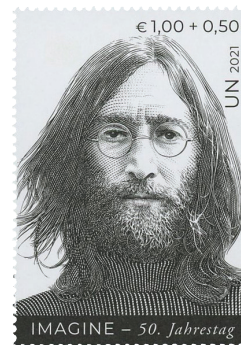
On December 8, 1980, Lennon was shot outside his apartment building in New York City by Mark David Chapman. Earlier that evening, Lennon had signed a copy of *Double Fantasy* for Chapman. He died shortly after the shooting, at age 40. Lennon is remembered for a body of work that helped define the Beatles' sound and remains widely performed, recorded, and discussed.



International Day of Peace Semipostal Stamp – Also known as World Peace Day, it's celebrated on September 21st every year.



Since 2021 marked the 50th anniversary of John Lennon's famous song "Imagine," the United Nations decided to issue stamps commemorating the artist and his personal work in advocating for world peace.



A surcharge was added to these UN stamps and souvenir sheets to go toward the United Nations' peacekeeping operations.

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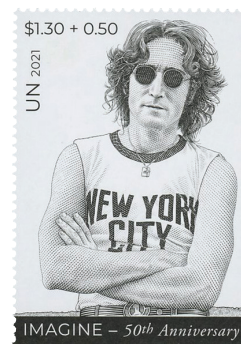
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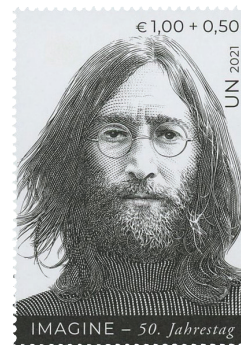
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