

# The Timeline History Of Valentine's Day | Histowiki

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**BC 3500** : A clay tablet from the Sumerian era is believed to contain the oldest love poem that has survived to this day. The Sumerians are credited for being the inventors of written language.

**AD 197** : Bishop Valentine, hailing from Interamna gains his title. He was also martyred for his faith, a victim of Emperor Aurelian's persecution. He also buried on the Via Flaminia. ([Saint Valentine's Day: Legend of the Saint](#))

**AD 269** : The Valentines, early Christians who were martyred for their faith, honored on February 14 are Valentine of Rome and Valentine of Terni Valentine of Rome, who was a priest in Rome who was martyred on this date and was buried on the Via Flaminia. ([Chaucer and the Cult of Saint Valentine](#))

**AD 270** : In defiance of the laws set forth by the Roman Empire, Catholic Priest St. Valentine helped Catholics to escape persecution and assisted them in the performance of Catholic sacraments such as marriage. He was martyred for his faith in Africa and his head is preserved in New Minster, Winchester, in the abbey. He was venerated after his death and is a recognized Catholic Saint. Legends state that he was personally interrogated by Emperor Claudius II who tried in vain to get him to convert to Roman Paganism and that St. Valentine performed a miracle by giving a blind girl her sight, leading many Romans to convert to Christianity in secret. He is rumored to have cut out hearts from parchment to give to Roman soldiers and Christians who faced persecution as a reminder of their faith, which is perhaps the origin of the Valentine's Day tradition of using hearts as a symbol for the day. Furthermore, he may have authored the first Valentine's Day card, addressed to the young girl whose sight he restored, and signed 'Your Valentine.' ([Castleden, Rodney. "The Book of Saints". 2006](#))

**AD 496** : Pope Gelasius I established February 14 as the day when the feast of St. Valentine occurs. (["Pope St. Gelasius I". Catholic Encyclopedia](#))

**AD 1382** : [Geoffrey Chaucer](#) wrote a poem that is said to contain the first reference to romantic love in connection with Valentine's Day, entitled Parlement of Foules. In the poem, Chaucer makes reference to birds pairing off and finding their mates. It is believed by many that Chaucer was referencing February 14 as Valentine's Day, although some historians still debate the issue, referencing the fact that February may be too cold a month for birds to begin mating. (["St. Valentine, Chaucer, and Spring in February"](#))

**AD 1400** : French Princess Isabel of Bavaria may have formally established a "High Court of Love" on January 6. Documents point to the 'Charter of the Court of Love' as the document that marks the beginning of its existence. Whether the court was just an imaginative creation of the Princess or an actual court that settled disputes of the heart such as contracts of love, settling perceived or alleged betrayals and violent acts committed against women is not known for certain. (Ansgar, 1986, Chapter 8, The Hibernantino of the Mating Season, pp. 131–138)

**AD 1415** : Charles, Duke of Orléans wrote a rondeau (a form of poem) to his wife while he was a prisoner of war, being held in the Tower of London, after he was captured during the Battle of



Agincourt. ([A Farewell To Love](#))

**AD 1477** : Margery Brewes wrote letters to her husband-to-be, John Paston and refers to him as “my right well-beloved Valentine.” These letters are believed to be the first ‘Valentines’ written in English. ([Davis, Norman The Paston Letters- A Selection in Modern Spelling Oxford University Press 1983 pp.233–5](#))

**AD 1600** : In playwright William Shakespeare’s famed play *Hamlet*, the character Ophelia sadly refers to Valentine’s Day and tells her husband Hamlet how she wishes to be his Valentine. ([William Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act IV, Scene 5](#))

**AD 1590** : *The Faerie Queen*, by Edmund Spenser contains the first reference to the phrase ‘Roses are Red, Violets are Blue’ that is still widely used on Valentines to this day. ([Spenser, The Faery Queene iii, Canto 6, Stanza 6](#))

**AD 1700** : Americans began to exchange hand-written and handmade Valentines during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. These sentiments were sent to lovers and to friends, oftentimes delivered by hand, but sometimes delivered via the Postal Service, the first of which was created in the United States in 1692. ([Our Postal System](#))

**AD 1784** : *Gammer Gurton’s Garland* was published. It contains a well-known Valentine’s Day poem that is still echoed by many to this day, containing the words ‘Roses are Red, Violets are Blue.’ ([Gammer Gurton’s Garland \(London, 1784\) in I. Opie and P. Opie, The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes \(Oxford University Press, 1951, 2nd edn., 1997\), p. 375.](#))

**AD 1797** : *The Young Man’s Valentine Writer* was published. It was a guide to be used by young men who were not so creative or ‘wordy’ and needed a bit of help coming up with verses to write to their beloveds on Valentine’s Day. During this time period many people began the custom of mailing their Valentines rather than delivering them in person. The first ‘secret admirer’ Valentines began to be sent as a result, which led Valentines to begin to be more racy than they had ever been before, due perhaps to the new ability to send them anonymously. ([Extraordinary Origins of Everyday Things](#))

**AD 1847** : The first Valentines to be commercially available for sale were created by an American woman named Esther Howland, hailing from Worcester, Massachusetts. As her idea gained popularity, she went into business, naming her popular service the ‘New England Valentine Company.’ (["Esther Howland". Emotionscards.com.](#))

**AD 1960** : Sweden established February 14 as “All Heart’s Day,” also known as *Alla hjartans dag*, as the country began to have a larger American influence. Although it is still not a legally recognized holiday in the country, the flower industry and cosmetic industries of the country have many sales for the day, exceeded only by their sales for Mother’s Day.

**AD 1980** : The jewelry industry begins to capitalize on the tradition of giving gifts to lovers on Valentine’s Day and begins to market diamonds as the gift of the discerning gentleman to his lady on Valentine’s Day.

**AD 2000** : As the Internet became more widely used, digital Valentines gained popularity and e-card Valentines began to be sent in addition to or in lieu of sending paper Valentine’s Day cards to lovers, friends and other loved ones.

**About this Timeline’s Curator:**

[John Alanis](#) is a well known author of 10 books on Dating and Men’s issues. His most recent book that can be found on Kindle, is [Where to Find a Good Woman \(Or a Bad Girl\): The Secret Step by](#)

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