Best Wishes

Louis
1901: Born August 4 to Mary Ann and William Armstrong in New Orleans, Louisiana. Father abandons family during infancy. Lives his first five years with grandmother, Josephine, then with mother and sister Beatrice (Mama Lucy).

1907: Karnofsky family hires him to work on junk wagon, and lends him money to purchase his first cornet. Forms a quartet with three other boys and sings on street corners for tips.

1912: Fires pistol in air to celebrate New York's Eve, is arrested and sent to Colored Waifs Home for Boys. Receives music instruction from band director and becomes leader of Waifs Home band.

1914: Released from Waifs Home, lives briefly with father, then returns to mother. Delivers coal and sells newspapers to help feed himself, mother, and sister. Performs in honky-tongs with local groups. Joe “King” Oliver, famous jazz cornetist, becomes his teacher and mentor.

1918: Oliver moves to Chicago and Louis takes his place in the Kid Ory Band.

1919: Bandleader Fate Marable hires him to perform on the steamer St. Paul, one of the riverboats that traveled the Mississippi River.

1922: Joe Oliver sends for him to come to Chicago and play second cornet in King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band at the Lincoln Gardens.

1923: Makes first recorded solo, “Chimes Blues,” on April 6 for Gennett Records in Richmond, Indiana, as a member of King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band.

1924: Marries Lil Hardin, pianist in Oliver’s band. Emerges as a soloist when he moves to New York City to join the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra at the Roseland Ballroom. Records with Henderson and various blues singers.

1925: Records “Cake Walking Babies from Home” with Clarence Williams’s Blue Five, which included Sidney Bechet on soprano saxophone. Records “St. Louis Blues” with Bessie Smith, the “Empress of the Blues,” on January 14. Quits Henderson orchestra to return to Chicago in November; plays with the Erskine Tate Orchestra at the Vendome Theater and Carroll Dickerson Orchestra at the Sunset Cafe. On November 12 makes first recordings as a leader with his own group, Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five and later, Louis Armstrong and His Hot Seven. The sixty recordings of this group transform jazz.

1929: Returns to New York; performs at Connie’s Inn with the Carroll Dickerson Orchestra. Appears in Broadway show Hot Chocolate, by Fats Waller and Andy Razaf. Records first song hit, “Ain’t Misbehavin,’” from Hot Chocolate, which becomes a favorite of both popular music and jazz lovers and a major cross-over success for Armstrong.


1932: First trip abroad; travels to London and tours Great Britain, July–November.

1933: Returns to London with new big band; tours Britain, Norway, Holland, and Denmark, where thousands greet him at train station.

1934: Lives in Paris most of the year.

1935: Returns to United States; Joe Glaser becomes his manager; appears at Connie’s Inn in New York.

1937: First African American performer to host a national network radio program, the *Fleishman’s Yeast Show*. Appears in films *Artists and Models* and *Every Day’s a Holiday* with Mae West.


1939: Portrays Bottom in Broadway musical *Swinging the Dream*, a jazz version of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

1940: Performs with Mills Brothers, famous African American quartet.

1942: Marries Lucille Wilson on October 12.

1943: Lucille purchases home in Corona, Queens, New York, where they live for the remainder of their lives.


1947: Performs at Carnegie Hall with small group and his big band, and at Town Hall with small group. Breaks up big band and forms septet, Louis Armstrong and the All Stars, debuting at Billy Berg’s Club in Hollywood in August. Performs with small group for the remainder of his career.

1948: Appears at first international jazz festival in Nice, France.


1950: Tours Germany, Belgium, Canada, Hawaii, and Colorado. Appears on *The Big Show* with Tallulah Bankhead. Records with Louis Jordan and Sy Oliver.

1951: Records hit song “A Kiss to Build a Dream On.”

1952: Appears in film *Glory Alley*.


1957: Tours South America and Europe. Speaks out strongly against racial injustice when Little Rock, Arkansas, refuses to integrate its schools; cancels U.S. government-sponsored tour of Russia in protest.

1958: Appearance at Newport Jazz Festival is captured in motion picture *Jazz on a Summer’s Day*. Appears twice on NBC-TV’s Timex Show. Appears in films *The Five Pennies* with Danny Kaye and *The Beat Generation*. 
1959: Performs in Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, and Italy. Suffers heart attack in Spoleto, Italy; is hospitalized briefly. Appears on *Ed Sullivan Show* and Bing Crosby Oldsmobile Show.


1963: Performs for President John F. Kennedy.

1964: Performs in Las Vegas and Puerto Rico. His recording “Hello, Dolly” becomes number-one hit. Appears as mystery guest on TV show *What's My Line?*

1965: Tours Eastern Europe; sold-out performances in Montreal, Toronto, and Las Vegas. Broadcasts over *Voice of America* from the Monterey Jazz Festival. Given Key to the city of New Orleans. Appears on TV shows *The Dean Martin Show* and *Shindig*. Appears in films *When the Boys Meet the Girls* and *A Man Called Adam.*

1966: Performs the summer season at Jones Beach Marine Theater on Long Island. Appears on *The Dean Martin Show* and *The Danny Kaye Show*. Records *Disney Songs the Satchmo Way.*


1970: Newport Jazz Festival presents tribute to Armstrong featuring Mahalia Jackson, Dizzy Gillespie, the Eureka Brass Band, and others. Appears on *The Dick Cavett Show*, *The David Frost Show, The Tonight Show*, and *The Flip Wilson Show*.

1971: Reunited with Bing Crosby on *The David Frost Show* singing “Blueberry Hill.” Armstrong and the All Stars appear in their final engagement at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City for two weeks. Appears on TV special with Pearl Bailey. Records poem “‘Twas the Night Before Christmas” in den of his home in Corona, his last commercial recording.

Louis Armstrong passes away in his sleep at home in Corona, New York, on July 6, 1971.

1987: “What a Wonderful World” becomes a hit as the theme of the movie *Good Morning, Vietnam.*
1891

**AUGUST 4, 1901**  
Louis Armstrong born in New Orleans.

**Music**
- Giuseppe Verdi dies (born 1813)
- Maurice Ravel: *Jeu d’eau*
- Sergei Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No. 2
- **Gussie Lord Davis, songwriter, dies** (born 1863)
- **Duke Ellington and gospel composer Thomas A. Dorsey, two years old**

**History and Politics**
- President William McKinley assassinated by an anarchist; succeeded by Theodore Roosevelt
- Businessman J. Pierpont Morgan organizes buyout of Carnegie to form U.S. Steel, world’s first billion-dollar corporation
- Queen Victoria of Great Britain dies; succeeded by her son Edward VII
- Peace of Peking ends Boxer uprising in China
- Treaty signed to build the Panama Canal under U.S. supervision

**Literature and Theater**
- Rudyard Kipling: *Kim*
- Thomas Mann: *Buddenbrooks*
- Johan August Strindberg: *Dance of Death*

**Visual Arts**
- Walt Disney born (died 1966)
- Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec dies (born 1864)
- Pablo Picasso’s Blue Period begins (1901–1905)
- Paul Gauguin: *The Gold in Their Bodies*

**Science and Technology**
- Following a “century of steam,” the “century of electricity” begins
- First motor-driven bicycles
- Physicist Enrico Fermi born (Nobel Prize 1938, died 1954)
- Guglielmo Marconi transmits telegraphic radio messages from Cornwall to Newfoundland.

**Daily Life**
- **Joe Walcott, first black welterweight champion, defeats Rube Ferns and wins title at Ft. Erie, Ontario.**
- Bert Williams becomes first black to record with Victor Talking Machine Company
- Bob Cole, J. Rosamond Johnson, and James Weldon Johnson become first blacks to sign songwriter contracts with a Broadway music company, J. Stern.
1923

APRIL 6, 1923 Louis Armstrong’s first recorded solo, “Chimes Blues,” performed with the rhythm section of the Creole Jazz Band.

Music
- Bela Bartok: Dance Suite
- George Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue
- Paul Hindemith: Das Marienleben, song cycle
- Arthur Honegger: Pacific 231
- James P. Johnson: Runnin’ Wild, the musical revue that popularized the Charleston
- Maurice Ravel: L’Enfant et les sortileges, opera

History and Politics
- Centers of Tokyo and Yokohama destroyed by earthquake; 120,000 die.
- Hitler’s coup d’etat, known as the Beer Hall Putsch, fails in Munich.
- Teapot Dome oil scandal hearings in Washington, D.C.
- Tri-state conclave of Ku Klux Klan held in Kokomo, Indiana; 200,000 members attend.
- Martial law established in Oklahoma to protect people and property from attacks by Ku Klux Klan
- William Monroe Trotter founds the Boston Guardian, a militant newspaper that opposed the policies of Booker T. Washington and demands full equality for blacks.

Literature and Theatre
- French actress Sarah Bernhardt dies (born 1844).

Religion and Philosophy
- Martin Buber: I and Thou

Daily Life
- Aeroflot, largest airline in the world, founded in the U.S.S.R
- Jack Dempsey knocks out Luis Firpo to retain the heavyweight championship
- First black professional basketball team, the Harlem Renaissance, organized
- Bessie Smith: “Downhearted Blues/Gulf Coast Blues,” first recording by a black artist to sell over one million copies.
1925

NOVEMBER 12, 1925  The first recording date by Louis Armstrong’s Hot Five, including the session that produced “Gut Bucket Blues.” This session began the sixty recorded performances of the Hot Five and the Hot Seven that transformed jazz.

Music
- Pierre Boulez born
- Erik Satie dies (born 1886).
- Dmitri Shostakovich: Symphony No. 1
- James Weldon Johnson: *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*

History and Politics
- Paul von Hindenburg elected president of Germany
- Adolph Hitler reorganizes the Nazi Party and publishes Vol. 1 of *Mein Kampf*
- A. Philip Randolph organizes the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters

Literature and Theater
- Amy Lowell dies (born 1854)
- Theodore Dreiser: *An American Tragedy*
- F. Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*
- Sinclair Lewis: *Arrowsmith* (Pulitzer Prize)
- Arna Bontemps: *Golgatha Is a Mountain* (Alexander Pushkin Award)

Religion and Philosophy
- Alain Locke: *The New Negro*
- Hebrew University founded in Jerusalem

Visual Arts
- Charlie Chaplin: *The Gold Rush*
- Walter Gropius, architect, moves the Bauhaus from Dessau to Weimar, Germany

Science and Technology
- The Scopes Trial: Evolution vs. Biblical story of Creation
- Solar eclipse in New York, first in 300 years
- Kodak produces the first 16mm movie film.
- Werner Heisenberg, Niels Bohr, and Ernst Pascual Jordan develop quantum mechanics.

Daily Life
- Land speed record of 150.86 mph set by Malcolm Campbell
- Madison Square Garden opens in New York City.
1971

JULY 6, 1971 Louis Armstrong dies in New York City.

Music
- Igor Stravinsky dies (born 1882).
- *Fiddler on the Roof* becomes the longest-running Broadway musical in history
- Rock impresario Bill Graham closes Fillmores East and West
- Lillian Hardin Armstrong dies August 28 (born 1898)

History and Politics
- American politician Thomas E. Dewey dies (born 1903).
- American diplomat Dean Acheson dies (born 1893).
- Undersecretary General of the UN Ralph Bunche dies (born 1904)
- American civil rights leader Whitney Young dies (born 1922)
- Los Angeles earthquake kills 60 and causes $1 billion in damages
- First segments of The Pentagon Papers published in the New York Times
- Lt. William Calley convicted in the My Lai massacre

Literature and Theater
- Bennett Cerf, American author and founder of Random House publishing company, dies (born 1898)
- Sylvia Plath: *The Bell Jar*
- Herman Wouk: *The Winds of War*
- Paul Zindel: *The Effects of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*
- Maya Angelou: *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water Fore I Die*

Visual Arts
- Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts opens.
- Stanley Kubrick: *A Clockwork Orange*
- William Friedkin: *The French Connection*
- Gordon Parks: *Shaft*

Science and Technology
- U.S. Apollo 14 and 15 crews become the third and fourth groups to explore the Moon’s surface.
- U.S.S.R. soft-lands a space capsule on Mars.
- Dr. Choh Hao Li synthesizes human growth hormone.

Daily Life
- Cigarette advertisements are banned from American television.
- Joe Frazier outscores Muhammad Ali to retain heavyweight boxing championship.
- Charles Evers of Mississippi becomes the first black candidate for governor in modern times.
- Daniels & Bell is the first black company to join the New York Stock Exchange.
- Satchel Paige is the first black player elected to Baseball Hall of Fame