

## BINGO HISTORY: STORY OF THE GAME BINGO

The origins of contemporary bingo go back to 16th century Italy, where the lottery game Lo Giuoco del Lotto d'Italia was introduced. The popular chance game was introduced to North America in the late 1920s by the name of Beano. A toy salesperson of New York was responsible for changing the name of the game into Bingo and to the increase of its popularity throughout the US. In the late 18th century, the original Italian lotto game made its way to France. Historical evidence shows that a game called Le Lotto was popular among the French high society who used to play the game in parties and social gatherings. Le Lotto used to be played with special cards that were divided into three rows and nine columns. Each of the three columns consists of 10 numbers, while each column had five random number and four blank spaces in it. Each player had a different lotto card where he used to mark the number announced by the caller. The first player to cover one row won the game. By the 19th century, the lotto game spread around Europe and started to serve as a didactic childrens game. In the 1850s, several educational lotto games had entered the German toys market. The lotto games purpose was to teach children how to spell words, how to multiply numbers, etc. By 1920s, a similar version to the lotto game, known as beano was popular at county fairs throughout the US. In beano, the players placed beans on their cards to mark the called out number. The first player who completed a full row on his card, used to yell out Beano!, until one night in December 1929, when a New Yorker toys salesperson by the name of Edwin S. Lowe visited a country fair outside Jacksonville, Georgia. On his way back to New York, Lowe had purchased beano equipment including dried beans, a rubber numbering stamp and cardboard. At his New York home, Lowe has been hosting friendly beano games. During one game, one excited winner who had managed to complete a full row stuttered out Bingo, instead of Beano. Listening to the excited stuttering girl, Edwin S. Lowe thoughts went away. Lowe decided to develop a new game that would be called Bingo. While Lowe's Bingo game was making its first steps in the market, a Pennsylvanian priest asked Lowe to use the game for charity purpose. After a short tryout period, the priest had found out that the bingo game causes the churches to lose money. Since the variety of bingo cards was limited, each bingo game ended up in more than five winners. In order to develop the game and to lower the probabilities of winning, Lowe approached Prof. Carl Leffler, a mathematician from Columbia University. Leffler was asked to create bigger variety of bingo cards that each of them will have unique combination of numbers. By 1930, Lowe had 6,000 bingo cards and Prof. Leffler went insane. Since then, the popularity of the bingo game as a fundraiser continued to grow. In less than five years, about 10,000 weekly bingo games took place throughout North America. Lowe's company grew to employ several thousands of employees and to occupy more than 60 presses 24 hours a day. Now, bingo is one of the most popular chance games in the world. It is played in churches, schools, local bingo halls and land based casinos in the US, the UK, Australia, New Zealand and other parts of the world.

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