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The history of the \$2 bill

While most of us have seen a \$2 bill, it's not a common sight these days.

The Federal Government issued the first \$2 In 1862. The bills were approximately twice the size of their current size until 1928 when the Treasury Department reduced the size of all paper currency to the standard size it is today.

The front of the bill features a portrait of Thomas Jefferson, which lead them to often being referred to as Toms.

The \$2 bill never found favor with the American public and retailers and banks did not prefer it because there wasn't a standard spot for it in cash registers and teller drawers.

In the 1920s, it was considered a jinx to receive a two-dollar bill. As a result It was not allowed in some casinos and racetracks. Even today, some retailers refuse to accept them because they think they are counterfeit or "play money."

Because of low circulation the government stopped printing \$2 bills in 1966. But in 1976, the treasury department decided to bring back the \$2, a special bill for the country's bicentennial, with a big picture of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on the back. The government printed 400 million of them.

The bicentennial bills turned out to be collector's items and they vanished into dresser drawers. These days, the lifespan of a \$1 bill is approximately 18 months, but a \$2 bill lasts about six years because people generally put them away and don't spend them.

Today, there are more than a billion \$2 bills in circulation and they are still being printed. You can get \$2 bills at many banks — you just have to ask. When you do use the bills they almost always get a reaction.

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