

April 4

1806 Claiborne Fox Jackson was born in Kentucky. He was the governor of Missouri when the Civil War began. He took the state militia to fight against the Union. Jackson set up a rebel legislature in Neosho. The rebel government was recognized by the Confederacy, but Missouri remained in the Union. A federal victory at Pea Ridge, Arkansas in 1862 ended the rebel threat. Jackson died a few months later.

1849 The citizens of St. Charles voted 78 to 26 to change from a village to a city. The village had been known as Saint Charles since 1809. But when the legislature passed an act making it a third class city, the name was changed to "St. Charles."

1852 The steamboat *Glencoe* exploded at the foot of Chestnut Street, killing 45. People greeting the arriving boat jumped onto the bow. The boat tipped forward, which changed the water level in the boilers. The ensuing explosion sent body parts onto the rooftops along Wharf Street.

1857 H. Clay Sexton was named as the first St. Louis Fire Chief. He formerly led the Mound Volunteer Company, one of the colorful companies that raced each other to fires and fought battles in the streets in the days before the paid department. He was removed from office and placed in the Gratiot Street Prison for alleged Confederate sympathies in 1862. He returned after the war and served again from 1869 to 1885.

1879 The worst fire here since the great fire of 1849 leveled the entire block surrounded by Washington, St. Charles, Fourth and Fifth Streets. It started in a five-story building housing a clothing wholesaler and quickly spread to the surrounding buildings. Two civilians and a firefighter were killed.

1889 An ordinance was passed authorizing the City Hall Commission to advertise for bids for the new building. The cost was not to exceed \$1 million. The commission held a design contest and chose the work of George Richard Mann. The cornerstone was laid in June 1891, but city hall was not completed until November 1904.

1904 The Women's Humane Society heard the sensational report of J.H. Finnell, special agent of the society. Finnell said that the butchers of the Igorote tribe at the World's Fair beat the unfortunate canines to death. The women declared that canned dog meat was readily available for importation from the Philippines and should be used instead.

1918 German immigrant Robert Prager was lynched by a mob at Mauer Heights, one mile west of Collinsville. He had been accused of making disloyal statements during a speech to miners in Maryville. Many miners were convinced he was a spy who planned to bomb the mines. But Prager was a loyal American, and even tried to enlist in the Navy. A jury acquitted those involved, saying they had committed "patriotic murder."

1920 The Cardinals announced they were moving to a new home from Robison Field. They would roost at Sportsmen's Park (later Busch Stadium) at Grand and Dodier until 1966, when the new Busch Stadium downtown was completed.

1928 City officials offered the Missouri Historical Society the use of the west wing of the Jefferson Memorial for the display of trophies awarded to Charles Lindbergh after his flight. The city had been in danger of losing the awards, because of the lack of a suitable display site.

1928 Maya Angelou was born Marguerite Johnson in St. Louis. She was raised in rural Arkansas, and recounted her upbringing there in *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*. She was nominated for an Emmy Award for her role in *Roots*. Her screenplay, *Georgia, Georgia*, was the first by an African-American woman to become a motion picture. Today, she is a leading voice in the African-American literary community.

1928 Edward G. Lewis, the flamboyant publisher who founded University City, was convicted in Los Angeles of mail fraud in connection with a land promotion. Lewis would end up broke. But the two planned communities he founded, University City and Atascadero, California, are still thriving today.

1933 Bernard F. Dickmann was elected mayor of St. Louis, the first Democratic mayor here in 24 years. He would call together a group of businessmen to set in motion Luther Ely Smith's plans for a riverfront memorial. The official name for the Poplar Street Bridge is the Bernard F. Dickmann bridge.

1940 Captain Joseph Streckfuss, President of the Streckfuss Line, announced that the ship under construction at the foot of Franklin Street would be placed into excursion service beginning on June 12th. The streamlined vessel had become known as "The Mystery Ship." It would be named the *Admiral*.

1941 A huge crowd turned out for the first Hollywood style premiere in St. Louis. John Wayne, Judy Canova, Jerry Colona, Bob Crosby and Susan Hayward appeared at the premiere of *Sis Hopkins* at the Fox. The crowd was so large along Grand that the stars had to go through an alley to enter the theater.

1949 Joseph M. Darst was elected mayor of St. Louis. During his term, a massive program of low-income housing construction was begun and the Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority was established.

1968 Martin Luther King Junior was assassinated. That night, Mayor Cervantes went from TV station to TV station to appeal for calm. The streets stayed quiet. In the 1970's, a House committee concluded that James Earl Ray of Alton assassinated King as part of a plot involving his brothers, Jerry and John, and two St. Louis businessmen, John H. Sutherland and John Kauffmann. Kauffmann and Sutherland, who were dead by the time the probe began, allegedly put up a \$50,000 bounty. Ray had escaped from the Missouri Penitentiary, where he was serving time for robbery.

1970 Mayor Cervantes signed a controversial anti-obscenity ordinance. The measure was aimed at preventing the run of *Hair*. Cervantes said he abhorred censorship, but the bill had become "a symbol of public rejection of the growing permissiveness which condones smut, sacrilegious attacks against our religion and desecration of our nation's flag."

1976 The Bicentennial "Freedom Train" arrived on the riverfront for a week-long stay. The special train carried national treasures such as Abe Lincoln's stovepipe hat, Edison's phonograph and the original Louisiana Purchase agreement. Thousands lined up to see the train.

1980 After 34 years behind the mike at old and new Busch Stadium, 73-year-old public address announcer Charley Jones announced his retirement. Joel Meyers, of KSHE radio took over.

1998 Mark McGwire blasted his fourth home run in four games. He tied the mark held by Willie Mays for consecutive games with home runs to start the season.

1998 A runaway barge slammed into the President Casino on the *Admiral*. One of the mooring lines was cut, and the Admiral swung out into the river. Fifty people were hurt and two thousand gamblers had to wait for hours to be evacuated by boat. The *Admiral* was later moved upstream to Laclede's Landing, away from the barge traffic.

2005 North Carolina defeated Illinois 75-70, to win the NCAA championship at the Edward Jones Dome. Sean May was named as the MVP, making 10 out of 11 shots for 26 points and grabbing 26 rebounds. Tar Heels coach Roy Williams finally won a national title in his fifth trip to the Final Four.