

April 7

1823 The first city election in St. Louis was held. William Carr Lane was elected the first mayor. The former post surgeon at Fort Bellefontaine was so popular that he would be re-elected to five more one-year terms. He returned to office seven years later, and was re-elected two more times. After Lane left office, President Millard Fillmore appointed him governor of the New Mexico Territory.

1826 William Walton died at the age of 84. He had migrated to what is now Missouri from Virginia about 1792 with his wife, Mary. The Waltons became one of the most prominent---and prolific families in what is now Overland, where you find Walton Road today.

1836 Three sisters from the French Sisters of St. Joseph arrived at Cahokia to establish a parochial school. Mother Febronne Fontbonne would direct the Holy Family School. Fontbonne College is named after the pioneer frontier educator.

1862 Union forces captured important Confederate positions at New Madrid and Island Number Ten on the Mississippi. James Eads, a St. Louis engineer, built eight partially armored gunboats needed for the campaign in less than 100 days.

1870 The city was taking over the property of the recently-annexed town of Carondelet. St. Louis Mayor Nathan Cole accused the Carondelet council of diverting money to its members during the final days. Cole said the treasury could have been “removed on the back of a mosquito.”

1881 The organizers of the new St. Louis Sportsmen’s Club announced plans to improve the recently purchased Grand Avenue Baseball Grounds. Owner Chris von Der Ahe said he would build a 2,000 seat grandstand. A reporter for the *Globe-Democrat* said the plan would attract interest in bringing professional baseball back to St. Louis.

1902 World’s Fair officials reluctantly conceded that they may have to postpone opening day past the scheduled date of May 1, 1903. Several foreign governments had requested the extension in order to get their buildings ready.

1904 The new Hotel Jefferson formally opened. It was the grandest of a dozen hotels rushed to completion for the fair. The 12-story Jefferson boasted 400 rooms. Today, it has been converted into the Jefferson Arms Apartments for seniors.

1908 The Cardinals and the Browns played a benefit game for the bankrupt former owner of the Browns, Chris Von der Ahe. The game raised \$5,000 for the flamboyant former saloon owner brought professional baseball back to St. Louis in 1882. He went broke after creditors forced him to sell the team in 1899. Von der Ahe died from cirrhosis of the liver in 1913.

1926 The St. Louis Board of Aldermen overwhelmingly endorsed a repeal of the Volstead Act. The board called Prohibition “A breach of personal liberties” and “A festering sore on the vitals of the nation.”

1933 A crowd of 25,000 gathered at the Anheuser-Busch Brewery and cheered as the clock struck midnight and prohibition ended. Speaking on a CBS radio network broadcast from the brewery, Gussie Busch said, “There is a song in our hearts: it’s

“Happy Days Are Here Again.” Police chased down some gangsters who tried to hijack two beer trucks. Five people were arrested for drunkenness that night, but were not sent to jail.

1933 The world famous Anheuser-Busch Clydesdales made their debut. On the morning that Prohibition ended, the Clydesdales took one of the first cases of legal Budweiser down Pennsylvania Avenue to present to President Roosevelt. Today, there are six Clydesdale hitches.

1933 The promoters of the bankrupt Arena put the building in receivership. The owners were selling off over six thousand chairs to pay the debt from their purchase. In May, the owners would announce they were considering tearing down the Arena for an apartment complex.

1946 In a show billed as “St. Louis’ first jazz concert,” Duke Ellington played before a huge crowd at Kiel Auditorium. He brought the house down with his signature song, “Take the A-Train.”

1955 A “funeral train,” made up of the last steam engines on the Missouri Pacific line steamed into the yards at Dupo. They were to be cut up for scrap. MO-PAC announced that 43 steam engines would be kept in mothballs in case of a national emergency.

1958 Work began on the superstructure for the new Mark Twain Expressway overpass at Third Street downtown. (Now the I-70 Cole overpass) It seems as if construction has been going on there ever since.

1968 A crowd estimated at about 30,000 marched peacefully from the Arch to Forest Park for a service in honor of the late Doctor Martin Luther King Junior.

1970 St. Louis County purchased the former Edgar Queeny Estate for a park. Hyacinth Rennard originally owned the 569-acre tract that makes up Queeny Park. He built the house that still stands at 1723 South Mason Road. He named it Jarrville after his ancestral home in France.

1972 The Cardinals home opener was cancelled, because of the first players strike in Major League history. Cards president August Busch was taking a hard-line stance against the players union and their representative, Marvin Miller.

1974 The Cardinals introduced their new mascot, “Fredbird.” The anthropomorphized Northern Cardinal threw out the first pitch on opening day at Busch Stadium. The identity of the person inside the costume is a pretty well guarded secret. In 1978, it was rumored that Fredbird was actually a girl.

1980 A tornado demolished 34 homes and damaged 120 more in Florissant. Fifteen people were injured, mostly in the Pleasant Hollow subdivision. Damage was put at \$2 million, but no one was killed.

1981 Democrat Vincent Scheomehl whipped Republican Jerry Wamser to capture the mayor’s office. Scheomehl had risen from a little known alderman from the 28th Ward in just five years.

1984 Mark Reeds scored at 37:07 of sudden death overtime in Detroit, giving the Blues a 2-1 lead in their playoff series. Reeds became one of only four Blues players to score two game winning goals in the playoffs. He went on to coach the Peoria Rivermen and has coached the Missouri River Otters since their inaugural season in 1999.

1997 One of the largest manhunts in Missouri history came to an end. Two Water Patrol officers caught triple-murder suspect Alis Ben Johns near Warsaw. He had eluded authorities since October. Hundred of searchers had been combing the woods for weeks.

2003 Four barges floated the westbound span into place to form the Veteran's Memorial Bridge carrying Rte. 364 over the Missouri River. The eastbound span was moved into place on April 4, 2002. Crews were delayed by low water. The Page Extension opened on December 13, 2003, 33 years after it was proposed.

2005 The \$49.9 million St. Charles Convention Center opened. Work was still underway on the adjacent 12-story Embassy Suites hotel. St. Charles convention director Steve Powell called it "a new frontier" in the tourism industry. City and county residents approved an increase in the hotel and motel taxes to pay for the facility.