

April 8

1882 Thomas Allen died. He was an attorney who married Ann Russell. Ann was the daughter of William Russell, who owned much of what is now South St. Louis. Allen would develop his father-in-law's land between Broadway, Jefferson, Soulard Market and Benton Park. Allen Avenue was named in his honor. Ann is named after his wife and Russell was named after Ann's father.

1896 Historians were bemoaning the loss of Pierre Chouteau's old log cabin. It had stood for more than a century at Vandeventer and St. Louis Avenue. It was torn down to make room for the largest subdivision ever laid out in St. Louis so far, Chouteau's Place.

1904 The latest figures from the Census Bureau showed that St. Louis was the fourth largest city in the country. The population of the city was put at 612,279. That ranked behind only New York, Philadelphia, and Boston.

1910 E. Percy Noel became the first person from St. Louis to fly in an airplane. Noel was the secretary of the Aero Club of St. Louis. He flew as a passenger with Glenn Curtiss at Memphis. A few months later, Albert Bond Lambert became the second St. Louisian to fly. He flew as a passenger with Orville Wright in Dayton, Ohio.

1911 Ground was broken for the Jefferson Memorial in Forest Park. The memorial was not built for the fair, as many believe. It was built on the site of the main entrance to the world's fair. The world's fair company built it as part of their deal with the city to restore Forest Park following the fair.

1912 Joseph Everett Mitchell and his brother William founded the St. Louis *Argus*, the first black newspaper in Missouri. Joseph was a veteran of the Spanish-American War. He and William were active in the NAACP, and the Urban League. The *Argus* is the oldest continuously operated black business in the city.

1922 The Cardinals unveiled their new uniforms, the first to feature two red birds perched on a bat with the word "Cardinals" across the front. The Redbirds first wore the uniforms in an exhibition game against the Browns and lost 3-2. Since that game, the Birds on the Bat have been on Cardinal uniforms every season, except for 1956.

1930 The city's chief engineer for paving and sewers predicted that the entire length of the River Des Peres through Forest Park would be underground by June 1st. W.W. Horner said the river would be converted into a series of lagoons to give the appearance of a "placid stream" through the park.

1932 Police Chief Joseph Gerk was blaming the depression for an increased traffic problem in St. Louis. Gerk said the depression had added to the numbers of "unserviceable" autos on the streets. He said that "worn out" vehicles were causing more accidents.

1940 The Board of Aldermen passed a strict anti-smoke ordinance. St. Louis had one of the worst smoke palls in the nation because soft coal was burned here. Future mayor Raymond Tucker was charged with ridding the city of the smoke. He had to overcome the coal lobby to get the bill passed. The air improved immediately. But for years afterwards, many buildings were still stained black.

1947 A new transmitter for KMOX was dedicated in Stallings, Illinois. Governor Donnell of Missouri and Mayor Tucker spoke on a special broadcast from the studios in the Mart Building. The new 50,000 watt transmitter increased the range of the station by 39%.

1962 Ron Elz signed on KXOK as "Johnny Rabbit." He left in May of 1964. A US District Court would give the rights to the name "Johnny Rabbit" to KXOK. They signed Don Pietromonico to be the new Rabbit. He led the ratings for the next three years. The Rabbit was retired in 1969.

1962 City and county voters approved a measure creating a joint city-county junior college district. Classes were expected to begin in the fall of 1963.

1971 John Russell Pardue was shot to death in an escape attempt in Connecticut, where he had been charged with robbery. The Pardue Brothers killed their father and grandmother in Franklin County in 1969. Then they held up the Union Bank, setting off a bomb at the county courthouse as a diversion. Ten people were hurt. They held up a total of five banks before they were captured in 1970.

1978 As Six Flags Over Mid America opened for the 1978 season, it unveiled its newest attraction. The "Sky Chuter" was billed as the world's tallest thrill ride. It dropped you 16 stories in huge chutes.

1981 Missouri's "G.I. General," Omar Bradley, died at the age of 88. A former employee of the Wabash Railroad, he applied to West Point because he was frustrated he could not afford college. He rose to a five-star general, and commanded the largest army in the world as it prepared for the invasion of France.

1996 It's a day of firsts on Opening Day at Busch Stadium. A grass surface was in place for the first time since 1969, new manager Tony LaRussa made his Busch Stadium debut, and new owners Bill DeWitt Jr., Fred Hanser and Andrew Baur were on hand for the first pitch. The stadium also sported a new paint job, billed as "Ballpark Green."

1997 The new hand operated scoreboard at Busch Stadium is in place for Opening Day. The new scoreboard and rows of flags honoring the Cardinals World Championship teams and retired uniform numbers reduced the stadium capacity to 49,676.

1998 Mark McGwire hit the 400th home run of his career. It came in a 9-5 Cardinal loss to the Mets in New York. McGwire reached 400 home runs faster than any player in major league history.

1999 The "Big Bumper" signed off the air for the last time. Jim White retired after 30 years of entertaining nighttime listeners across the nation on KMOX.

2000 The Cardinals unveiled plans for a new stadium south of the current ballpark. The 370-million-dollar plan called for a retro-style stadium. Team officials said the club would pay one third of the cost. The Birds hoped to use money from the taxes the team paid on tickets to cover the rest.

2003 St. Louis voters elected a reform slate to the School Board. Former Mayor Vincent Schoemehl, Ronald Jackson, Robert Archibald and Darnetta Clinkscale would ignite controversy when they voted to hire Alvarez and Marsal, a turnaround management firm, to manage the district. To cut costs, the firm announced in July that it would close 16 city schools.

2005 The Cardinals came from behind to beat the Phillies 6-5 on the last Opening Day at Busch Stadium. Newly acquired pitcher Mark Mulder started the game, during which the Cardinals trailed as much as 5-1.

2005 The motion picture *Fever Pitch*, starring Drew Barrymore and Jimmy Fallon, opened nationwide. The ending was filmed at the end of the Game Four of the 2004 World Series in St. Louis. It's a happy ending for the avid Red Sox fan played by Fallon, but Cardinal fans may not enjoy it quite so much.