

April 20

1766 The first wedding in St. Louis took place. Toussain Hunaud, a Canadian trapper, married Marie Boujenou, the daughter of one of St. Louis' first settlers. There was no church in St. Louis, so the wedding took place at the bride's house.

1769 The great Ottawa Chief Pontiac was assassinated by Peoria Indians at Cahokia, Illinois. Governor St. Ange sent for his body. Pontiac was buried in St. Louis, near the present site of Broadway and Market.

1829 A branch of the Bank of the United States was established at St. Louis. The move reflected the growing importance of the city. It also brought an end to the dozens of types of money floating around the city.

1836 Anne Lucas married Wilson Price Hunt, the cousin of her deceased husband, Theodore Hunt. Anne was the sister of Charles Lucas, who settled on a huge tract of land he named "Normandy." When Charles was killed in a duel with statesman Thomas Hart Benton, he left the land to a brother and Anne. Of course Normandy is where you will find Lucas and Hunt Road today.

1861 Secessionists captured the U.S. Arsenal at Liberty, Missouri. The action marked the first aggressive act against the government in Missouri. It also prompted the commander of the arsenal at St. Louis to take action to protect it. The move added to the tension that led to the tragedy at Camp Jackson a few weeks later.

1875 The Police Board approved a proposal by Chief Laurence Harrigan to form a special "Lady's Platoon." The most handsome cops in the city would be assigned to patrol the fashionable Fourth Street shopping district. All off the officers had to be at least six feet tall. Their duties included helping the ladies across the street.

1876 One of the worst fires in East St. Louis history demolished Heim's brewery. As the town's lone fire engine rushed to the blaze, the firemen realized they had left the hose back at the station. They hurried back, and then remembered they had also forgotten the charges for the engine. A call to St. Louis brought two pumpers, but it was too late to save the brewery.

1895 St. Louis Police declared war on "criminal resorts." They raided the "Winter Garden," "Red Onion" and three other variety theaters. The audience had been tipped off. When the officers arrived, they found everyone dutifully reading hymnbooks.

1904 With just ten days to go before the opening of the fair, St. Louisans were stunned by 5.5 inches of snow. Fair officials were in a panic. They feared the snow would delay the work that remained to be done before opening day. Over 2,000 additional men were put to work during the overnight hours.

1912 *Titanic* survivor Spencer Silverthorne arrived home in St. Louis. He was a buyer for Nugent's Dry Goods. Silverthorne said an officer ordered him into a lifeboat because there were not enough women nearby to fill it.

1926 KMOX began an experiment that a spokesman said "has been tried before on the lecture platform in England but has never before been attempted in broadcasting. The station began broadcasting Sir Thomas Malory's "Morte D'Arthur" in condensed form.

1930 Jerome Hannah Dean made his professional debut with the St. Joseph Saints. He won the first game of a double header against Denver 4-3. When Dean was in the Army a sergeant had called him a "Dizzy son-of-a-bitch" for practicing pitching with potatoes at a trash can lid while on KP at 5:30 in the morning. The nickname stuck.

1930 Four people drowned during an Easter baptismal service in the Mississippi at the foot of Morgan Street. A minister, two deacons and a 13-year-old girl were swept away after they lost their footing about 15 feet from the shore.

1931 Gangsters kidnapped wealthy Portland Place Doctor Isaac Kelley. Three years later, the papers revealed that Nellie Muench, a Central West End socialite with a shady reputation, planned the crime. Muench bought a baby from an unwed mother in order to appear more sympathetic to a jury. She even convinced a colleague of her husband that he was the father, and extorted money from him! A jury acquitted Muench of the Kelley kidnapping. But the baby scam got her ten years.

1950 Mayor Darst vetoed a bill banning that great scourge of the 1950's, lurid comic books. He said he agreed with the bill's motives, but wasn't sure it was constitutional.

1960 The first Valley of the Flowers Festival in Florissant wrapped up with a parade and the crowning of Gail Menner as the first queen.

1965 A.J. Cervantes took office as Mayor of St. Louis. Cervantes brought the Spanish Pavilion here from the New York World's Fair for use as a cultural center, but it closed after just one year. He also brought a replica of the Santa Maria to the riverfront. It sank in a thunderstorm. Cervantes term was marked by a controversy over alleged mob ties, but his greatest achievement was raising bonds to build a convention center.

1968 The FBI announced it was searching for James Earl Ray in connection with the murder of Martin Luther King Junior. A small time criminal from Alton, Ray had been sent to the state pen in Jefferson City for holding up a supermarket in St. Louis in 1960. He escaped in April 1967 by hiding in the bread bin of a bakery truck.

1970 The Spanish Pavilion closed its doors. It was open for less than a year before the foundation formed to bring it here went bankrupt. Developer Donald Breckenridge bought the building, which today serves as the lobby of the downtown Marriott.

1982 Ground was broken for the Bowling Hall of Fame and Museum. A crowd of about 2,000 watched St. Louis Hall of Famers Roy Bluth and Myrtle Schulte roll balls down a simulated alley to trigger a fireworks display at the ceremony.

1999 Local officials reacted swiftly to the massacre in Littleton, Colorado. A seventh grader at LaSalle Springs Middle School would be the first of many in the coming days to be suspended for making threats. School officials were urged to watch students closely for signs of violence and to take any threats very seriously.

1999 George Hickenlooper's film, *The Big Brass Ring* premiered in Los Angeles. The movie starred William Hurt. It featured over a dozen St. Louis locations, including Union Station, the Arch and the Stratford Hotel in Alton.