

April 27

1813 Explorer Zebulon Pike was killed while leading a campaign against the British at York, (now Toronto) Canada. He launched the second expedition into the Louisiana Territory from St. Louis in 1806.

1815 John Liggett was born in St. Louis. He built his family's tobacco business into one of the largest in the nation. Brands produced here by Liggett and Myers, or "L and M," included "Sweet Moments," "Good Form," "Tent" and "Long Voyage." In 1897, the company became part of the James B. Duke tobacco trust.

1822 Ulysses S. Grant was born in Clermont County, Ohio. After graduation from West Point, "Sam" Grant arrived at Jefferson Barracks in 1843. A classmate, Frederick Dent, asked Grant to visit the Dent family at their estate, "Whitehaven." There he fell in love with the oldest Dent daughter, Julia. They were married in 1848. Grant built a cabin along Rock Hill Road near Pardee, which he called "Hardscrabble." That cabin now stands at Grant's Farm. Whitehaven is now a National Historic site.

1865 The steamboat *Sultana* exploded on the Mississippi near Memphis while en route to St. Louis. Nearly 1800 men were killed, mostly returning Union prisoners of war. That's more people than died on the *Titanic*. Confederate spy Robert Loudon of St. Louis admitted sabotaging the Sultana. He had been sentenced to death for burning steamboats but was spared by Abraham Lincoln. He had escaped in 1864, while being transferred from the Gratiot Street Prison to Alton.

1875 The Board of Commissioners approved the purchase of the land for the proposed Forest Park. An area of 1,372 acres was condemned and purchased for \$799,995. The park was dedicated in June 1876.

1896 Rogers Hornsby was born in Winters, Texas. His lifetime batting average of .358 is the highest in National League history. He won the National League batting crown seven times, including six in a row from 1920 to 1925. He hit .424 in 1924, which is a 20th century National League record. He played while managing the Cardinals to their first world championship in 1926.

1900 A special congressional hearing in Washington DC heard details of the proposed 1903 World's Fair from the fair executive committee. Representatives from the states of the Louisiana Purchase appeared at the hearing to lobby Congress to appropriate \$5 million for the fair.

1901 One of the first car fires was reported here. A car erupted in flames as it headed down Grand. The *Globe* reported, "This destroys what little confidence we had begun to repose in autos. A horse may run away, but he can't burn up. An automobile may do both."

1903 President Theodore Roosevelt arrived in St. Louis for ceremonies marking the dedication of the world's fair buildings. The fair had been postponed for a year past the planned April 1903 opening to give several nations more time to complete their exhibits. The dedication ceremonies went on anyway. A future president was also in St. Louis that day. Woodrow Wilson, the president of Princeton University, was here for a speech at the University Club.

1904 The first 300 specimens for the U.S. Government's giant birdcage at the World's Fair arrived from the Washington, D.C. Zoo. The cage was 228 feet long, 84 feet wide and 50 feet high. The city bought the cage for \$3,500 after the fair. That figure didn't include the birds, so the Zoo paid \$7.50 for a pair of Mandarin ducks and \$20 for four Canadian geese.

1904 The Inside Inn opened. E.M. Statler built the only hotel on the World's Fair grounds and he nearly died on the first day. A coffee urn exploded as Statler, a coffee boy and a chef inspected it. The boy died, the chef was seriously injured and Statler spent months in the hospital. He returned in August, and went on to found his own international hotel chain.

1905 Officials of the Chicago salvage company charged with clearing the buildings from the fair issued a heated denial that they planned to dynamite the huge Ferris wheel. They had offered the wheel free to anyone who would take it down, but had no takers.

1908 Work was started on the diversion of the River des Peres through Forest Park. The \$10 million was billed as the largest sewer project ever. The river through the park flooded often, and was rapidly becoming a foul open sewer.

1916 Enos "Country" Slaughter was born in Roxboro, North Carolina. Slaughter was beloved for his hustle and determination. A daring base runner, he is best remembered for dashing from first to home on a hit by Harry Walker in Game Seven of the 1946 World Series. Slaughter spent three years in the service at the height of his career, but still played in five World Series.

1931 One of the most sensational crimes in St. Louis history reached a turning point. The St. Louis newspapers were reporting that Doctor Isaac Kelly had been released by his abductors but was waiting for nightfall before returning home. It turned out that Nellie Muench, a west end socialite, masterminded the kidnapping with the gangsters. She stole a baby in an effort to appear more sympathetic to a jury.

1933 An ordinance changed the name of Morgan Street in the city to Delmar. Prior to this date, the road was only known as Delmar between the city limits and Hanley. The city street originally was named for Daniel Morgan, a general during the Revolutionary. The name Delmar comes from two large property owners. The road divided their land. One was from Delaware and the other was from Maryland, so they combined the state names.

1943 Ernest Hamwi died at the age of 59. The International Association of Ice Cream Manufacturers credits the Syrian concessionaire with inventing the ice cream cone at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. Other sources credit ice cream salesman Charles Menches. The family of Italo Marchiony claims he invented the treat in New York or New Jersey in 1896 and patented a mold for cones in 1903.

1947 Highways 66 and 141 were closed for 30 miles, due to the rampaging Meramec River. The Coast Guard was evacuating families in Valley Park, Times Beach and Eureka. The river was cresting at 14 feet over flood stage at Valley Park.

1947 A Hollywood film crew was here to begin filming exterior shots for the movie, *Fighting Father Dunne*. Pat O'Brien was to star in the story of Reverend Peter Dunne, who fought for the disadvantaged boys of St. Louis.

1973 Damage from the flooding in Missouri and Illinois was put at \$150 million. The river had already smashed the old record crest and was forecast to hit 43.5. Thousands of people were homeless.

2002 The new "Rivers Edge" exhibit at the St. Louis Zoo opened. The idea for the exhibit began in 1992, with the birth of Raja the Elephant. There was no room at the elephant house for the new arrival. Today, hippos, elephants, crocodiles and other animals from all over the world interact in their habitats.