

August 11

1768 The Spanish troops arrived to take formal possession of St. Louis. The territory had been ceded by the French five years earlier. The treaty was kept secret for over a year.

1807 Missouri Senator David Rice Atchison was born. He is famous for becoming President of the U.S. for a day between administrations. But he also played an important role in acquiring the Platte Territory for Missouri. (Where Atchison County is today) Atchison crusaded for the admission of Kansas as a slave state, and tried to repeal the Missouri Compromise.

1872 An astronomer's prediction that a comet headed towards earth was about to hit St. Louis was causing panic here. Many residents were packing up and leaving. Young boys added to the disorder in the streets by standing on street corners and occasionally yelling, "here she comes!"

1875 In a letter to the editor of the *Globe-Democrat*, Jesse James said most of the state's Democratic newspapers and every ex-Confederate member of the assembly had stood up for him and his men. James said "it is against reason to suppose we are guilty of murder and robbery as the best men in Missouri are our friends."

1881 The worst fire here since the Southern Hotel disaster caused \$312,000 in damage and destroyed the huge Atlantic Flour Mills at Main and Plumb. Lightning was blamed for starting the blaze.

1899 John Forsyth removed a barrier that had stood across the road between Skinker Boulevard and Clayton for ten years. He donated the right of way through his farm on the condition that a fine road should be built. Forsyth barricaded his road when he wasn't happy with the work.

1904 The Olympic "Anthropological Field Days" got under way at the World's Fair stadium. (Francis Field) The event featured competitions between "costumed members of the uncivilized tribes." Philippine Negritos and Igorrotes, the Patagonians, the Ainu, Native Americans and others took part in two days of competitions in events such as rock throwing, mud fighting, spear throwing and pole climbing.

The anthropological events nearly killed the Olympic movement. Founder Baron de Coubertin declared "in no place but America would one have dared to place such events on the program." The Olympic committee was forced to hold an interim games at Athens in 1906 in an effort to restore credibility.

1931 Six generators were turned on, and the new Union Electric Dam at Bagnell, Missouri began generating power. Heavy rains had brought the new lake to within 2.3 feet of its projected level.

1944 The *Globe-Democrat* reported that most hotels in St. Louis were already booked during the first 12 days of October, the likely date for the World Series. The rush began in June, when the Brownies went on a winning streak. The Chase, headquarters for many teams when they played in St. Louis, was taking reservations by mail only.

1949 Luke Easter joined the Cleveland Indians, becoming the first black St. Louisan to play in the major leagues. Easter was a 34-year-old veteran of the Negro Leagues. He led his fans to believe he was born here, but he was actually born in Mississippi. Easter ended up working as a bank guard in Cleveland, and was killed in a robbery in 1979.

1966 Famous-Barr reported no noticeable drop-off in ticket sales for the August 21st Beatles concert at Busch Stadium in the wake of John Lennon's remark that the Beatles were more popular than Christ. Beatles records were being burned, Capitol records stock had dropped shortly, and officials in Memphis had requested the cancellation of the concert there.

1970 Carl Taylor slugged the first walk off grand slam at Busch Stadium. San Diego led the Cardinals by 8-1 in the 7th and by 10-7 as the reserve outfielder came up in the 9th. Taylor only played one season for the Cardinals and would record just 10 career home runs.

1981 Reputed mob enforcer Paul Leisure was maimed when a car bomb exploded as he drove away from his South St. Louis home. The attack was in retaliation for a bomb that killed underworld figure Jimmy Michaels Senior. James A. Michaels III, grandson of Jimmy Michaels, and Milton Russell Schepp, former St. George police chief, would be charged in the case. Two more rivals would die, and two more would be hurt in two years of warfare between the Leisure and Michaels families.

1989 The Who performed at Busch Stadium, part of their tour marking the 20th anniversary of the rock opera "Tommy." Simon Phillips replaced the late Tommy Moon on the drums and the group played for nearly three hours.

1993 Highway 40 was partially re-opened through the Chesterfield Valley. It had been closed since the Monarch Levee was breached on July 31st. The last of the South St. Louis residents who were evacuated when propane tanks broke loose during the flood returned to their homes. The Mississippi was still eleven feet over flood stage, but had fallen by a foot in 12 hours.

1994 The day baseball changed forever. After the Cards beat the Marlins 8-6 in Florida, Major League baseball players walked off the job amid owner's efforts to impose a salary cap. The strike wiped out the season and cancelled the World Series. The Cardinals were in the midst of a terrible season, tied for 3rd place in the NL Central, 13 games back.

1994 A turning point for efforts to bring pro football back to St. Louis. Fans Incorporated announced that former Senator Thomas Eagleton was joining the effort.

Eagleton took over as president and chief negotiator for the coalition of local businesses that was trying to lure the Rams to St. Louis.

1997 Jennifer Hywari of Florissant was killed in an accident caused by "road rage" on eastbound 40 in the Chesterfield Valley. John DeVanny was convicted of manslaughter for slamming on his brakes in front of Hywari after she cut him off in traffic.

1998 Mark McGwire's 47th home run of the season broke Hack Wilson's record for the most home runs before September 1st.