

August 25

Today is the feast day of St. Louis. Catholic churches will celebrate the special mass and remember the good deeds of our city's patron saint, King Louis the Ninth of France. Louis became king at age 12. He was beloved for his work with the poor, and made two crusades to the Middle East. On his second crusade in 1270, he was captured, imprisoned, fell ill and died. Because of his piety, the Catholic Church canonized Louis the Ninth in 1297.

1793 Five people, including the wife and sons of Antoine Riviere Junior, were massacred by Indians outside Florissant. Indians were a constant danger to the settlers of the Florissant Valley. One legend tells of the townspeople holding off an attack behind the walls of a stockade along Coldwater Creek until reinforcements arrived from St. Louis.

1823 Court-appointed commissioners voted to accept a donation of land from Charles Lucas and Auguste Chouteau for the site of the St. Louis courthouse. Today, it's the building we know as the Old Courthouse.

1863 Union General Thomas Ewing issued his notorious "Order Number Eleven," designed to stamp out guerilla sympathizers in the Missouri counties on the Kansas border. All civilians were expelled from a 30-mile wide area, unless they could prove their loyalty. Ewing's troops then looted and burned most of the area.

1889 Henry Shaw died at the age of 90. In 1859, he opened the garden of his estate to the public. St. Louisans have enjoyed Shaw's Garden ever since. In 1868, he deeded 276 acres of his land to the city for Tower Grove Park.

1900 The 12th U.S. census showed that St. Louis was the fourth largest city in the nation. The population of the city had increased more than 123,000 since 1890, placing it behind only New York, Chicago and Philadelphia.

1926 The Cardinals moved into first place in the drive towards their first pennant with a 4-3 win over Boston. Rogers Hornsby called on veteran reliever Grover Cleveland Alexander for the third time in two days to snuff out a Braves rally.

1931 Regis Philbin was born in New York City. He hosted *Saturday Night in St. Louis* on KMOX-TV beginning in 1970. The show regularly won its time slot. In its final season, the show drew more viewers than the upstart *Saturday Night Live* on NBC. Philbin left in 1975 to host a show in Los Angeles.

1950 A military hospital ship leaving San Francisco for Korea was rammed by a freighter off the coast. A St. Louis medical student who was with the 23rd ROTC Unit was among the volunteers who went out in boats and saved 492 people before the ship sank. It was the first time the name Thomas Dooley was in the headlines here.

1968 Arthur Ashe won the U.S. men's singles title, the first black man to win a major title. Ashe came to St. Louis in 1960 to work on his skills with tennis coach Richard Hudlin at Sumner High School. He graduated first in his class and earned an athletic scholarship to UCLA. He would one day become the first black male inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

1971 The Municipal Airport Commission voted to restore "Lambert" to the name of the airport. The board reversed a decision it made the year before in the interest of brevity. A storm of protest greeted the insult to the memory of St. Louis aviation pioneer Albert Bond Lambert.

1972 A bomb killed union rackets man Louis Shoulders as he returned to his car following a night of fishing at Table Rock Lake. Authorities had been predicting violence for several weeks, since the murder of Steamfitter's Local 562 boss, Edward Steska. Shoulders' father Ira had been convicted of perjury in connection with the missing half of the Greenlease ransom back in 1953.

1984 Thousands watched as the Buder and International buildings downtown were imploded to make room for the Gateway Mall project. Preservationists had lost a court fight to save the historic buildings that once made up "Realty Row." The city would settle for a half mall, instead of the uninterrupted open space originally proposed between the Old Courthouse and the Civil Courts Building.

1986 A's rookie Mark McGwire hit his first major league home run. It was a 450-foot-blast off Walt Terrell of the Detroit Tigers.

1991 Cards ace reliever, Lee Smith, gained his 300th save. Big Lee became just the fifth player in major league history to reach that mark as he wrapped up a 5-2 win over the Dodgers at Busch Stadium. He would finish the season with 47 saves, at the time a record for the National League.

1999 A four-alarm fire threatened one of the city's newest attractions. The fire at the City Museum was confined to an elevator shaft and no one was hurt. But it called attention to the school bus dangling high over the street as part of the eclectic mix of exhibits. The city threatened to have the bus removed.

2005 A 6-3 Redbird win over the Pirates in Pittsburgh moved manager Tony LaRussa up to number three on the all time managerial wins list. By passing Sparky Anderson with 2,195 wins, LaRussa trailed only John McGraw and the great Connie Mack.