

December 12

1833 Bishop Louis Valentin DuBourg died at the age of 66. Bishop DuBourg supported the re-establishment of the Jesuits here, laid the foundation for the cathedral, and opened St. Louis College, the forerunner of Washington University.

1839 A last minute truce averted a war between Missouri and Iowa. The border dispute began when the Clark County Sheriff tried to collect taxes along the disputed state line. He was thrown in jail by Iowa authorities. Both Missouri and Iowa called out the militia. But "The Honey War" was settled before there was any fighting.

1840 Mayor John Darby purchased six acres from the heirs of Pierre Chouteau, under the condition that it be used "as a public square forever." His \$25,000 deal caused some to refer to the area bounded by Market, Clark, 12th and 13th Streets as "Darby's Ditch." The area was known as Washington Square until an 1890 ordinance made it the site of the new City Hall. Construction began in 1892 and was City Hall was completed in 1904.

1861 General Halleck, Commander of the Union Department of the West, ordered that \$10,000 be collected from wealthy Southern sympathizers in St. Louis. A board of assessment would decide how much each person would pay. The order was clearly unconstitutional, but most paid up and agreed to take a loyalty oath.

1867 The town of Marissa, Illinois was laid out by James Stewart. The town postmaster gave it the name of a historic town. According to Latin records, Gabinius destroyed the original Marissa.

1873 Enterprising downtown merchants organized a ferry service--across the street! The first boat was launched at Third and Washington, "where the current of mud ran deepest and most rapid." The boat, which could hold several people, was pulled across the street by ropes.

1878 The first issue of the *St. Louis Post and Dispatch* hit the streets, just days after Joseph Pulitzer bought the bankrupt *Dispatch* at an auction. The four page first issue edition had a press run of 4,020 and was distributed by wheelbarrow. The name was shortened to the *Post-Dispatch* on March 10, 1879.

1902 The first exhibit for the world's fair arrived here. It was a boiler from Dusseldorf, to be used as part of the plant to generate power for the fair.

1903 The Cardinals made one of the worst trades in their history. They dealt rookie Mordecai "Three Fingers" Brown to the Cubs for pitcher Jack Taylor and catcher Larry McLean. The team believed Brown's handicap would not allow him to be successful for very long. He went on to win 230 more games and lead the Cubs to four pennants.

1912 Boxer Henry Armstrong was born. He moved to St. Louis as a young boy. Armstrong would become the first boxer to hold titles simultaneously in three weight classes. He rang up 152 victories in 14 years before retiring in 1945.

1913 Mayor Henry Kiel signed a bill designating 77 acres in Forest Park to be used as a zoo. By 1914, a couple of dozen animals were residing in the park, but there were no adequate shelters. A zoo tax was finally passed in 1916.

1921 Ground was broken for the Shriner's Hospital for Crippled Children here. Each of the \$2 million Shriners in the country donated \$2 for the hospital fund. They also pledged to contribute \$2 each year as long as it was needed.

1926 Colonel John Paegelow, the commander of Scott Air Force Base, ordered the construction of a 176-foot-tall mooring mast. The mast was to be capable of handling the largest airships in the world. He hoped to turn Scott into the biggest airship base in the world, a title currently held by the Naval Air Station at Lakehurst, New Jersey.

1931 East St. Louis Police Chief James Leahy vowed he would allow no more "Communist" meetings in his city. Sixteen people were arrested for vagrancy during a meeting to discuss relief for the unemployed. Those arrested denied that they were Communists.

1935 Work began on the new floral conservatory at Forest Park. The Jewel Box received its name from its predecessor, an ordinary greenhouse built in 1913 on the site of a dump. William Becker, an engineer with the City's Board of Public Service, designed the Jewel Box with its 15,000 square feet of glass. The new Jewel Box opened on November 14, 1936.

1938 The United States Supreme Court ruled against the University of Missouri. The court ordered the university to admit Lloyd Gaines, who was black. It was the first in a series of Supreme Court decisions that would overturn the doctrine of "separate but equal."

1944 A crowd jammed the Old Courthouse rotunda to honor black aviator Wendell Pruitt of St. Louis. Pruitt won the Distinguished Flying Cross for shooting down three German planes, destroying 70 on the ground and helping sink an enemy destroyer. Four months later, he was killed while training pilots for the "Tuskegee Airmen." In 1955, the city would name its gleaming new public housing project after Pruitt.

1957 The McDonnell F-101 "Voodoo" established the world's absolute speed record for airplanes at 1,207.6 miles per hour.

1963 The \$18 million St. John's Hospital on Ballas was dedicated. It replaced the old St. John's, located at 307 South Euclid. St. John's traces its roots to the arrival of six Sisters of Mercy in 1856. The first St. John's building was located at 10th and Morgan, now Delmar.

1969 For only the second time, a small plane flew through the legs of the Arch. Five days later, another one followed. A \$500 reward was offered for the culprits, but they were never caught.

1970 Patrolman William Downey became the first University City Police officer to die in the line of duty. Downey was shot as he interrupted a gas station hold-up.

1972 Over 100,000 families were without power, traffic was paralyzed and schools and businesses were closed by a tremendous ice storm. The National Weather Service called it "one of the major ice storms of the century" in St. Louis.

1972 The great Larry Wilson announced his retirement. Wilson was a member of the original Cardinals, and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1978. He was a safety who helped popularize the safety blitz and set a team record with 52 interceptions during his 13-year career.

1980 The Cardinals made one of their least-memorable deals. They traded Rollie Fingers, Ted Simmons and Pete Vuckovich to the Brewers. In return, the Birds got Larry Sorenson, Sixto Lezcano, and minor leaguers David Green and David LaPoint. Fingers would win the Cy Young in 1981. Vuckovich won it the following year.

1980 KMOX TV reporter Steve Trenkman and his two sons were killed in an accident on Highway 40 near McCausland. A car crossed the grassy median, became airborne, and sheared off the top of Trenkman's car.

1984 The Cardinals traded "Silent George" Hendrick and a minor league catcher to the Pittsburgh Pirates. It was a good deal for the Cardinals, as they picked up pitcher John Tudor and catcher Brian Harper.

1997 The Rolling Stones played a concert at the Trans World Dome. The show was broadcast nationwide on pay-per-view. Along with opening act Kenny Wayne Sheppard, the Stones were joined by Dave Mathews, sax player Joshua Redman and blues legend Taj Mahal.