

December 15

1833 General Daniel Bissell died at his "Franklinville Farm" on Bellefontaine Road. He had served in the Revolutionary war, and in many battles in the west. Bissell served as military commander of Fort Bellefontaine and improved the road leading to the fort. He retired in 1812 and had built a home by 1818. The home stayed in the Bissell family for 150 years, before it was donated to St. Louis County.

1880 One of the most interesting figures in Florissant history died. Auguste Archambault was an intrepid mountain man. He worked with Kit Carson, helped build Fort Bridger and served as a guide for John Fremont. The home he built in old town still stands.

1896 Plans were unveiled for the new City Hospital, to replace the one destroyed by the tornado of 1896. The \$258,000 then in the hospital fund was to be used to erect the isolation ward and two general wards. The plan called for several other connecting buildings to be built as funds permitted.

1900 One of the city's finest homes was destroyed by fire. The 19-room Thomas Skinker mansion was located west of Forest Park. The home was a great distance away from the nearest fire plug. The house was in ruins before the firemen were able to get any water on the fire.

1919 The City of Brentwood was incorporated. The incorporation was a hurried attempt by residents to avoid being annexed by Maplewood. The incorporation papers were filed about 24 hours before the election on the proposed annexation. The community was originally known as Maddenville. Brentwood is a German phrase meaning "Burnt Wood."

1929 The *Post-Dispatch* reported that Route 66 was paved in Illinois and Kansas. About 2/3 of the route in Missouri was paved. The highway was completely unpaved in Texas. Just 64 miles of the 12,221 miles between New Mexico and California was paved.

1933 Mayor Dickmann formed a civic committee to work for establishment of a memorial on the St. Louis riverfront. Dickmann said the monument would honor the pioneers and commemorate the Louisiana Purchase. Luther Ely Smith was named chairman.

1942 Seven Army airman died in the crash of a four-engine bomber. The plane went down in a field two miles northwest of the airport near Dunn Road. Part of the plane crashed into a home, which caught fire and burned to the ground. The homeowners survived, as did two crewmen.

1945 The Rams won their first NFL title, defeating the Washington Redskins. At that time, they were the Cleveland Rams, playing their eighth and final season there before moving to Los Angeles in 1946.

1949 Congressman Ray Karst said there was evidence of Communist activity at the St. Louis Army Finance Center. He promised a congressional inquiry if the Army didn't fix things quickly. An employee had been fired after blowing the whistle on \$90 million in overpayments. The employee also said Reds were active there.

1951 Raymond R. Tucker, the St. Louis Director of Civil Defense, approved plans by the Police Department to train 5,000 auxiliary officers. In the event of a nuclear attack, they would be in charge of patrolling the devastated areas.

1961 The Missouri Pacific Railroad ended service on the last commuter line out of Union Station.

1964 Anheuser-Busch became the first brewery ever to produce 10 million barrels of beer in a single year. AB began as a brewery founded by a man named Schneider in 1852. The firm was taken over by a competitor, and expanded with money borrowed from Eberhard Anheuser, a soap manufacturer. Anheuser took over when the brewery failed.

1969 One day after the last football Cardinal game of the season, crews began installing Astro Turf at Busch Stadium. The Cardinals and the Big Red shared the \$750,000 cost. The artificial surface was removed before the start of the 1996 baseball season.

1972 City patrolman Harold Warneke was shot to death when he interrupted a hold-up at a West End supermarket. Just 13 days earlier, patrolman Frank Dobler had been shot to death following an argument with a cab driver.

1974 The Big Red clinched St. Louis' first NFL division title with a 26-14 win over the New York Giants at Busch. The "Cardiac Cardinals" fell behind 14-0 at the half Jim Tolbert and Larry Stallings made key interceptions to give them the win. Bill Bidwell made an emotional speech and the team presented him with the game ball. The Cardinals would lose their first playoff game to Minnesota on December 21st.

1983 Alderman Sorkis Webbe Junior, his father Sorkis Senior, and four other members of the Seventh Ward Democratic Organization were indicted on vote fraud charges by a federal grand jury. They were charged with altering absentee ballots and beating an opponent during the 1980 primary. Junior did time, but Sorkis Senior died before going to jail. The Webbes made headlines with their ties to organized crime. Junior was convicted of fraud involving the city cable franchise. Senior had been indicted for tax fraud for a kickback scheme at the Aladdin Hotel in Las Vegas.

1991 The Eads Bridge was closed to automobile traffic. Bi-State said it should reopen by July 1992, when the Metro-Link station was completed. But the bridge deck was too badly deteriorated. The Eads finally re-opened to traffic on July 4, 2003.

1996 Boeing announced a buy-out of its arch-rival, St. Louis-based McDonnell-Douglas. The deal would create the world's largest aerospace company. Boeing CEO Phil Condit and McDonnell Douglas President and Chief Executive Officer Harry Stonecipher said the merger represented more job security at the largest employer in the St. Louis area.