

December 19

1819 The Florissant post office was established. Anthony Carr was named as the first postmaster. The population was about 300 at the time.

1876 An official recount on the vote on the separation of St. Louis City and County showed that the measure had actually failed by 1,927 votes. Judges were considering throwing out the results from two precincts, where officials had not registered votes properly. That would give the separation a majority of about 600 votes.

1877 The *Globe-Democrat* reported that East St. Louis was in "A bad sort of trouble." "A general state of disgruntlement" existed as the result of a long-running feud between the mayor and the city council. The police board had been abolished, and the interests of the public neglected.

1897 A fire described as one of the most sensational since the Great Fire of 1849 leveled the Mermod and Jaccard Jewelry Building at Broadway and Locust. Half of the stock, valued at \$600,000, was destroyed. Police were guarding the treasure in the burned-out ruins.

1901 Plans were adopted for a new St. Charles County Courthouse on "Clerk's Hill," land bought by the city to house the clerk's offices because the present courthouse was inadequate. The old courthouse was built in 1849. The present building was finished in 1903.

1902 A bill under consideration in the legislature would create a special police force for the World's Fair. The Jefferson Guards would be necessary because the grounds were partially in the city and in the county.

1904 World's Fair officials said 19,640,855 people visited the fair during its run. That included 6,890,239 free admissions, a proportion fair officials said was "probably the largest in the history of international expositions.

1933 The *Globe-Democrat* reported that a home at Ladue and Lindbergh had the first whole-house air conditioning in the area. The system cost \$3800. The home's owner bragged it could cool the eleven rooms and servants quarters by as much as ten degrees in the summer at a cost of 50 cents per day.

1934 A federal commission appointed by President Roosevelt, Congress and the Jefferson Memorial Association, began meeting at the Jefferson Hotel in St. Louis. They began to make plans for a riverfront memorial to honor the pioneers and commemorate the Louisiana Purchase.

1945 Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill announced plans for a trip to the United States early in the spring of 1946. Churchill promised "An important statement" at a lecture on world affairs at Westminster College in Fulton.

1954 Wally Moon of the Cardinals was named the National League Rookie of the year. The 24-year-old hit a home run in his first at-bat on April 13. The Cardinals traded Enos Slaughter to make room for Moon, who finished the season with a .304 average. The award is all the more astonishing when you note that Hank Aaron and Ernie Banks were rookies in 1954.

1965 The St. Louis football Cardinals played their last game in Old Busch Stadium, dropping a 27-24 decision to Cleveland. Larry Wilson returned an interception for a touchdown and a team record 96 yards.

1968 A Cessna 182 crashed into the gym at McCluer Senior High School in Florissant. The nine students in the gym at the time were unhurt, but the pilot was killed.

1972 Interstate 44 was opened to traffic between I-55 and Laclede Station. I-44 was now completed across Missouri, rendering Route 66 obsolete. Officials were predicting a bottleneck at I-55, because only one exit was complete. I-55 was still under construction south of 44.

1973 The smallest crowd ever to see a Blues game at the Arena braved a foot of snow to watch the Blues beat the L-A Kings, 3-1. Only 4,115 fans made it in. Fans were allowed to sit in the empty seats, and concessions were on the house. The snowstorm was the worst in St. Louis since 1890.

1984 Demolition work was underway on the old Channel Two tower at 5915 Berthold. The top half of the St. Louis landmark was sheared off in the 1959 tornado. The bottom half then served as a base for microwave and other antennas. Those were now being moved to the top of Deaconess Hospital.

1984 The Union Electric Nuclear Power Plant in Callaway County was declared fully operational. When the project was announced in July 1973, plans called for two reactors at a cost of \$1.758 billion. Only one reactor was built at a cost of \$3.1 billion.

1996 The Blues fired Mike Keenan as coach and general manager. Blues fans had high hopes when Keenan came to town in 1994. But he was criticized for his icy demeanor and trading away popular players such as Brendan Shanahan and Curtis Joseph. He also lavished big contracts on free agent busts such as Dale Hawerchuk, Brian Noonan, and Adam Creighton.

1999 The Rams set a St. Louis pro football record with their 12th win of the season. The record breaker was a 31-10 win over the New York Giants at the Trans World Dome.

2001 Cards GM Walt Jocketty made one of his few deals that didn't turn out well. The Cards signed free agent first baseman Tino Martinez to a three-year deal worth \$21 million. Martinez was a disappointment during his two seasons in St. Louis. The Cards

ended up assuming \$6 million of his salary when Tino was shipped to Florida in November 2003.