

December 20

1803 The United States formally took possession of the Louisiana Territory at New Orleans, completing the biggest real estate deal in U-S history. The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the U-S, at a cost of about \$20 per square mile. President Jefferson came under fire for the deal. Some said he had exceeded his authority and the territory was too large to be governed effectively.

1812 Sacagawea died at Fort Manuel in what is now South Dakota. William Clark took custody of her son Jean Baptiste and infant daughter Lisette back in St. Louis. As a young Shoshone Indian woman in 1804, Sacagawea accompanied Lewis and Clark on their journey into the unknown Indian lands of the west. Traveling with two-month-old Jean Baptiste strapped to her back, her services as an interpreter were vital to the expedition.

1820 The Missouri Territory imposed a bachelor tax on unmarried men between the ages of 21 and 50. It cost you \$1 a year to remain a bachelor in Missouri in 1820.

1852 Edward Noonan was born in Reading, Pennsylvania. He was the 31st Mayor of St. Louis, serving from 1889-1893. During his term, work began on Union Station, City Hall and the new waterworks at Chain of Rocks. Noonan also signed a measure that forbade contractors doing business with the city from working their employees more than eight hours per day.

1858 After three and 1/2 years of bloody anti-slavery raids along the Kansas border. John Brown made his final raid into Missouri. The raid into Vernon County almost ignited the border war again. Brown's next raid would be at Harper's Ferry.

1877 The *Post-Dispatch* reported that sales of works by Mark Twain were falling. His *Innocents Abroad* and *Roughing It* were selling well. But his latest release, *Tom Sawyer* was described as a disappointment. The writer said that if it were not for the success of his play *Colonel Sellers* and the wealth of his wife, Twain might have to return to the lecture circuit to support his lifestyle.

1881 Branch Rickey was born in Stockdale, Ohio. He became president and field manager of the Cardinals in 1917, and managed until 1925. Demoted by owner Sam Breadon to vice-president, Rickey developed the farm system that produced the great Redbird teams of the 30's and 40's. All Major League teams adopted the system. Rickey signed Jackie Robinson after moving to the Dodgers, breaking baseball's color barrier.

1901 Formal ground breaking ceremonies were held for the World's Fair. There was five inches of snow on the ground, and the bitter cold forced the postponement of the huge parade planned to mark the occasion. A bonfire was kept burning to thaw the ground.

1923 Leaders of the notorious Egan Gang visited the state prison in Jefferson City. They brought lavish Christmas gifts of \$30 to each of the 31 gang members currently behind

bars. It was a tradition established by mobster leader William Egan, before a rival gang gunned him down in 1921.

1926 The World Champion Cardinals stunned the city with the announcement that they had traded the great Rogers Hornsby to the Giants for Frankie Frisch. Hornsby had been in a dispute with management over his contract. The St. Louis Chamber of Commerce asked baseball commissioner Kenesaw Landis to prevent the trade, but Landis refused to intervene.

1935 Mayor Bernard Dickmann arrived in Washington to ask for the first federal money for the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. The Attorney General said federal law wouldn't permit such expenditure. But Dickmann gently reminded President Roosevelt that he needed to carry Missouri to win the next election. St. Louis had the money the next day.

1936 The most sensational case of the gangster era here came to a close with the conviction of Nellie Muench and her associates on federal mail fraud charges. The Central West End socialite masterminded the kidnapping of Doctor Isaac Kelley, and then planned a hoax to make her look more sympathetic to the jury. She and her associates stole a baby for her to bring to court. She got ten years.

1955 The Municipal Airport Commission called for construction of a second airport. Public Utilities Director Conway Briscoe said many cities were finding out that a single airport wasn't enough, especially during bad weather.

1957 The city approved the massive redevelopment plan for the Mill Creek Valley. An eight-story office building, a 150-unit hotel and high rise apartments were planned on the 465-acre site formerly occupied by one of the worst slums in the city.

1962 Mayor Tucker named August A. Busch Junior to take charge of events planned for the city's bicentennial celebrations in 1964. Tucker cited Busch's "flair for showmanship." Among the events planned for the bicentennial were the dedication of the stadium and the Arch.

1973 The city was digging out from a paralyzing 13-inch snow storm the day before. Seven people had died. Several gas stations, already hit hard by the energy crisis, ran out of gas due to problems getting deliveries through the snow.

1998 Television and radio personality Mary Phelan Baudendistel died of injuries from an auto accident on I-270. A driver with a suspended license struck her vehicle from behind. Phelan was 37. After eight years at KMOV, she had left in August to start a new life with her husband. She was married on November 28.

1999 The Cardinals traded pitcher Juan Acevedo and two minor leaguers to Milwaukee for second baseman Fernando Vina. Fernando signed with Detroit as a free agent in December 2003.

