

December 21

1847 The first telegraph message was sent to St. Louis. A message from Louisville was sent to the offices of the *Missouri Republican* via the newly opened East St. Louis telegraph office. The messages were sent across the river, allowing the paper to boast that it could publish the news from the East Coast almost to the moment the paper was published.

1896 A devastating fire swept the business section along Main Street in Kirkwood. The town had no fire department. When the fire proved too much for a bucket brigade, a call went out to the St. Louis Fire Department. A pumper came just as fast as the horses could go, but it was too late to save several buildings.

1901 In the freezing cold weather, workers began the task of clearing trees and levelling the ground at the site of the World's Fair.

1908 The Mississippi Valley Auto Company began operating the first taxi cabs in St. Louis. Missouri Governor David R. Francis was the first passenger, making a 25-minute trip from his residence at Newstead and Maryland to his office on North 4th Street. The first fares were 30 cents for the first ½ mile and 10 cents for each ¼ of a mile thereafter.

1920 George Herbert Walker Bush of St. Louis, President of the U.S. Golf Association, proposed a biennial match between U.S. and British Amateur Golfers. The players would vie for the Walker Cup. Walker's grandson would become the 41st president of the United States. His great grandson is the 43rd president.

1926 The St. Louis Chamber of Commerce sent a telegram to Baseball Commissioner Kenesaw Landis, asking him to step in and void the trade one day earlier that sent Rogers Hornsby to the Giants for Frankie Frisch. Landis refused. The chamber called the trade "a terrible blow" to the city.

1935 President Roosevelt signed a bill authorizing Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes to acquire land and develop the proposed riverfront memorial. At first, the federal government had balked at spending the money. But St. Louis Mayor Bernard Dickmann traveled to Washington and gently reminded President Roosevelt that he needed Missouri's votes in the next election.

1949 The city of Creve Coeur was incorporated. The name means "broken heart" or "cleft heart" in French. Legend says an Indian girl named Me-Me-Ton-Wish was heartbroken over her unrequited love for a French-Canadian trapper and jumped from the bluffs. It actually probably refers to the shape of what is now Creve Coeur Lake. When the area was settled it was actually two lakes, resembling a broken heart.

1949 The East St. Louis schools announced that 85 years of segregation would end on January 30th, the start of a new semester. A new Illinois state law threatened to deny funding to districts where segregation was still in force.

1951 Search and rescue crews were rushing to Southern Illinois, following word of a gas explosion at the Orient Mine Number Two in West Frankfort. The disaster would kill 119 men.

1952 Joaquin Andujar was born in San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic. "One Tough Dominican" pitched for the Cardinals from 1981 until he game unglued during Game Seven of the 1985 World Series. Andujar was the hero down the stretch in 1982.

1959 Florence Griffith Joyner was born in Mojave, California. The track star known as "Flo Jo" married Al Joyner of East St. Louis. She won four medals in the 1988 Seoul Olympics, setting records in the 100 and 200-meter dashes. She suffered a heart seizure on a flight from California to St. Louis in 1996 and died during an epileptic seizure on September 21, 1998 at the age of 38.

1959 Zoo officials were searching for the popular performing chimpanzee, "Mister Moke." He had been kidnapped from his cage. A \$1,000 cashier's check was left behind. It turned out that Mister Moke's former owner had taken him to Florida to star in motion pictures. He turned up a few months later.

1959 The President of Falstaff, Joseph Griesedieck, announced St. Louis would apply for a National Football League franchise. Griesedieck said the league had many questions about the progress on plans for a new downtown stadium.

1960 Andy Van Slyke was born in Utica, New York. Andy played outfield for the Cardinals from 1983-86 before he was traded to Pittsburgh.

1964 Mayor Raymond Tucker announced he would run for a nearly-unprecedented fourth term. The only other candidate to announce so far was Alderman Alfonso J. Cervantes.

1973 One of the worst traffic tie ups in city history. Because of a blizzard two days earlier, many highways were still narrowed to one or two lanes when St. Louisans returned to work. The crush of shoppers trying to take care of Christmas shopping put off due to the weather added to the mess.

1974 The "Cardiac Cardinals" came up short in their drive to the Super Bowl. They lost the first game of the playoffs to the Minnesota Vikings, 30-14. It was the first playoff game ever for a St. Louis NFL team.

1975 The Big Red beat the Detroit Lions 24-13 to win their second straight NFC East title. Terry Metcalf set a single-season record for all-purpose yards with 2,462. Metcalf was named league MVP, but the Cards fell again in the first round of the playoffs.

1981 Guardian Angels founder Curtis Sliwa and his fiancee announced they would spend their honeymoon in the Vaughn Housing Projects to focus attention on the

conditions there. They told the media they were asking for "rat traps and roach spray" as wedding presents.

1984 "Wick" became a member of the Blues. The Blues traded Perry Turnbull to Montreal for Gilbert DeLorme, Greg Paslawski and Doug Wickenheiser. His overtime goal in Game Six of the 1986 Campbell Conference Finals went down in Blues history as "The Monday Night Miracle." His courageous battle against cancer was an inspiration to the team and to fans. Wickenheiser died on January 12, 1999.