

## **December 23**

**1795** Today is the birthday of Bridgeton. In 1795, Robert Owen was granted a concession from the Spanish for the Village a' Robert, which he had laid out in 1792. The French called the area Marais des Liards, literally "cottonwood swamp." The Americans called it Owen's Station, later Bridgeton.

**1809** The city's first police ordinance was passed. No force was established, but each male citizen over the age of 18 was required to serve or provide a substitute. An actual police force was established in December 1839.

**1865** Sarah Breedlove was born on a plantation in Louisiana. She moved to St. Louis in 1887, and worked as a washerwoman. A scalp ailment caused her to lose much of her hair, and she sold Annie Malone's hair care products before developing her own line in 1906. She moved to Denver, married, and changed her name to Madam C.J. Walker. Madam Walker became one of the first African-American female millionaires and a great philanthropist.

**1902** Aloys P. Kaufmann was born in St. Louis. He was the 40<sup>th</sup> Mayor of St. Louis, appointed after the death of Mayor Becker. He was elected in his own right and served until 1949. Becker failed in his quest for the state Constitutional Convention of 1943-44 to allow for the expansion of the city boundaries. His administration also passed the earnings tax.

**1922** Detectives visited one of the city's most popular restaurants and arrested 25 people. 150 patrons were frisked for flasks at Caffarata's Cafe on Delmar.

**1929** Dick Weber was born. Weber joined the famous Budweiser bowling team in 1955. He went on to win 26 PBA tournaments and 6 senior titles, winning Bowler of the Year honors in 1961, 1963 and 1965. Weber was the sport's first television star and was the first to win a PBA title in six different decades.

**1924** Half the reservations made for New Year's Eve at various St. Louis clubs were suddenly cancelled. It happened following an announcement by the federal prohibition office here. The feds were bringing in 25 more special agents to ensure that St. Louis had a dry New Year.

**1930** The results of the 1930 Census showed the population of St. Louis had increased by six percent since 1920. About 821,960 people now lived in St. Louis. The population of St. Louis County had jumped by 110%, to 211,593.

**1931** Deputy Prohibition Administrator James Dillon said his men had their work cut out for them this holiday season. He estimated that there were 1,000 speakeasies and 3,000 "beer flats" in operation here. Dillon said many restaurants; cigar stores, confectioneries and bootblacks were dispensing liquor.

**1932** The street lights burned around-the-clock and Lambert Field was shut down for three days, due to another choking pall of smoke. Officials said the depression was adding to the smoke problem in St. Louis. People were heating their homes with the cheapest coal they could find.

**1945** Archbishop John Glennon was named to the College of Cardinals by Pope Pius the 12th. But St. Louisans never saw him as a prince of the church. After the lengthy ceremonies, 83-year-old Cardinal Glennon went to visit his native Ireland, where he caught pneumonia. He never returned home and died at the home of Irish President Sean O'Kelly in March 1946.

**1946** Real estate promoter Cyrus Willmore announced he was donating 70 acres of land to the city for a park. The land ran along the River des Peres east of Jamieson. The park adjoined Willmore's 700-acre "St. Louis Hills" development.

**1949** Mayor Darst announced that the city had picked a 40-block site for a combined privately financed slum clearance project and a federally subsidized low-cost housing project. Some 12,000 units would be built on the site bounded by 18th and Cole, Cass and Jefferson--later notorious as the Pruitt-Igoe housing project.

**1951** The Rams won their only NFL title while based in Los Angeles, a 24-17 win in the title game over the Cleveland Browns.

**1959** A federal grand jury indicted Chuck Berry on a charge of transporting a minor across state lines for immoral purposes. A 14-year-old girl said Berry brought her from El Paso, Texas to work as a hatcheck girl in his tavern. Berry was sentenced to three years after a second trial.

**1965** Ceremonies marked the topping out of the new Busch Stadium. The last of the structural concrete was poured, a few days ahead of schedule. That same day, the first section of the field lights was installed. They were lit for the first time on April 22, 1966.

**1973** Warm air blowing over snow left by a blizzard on December 19th caused a dense fog that shut the city down. Lambert Field was closed for 13 hours, stranding thousands of holiday travellers. I-70 was shut down for several hours after a series of accidents involving about 30 vehicles.

**1980** City officials were hailing the approval of an \$18 million federal grant to help finance St. Louis Centre. The \$120 million project was expected to create 2,500 permanent jobs. The shopping mall was planned for the three blocks between Famous and Stix downtown.

**1982** The Centers for Disease Control and the Missouri Division of Health recommended that the town of Times Beach be evacuated. Just two months earlier, residents learned the town could be contaminated with deadly dioxin, contained in waste

oil sprayed to keep the dust down on the streets years ago. A devastating flood along the Meramec River followed the news.

**1984** The *Globe-Democrat* was sold to Jeffrey Gluck of Columbia. He suspended publication on December 6, 1985, and then sold the *Globe* financially troubled to a pair of St. Louis businessmen. They suspended publication for good in 1986.