

February 4

1850 The Jackson County Court incorporated the community of "Kansas." A member of the family that established St. Louis founded the town near where the Kaw River meets the Missouri. Francois Chouteau built a fur trading post on the site in 1821. About 700 people lived there in 1850. The name was changed to Kansas City in 1889.

1850 The first high school west of the Mississippi opened in a portion of the old Wayman School at Sixth and Locust. The first building to be used exclusively for high school purposes opened on March 24, 1856 as Central High at 15th and Olive.

1884 Doctor, scientist and botanist George Engelmann died at the age of 75. He is best remembered for developing Henry Shaw's botanical garden. For 47 years, he faithfully kept track of the weather in St. Louis, our first meteorologist. He died after catching cold while trying to clear a path through the snow to his instruments. I doubt Dave Murray would do that!

1900 The worst fire in St. Louis since the great fire of 1849. All of the buildings in a four-square block area of the downtown retail district were destroyed. The fire began at Penny and Gentiles on North Broadway. Famous-Barr, across from the burned blocks, suffered extensive smoke damage. One fireman was killed.

1902 Charles Lindbergh was born in Detroit. He grew up on a farm in Little Falls, Minnesota. While best remembered for his transatlantic flight, he also convinced the Guggenheim family to fund rocketry experiments by Robert Goddard and invented an artificial heart. Lindbergh was criticized for speaking out against voluntary U.S. entry into World War Two. But once war came, he flew 50 combat missions as a civilian advisor and developed new techniques that increased the capability of American fighter planes.

1905 Arson was suspected in one of the worst fires ever in East St. Louis. Three of the city's largest office buildings were destroyed. Firefighters were hampered by a raging blizzard.

1921 In one of the biggest thefts to that date in St. Louis area history, five gunmen kidnaped a federal mail messenger at the KATY depot at St. Charles. They took a pouch containing \$115,000. The messenger was released unharmed.

1923 The *Globe-Democrat* called it "The biggest baseball story in years" as the Card's owner Sam Breadon announced he had signed manager Branch Rickey to an unprecedented five-year contract. In 1925, Breadon moved Rickey to the front office, where he developed the "farm system" that turned the Cardinals into a powerhouse.

1931 The St. Louis County Plan Association was protesting the Missouri Highway Department's "Super Highway 40" plan. The association said the highway from Wentzville to St. Louis would cut through Ladue Village and "destroy the most beautiful

residential property in the county to build a highway for Kansas City and Illinois motorists."

1947 The very first public test of a television program in St. Louis. Harold Grams, the program manager of KSD TV, interviewed two technicians from RCA. The broadcast was seen by RCA executives at the Statler Hotel and a troop of Brownies at the home of the local RCA distributor.

1953 Plans were announced for the demolition of the first big office building to be erected in St. Louis. The ten-story Equitable Building at Sixth and Locust was to be torn down to make room for a new Woolworth's. Built in 1869, The Equitable became famous as a spot to take an elevator trip to the top for a view of the city.

1955 St. Louis newspapers carried the story of a two-month-old boy whose ear was bitten off by a rat in the Mill Creek Valley, the city's worst slum. The city health commissioner admitted that rat control efforts had been abandoned there, because the entire valley was to be leveled for redevelopment. A Teamsters local sued to force the city to enforce the laws in blighted areas.

1970 Workers placed the final section of steel superstructure linking the Daniel Boone Expressway with the Poplar Street Bridge. At the time, Highway 40 ended at Market Street. Highway officials were confident that the project would be finished by the end of 1970.

1972 Missouri Governor Warren Hearnes signed legislation creating the Missouri-St. Louis Metropolitan Airport Authority. Hearnes and St. Louis County Supervisor L.K. Roos made the move to thwart Mayor A.J. Cervantes in his plans for a new airport at Columbia-Waterloo. Governor Hearnes said Lambert Field would be adequate for the next 100 years.

1974 Sheriff's deputies were escorting convoys of trucks as an independent trucker's strike spread. Truckers demanding a roll back in fuel prices and an increase in freight rates blockaded the huge Gasper's truck stop at Kingdom City.

1982 Five days after a blizzard dumped up to 22 inches of snow on the area, things were still not back to normal. County Executive Gene McNary asked business owners to keep one-half of their employees home, and asked public schools to remain closed. The city announced it would pay anyone with a snowplow \$45 dollars an hour to help clear the streets.

1983 A civic group bought 50 acres on the East St. Louis Riverfront, across from the Arch. The group said it hoped the land would someday be used to extend the memorial across the river.