

February 25

1844 Boys stumbled over dissected bodies after they went to retrieve a ball that went over the fence at the St. Louis University Medical College. (Not related to today's SLU School of Medicine) Rumors spread about grave robbing and a mob quickly formed. The militia was called out and the mob dispersed. But they later returned and destroyed the college. The mob headed for another medical school, but students there hid the bodies.

1868 James B. Eads personally directed the placement of the first 3,000 pound granite block that would form the foundation of the first pier of the bridge. Eads insisted that the piers rest on the bedrock 100 feet below the river bottom. He had observed that the river bottom at Cairo was a moving mass several feet thick, and new any other method of construction would fail.

1873 A report in the *Globe-Democrat* on the progress of the Eads bridge said the piers and the abutments were nearly complete. Captain Eads said work had been slowed down in recent weeks because of ice in the river, but he still expected work to be completed by next fall. Workers were starting construction on the arches on which the superstructure would rest.

1876 President Grant fired his personal secretary Orville Babcock. He also axed his military secretary, Levi Luckey, over the allegations stemming from the "Whiskey Ring" scandal unfolding in St. Louis. Large distilleries had bribed high-ranking officials to avoid paying liquor taxes. Babcock was acquitted, only after Grant intervened. The whole affair tarnished Grant's reputation.

1882 Flamboyant Irish poet, playwright novelist and all-around dandy Oscar Wilde caused a furor in a visit to St. Louis. He was 27 years old at the time, and at the height of his popularity. Wilde delivered a lecture on the aesthetic movement at the Mercantile Library Hall and stayed at the Southern Hotel. The city marveled at his velvet jacket, satin knee breeches, stockings and long hair.

1899 The World's Fair committee hosted a lavish banquet in Washington, D.C. for 200 guests, three cabinet officers, and Senators and Representatives from all of the states of the Louisiana Purchase. The guests pledged their support for a federal appropriation for the proposed World's Fair.

1922 The *Globe-Democrat* reported that St. Louis built autos were the hit of the 1922 auto show here. The Dorris, Moon, Gardner, St. Louis, and Stanwood were all built in St. Louis. Trucks manufactured here included the Eagle, Luedinghaus, Power and the Traffic.

1923 Clarence "Little Red" Powers, the second lieutenant for the Egan Gang, was shot to death at the Nine Mile House on Olive Street Road in St. Louis County. Two private watchmen also died in the hail of bullets. The killing came just days after an attorney affiliated with the rival Hogan Gang was murdered on a downtown street.

1943 Talk show host Sally Jesse Raphael was born. The former disc jockey's talk show began as a ½ hour local production on KSDK Channel 5 in 1983. She went national a year later, becoming known for her shows on relationships and her trademark red frame glasses. The show was the longest running of its type when cancelled in May 2002.

1948 A fire demolished the Diamonds Restaurant on Highway 66 at Missouri 100. The fire was so intense, 66 was shut down. A new Diamonds was built on the same spot. That building is now the Tri-County Truck Stop. When I-44 was built in 1960, a new Diamonds was built on the interstate. It closed in 1995.

1950 Mayor Darst named some of the city's top business, financial and civil leaders to form the Urban Redevelopment Corporation. They were charged with raising \$50 million for a private capitol housing project, a 5,000 unit apartment complex to replace a slum on the edge of downtown.

1956 Six people were killed, 20 hurt, as a tornado swept through South St. Louis County and across Metro East. All six of the deaths were in the East Side communities of Summerfield and Imbs Station.

1961 The Board of Aldermen passed three bills clearing the way for the city to do its part in moving forward with the stadium project. The most important measure approved the Civic Center Redevelopment plan for the stadium. Elated officials said construction could begin within two years.

1966 CBS Television aired the documentary *Sixteen in Webster Groves*. The next day, Webster Groves was in an uproar. At first, Webster Groves residents were thrilled to have been chosen. But the documentary made the teens look shallow and materialistic. Some of the parents looked even worse.

1966 The FCC ordered radio station KWK off the air at midnight, ending a three year battle by the station to keep its license. The license was revoked in 1963, after KWK ran a fraudulent treasure hunt contest that ended up with listeners digging up the Munny parking lot.

1971 The site recommended by a city sponsored study for a new airport was reported to be "a relatively sparsely populated area near Columbia, Illinois." The site was 16 miles from downtown.

1972 The Cardinals made the worst trade in franchise history. They sent Steve Carlton to the Phillies for Rick Wise. Gussie Busch ordered Carlton traded after a contract dispute. The next season, he won 27 games for the last place Phillies and picked up the first of his four Cy Young Awards. Wise did win 16 games in 1972 and 1973, but was traded to Boston after the 1973 season.

1976 Reporters and some of the workers who built it took the first rides on the brand new roller coaster at Six Flags over Mid America. The "Screaming Eagle" reached speeds of 62 miles per hour on a 3,872-foot course.

1983 Tennessee Williams choked to death on a medicine bottle cap at his at his New York City residence in the Hotel Elysee. Williams moved from Mississippi to St. Louis with his family in 1918 at age seven. He attended University City and Soldan High Schools as well as Washington University. He went to work for the International Shoe Company in 1931. Williams drew on his St. Louis experiences in his best-known plays.

1993 St. Louis was blanketed with nearly a foot of snow. Three people died. The 11.7 inches ranked as one of the six biggest snow falls in city history. It came a little more than a week after we had been hit with an eight-inch storm.

2005 A double homicide suspect died in a spectacular crash during a police chase broadcast live on television. Police said John Clark Alexander of Frontenac had killed his estranged wife, Kelli Alexander and her friend April Wheeler in Town and Country before leading police on the high speed chase. Alexander was thrown from the vehicle when it went airborne and overturned on Highway 40 at Lindbergh.