

January 2

1896 Six people were killed, dozens injured, as fire destroyed four three-story brick buildings in the 300 block of North Second. Most of the deaths were the result of an explosion in one of the buildings where fireworks, dynamite and gunpowder were stored.

1901 Joseph Folk took office as the new St. Louis Circuit Attorney. He won with the help of "Boss" Ed Butler. But once Folk took office, he went after Butler and the "Big Cinch" machine that controlled St. Louis government. Folk's enemies labeled him "Holy Joe" as his "boodle" cases attracted national attention and got him elected governor in 1904.

1911 The landmark Autenrieth Hotel in Clayton burned to the ground. The hotel was the headquarters for the first Clayton volunteer fire department. The fire engine was stored inside the hotel.

1928 The first concrete proposal for cleaning up the riverfront was made by the City Planning Commission under Harland Bartholomew. He envisioned clearing the riverfront of buildings, an open "Mall" in the heart of downtown and constructing the Third Street Highway. Bartholomew and his firm would develop plans for hundreds of cities

1930 Colonel Charles Lindbergh said a new airport should be built closer to downtown. He said it was essential if St. Louis was to retain its position as a leader in commercial aviation. Lindbergh said a new airport should be planned "before it is too late."

1931 Pearl Abernathy and his daughter in law, Mrs. Charles Abernathy, were charged as accessories in the kidnapping of Augustus Busch Orthwein. The elder Abernathy admitted that his son, Charles, had kidnapped the grandson of August Busch.

1932 Six law enforcement officers were killed when they shot it out with the Young Brothers south of Springfield, Missouri. Two other gunmen were involved, one believed to be "Pretty Boy" Floyd. The Young brothers escaped. But they were cornered in Houston, where they killed themselves rather than surrender.

1935 The "trial of the century" got underway in Flemington, New Jersey. Bruno Richard Hauptman, an illegal German immigrant, was charged with the kidnapping and murder of the Lindbergh baby. Hauptman would be convicted, largely on circumstantial evidence. He went to the electric chair on April 3, 1936.

1948 The largest crowd to see a Billikens game to that date saw the Bills win their seventh straight. A crowd of 11,216 packed Kiel as the Bills, led by "Easy Ed" McCauley defeated defending NCAA champions, Holy Cross.

1950 At least 12 persons were hurt and 60 homes were damaged or destroyed, as a tornado ripped through parts of Madison County, Illinois and St. Louis County. Seven hours before the storm, a weakened levee along the Mississippi collapsed, flooding 500 acres near Wood River.

1951 The St. Louis County Council met for the first time. Prior that date, the County Court had been the governing body of the county. It had been in place since November 1804.

1954 FBI agents were digging in remote areas of St. Louis County. They were searching for the missing \$300,000 of the Greenlease kidnapping ransom. The search centered on the area around the Meramec River, within a short drive from the Coral Court Motel. Kidnapper Carl Austin Hall told police that while staying at the hotel, he drove around searching for a place to bury the ransom but never found a good spot.

1955 Construction was slated to begin on a \$450,000 drive-in movie theatre in the 9900 block of Page. The Holiday Drive-In would cover 16 acres and feature some of the most elaborate buildings and equipment ever used in a drive-in here.

1959 NASA announced plans to put a man in space. McDonnell Aircraft would be awarded the contract to design, develop and build the spacecraft.

1976 Leif Sverdrup died. The St. Louis civic leader was a highly decorated World War Two engineer, in charge of the Engineering Construction Command for the Pacific Theater. You see the work of his engineering firm every day. Sverdrup and Parcel designed Busch Memorial Stadium, The Poplar Street and Blanchette Bridges, and the bridges on Highway 40. The firm merged with Jacobs Engineering Group in 1999.

1986 Bill Veeck died at the age of 71. Veeck was a pioneer owner of three teams who introduced zany promotions, bat day, fireworks, exploding score boards and players names on the backs of their uniforms. As owner of the Browns, he sent a midget up to bat in 1944 and had fans vote on the manager's moves during a game. While working for the Cubs in 1937, it was his idea to plant ivy at the wall in Wrigley Field.

1995 The St. Louis area was digging out after eight inches of snow. Some areas to the west received up to a foot. About 33 percent of the flights at Lambert were cancelled. Parts of I-70 and 44 where closed.

1997 We were basking in record heat. The temperature topped 70 degrees, breaking the old record of 68, set in 1964.

2006 The Rams fired coach Mike Martz. Martz coached the Rams for more than five seasons, leading them to playoffs four times and to the Super Bowl after the 2001 season. The Rams started the 2006 season 2-3 before Martz was sidelined with an infection of the heart lining. Assistant Joe Vitt replaced him for the rest of the season.