

## January 6

**1810** The town trustees of St. Louis passed an ordinance providing for the first tax collector in the town.

**1814** The first theatrical performance in St. Louis took place. A group of young St. Louis men performed *The School for Authors*, and *Budget of Blunders*, billed as “a farce.” The performance took place at the building we now know as the “old” courthouse. The first theatre in St. Louis would not open until 1819.

**1863** William Carr Lane died. He was elected as the first Mayor of St. Louis on April 5, 1823. He was re-elected to five consecutive one-year terms. In 1837, he was elected to fill out the un-expired term of Mayor Darby, then re-elected two more times. Lane also served three terms in the Missouri House and was appointed governor of the New Mexico Territory in 1852.

**1865** The Missouri Constitutional Convention began meeting in St. Louis. The Drake Constitution, named after a St. Louis lawyer, abolished slavery in Missouri. But it also required a controversial loyalty oath for all voters, officeholders, teachers, attorneys and ministers. It also threw all judges, circuit attorneys and recorders out of office. Those not deemed disloyal were re-appointed by the governor.

**1872** Some of the loveliest young ladies in the city jammed the corridors of the Southern Hotel, eager for a glimpse of the 22-year-old Grand Duke Alexis, son of the Czar.

**1877** One of the first contract holdouts in St. Louis baseball history. Joe Battin would not sign with the Browns because of a new National League policy charging the players \$30 for their uniforms and deducting 50 cents per day from their salaries for meals.

**1889** Jordan Lambert died. His son, future aviation pioneer Albert Bond Lambert, became head of the firm now known as Lambert Pharmaceuticals. Jordan Lambert had helped develop the formula for Listerine. In 1884, he formed Lambert Pharnacal to market it to the medical community as a surgical antiseptic only. In 1895, his firm began marketing Listerine as the first mouthwash.

**1912** The magnificent new Main Library on Olive opened. Andrew Carnegie had donated \$1 million for the library, with the stipulation that the city should provide \$150,000 annually for maintenance.

**1930** The new \$531,000 Arsenal Street Viaduct opened to traffic. Construction on the landmark bridge spanning the River Des Peres and the Frisco tracks began in February 1928. A modern bridge replaced the viaduct in 1996.

**1950** Mayor Joseph Darst pledged to throw the entire weight of his administration behind efforts to hold a world's fair here in 1953 to mark the 150th anniversary of the

Louisiana Purchase. Nothing was ever done, and a few private citizens held the only observance of the anniversary on the riverfront.

**1957** The Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority unveiled plans for the redevelopment of the Mill Creek Valley. About 460 acres bounded by Grand, 20th, Olive and the rail yards would be levelled. Industrial and residential projects would rise on the site, to be joined by an expanded St. Louis University Campus.

**1959** The designer of the Arch returned to St. Louis. Eero Saarinen met with Mayor Tucker and declared that construction on the proposed Free Bridge at Poplar Street would not interfere with Arch construction. The National Park Service said the Arch would be finished by the summer of 1963.

**1962** Promoter Bill Bangert and his village of Champ (where I-70 and I-270 meet today) were making headlines with grandiose plans again. Bangert had begun work on a 1 ½ mile barge canal from the Missouri River to the village to lure industry to Northwest St. Louis County.

**1963** Mutual of Omaha's *Wild Kingdom* made its debut. St. Louis Zoo Director Marlon Perkins hosted the television show, which developed many of now-familiar nature show concepts. Field correspondent Jim Fowler usually ended up facing the dangerous creatures. The show ran in prime time until 1971, when it went into syndication. Original episodes were produced for another 19 years.

**1963** Fluoridation of the St. Louis County water supply began. The U.S. Supreme Court had recently upheld the fluoridation ordinance. It had been passed in 1955, and repeatedly challenged in court.

**1963** A crowd of 7,828 at the Arena welcomed professional hockey back to St. Louis. The minor league Braves moved here from Syracuse. Such future stars as Bobby Orr and Phil Esposito played for the Braves before joining the Boston Bruins.

**1967** Johnny Keane died of a heart attack at the age of 55. Keane managed the Cardinals to the World Championship in 1964, and then quit to manage the Yankees.

**1971** The Jesuits ended training at St. Stanislaus Seminary on Howdershell. The Jesuits said the seminary, established in 1823, would be sold in the summer. Now owned by the Gateway College of Evangelism, most of the thousands of acres of seminary land have been taken over by subdivisions. There are plans to turn the rest into a park.

**1972** Blues coach Al Arbour, along with players John Arbour, Phil Roberto and Floyd Thompson, were hauled off to jail after a riot at the Spectrum in Philadelphia. Bob Plager and other players climbed into the stands to brawl with fans that had dumped a beer on the coach. Four fans were hurt. Al Arbour required 12 stitches, John Arbour ended up with 40.

**1974** In reaction to the energy crisis, the Cardinals announced that home night games would start earlier. Weeknight games would start at 7:30 pm instead of 8. Saturday night games would begin at 6 instead of 7.

**1982** Developer Don Breckenridge announced plans for a \$24 million luxury hotel off Highway 40, near Clarkson. The 12-story, 224-room hotel was to be built on the site of the Castle Oak Golf Club.

**1989** George "Tiny" Mercer became the first Missouri inmate to be put to death by lethal injection, and the first to be executed in 24 years. Mercer was a motorcycle gang member convicted of rape and murder. Missouri had reinstated the death penalty in May 1977.

**1994** The Los Angeles Rams announced they planned to terminate their lease in LA and were searching for a new home.

**1997** The Blues named Joel Quenneville as the 19<sup>th</sup> coach in team history. He replaced Mike Keenan, who had been fired on December 19th. Quenneville has won more games than any other Blues coach.

**1998** Police said Richard Abeln had confessed to hiring a hit man to kill his wife. Debra Abeln was killed at Parks Airport on December 26th in front of her 12-year-old son. The hit was made to look like a botched robbery attempt.