

January 17

1839 An item appeared in the St. Louis papers mentioning that the idea of a bridge across the Mississippi here had been attracting attention. A petition had been presented to the legislature to ask for the incorporation of a company to build one.

1843 The legislature abolished imprisonment for debtors in Missouri. Prior to this date, you could be thrown in jail if you got behind in your bills.

1854 The Mississippi River was frozen solid. A riverfront saloon and innkeeper named Polk pitched a tent in the middle of the river and began selling a little something to warm folks up. Business was so brisk, that he added a ten-pin alley by the end of the day. About seven other entrepreneurs followed suit. The Mississippi froze over several times into the 1870's and 1880's. The last time it happened was in 1940.

1873 A huge crowd gathered to watch a massive ice flow smash against the piers of the Eads Bridge, which was then under construction. The ice gorge had broken up on the Missouri at St. Charles. The piers held, but dozens of terrorized workmen had to be rescued.

1894 A St. Louis County mob lynched John Buckner, a black man accused of raping a white farmer's daughter. The next day, a mob attacked the County Jail. They planned to lynch a black man accused of assaulting elderly women in Ballwin and two blacks accused of murder. The sheriff got wind of the plans and moved the prisoners to the St. Louis Jail.

1899 David R. Francis addressed the most wealthy and substantial citizens of St. Louis. He asked for their help in raising \$5 million for the proposed world's fair. They greeted the proposal enthusiastically, and the success of the fair was said to be assured.

1915 White Sox player turned evangelist Billy Sunday condemned St. Louis. He said St. Louis was a "sinful, lustful, devil beridden city." Sunday said, "Will it ever awake to its regeneration?" He added that there was "little hope that the lord will ever be able to save such a hell-hole as St. Louis. He was speaking in Philadelphia at the time, which we all more is much more pure.

1926 The *Globe-Democrat* published a letter from George Munro of University College in Auckland, New Zealand. Munro wrote that he heard the initial tests of KMOX on December 16, 1925. Munro said the signal was remarkably clear some 8,000 miles away.

1927 Tom Dooley was born in St. Louis. After graduating from St. Louis University Medical School, he joined the Navy, and helped move refugees from North Vietnam. He used money from a book about his experiences to establish a hospital in Laos. In 1957, He started MEDICO to provide health care around the world. He wrote additional best sellers and became famous for his broadcasts from Southeast Asia on KMOX.

1932 The last street car left St. Charles. Louis Hesserich, superintendent of the line, and Postmaster E.L. Ren, who had ridden on the first St. Charles streetcar in 1904, were both on board for the final trip across the "electric bridge."

1932 County leaders were upset over rumors that the government planned to move its air mail terminal from Lambert Field to Curtiss-Steinberg Field on the East Side. The government said Curtiss-Steinberg was ten miles closer to downtown. County officials said such a move would doom Lambert Field because the airlines would follow suit.

1945 Vera Callahan, a 45-year old mother of two, became the first female candidate for mayor of St. Louis. As she filed for the Democratic nomination in the upcoming primary, she promised a lively campaign, but no mud slinging.

1952 Darrell Porter was born in Joplin. He played for Milwaukee and Kansas City and publicly announced he had overcome a drug and alcohol problem before signing with the Cardinals in 1981. Porter dominated the 1982 post season, batting .556 in the NLCS and was named MVP of the World Series. He was found dead of an apparent heart attack in a suburban Kansas City park in 2002.

1959 Demolition work was underway on the old Stag Brewery at North Florissant and Salisbury. The Carling Brewery bought out the Griesedieck Western Brewery in 1954. They then closed the St. Louis Stag Brewery, and consolidated operations in Belleville.

1977 The Illinois Department of Transportation began taking down the Route 66 shields and replacing them with I-55 signs. The signs would be removed in Missouri by February. Route 66 retained its designation longer in Illinois, because much of the highway was not up to Interstate standards. Missouri wanted to wait until the signs were removed in Illinois.

1977 Peter Busch pleaded guilty of manslaughter in the shooting of David Leeker. Leeker was the son of the owner of the So-Good Potato Chip Company. He was shot under mysterious circumstances while spending the night at the Busch mansion on February 10th. Peter was placed on probation for five years.

1978 Big Red Coach Don Coryell came to work to find all the locks had been changed. The most successful coach in Cardinal history had been involved in a feud with owner Bill Bidwell. Coryell resigned three weeks later, and went on to great success as coach of the San Diego Chargers.

1989 Chuck Berry sued *High Society* magazine for \$10,000,000 after they published nude photos of him with several women. Berry claimed he had taken the pictures over the past 30 years in case the women tried to defame him. He said the pictures were stolen from his Wentzville office.

1995 Los Angeles Rams owner Georgia Frontiere announced her team was moving to St. Louis, ending the city's long quest to replace the Cardinals. There were balloons, music,

and fireworks at a press conference at America's Center downtown to announce the move. Frontiere was born in St. Louis. She took over the team in 1979, when husband Carroll Rosenbloom drowned.

2004 A soaking rain and 40 degree temperatures chilled the crowd on hand for ground breaking ceremonies for the new Busch Stadium. Chairman Bill DeWitt Jr. announced that the seats in the ballpark would be red, after Cards fans voted 6-1 on line in favor of red over green. Work had actually begun on December 23, 2003.

2005 St. Louis native and movie star Virginia Mayo died at the age of 84. The daughter of a Globe-Democrat reporter graduated from Soldan in 1938 and got her big break performing in the chorus line at the Muny. She starred in comedies with Bob Hope, but won praise for her dramatic performance in "The Best Years of Our Lives" and "White Heat."