

July 19

1820 Missouri's first constitution was signed at the Mansion House Hotel at Third and Vine here. Missourians were confident of being admitted to the union quickly. But the some eastern congressmen were offended by language in the document relating to slavery. After a bitter fight, the Second Missouri Compromise changed the offending language. Missouri became a state on August 10, 1821.

1853 The first division of the Pacific Railroad was completed. The first section of the first railroad west of the Mississippi ran from St. Louis to the town of Franklin, which was re-named Pacific to mark the occasion.

1890 The mayor's daughter, Zoe Noonan, turned the first shovel full of earth as work began on the new City Hall. No bond issue was passed for its construction, so the building took 14 years to complete. The City Hall is modeled after the Hotel DeVille, the City Hall of Paris. The design by George R. Mann was chosen from 37 entries in a national competition.

1924 Herman Bell of the Cardinals became the last major league to complete and win both games of a doubleheader. He threw a two-hitter in the first game against the Boston Braves and four-hitter in the second! The final scores were 6-1 and 2-1. Bell would only win one more game that season. But he won both ends of a doubleheader again in the minors.

1937 The Forest Park section of the Express Highway opened to traffic. The first expressway in St. Louis ran between Skinker and Kingshighway. (Highway 40 coming into St. Louis dead-ended at Eager Road until the late 1950's) Officers of the Mounted District reported that drivers who tried the highway that first day "really burned it up."

1940 Robert Wadlow, the "Gentle Giant," was laid to rest in Upper Alton Cemetery. At the time of his death at age 22, Wadlow stood eight feet, 11.1 inches tall and weighed 490 pounds, the biggest man who ever lived. He wore a size 37 shoe and traveled the country as a spokesman for a shoe company. His casket weighed 1,000 pounds and required 26 men to move. Wadlow's amazing growth was caused by a glandular problem that is treatable today.

1946 The English Teachers Association of Missouri had ignited a firestorm after reportedly complaining to the FCC about Dizzy Dean's assault on the language during his baseball broadcasts on WIL. The teachers said he was a bad influence on students. Hundreds of telegrams poured into WIL in support of 'Ol Diz.

1951 St. Louis was bracing for a record crest of the Mississippi. President Truman signed a bill authorizing federal aid to state and local governments in Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma. Damages from the 1951 flood would top \$1 billion, making it the costliest in the nation's history to that date.

1955 Route 66 on the east side was re-routed to take advantage of new expressway construction. The old "City 66" route over what is now 203 and Collinsville road was abandoned. The new route used the new four-lane across the Veteran's (Now King) Bridge. The location of 66 from Edwardsville across the chain of rocks thru Hazelwood and Kirkwood (Now Dunn road and Lindbergh) was redesignated as "By-pass 66."

1961 TWA became the first airline to show in-flight movies. The first movie shown in the skies was *Love Possessed*, starring Lana Turner.

1963 Charlotte Peters was filming her TV show at the Forest Park Highlands, when a fire broke out at the restaurant. Peters ended up reporting on a disaster that wiped out the beloved amusement park. The carousel survived and was sold to businessman Howard C. Ohlendorf. Ohlendorf spent \$250,000 to restore the carousel, which now resides at Faust Park. The ruins of the park were cleared and St. Louis Community College at Forest Park stands on the site today.

1972 Sally Benson died in Woodland Hills, California at the age of 71. In 1941-42, she penned a series of autobiographical vignettes for the *New Yorker* Magazine, entitled "5153 Kensington." The stories became the basis for the book and the film *Meet Me In St. Louis*.

1972 Louisiana, Missouri Police organized a posse after several residents reported seeing a huge black, hairy beast. Officials were afraid nervous residents would start shooting. The media whipped up hysteria over "Mo Mo the Monster" and sightings were reported as far away as St. Charles County. Mo Mo was even immortalized in a country song and a ride at Six Flags. He may still be out there.

1989 Governor Ashcroft signed the stadium bill. The measure authorized state funds for part of the construction of a domed stadium and convention center expansion in St. Louis.

1993 The Mississippi River was still at a record crest of 46.9 feet. Hundreds were fleeing the floodwaters after a levee gave way along the River Des Peres. At least 26 people were dead in the Midwest, and 10,000,000 acres were underwater. Even more rain was predicted here for the next day.

2006 One of the worst storms to hit St. Louis in recent memory cut off power to over 1,200,000 people. Winds up to 90 mph were blamed for at least two deaths and 30 injuries, including several people hurt at Busch Stadium. The Switzer Building next to the Eads Bridge collapsed. Ameren UE came under fire as large parts of the area were without power for up to ten days in the midst of a heat wave.