

## July 27

**1786** The co-founder of St. Louis tied the knot. Auguste Chouteau married Marie Therese Cerre. He was 36. She was 16.

**1817** The first steamboat arrived in St. Louis. The *Zebulon M. Pike* took six weeks to make the trip from Louisville, because it could only run during the day. A big crowd greeted the boat at the riverfront, but the Indians fled at the site of the fire-breathing monster. The arrival of the steamboat would transform St. Louis into one of the great cities of the U-S.

**1825** The town of Lebanon, Illinois was laid out by William McKinney and Thomas Ray. Lieutenant Governor McKinney built the Hotel Veranda there as a stage stop on the St. Louis to Vandalia route. The settlement sprang up around the hotel.

**1875** The St. Louis delegation to the Missouri constitutional convention proposed a plan calling for the separation of the city and the county. Their plan called for the city limits to be extended to include the new Forest Park. The city would assume the indebtedness of the county and "send the suburbs out free and unencumbered."

**1883** St. Louis Mayor William Ewing was acquitted in an impeachment hearing before the City Council. The impeachment effort began after Ewing refused to confirm appointments by the "Big Seven" Republican councilmen. But the six Democrats sided with Ewing, and the effort failed to win the 2/3 majority necessary.

**1894** William Henry Harrison Duncan was hanged at the County Courthouse in Clayton. He was convicted of killing officer James Brady at Starkes Saloon, 715 North 11<sup>th</sup>, on October 6, 1890. The folk song "Duncan and Brady" was written amid the racial tension after the controversial trial and the discovery that Starkes had confessed to the murder. Bob Dylan, Lead Belly, Woody Guthrie and others have performed the song, sometimes known as "King Brady."

**1904** Mayor Rolla Wells became the first mayor in the U.S. to get a new automobile. The touring car was the 700<sup>th</sup> automobile registered in St. Louis in 1904. The Police Department suggested that a contest with its new "scorcher wagon" might be a good event for Automobile Day at the World's Fair.

**1905** Leo Ernest Durocher was born in West Springfield, Massachusetts. The Cardinals traded pitcher Paul Derringer to Cincinnati for Durocher in 1933. The fiery shortstop proved a perfect fit for the "Gashouse Gang." He is best remembered for a 24-year managerial career. "Lippy" was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1994.

**1929** The Missouri Public Service Commission granted Union Electric the authority to build and operate a 30 million dollar dam on the Osage River at Bagnell, Missouri. The dam would create a lake 100 miles long, with thousands of miles of shoreline and one "Party Cove."

**1948** Betty Thomas was born in St. Louis. She is probably best known for her role as Lucy Bates on NBC-TV's *Hill Street Blues* from 1981-87. Since then, she has become a very successful director. Her feature directorial debut came with 1992's *Only You*. Among her other credits are *The Brady Bunch Movie*, *Private Parts* and *28 Days*.

**1953** Dizzy Dean was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Ol' Diz was a legend as much for his broadcasting as for his pitching. He mortified local English teachers with such descriptions as "he slud into third." The teachers tried to have him taken off the air. Diz pitched for the Cardinals from 1930 to 1937. He won two games of the 1934 world series and his brother Paul won the other two.

**1953** As the Korean Armistice took effect, the *Post-Dispatch* reported that 317 St. Louisans were killed in the conflict. Ninety-nine were reported missing in action and one-thousand-78 were wounded.

**1954** The Cahokia Downs Race Track opened. The lights went out between the third and fourth races on opening night. Cahokia Downs would host racing action until it was destroyed by fire in 1979.

**1972** The McDonnell-Douglas F-15 "Eagle" made its first flight.

**1977** Ralston-Purina purchased the Blues. The franchise was near financial ruin, with just three people left on staff. Fortunately, one of them was General Manager Emile "The Cat" Francis. Declaring, "The Check is back in the Checkerdome," Francis made the Blues competitive. But the team fell on hard times again, and Ralston abandoned the club when the league refused to approve a move to Saskatoon. Harry Ornest bought the team in 1983.

**1983** Six years to the day after it had bought the club, Ralston-Purina announced it had sold the Blues to Harry Ornest. Say what you will about the Ornest era, but he did save the club from moving to Saskatoon and he hired Ron Caron.

**1983** The Cardinals swiped nine bases en route to a 7-6 win over the Giants, the most steals by a team in a single game at Busch Stadium. Lonnie Smith stole three, Willie McGee and Ken Oberkfell swiped a pair each. Giants catcher John Rabb said he hoped the Cardinals won the Olympics next year.

**1983** The westbound lanes of the new Vandeventer overpass on Highway 40 opened. The eastbound lanes would remain detoured until the following summer. St. Louisans had endured delays and detours since the \$40 million project began in 1977.

**1995** Blues coach and general manager Mike Keenan stunned Blues fans with the announcement that Brendan Shanahan had been traded to Hartford. The Blues picked up a young defenseman named Chris Pronger. Shanahan has been a part of three Stanley Cup Champion teams since then. The Blues still have none.

**1996** Dan Dierdorf was inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame. Dierdorf anchored the Big Red offensive line from 1971 until 1983. He was a five-time all-pro player.

**2003** Bob Hope died at the age of 100. Hope came to St. Louis many times, starting out performing vaudeville routines at the Grand Theatre. He visited Children's Hospital often, performed at Scott Field and Jefferson Barracks in 1942 and starred in "Roberta" at the Muni in 1958. Hope emceed the opening of St. Louis Center in 1985. His daughter, Linda, attended St. Louis University.