

March 15

1778 The inhabitants of the village of St. Louis met to tackle the problem of how to drain the city. They decided to build a gutter down what is now Chestnut to draw water to the Mississippi. Construction on an actual sewage system was not begun until 1843. The cholera epidemic of 1849 spurred further development.

1807 Luther M. Kennett was born in Falmouth, Kentucky. He was the 15th Mayor of St. Louis, serving three one-year terms beginning in 1850. He took charge of improving public health in the wake of the great cholera epidemic. He established a quarantine station on an island south of the city. All passengers were required to disembark to be inspected for cholera, and many were detained.

1864 The St. Joseph Lead Company was organized by a group from New York to mine land in southeastern Missouri. The firm grew into Doe Run, the world's second largest mining and smelting company. In 2000, the EPA ordered the firm to clean up lead contamination around its 110-year-old smelter in Herculaneum. Doe Run bought out 160 homes around the facility in March 2002.

1845 The General Assembly established the first public school in the town of St. Ferdinand. (Florissant) Children who lived in the village or the common fields were to be taught for free. The academy thrived until 1871, when the Florissant School District was established.

1884 The "New" Post Office and Customs House on Olive was dedicated. General William T. Sherman presided over the ceremonies. In 1959, the federal government moved to sell the building to a developer, who planned to tear it down. Public outcry saved the building. It was declared a landmark.

1889 Work began on a road from Skinker to Clayton. John Forsyth donated the land through his farm on the condition that a good gravel road would be constructed. He sued when he saw the poor road that was built, and put a barrier across it. It wasn't removed until ten years later.

1893 The last spike was driven for the St. Louis division of the KATY Railroad, between St. Charles and New Franklin. The tracks hugged the bluffs along the Missouri River. The section became the KATY Trail after the line was abandoned in 1986.

1901 Steel magnate Andrew Carnegie announced he was donating \$1 million for the construction of a main library and ten auxiliary libraries in St. Louis. His only stipulation was that the St. Louis Library provide for annual maintenance. Carnegie had recently retired to devote his time to giving his fortune away.

1904 The *Globe-Democrat* reported on the popularity of the new song "Meet Me in St. Louis, Louis." The song originated when New York composer Kerry Mills ordered a popular drink called a "Louis." The bartender's name was Louis, so he said, "Give me

another Louis, Louis.” His friend, lyricist Andrew Sterling smiled at the repetition. Sterling penned the lyrics, which actually tell the story of a wife who leaves her husband to come to the fair!

1931 More than 8,000 people attended the biggest celebration ever in Rolla. They were celebrating the completed paving of Route 66 across Missouri. The last mile had been paved back in January in Phelps County near Arlington. At that time, US 66 used Manchester west from St. Louis to Gray Summit. The new Watson Road and the highway through Valley Park and Pacific opened in 1933.

1942 The *Globe-Democrat* reported that the war had brought comparative prosperity to the “Hooverville” shanty town that sprang up during the Depression beneath the Free Bridge. The war boosted the price of scrap metal from riverfront dumps, the primary source of income for many residents. The article noted that most of them still could not afford to move out of the shanty town.

1956 City officials announced that the Lafayette area would be the site of the city's fourth urban renewal project. A 772-acre area on the near south side would be cleared. Mayor Tucker estimated that it would cost about \$45 million to prepare the area for sale to private developers.

1961 Chuck Berry was convicted in his second trial for bringing a 14-year-old girl across state lines to work as a hat check girl in his St. Louis tavern. The first conviction had been overturned because the judge made racist remarks. Berry was sentenced to three years in prison.

1962 The population of St. Louis County exceeded that of the city for the first time. The Metropolitan Census Committee of the St. Louis Chapter, American Statistical Association, put the county population at 762,000. The city population was put at 740,000.

1962 Doctor Arthur Holly Compton died at the age of 69. Compton was a physicist famous for his work on the atom bomb. He served as chancellor of Washington University from 1946 to 1953. Compton won the Nobel Prize in 1927 for his discovery of the diffusion of X-Rays.

1965 Civil rights activist Ivory Perry lay down in front of a car to block traffic on the Kingshighway exit from Highway 40. Other members of the Congress of Racial Equality, or CORE, blocked key intersections. Perry took part in confrontational protests at Laclede Gas and Jefferson Bank, but is best remembered for climbing 100 feet up the side of the Arch when it was under construction in 1964.

1969 With thousands inconvenienced by a Bi-State bus drivers strike, Mayor Cervantes stepped in. He ordered both sides to meet around-the-clock in his office until an agreement was reached.

1983 The Museum of Science and Industry unveiled plans for a \$20 million science center in the old Falstaff Building at 5050 Oakland Avenue. Plans called for the museum to move there from Oak Knoll Park if voters approved a tax increase.