

March 20

1811 George Caleb Bingham was born in Virginia. His family came to Missouri in 1819, and the artist always claimed Missouri was his home. His most famous works were genre paintings, such as "The Jolly Flatboatmen." Perhaps his most famous work is "Order Number Eleven." It portrays the heartbreak following Union General Thomas Ewing's 1863 order forcing residents from a four-county area of Missouri.

1873 Henry Shaw complained to the County Court about the failure to improve the roads leading to Tower Grove Park. Shaw donated the land for the park, with the stipulation that the roads be kept in good condition. Shaw said visitors to the park risked damage to their carriages.

1875 The Missouri House rejected a resolution granting amnesty to the Younger and James Brothers for their guerrilla activities during the war. The lawmakers who favored the proposition hoped that granting amnesty would persuade the desperados to settle down and lead peaceful lives.

1878 Businessmen Charles and Alonso Slayback proposed a yearly pageant, similar to the Mardi Gras in their native New Orleans. They created the Mystic Order of the Veiled Prophet. The organization staged a parade for the masses and a ball for the elite. Civil rights protests, including the prophet's "unmasking" by activists at the 1972 ball, forced the group to diversify. In 1981, its leaders put on the first V.P. Fair on the riverfront. In 1995, the celebration became known as Fair St. Louis.

1897 Fire destroyed Schweighofer's Bakery in Clayton. St. Louis rushed two engines to the scene, just in time to save the rest of the town. The fire prompted citizens to found the Clayton Volunteer Fire Department.

1906 Business was at a stand still after one of the worst snow storms on record here. The storm dumped about a foot of snow over two days. The city street commissioner hired 1,000 unemployed men to clear the streets and sidewalks.

1922 The Aero Club of St. Louis voted to name its new airfield at Bridgeton after Albert Bond Lambert. Lambert was the president of the club and a tireless promoter of St. Louis as an aviation center. He was using his own money to develop the field. Lambert would later sell the field to city for a fraction of its value.

1927 After formally filing for the Orteig Prize, Charles Lindbergh headed to San Diego. While there, he would oversee construction of his plane by the Ryan Aircraft Company.

1943 St. Louis Fire Chief Joseph W. Morgan was killed in a fire at the Goodwill Industries Building, 713 Howard. He had gone in alone to make sure the walls were safe before ordering his men in. The 80-year-old building collapsed as Morgan stood on a second story fire escape. His son, Joseph J. Morgan, would one day become Fire Chief of Clayton.

1943 Eight people were killed and 19 hurt in a train-bus collision near Granite City. An interurban electric train hit the Nameoki bus at St. John's Crossing.

1965 A crowd of 9,000 turned out for the festivities honoring the great Bob Petit of the Hawks in his final game before retirement. Petit played 11 seasons in the NBA, appearing in 11 All-Star games. He was a three-time MVP. Petit led the Hawks to their only world title in 1958. In 1964, he had become the first NBA player to score 20,000 points. Petit was named to the Hall of Fame in 1971.

1972 Curt Flood's lawsuit seeking to overturn baseball's reserve clause reached the U.S. Supreme Court. Flood sued after the Cardinals traded him to Philadelphia following the 1969 season. The high court would uphold lower court decisions against Flood, ruling that baseball was exempt from anti-trust laws.

1973 City police sergeant Vernon Brinkman was killed with his own pistol following a brawl in a downtown tavern. An unemployed South St. Louis man confessed to the shooting.

1975 It appeared a certainty that the controversial Meramec Dam would be built. A federal judge ruled against the Sierra Club in its suit to halt the project. Construction was already underway on the site of the proposed 12,000-acre reservoir. But farmers and environmentalists pushed for a referendum on the issue. Over 60% voted against the dam, and the project was halted in 1981.