

March 30

1867 Fire broke out at the magnificent Lindell Hotel, the finest in the west. The hotel occupied an entire city block on Washington between Sixth and Seventh Streets. The loss of the hotel was considered a huge public calamity, but no one was killed. A new hotel opened on the site in 1874.

1872 St. Louis and East St. Louis were cleaning up after a tornado that hit while the streets were crowded with Saturday shoppers. Several people were seriously hurt when a market collapsed at Seventh and Spruce. Amazingly, no one was killed. Three steamboats were sunk.

1881 The magnificent new Southern Hotel opened. The hotel occupied the entire block where the Stadium East Garage stands today. The new building replaced the hotel that burned in one of the worst fires in St. Louis history. At least 21 people died. Firefighter Phelim O'Toole became a folk hero when he saved at least a dozen lives.

1887 The body of former Missouri Confederate Governor Thomas Reynolds was found at the bottom of an elevator shaft at the building we know as the Old Post Office. A note found in his pocket said he was suffering from depression and hallucinations. The note said that if he did harm himself, it was due to a "temporary disorder of the mind." Reynolds fled to Mexico after the war, still carrying the state seal. He returned it in 1869.

1890 The Great Blizzard of 1890 began. Officially, 20.4 inches of snow fell here on the 30th and 31st. That's still the all-time record for the worst snowstorm in St. Louis history.

1901 President William McKinley appointed a World's Fair commission. They were ordered to meet within 30 days of the passage of the World's Fair bill.

1903 Mark Twain wrote a letter to the directors of the world's fair, urging that steamboat races be held. Twain wrote, "As an advertisement for the fair, it would be hard to beat the boat race. As a spectacle, nothing could be added to it, except an old fashioned blow up as the boats entered the home stretch. But this should not be arranged; It is best left to providence and prayer."

1904 The Commissary Department at the world's fair asked the city pound to provide a number of dogs each day to the Igorote Village at the fair. The natives considered dog meat a great delicacy. Legend says this is how the "Dogtown" neighborhood got its name. That's a myth. Irish laborers gave the area its name in the 1860's because there were so many dogs there.

1907 The first Automobile Show of St. Louis opened at the Jai Alai Building. (Winter Garden) Mayor Rolla Wells led a parade of 300 automobiles to mark the occasion. Over 20,000 people would see the exposition during its six-day run.

1927 Officials at City Hospital warned that home brew and moonshine was turning deadlier in the St. Louis area. City Hospital reported treating 1,984 cases of alcohol poisoning in 1926. Officials said 26 victims had died and many had lost their sight or ended up paralyzed.

1930 The St. Louis Police Department announced it was abandoning the Mounted Patrol District, headquartered in Forest Park. The department said mounted officers were no longer effective. A few horses would be kept for limited duty and parades.

1931 The *Globe-Democrat* reported that Betty Grable of St. Louis had signed a contract with the Fox Studios that assured her of "talkie stardom." She had made her first appearance in 1930, dancing in *Let's Go Places*. She would go on to appear in 42 films and become the most famous pin-up girl of World War Two. Grable felt she was not a great actress. She once said, "My legs saved me."

1946 "St. Louis Woman" opened on Broadway. Based on a book by Arna Bontemps and Countee Cullen from Bontemps's novel "God Sends Sunday," the play brought wide attention to supporting actress Pearl Bailey, who stopped the show nightly with her renditions of "Legalize My Name" and "A Woman's Prerogative."

1957 The N-B-A championship series between the St. Louis Hawks and the Boston Celtics began. Boston would take the title, four games to three. The two teams would meet again in the finals in 1958. But this time, the Hawks came out on top.

1957 A reviewer in the *Globe-Democrat* said "Elvis Presley sang, groaned, shimmied and shook his way through 16 offerings" the night before at Kiel. Every seat was filled. It marked the first sell out by a performer "other than Liberace" in recent years.

1960 Hopes were renewed that the Arch might be completed in time for the city's bicentennial in 1964. The Senate had approved a new appropriation of \$4,603,000 for the construction. That was triple the amount approved by the House.

1977 The long-running controversy over the proposed major airport at Columbia-Waterloo, Illinois was resolved. Brock Adams, the US Secretary of Transportation, reversed a decision by his predecessor. Adams announced there would be no federal funding for such a project. Adams said he was confident Lambert Field was capable of meeting the areas needs until at least 1995.