

## May 12

**1852** For the first time, a locomotive whistle split the air west of the Mississippi, as the Pacific Railroad received its first locomotive here. The railroad was under construction from St. Louis to what would become the town of Pacific. By May of 1853, the rails reached Kirkwood. In November of 1855, the line was completed to Jefferson City.

**1875** The owners of the rival St. Louis *Globe* and the *Democrat* announced that talks had been completed that would lead to a merger of the two papers. The first issue of the *Globe-Democrat* would hit the streets on May 20th. William McKee, who was involved in the Whiskey Ring scandal now engulfing the Grant administration, controlled the new paper.

**1899** A huge crowd at Union Station welcomed the Sixth Missouri Volunteers back from Cuba. They were presented with medals inscribed "Presented by the citizens of St. Louis for patriotic service in the War with Spain."

**1925** Lawrence Peter "Yogi" Berra was born in St. Louis. He grew up on Elizabeth Street on "The Hill." Berra tried out for the Cardinals in 1942, but was upset when Branch Rickey offered him \$250 to sign. That was half as much as Rickey offered Yogi's childhood friend, Joe Garagiola. Berra would go on to play on ten world championship clubs. He was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1973.

**1927** Charles Lindbergh and "The Spirit of St. Louis" left Lambert Field for New York. He had broken the record for the 1600 mile solo flight from the west coast. When he arrived in New York, he set a new record for the transcontinental flight. He left for Paris on May 20th.

**1932** The body of the kidnaped infant son of Colonel and Mrs. Lindbergh was found in the woods less than a mile from their home in Hopewell, New Jersey. Bruno Richard Hauptman was executed for the murder in 1936.

**1933** St. Louis Zoo Director George Vierheller unveiled plans for a \$400,000 building program he said would make the zoo the finest in the world. Bars and cages would be eliminated where possible. Moats and walls would protect people and animals from each other. Vierheller came up with the idea of the chimpanzee shows in 1926. He would serve as director until 1962.

**1950** Under orders from Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson, Illinois troopers raided the two biggest gambling houses in Madison County. Troopers arrested 750 people, including many St. Louisans. Stevenson had called the enforcement of gambling laws on the east side "a joke."

**1965** Protesters with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) began picketing Southwestern Bell. When the police showed up, they moved to the Laclede Gas

Building, where two of them chained themselves to the front doors. Over 500 people were stuck inside.

**1966** A crowd of 46,048 was on hand as the New Busch Stadium opened. First pitch by Ray Washburn of the Cardinals to Felipe Alou of the Braves (a ball) came at 8:04 PM. Hometown hero Mike Shannon got the first Cardinal hit at Busch. Second baseman Gary Buchek, who also grew up in St. Louis, scored the first Cardinal run in the new ballpark. Buchek also drove in the tying run in the ninth. The Redbirds beat the Braves 4-3 in 12 innings. Eric von Schneider caught the first home run ball off the bat of Felipe Alou and told a reporter he planned to sell it for \$50. Don Dennis was the first pitcher to win a game at Busch. Phil Niekro got the first loss. Henry Aaron had the first walk and Ray Washburn got Eddie Mathews for the first strikeout.

**1972** Lieutenant Michael Blassie of Florissant was shot down near An Loc, Vietnam. He rested for 14 years at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. In 1998, his family pressed the Pentagon to have the body exhumed for DNA testing, which confirmed the remains were those of Blassie.

**1986** Number 14 scored in sudden death overtime on a night that would go down in Blues history as "The Monday Night Miracle." The Blues trailed the Calgary Flames 5-2 in Game Six of the Stanley Cup semi-finals with 11:52 left in the game. They stormed back and won on Doug Wickenheiser's goal. But Calgary would win Game Seven. Wickenheiser died of cancer on January 12, 1999 at the age of 37. The Blues named their charity trust in honor of "Wick."

**1988** The Metropolitan Square Building was topped out. The tallest building in St. Louis, it stands 539 feet tall. That's 37 feet shorter than the Arch.

**1989** Paula Sims was arrested and charged with lying to police investigating the death of her infant daughter Lorelei in June, 1986. She told police her baby had been kidnapped. The charges came after Sims told police the same story to explain the death of her second child. Six-week-old Heather Sims died in April 1989. The case drew national attention.

**1998** Mark McGwire launched what could be briefly called the longest home run in Busch Stadium history. The 527-foot bomb came off Milwaukee's Paul Wagner. Four days later, Mac fired a 545-foot-shot off the *Post Dispatch* sign.

**1999** A new era began in East St. Louis. Debra Powell was sworn in as the first female mayor in city history. She replaced Gordon Bush, who retired after eight years in office.

**1999** About 500 fans camped out overnight at the Esquire Theatre to be first in line for advance tickets to see *Star Wars Episode One: The Phantom Menace*.