

## May 18

**1785** John Scott, Missouri's first congressman, was born in Virginia. He was the Missouri Territory's delegate to Congress when Missouri was admitted to the union in 1821. One of the authors of the first state constitution, he wrote the part providing for free public schools and a state university.

**1819** Silas Woodson was born in Knox County, Kentucky. He was elected Missouri's 21st governor in 1866. Woodson Road is named after him.

**1849** By 8:00 am, the Great Fire of 1849 was under control. The blaze destroyed 15 city blocks, 430 buildings, 23 steamboats, nine flatboats and barges, the post office, three banks and \$2,750,000 in property. Volunteer Fire Captain Thomas Targee was the hero of the Great Fire. Targee died in an explosion while throwing a keg of powder into Nathaniel Phillips' Music Store. But his heroism created a gap that kept the flames from wiping out the cathedral and the entire business district. Targee Street was named in his honor. It ran south of Market between 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, where the Savvis Center now stands.

**1863** Federal troops surrounded the rebel stronghold of Vicksburg, Mississippi. For the next 48 days, the citizens endured constant shelling and near starvation. The surrender of Vicksburg on July 4 gave the Federals control of the Mississippi and made a national hero out of Ulysses S. Grant. General John Bowen of St. Louis fought on the rebel side, and carried the flag of truce to Grant.

**1873** The *Globe-Democrat* reported that Henry Shaw was "so annoyed by depredations of visitors upon his flowers and plants that he has serious thoughts of closing the gates and allowing only those who he knows to be ladies and gentlemen" to enter his gardens.

**1875** An army of police officers were guarding city hall after supporters of Henry Overstolz threatened to take over city government by force. Overstolz had been narrowly defeated in a special mayoral election by James Britton. Britton was sworn in, even though widespread fraud was alleged. The resulting dispute made St. Louis a national laughingstock until Overstolz was declared the winner in February 1876.

**1896** Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show was preparing for its first engagement here in eleven years. Marksman Annie Oakley and the other performers arrived on a special 54-car train. The show used to winter in St. Louis, at the Cote Brillante race track grounds.

**1902** A report in the *Globe* on the growing popularity of the automobile here said it would bring one great benefit. The paper said the end of the horse would result in "a more perfect state of public health." One writer said, "No matter how clean they may be kept, the presence of thousands of stables has always been a menace to public health."

**1904** The city lighting supervisor, Thomas B. Carter, refused to install more lights in the parks as demanded by a North St. Louis citizen's association. He said it would cost too

much. He even suggested less light might be a good idea for “sweethearts and spooners.” Carter said he didn’t think making love in the parks was a serious breach of the peace.

**1922** Three men in a speeding car unloaded their shotguns at William Colbeck at his plumbing business. Colbeck had taken over leadership of the Egan gang after Egan was killed. Colbeck survived. In swift retribution, gunmen riddled the home of two members of the rival Hogan gang with bullets.

**1931** The Board of Public Service adopted plans for improving Aloe Plaza, opposite Union Station. The plans called for a large fountain to replace the row of dilapidated buildings and former bawdy houses that now greeted travelers as they exited the station.

**1947** It was a narrow escape for 91 people, after the famous packet steamer *Golden Eagle* went out of control and hit an island near Grand Tower, Illinois. The Eagle sank, but everyone was rescued. It was the boat's maiden voyage of the season.

**1952** Maybe it was doomed from the start. Bad weather washed out the groundbreaking ceremonies for the Oliver Wendell Pruitt Homes public housing project in the area of Jefferson and Biddle. Plans called for 20 buildings eleven stories tall.

**1966** Officials announced a plan to light the Arch at night. Almost immediately, they began reconsidering. After some tests in the fall and winter, the plan was scrapped. The Arch was lit for the visit of Pope John Paul II. Permanent lights were finally installed in November 2001.

**1983** The NHL Board of Governors rejected the sale of the St. Louis Blues by Ralston Purina to interests in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. NHL President John Zeigler Junior said the league was ready for a lengthy battle.

**1998** Mark McGwire's 449-foot home run into the upper deck at the Astrodome set a major league record for home runs before June 30th. Ken Griffey Junior set the old record of 32 in 1994.

**1998** Several weeks of traffic tie ups began when a trash truck severed a support on the eastbound 40 approach to the Poplar Street Bridge. It would be July 30th before all lanes were opened.