

May 20

1770 Captain Pedro Piernas arrived here to take over as Spanish Lieutenant Governor. Piernas urged the people of the village to build a church on the block that had been set aside for it. They did so quickly. Father Pierre Gibault would dedicate the log church on June 24, 1770. Piernas also encouraged Americans to settle in the area.

1804 Meriweather Lewis joined William Clark and their men at St. Charles. In his journal, he described St. Charles as “small but illy constructed” and described the villagers as “miserably poor, illiterate and when at home excessively lazy.” Lewis hired Pierre Cruzat and Francis Labiche, the last two men to join the expedition.

1855 Mary Meachum tried to help several slaves escape across the Mississippi along what is now the North Riverfront Bike Trail. They were caught and Mary was indicted on charges of “enticing people held in slavery to escape to another state.” There is no record of how the case ended. Mary was the wife of John Berry Meachum, leader of the first African American Baptist Church in St. Louis. Their home was said to be a stop on the “Underground Railroad.”

1862 President Lincoln signed the Homestead Act, opening up millions of acres of free land to settlers in the west. Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton was largely responsible for getting the act passed. Citizens could buy land for \$1.25 an acre for up to 160 acres. The only stipulation was that they settle on the land for at least five years.

1876 The first issue of the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* hit the streets. The paper boasted that with the merger of the *Globe* and *Democrat*, advertisers could now reach 23,000 subscribers.

1889 C.I. Deyo of the *Post-Dispatch* reviewed the new novel by Kate Chopin of St. Louis. *The Awakening* caused a scandal with its frank portrayal of a woman who has an affair and its feminist tone. Deyo said *The Awakening* was “Sad and mad and bad, but it is all consummate art.” In 1991, the novel became the basis for the film *Grand Isle*, starring Kelly McGillis.

1902 The birthday of Union Electric. UE was founded on this date with a 6400-watt power plant that served two thousand customers. UE soon began work on the huge Ashley Street plant to provide power in time for the World's Fair. UE became part of the Ameren Corporation in December 1997.

1908 Maplewood was incorporated as a city. James Sutton bought 314 acres of the old Gratiot land grants in 1826. He ran a blacksmith shop at what is now Manchester and Big Bend. One of his daughters sold her share of the land to a real estate company in 1890. The company built a subdivision called Maplewood.

1927 St. Louisans sat by their radios eager for news of Charles Lindbergh's flight. The headline in the *Globe* screamed "Lindbergh off to Paris in daring non-stop dash." The "Spirit of St. Louis" had taken off from Roosevelt Field, Long Island. The plane staggered under its heavy load of fuel, and barely made it aloft. 33 ½ hours later, he brought the plane down safely at Le Bourget.

1931 Cardinal great Ken Boyer was born in Liberty, Missouri. A Cardinal from 1955 to 1965, he was a four-time Gold Glove winner. He won the National League MVP award in 1964. Boyer managed the Cardinals from 1978 to 1980. He died of cancer in 1982.

1945 One-armed outfielder Pete Gray of the St. Louis Browns reached base five times on four hits and handled nine chances flawlessly in the outfield during a doubleheader at Yankee Stadium. Gray lost his arm in a truck accident at the age of six. He would bat .218 in 61 games for the Browns in 1945.

1948 Stan Musial's "Stan the Man" nickname was born. A day after going five-for-five, Stan continued a hitting spree against the Dodgers at Ebbetts Field. His four hits, including a home run and two doubles, led the Cardinals to a 14-7 win. As he came up to bat, fans were overheard saying, "Here comes that man again."

1952 A fad got out of hand at Mizzou. The governor called in the National Guard to quell "panty raids" by MU students. They had gone on a rampage on their own campus, and then hit women's dorms at two nearby schools. Drills were being held in women's dorms, so they would be prepared to respond. Some women were being trained on how to use a fire hose on the raiders.

1952 Stix, Bauer and Fuller announced plans for an eight-million-dollar shopping center at Clayton Road and Brentwood Blvd. Plans called for 60 shops and a medical center at the new Westroads Shopping Center, now the Galleria.

1954 Former police Lieutenant Louis shoulders and Patrolman Elmer Dolan were sentenced to prison for perjury in connection with the disappearance of the Bobby Greenlease ransom money. They had been hailed as heroes after capturing the suspects here, but they soon became suspects when half of the \$600,000 ransom disappeared. To this day, no one knows for certain what happened to most of the money.

1963 Walt Disney toured the Riverfront and the Arch construction site. He was considering a request to participate in the planning of an area called "Riverfront Square" for the city's bicentennial celebration in 1964.

1964 Civic Center Redevelopment awarded a \$20,544,000 contract to Millstone Construction Company for the downtown stadium and parking garage. The contractors assured that the stadium would be ready by the start of the 1966 baseball season.

1966 Tickets went on sale for the Beatles August 21st show at Busch Stadium. Sales here evidently not affected by the controversy over John Lennon's remark that the Beatles

were more popular than Christ. All of the 48,000 seats sold out that day, with tickets starting at \$4.50.

1971 Eleven people were slightly hurt when a Grant's Farm tour train jackknifed. (Oh, the humanity!) The tram was carrying Boy Scout leaders for a private party and was doing about ten miles an hour when the mishap occurred.

1971 The St. Louis County Council approved re-zoning legislation, clearing the way for a controversial residential and industrial development on the Missouri River floodplain, west of the I-244 I-70 interchange. The first buildings in "Earth City" were slated to be finished by early 1972.

2003 Director David Anspaugh and writer-producer Angelo Pizzo announced that the story of the 1950 U.S. national soccer team would become the most expensive film ever made in Missouri. *The Game of Their Lives* would star newcomers Wes Bentley and Gerard Butler. The 1950 team upset England in a World Cup game, one of the greatest upsets in sports history. Five St. Louisans, including four from "The Hill," were members of the team.

2004 The St. Louis Zoo announced that Raja the elephant was about to become a father.