

## May 23

**1801** Peter G. Camden was born in Amherst County, Virginia. He served as the 11<sup>th</sup> mayor of St. Louis, from 1846-1847. During his term the Police Department was organized.

**1804** Only two days after the Corps of Discovery left St. Charles, the expedition almost ended. While exploring Tavern Cave and 300-foot tall rock bluff near present day St. Albans, Meriwether Lewis nearly fell to his death. He slid 20 feet but saved himself by digging his knife into a crevice on the bluff.

**1806** Oliver D. Filley was born in Bloomfield, Connecticut. He was the 20<sup>th</sup> Mayor of St. Louis, elected in 1858. Filley was in office at the outbreak of the Civil War. He led the movement to organize union loyalists. During his administration, the Fire Alarm Telegraph System was completed and construction began on four street railway lines using horse-drawn cars.

**1820** James B. Eads was born in Lawrenceburg, Indiana. At age 22, Eads developed the first diving bell for use in salvage operations. During the Civil War he built some of the first "ironclad" ships. Eads had little formal education, and was a self-taught engineer. After the great bridge at St. Louis was completed, Eads went on to devise a system of jetties south of New Orleans that to this day keep the mouth of the Mississippi from filling with silt.

**1840** One of the earliest records of a "labor problem" in St. Louis. Bricklayers went on strike, demanding a ten-hour day. After a mass meeting, the employers gave in and the strike was ended without violence.

**1873** Peter Jean DeSmet died at the age of 72. He came to Florissant in 1823 to open the Jesuit school for Indian boys. In 1840, he began ministering to the Indians, who soon named him "Black Robe." He was considered the most influential white man among the Indians of the plains, and helped reduce bloodshed during the opening of the West.

**1874** The new Eads Bridge was opened to pedestrian traffic. Pedestrians paid a five cent toll. For ten cents, people could buy a promenade ticket and stay on the bridge to enjoy the view and the cool breezes. A great jam was predicted for the coming Sunday, when promenaders would not be disturbed by workmen laying the railroad tracks.

**1896** The *St. Louis Republic* carried a small notice that Forest Park Highlands, "the finest and largest open-air enterprise in the West," was open for business. The paper said the Highlands offered "ten new and novel features including a scenic railway." Admission to the grounds was free. Comedienne Marie Dressler was appearing at the Col. John D. Hopkins' Vaudeville Theater.

**1897** With the Browns mired in last place, owner Chris von Der Ahe opened a "shoot the chutes" water slide from a water tower into an artificial lake at Sportsmen's Park. Von

der Ahe had tried horse racing, a beer garden and even an all-girl band in an effort to draw crowds.

**1904** Famed saloon smasher Carrie Nation made another appearance in St. Louis. She spoke at a gospel meeting in a tent at Jefferson and Locust. She said she had “decided to cut out the hatchet business” and instead would use the bible to attack saloons. When asked if she planned to attend the fair, she launched into a tirade, calling it "the devil's carnival."

**1904** The Bontocs at the World's Fair Igorot Village got their first taste of ice cream. What was intended by President Francis and Governor Hunt to be a pleasant treat turned into an ordeal. The Bontocs would not eat the strange food. So officials held the natives down and forced the ice cream down their throats.

**1922** A \$74 million civic improvement program to be financed by a bond issue was unveiled. It called for a four-million-dollar municipal auditorium. The bond issue also included clearing an area between 13th and 14th, Olive and Market, for a memorial to those who gave their lives in the world war.

**1927** Charles Lindbergh was greeted at the Palace of the Elysee by French President Doumergue. He was awarded the Legion of Honor. In St. Louis, Mayor Miller said a great parade over a long route would be part of the celebration when Lindy returned here.

**1929** Dwight F. Davis left St. Louis to take over as Governor-General of the Philippines. As St. Louis Parks Commissioner, he laid out ball diamonds and the public tennis court in Forest Park. In 1900, he donated the "Davis Cup," to be awarded to the international team tennis champions.

**1929** The Village of Madison bought the Chain of Rocks Bridge from the bankrupt promoters for a fraction of its original cost. The village would know the bridge as “The Golden Goose.” It brought in \$7 million in revenue for the tiny community before closing in 1970.

**1932** The city of Ellisville was incorporated. Captain Henry Ferris settled the area before 1837. He built a substantial home that was bought by Vespasian Ellis. William Hereford secured a post office for the Ellis house and named it Ellisville, either after his old hometown in Virginia, or in honor of Ellis.

**1952** The MU Board of Curators met to consider punishment for the ringleaders of the great panty raid. Eleven students were suspended. The National Guard had been called in to quell the disorder, which some observers said showed the presence of "a subversive element" on college campuses.

**1959** “Wrestling at the Chase” premiered on KPLR-TV, Channel 11. Over the next 24 years, over 1,100 episodes would run. The show featured the biggest names from the National Wrestling Foundation, mostly run by promoter Sam Muchnik. St. Louisans still

fondly remember watching Rick Flair, Harley Race, “Dick the Bruiser” Afflis, Ted DeBiase and many more.

**1968** An official with the Department of Housing and Urban Development admitted that the Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project might have to be phased out. Housing authorities wanted it torn down because it was a symbol of past mistakes in public housing.

**1973** About 25 protestors stood outside as the first abortion clinic in Missouri opened in St. Louis. About eight young women had abortions that day at Reproductive Health services on Euclid. A week earlier, a federal court had thrown out Missouri's abortion law.