

## May 27

**1778** Pierre Laclede died on his way back to the city from New Orleans. The founder of St. Louis was buried in an unmarked grave near the mouth of the Arkansas River.

**1861** Captain Constantin Blandowski was buried with full military honors. The dashing former European revolutionary was shot in the leg at Camp Jackson as Union troops marched their prisoners back to the Arsenal on May 10, 1861. Blandowski gave the order to fire on the civilians that day. Over 30 were killed. Blandowski was the first Union officer to be mortally wounded during the Civil War.

**1870** The editors of the *Missouri Republican* were promising to resume publication as soon as possible after a devastating fire. The five-story building housing the paper at 211 Chestnut was destroyed. The loss was put at \$135,000. Every fire engine in the city fought the fire.

**1873** The James Gang held up the bank in Ste. Genevieve. They made off with about \$3500.

**1896** Shortly after 5 p.m., a tornado touched down near the present site of the State Hospital on Arsenal street. The twister then roughly paralleled the path of today's I-44 before slamming into East St. Louis. At least 306 people died. Seventh and Rutger was the deadliest spot. Fourteen died in the destruction of the three-story Mauchenheimer family tenement. Today, the site is a parking lot under I-55. A year earlier, The Reverend Irl Hicks had forecast a tornado would hit St. Louis in May 1896. He based his forecast on the moon and the planets. No one paid much attention.

**1911** Actor Vincent Price was born in St. Louis at 3748 Washington Avenue. A graduate of Country Day, he made his first film appearance in 1938's *Service DeLuxe*. It was his role in the 1953 3-D movie *House of Wax* and appearances in several 1960's Roger Corman adaptations of Edgar Allan Poe tales that made him the King of the Horror movie. He also played in some lighter films, such as the unforgettable *Doctor Goldfoot and the Bikini Machine* (1965) and the Elvis film *The Trouble With Girls*. His last film appearance was in 1990's *Edward Scissorhands*.

**1914** A statue of a naked young woman was unveiled in Reservoir Park, at Grand and Lafayette. The "Naked Truth" was commissioned by German-Americans here to honor journalists Carl Schurz, Carl Daenzer and Emil Pretorious. August Busch donated much of the money but was shocked at the final design. The nudity caused a major controversy and the sculptor refused Busch's request that the figure be draped. The statue was re-located to another part of the park during the construction of I-44.

**1927** The Board of Aldermen passed a resolution calling for a committee to begin negotiating to buy Charles Lindbergh's plane, "The Spirit of St. Louis." The resolution called for the plane to be placed at the Jefferson Memorial or some other suitable place as

a permanent memorial. Mayor Victor Miller organized a committee of 250 to plan the homecoming celebration for Lindbergh.

**1929** Charles Lindbergh married Anne Morrow at the New Jersey home of her father, ambassador Dwight Morrow. Lindbergh and his new bride eluded the press that had staked out the home for months.

**1931** The owners of the bankrupt Arena were threatening to tear it down to make room for an apartment complex and an industrial development. The Arena had opened in September 1929, just a few weeks before the stock market crash wiped out the promoters.

**1945** Curtiss-Wright announced it was closing its St. Louis plant, one of the largest here. The company said 12,000 workers would be laid off because of cutbacks in Army plane orders. After the war, the fledgling McDonnell Aircraft Company took over the complex at Lambert Field.

**1945** The Army Signal Corps offered a preview of its film documenting Nazi atrocities during the war. A crowd of press and members of civic organizations sat in stunned silence. The film was to be shown at no charge to the public at Kiel Auditorium.

**1948** Missouri Governor Phil Donnelly signed a bill giving the city the power to levy an earnings tax of 1 ½ percent. The bill allowed the tax only for two years, as a "temporary" measure to help the city out of a financial crisis.

**1958** The McDonnell F4H "Phantom" made its first flight. The Phantom would go on to establish 15 world's records. It was the most famous plane ever built in St. Louis. Many Phantoms are still in service around the world today.

**1960** The Cardinals traded pitcher Wilmer "Vinegar Bend" Mizell and outfield Dick Gray to the Pirates for minor leaguers Julian Javier and Ed Bauta. "Hoolie" would become one of the top second basemen in the National League, anchoring the Cardinal championship teams of the 1960's.

**1962** The Board of Trustees of the controversial Village of Champ approved a contract with the Amateur Athletic Union to build an \$87.5 million domed stadium and "international shopping center." Promoter Bill Bangert dreamed of holding the Olympics there someday. Champ is located at I-270 and 70.

**1970** Mayor A.J. Cervantes announced he would file a \$12 million lawsuit against *Life* magazine. An article had accused the mayor of having personal and business ties to the underworld.

**1973** The Gaslight Square Era officially came to an end, though the area had faded long before. The Board of Aldermen enacted an ordinance changing the name of Gaslight Square back to Olive Street.

**1977** "A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away." The motion picture *Star Wars* opened for an exclusive St. Louis engagement at the Creve Coeur Cine.

**1994** Riverboat gaming came to Missouri. The first boats to open in Missouri were the President Casino on the *Admiral* on the St. Louis Riverfront and the Station Casino in St. Charles. A crowd of welders worked all night to reinforce the hull of the Admiral in time for the opening.