

May 30

1252 Ferdinand the Third, King of Castille, was born. Under his reign, the kingdoms of Leon and Castille were united and he crusaded against the Moors. He was canonized in 1671. When the Spanish established civil government at Florissant, they named the village St. Ferdinand. Early highway maps used St. Ferdinand, but the locals always called the town by its French name. It caused a lot of confusion for motorists.

1896 Three days after the worst tornado in St. Louis history, 50 police officers were rushed to Union Station to deal with panic in the crowds of out-of-town gawkers who came in for the weekend to see the damage. More than 140,000 people passed through Union Station that day. In East St. Louis, police had arrested 83 people for looting.

1897 The *Post-Dispatch* reported on the first amusement park in St. Louis. Businessman Anton Stuever was bringing "high class vaudeville" to the Forest Park Highlands. The park also boasted a "Scenic Railway," billed as one of the longest tracked rides in the world.

1900 The city was paralyzed by a violent street car strike that had left several people dead and dozens wounded. Sheriff J-M Pohlmann issued a call for 2,500 citizen deputies to restore order. They would be armed with riot repeating shotguns and ordered to protect the cars being run by the strikebreakers.

1902 The massive job of straightening the River Des Peres and putting it beneath the World's Fair grounds was declared complete. Work had begun just six months earlier. The river was reduced to ½ its original length through Forest Park. Now, there are plans to put it back.

1903 Mark Twain responded to a movement by residents of Hannibal to honor him with a special day at the St. Louis World's Fair. Twain wrote "such compliments are not proper for the living; they are proper and safe for the dead only." He added, "I hope that no society will be named for me while I am still alive, for I might at some time or other do something which would cause its members to regret having done me that honor."

1914 The largest crowd so far turned out to see the lavish "pageant and masque" commemorating the 150th anniversary of the founding of St. Louis. The huge success of the production would lead to the establishment of the Municipal Opera.

1922 Between games of a doubleheader, the Cardinals swapped outfielder Cliff Heathcote to the Cubs for Max Flack. The two players swapped uniforms, and started the second game for their new teams.

1923 A crowd of 6,000 witnessed the induction of 2,200 people into the Ku Klux Klan at Creve Coeur Lake. Gaslights illuminated a 36-foot-tall cross at the first big public demonstration here by the Klan.

1925 Rogers Hornsby was name player-manager of the Cardinals. He replaced Branch Rickey, who had held the job since 1916. In 1925, Hornsby would become the only player manager in major league history to win the Triple Crown. He hit .403 with 39 home runs and 143 RBI's.

1927 Charles Lindbergh and the "Spirit of St. Louis" arrived in London, to the biggest welcome in the history of the city. A crowd of 200,000 people waited as the plane landed at Croydon. Eleven people were hospitalized as the crowd surged forward to meet Lindy.

1931 About three months after the dam at Bagnell, Missouri was completed, the Lake of the Ozarks was opened to boat traffic. It probably only took a couple of days before some clown in a cabin cruiser swamped a johnboat on the main channel.

1932 The man who popularized the Missouri state motto died. Congressman William Vandiver of Cape Girardeau listened one night while a colleague poked fun at him before a prestigious audience in Philadelphia. He said he didn't believe his colleagues comments about Philly hospitality. "Frothy eloquence neither convinces nor satisfies me," he said. "I'm from Missouri; you've got to show me."

1939 A stone overlook along Highway 66 at Pacific was named Jensen Point in honor of Lars Peter Jensen. Jensen was the manager of the Missouri Botanical Garden's Arboretum at Gray Summit for 14 years. He directed the beautification of 66 from St. Louis to Pacific. The highway was named the Henry Shaw Gardenway.

1959 For the 30th year in a row, flowers were placed anonymously on the Chain of Rocks Bridge on Memorial Day. This time, the mystery was solved. Workers found a note explaining that the flowers were in honor of Walter McKee. McKee lost his life while working on the bridge in January, 1929.

1960 Army Secretary William Bruckner approved plans for a new highway bridge north of the Chain of Rocks. Barge line operators complained. But the Corps of Engineers pointed out that most barge traffic was now using the new Chain of Rocks Canal.

1972 Six miles of four-lane Highway 40 opened to traffic in the Chesterfield Valley. The highway department had first announced plans to eliminate the treacherous three-lane "suicide lane" stretch in 1962.

1998 The Pentagon confirmed that the remains resting in the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery were those of First Lieutenant Michael Blassie of Florissant. Blassie had rested there for 14 years, before his remains were exhumed for DNA tests.

2000 Missouri Governor Mel Carnahan signed a bill designating a stretch of Interstate 55 in South St. Louis County as the Rosa Parks Highway. The bill covered the same stretch of highway between Butler Hill and Lindbergh that had been "adopted" by the Ku Klux Klan.