

September 1

1821 Captain William Becknell led a trading expedition out of New Franklin, Missouri bound for Santa Fe. The expedition opened one of the most famous paths to the west, The Santa Fe Trail.

1821 The first legal execution in St. Clair County, Illinois took place. Timothy Bennett was hanged for killing Alphonse Stuart. The men argued over a trespassing horse and set up what was supposed to be a sham duel, their guns loaded with powder only. But Bennett slipped a bullet in.

1838 General William Clark died at the age of 68. He joined Meriweather Lewis in exploring the Louisiana Territory in 1804. He was also famous for his exploits during the Revolutionary War. Clark is buried in Bellefontaine Cemetery.

1880 The predecessor of the St. Louis Symphony was founded. The St. Louis Choral Society would absorb the St. Louis Musical Union in 1890, and change its name to the Choral Symphony Society. In 1907, choral music was dropped, and the name was changed to the St. Louis Symphony Society.

1881 The *Globe-Democrat* reported that Henry Shaw was planning a special horticultural exhibit at his garden, "far away in the southwest outskirts of St. Louis." Shaw offered prizes for outstanding plants. He also promised to purchase any suitable specimens for exhibition in his garden.

1892 The first Stix store opened. Julius and Sigmond Baer started out with a small dry goods store in Fort Smith, Arkansas. They were joined by their brother-in-law, Aaron Fuller and decided to move to St. Louis. They asked for help and advice from civic leader Charles Stix. The Stix, Baer and Fuller store moved to its location on Washington between 6th and 7th streets in 1905. The Arkansas based Dillard's chain bought out Stix in 1984.

1894 Union Station opened with a gala in the Grand Hall, attended by about 20,000 invited guests. Architect Theodore C. Link's building was twice as big as any railroad depot in the world. The station closed in 1979. It was renovated and turned into a unique shopping area in 1985. It stands on the site of "Chouteau's Pond." An early settler, Joseph Taillon, built a mill and a dam across a stream the French called "La Petite Riviere." Auguste Chouteau acquired the property and built a bigger dam. "Chouteau's Pond" became polluted and was drained in 1849. The old bed would provide an easy path for the new railroads.

1894 Miss Minne Walden, a "pretty blonde of 18," became the first woman to win a bicycle race in the U.S. She set a female record for the mile at two minutes and 58 seconds in a ladies race at De Hodiament. She received a diamond ring and a sweater. The rider who came in second received a box of candy.

1906 With the umpires stricken by food poisoning, Cardinals catcher Pete Noonan and pitcher Carl Lundgren were pressed into service to umpire the game at Chicago. Even with their own players umpiring, the Cardinals lost to the Cubs 8-1. The 1906 team would finish dead last, 63 games out.

1917 Scott Field was completed and accepted as an Army aviation station. The primary role of the \$1.5 million field was to train pilots and ground crews for the American Expeditionary Force. The first flight from the field was made the following day.

1944 Leonard Slatkin was born in Los Angeles. He became music director of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra in 1979 and assumed the role of conductor laureate after the 1995-96 season. He has won five Grammy Awards and been nominated 50 times. Slatkin is currently the director of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C.

1947 Archbishop Joseph Ritter took the unusual step of threatening hundreds of his parishioners with excommunication. A group of parents was threatening legal action to bar admission of Negro students to the Catholic schools. In a letter read at all St. Louis masses, Ritter reminded them of "the equality of every soul before almighty God." The parents quickly called off the legal threat.

1952 Raymond Witcoff, the Chairman of Mayor Darst's Committee on Educational Television, predicted an educational TV station would be on the air here within a year. He called it "one of the greatest educational and cultural opportunities offered our people." Channel Nine signed on in September, 1954.

1956 Bargain hunters packed an auction of homes in the path of the Daniel Boone Expressway through Richmond Heights. Many of the homes were less than five years old. They sold for between \$700 and \$1,800. The buyers had to pay to move the homes.

1956 The biggest show in St. Louis since the world's fair opened on the riverfront. Organizers of the month long "Mid America Jubilee" would hail it as a great success. They said it would return again in 1957, and were confident it would grow into a full-fledged world's fair by 1964.

1958 Southern Illinois University officials announced the college had selected a 26-hundred-acre site near Edwardsville for a proposed second campus. The purchase of the site depended on a \$1.5 million fund raising drive by a group formed to secure a university for the East Side.

1961 The man who designed the Arch died. Eero Saarinen died of a brain tumor at the age of 51 before he could see his vision become reality.

1966 At 2 p.m., the new Chain of Rocks Bridge opened to traffic. Almost immediately, toll takers on the old bridge to the south said traffic was off by 80 percent. The new bridge was to have opened in November 1965. But construction was beset by labor troubles and other delays.

1969 McDonnell-Douglas was awarded a \$189 million order from NASA for a three-man space station that could be used on missions up to 56 days long. The first flight of "Skylab" was planned for sometime in 1972.

1970 Preliminary census figures showed that St. Louis had fallen from the list of the top ten cities in the nation for the first time in over a century. The city had lost 142,000 people since 1960. St. Louis now ranked 18th, with a population of 608,078.

1975 A sellout crowd honored Bob Gibson on a special day at Busch Stadium. Gibson heard salutes by Commissioner Bowie Kuhn, August Busch Junior, and a congratulatory telegram from President Gerald Ford. Gibson had announced he would retire at the end of the season.

1976 Chesterfield Mall opened.

1998 Mark McGwire's second home run of the night against the Marlins in Florida broke the National League record for home runs in a season. Hack Wilson of the Cubs set the old record of 56 in 1930. It also broke Babe Ruth's record for homers in consecutive seasons. The Babe hit 114 in 1927-28.

1999 The state executed a key figure in a bloody era of St. Louis history. David Leisure was put to death for a 1980 car bombing that killed a rival underworld leader, Jimmy Michaels. The Leisure and Michaels families fought a bloody war over the control of a labor union.