

September 2

1821 St. Ferdinand's Catholic church in Florissant was consecrated by Joseph Rosati, the first Bishop of St. Louis. St. Ferdinand is the oldest Catholic church between the Mississippi and the Rockies. The Old Cathedral was built 13 years later.

1839 The first fire in St. Louis to devastate a wide area leveled an entire city block. Water Street, Laurel and Vine bound the burned area. One person was killed.

1850 Children's poet Eugene Field was born. His most famous works are *Wynken, Blynken, and Nod* and *Little Boy Blue*. He may not have been born at 634 Broadway as believed. When Mark Twain unveiled a plaque commemorating the site in 1902, Field's brother Roswell told Twain that Eugene was born on Collins Street and the family moved to Broadway when he was two. Twain remarked, "officially and for the purpose of the future your brother was born here."

1894 At 1:02 a.m., the very first train arrived at the newly-dedicated St Louis Union Station. It was the St. Louis, Vandalia and Terre Haute "Fast Mail." The last train to use Union Station left on October 31, 1978.

1904 Seven people were killed, 19 injured, when a Wabash train packed with world's fair goers smashed into a streetcar at the Sarah Street crossing. The crash was blamed on the carelessness of the streetcar crew and the guards at the crossing.

1906 Archbishop John Glennon unveiled plans for a new Cathedral on Lindell Boulevard. He put the cost of the new building at over \$1 million.

1917 A civilian flying instructor made the first flight from Scott Field. The first class of 100 cadets would begin training on September 11, 1917. The base was named after Corporal Frank Scott, the first enlisted man to die in a plane crash. Scott is the only base named for an enlisted man.

1926 Pennant fever gripped St. Louis as the Cardinals won their fourth straight over the world champion Pittsburgh Pirates and were in first place. The Birds were just 1/2 game in front of the Reds, with the Pirates two games back.

1926 Sharing the headlines with the pennant-chasing Redbirds was a bootleggers war here. One man was dead, and seven had been wounded so far. Men in a speeding car shot the latest two victims as they left the hospital. The victims had been visiting friends wounded in an earlier shooting. Despite being critically wounded, they would not finger their attackers.

1929 The \$2.5 million Lennox Hotel on Washington Avenue opened. The tallest hotel in the city, it would be the last new hotel built downtown until 1963. The Lennox re-

opened in 2002 as the Renaissance St. Louis Suites, the first part of the convention center hotel project.

1931 Former Army pilot James Doolittle shattered the transcontinental flight record. Doolittle, an officer with the Shell Oil Company in St. Louis, flew from Newark to Burbank in eleven-hours-15 minutes to clinch the \$10,000 prize in the Bendix Trophy event of the National Air Races. Doolittle would later lead the first US raid on Tokyo during World War Two.

1948 Los Angeles Rams running back Fred Gehrke hand painted Rams horns on the side of his helmet, the first time a team logo appeared on an NFL helmet. Gehrke was a former art student and a painter who thought the plain leather helmets were drab. Rams coach Bob Snyder gave him permission to paint a helmet and liked the results. Gehrke was paid \$1 for each helmet he painted. Plastic helmets came out one year later.

1959 Jimmy Connors was born in Belleville, Illinois. He started playing tennis at age two and turned pro in 1972. Connors would become as famous for his clashes with judges, players, and tournament officials as much as for his aggressive play. Connors was ranked number one in the world from 1974 to 1978. He was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame in 1998.

1961 The zoo's talented chimpanzee, "Mister Moke," returned to St. Louis. Zoo officials had kept up a diligent search since December of 1959, when Mister Moke was kidnapped from his cage. His former owner had taken the chimp to perform in movies. Jerry Lewis agreed to delete a scene in *The Bellboy* featuring the chimp.

1962 Stan Musial's 3,516th hit moved him into second place on the lifetime hit list, behind Ty Cobb. Musial would not overtake Cobb. Since Stan retired in 1963, he has dropped to fourth on the all-time list. Musial trails Henry Aaron, Cobb and Pete Rose.

1976 Transportation Secretary William Coleman stunned the city when he announced the approval of federal funding for land acquisition for a new St. Louis airport near Waterloo, Illinois. Local officials reacted sharply, and were promising a legal fight.

1991 A torrential downpour washed out the 10th VP Fair's final day. That night's Kenny Rodgers concert was cancelled, and thousands were left holding worthless "scrip."

1993 The John *Larroquette Show* premiered on NBC-TV. The former *Night Court* star played a recovering alcoholic who took a job at a seedy St. Louis bus station. The dark comedy and urban issues made the show a hit at first. But NBC gradually removed or cleaned up many of the interesting characters. The show was cancelled in October 1996.

1994 The Old Barn on Oakland Avenue closed its doors for good. A concert by Christian recording star, Carman Licciardello was the final event at the Arena. The Arena was built in 1929, as the home of the National Dairy Show. The old barn hosted The Rolling Stones, Ronald Reagan, Blues Hockey, Spirits Basketball and Gypsy Caravans.

