



CELEBRATING MISSOURI'S BICENTENNIAL

Two hundred years ago,

the territory of Missouri gained its statehood. Together as Missourians, and as Catholics, we and our ancestors have witnessed many milestones in the past two centuries. In this Messenger, we take a pause on policy reporting to look back at 200 years of Missouri state and church history as we ready to celebrate the bicentennial in 2021.

Did you know?

At age 12, Rose Philippine Duchesne was sent to be educated in the Monastery of Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut, near Grenoble. Although she was subsequently removed from the monastery by her father, she ultimately entered the Visitation of Mary convent (which later joined the Society of the Sacred Heart after the French Revolution) at 19. Duchesne left for the United States to serve as a missionary to Native Americans with four other nuns. After arriving in New Orleans, they discovered that the bishop had provided no place for Duchesne to live or work. This led the nuns to travel up the Mississippi River to St. Charles, Missouri. Duchesne opened multiple schools in the St. Louis region, along with a Sunday school and orphanage. The Academy of the Sacred Heart, established in 1818 by St. Rose Philippine Duchesne, still operates in St. Charles. She was canonized on July 3, 1988 by Pope John Paul II.



February 15, 1764

Auguste Chouteau and companions, at the order of Pierre Laclède, begin clearing the site for the settlement of St. Louis, named after French King, Louis XIV, the model of all Catholic monarchs since the middle ages.

September 24, 1815

Pope Pius VII consecrates Father William DuBourg bishop of the Louisiana Territory

March 3, 1820

U.S. Congress passes the "Missouri Compromise"

June 12, 1820

First Missouri Constitutional Convention in St. Louis in anticipation of statehood.

September 26, 1820

Frontiersman Daniel Boone (Boone County, MO) dies

April 30, 1803

The Louisiana Purchase. Land stretching from Louisiana to Oregon purchased by Thomas Jefferson from Napoleon of France

August 29, 1769

Rose Philippine Duchesne born in Grenoble, France.

May 21, 1804

Lewis and Clark depart St. Charles to begin their expedition exploring the Missouri River and parts West

March 29, 1818

Bishop DuBourg lays cornerstone for the first cathedral in St. Louis

July 12, 1818

Sister Duchesne departs New Orleans for St. Louis and eventually St. Charles

The Church Spreads West

When Pope Pius VII appointed Fr. William DuBourg to be the first bishop of the Missouri territory in 1815, he was to administer the entire Louisiana territory along with territory known as Florida. He held that position until 1826, when the Louisiana territory was split into the diocese of St. Louis and the diocese of New Orleans. DuBourg became bishop of New Orleans, while Fr. Joseph Rosati was appointed bishop of St. Louis. The St. Louis diocese would later spawn the Diocese of St. Joseph in 1868, the Diocese of Kansas City in 1880, and then the Diocese of Jefferson City, the Diocese of Springfield/Cape Girardeau, and a combined Diocese of Kansas City/St. Joseph in 1956.

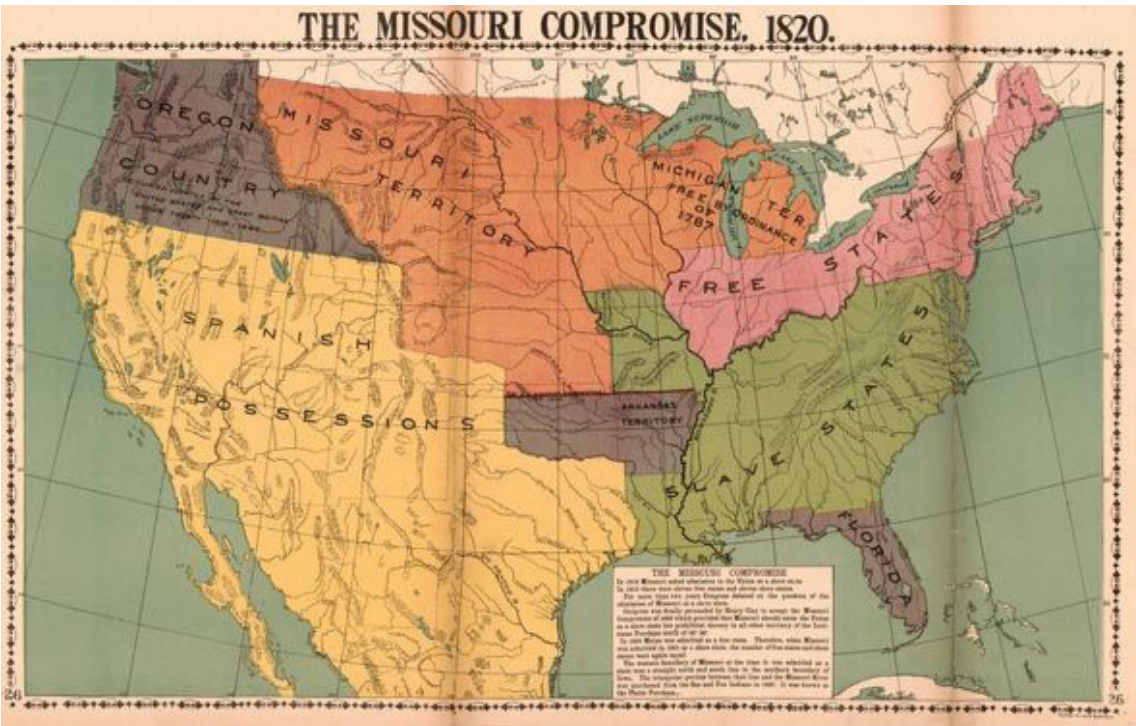


The Missouri Compromise

Missouri’s official entry into the United States in 1821 came at a time of great political struggle over the issue of slavery. At the time, there were 11 slave states and 11 free states. Because the North had a greater population, free states had a larger delegation in the U.S. House of Representatives. In the U.S. Senate, however, slaveholding states had the same number of Senators as free states, giving them sufficient votes to protect their interests.

When Missouri’s territorial legislature made a formal request to be admitted to the Union in 1818, Rep. James Tallmadge of New York offered an amendment prohibiting the importation of any new slaves into Missouri and gradually emancipating those already there. When Maine later applied for statehood, a proposal was offered in the U.S. Senate to admit Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state to maintain the balance of power — the so-called “Missouri Compromise.” The compromise also provided that any territories west of Missouri and north of Missouri’s southern border would be admitted as free states. On March 3, 1820, Congress passed the compromise legislation. Missouri’s official grant of statehood was delayed for another year, however, as squabbles over the compromise continued.

Missouri has often been referred to as the “Mother of the West,” since the trailheads for the Oregon Trail, the California Trail, and the Santa Fe Trail all lie within her boundaries. These routes took native-born Missourians, and others, west in search of land, fur, silver, gold, and other riches. It is Missouri’s place in the development of other western territories that makes the “Gateway Arch” such a fitting tribute to Missouri’s early history. Texas, for example, became a state in 1845, followed by California (1850), Oregon (1859), Kansas (1861) and Nebraska (1867).



Missouri Compromise map sourced from the Library of Congress



August 10, 1821
Missouri becomes first U.S. State West of the Mississippi River

December 31, 1821
Jefferson City selected as Capital of Missouri

November 5, 1828
Sisters of Charity arrive in St. Louis to start first hospital west of the Mississippi

March 6, 1857
U.S. Supreme Court rules against Dred Scott on his appeal from the federal court in Missouri, denying his claim to citizenship and freedom



November 5, 1837
First Capitol building in Jefferson City destroyed by fire.

March 3, 1868
Diocese of St. Joseph founded as suffragan diocese of St. Louis

October 1, 1826
Seat of Missouri government moved from St. Charles to Jefferson City

November 4, 1826
Diocese of St. Louis formally established

August 1, 1830
Cornerstone laid for the Basilica of St. Louis, King (The “Old Cathedral”) by Bishop Joseph Rosati

April 1, 1854
Augustus Tolton born a slave in Brush Creek, MO

October 26, 1861
Pony Express (St. Joseph, MO) ceases operations after 18-months due to advent of the telegraph

Fr. Augustus Tolton - From Slave to Future Sainthood



Fr. Augustus Tolton was born a slave in Brush Creek, Missouri on April 1, 1854. In 1862, he escaped to freedom with his mother by crossing the Mississippi River into Quincy, Illinois. The local parish priest in Quincy allowed him to be educated at St. Peter’s Catholic Church and school. He later graduated high school and attended Quincy College, since no U.S. seminary at the time would admit a black candidate for the priesthood. He began his studies for the priesthood in Rome in 1880 and was ordained to the priesthood at age 31 in 1886. Following ordination, he returned to the U.S. and became pastor of St. Peter’s parish in Quincy. He later left for Chicago, where he faithfully served until his untimely death in 1897. He was declared “venerable” by Pope Francis on June 11, 2019, and the cause for his canonization continues.

The “Show-Me” State

Missouri’s most well known nickname is the “Show-Me State”. There are several stories concerning the origin of the slogan, but the one most widely known gives credit to Missouri U.S. Congressman Willard Duncan Vandriver for coining the phrase in 1899. During a speech in Philadelphia he said, “I come from a state that raises corn and cotton and cockleburs and Democrats, and frothy eloquence neither convinces nor satisfies me. I am from Missouri. You’ve got to show me.”

The phrase is now used to describe Missourians’ character: not gullible, conservative and unwilling to believe without adequate evidence.



July 4, 1874

Eads Bridge dedicated in St. Louis, linking St. Louis to the national railroad system

May 5, 1875

Missouri Constitutional convention convenes – Blaine Amendments adopted

September 10, 1880

Diocese of Kansas City founded as suffragan of St. Louis

April 3, 1882

Infamous outlaw Jesse James killed by bounty hunter in St. Joseph, MO

February 18, 1885

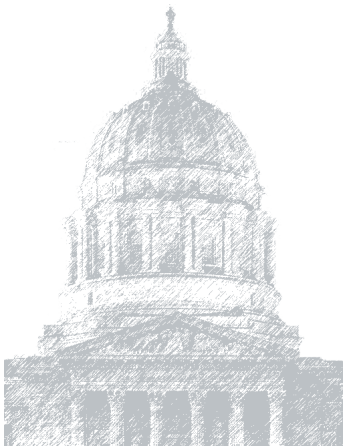
Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) publishes *Huckleberry Finn*

April 30, 1904

World’s Fair (Louisiana Purchase Exposition) opens at Forest Park

The City of Jefferson

The Missouri Compromise authorized the Missouri territory to establish a government and to select a place for a capitol. The commission appointed to make the selection was required to locate the capitol along the Missouri river within forty miles of its confluence with the Osage, limiting the number of available sites and piquing the interests of land speculators. On December 31, 1821, the commission ultimately selected a site known at the time as Howard’s bluff on the south bank of the Missouri river at the mouth of Wear’s creek. The site would become known as the “City of Jefferson.”



May 1, 1907

Ground broken on Lindell Boulevard in St. Louis for future Cathedral Basilica

February 5, 1911

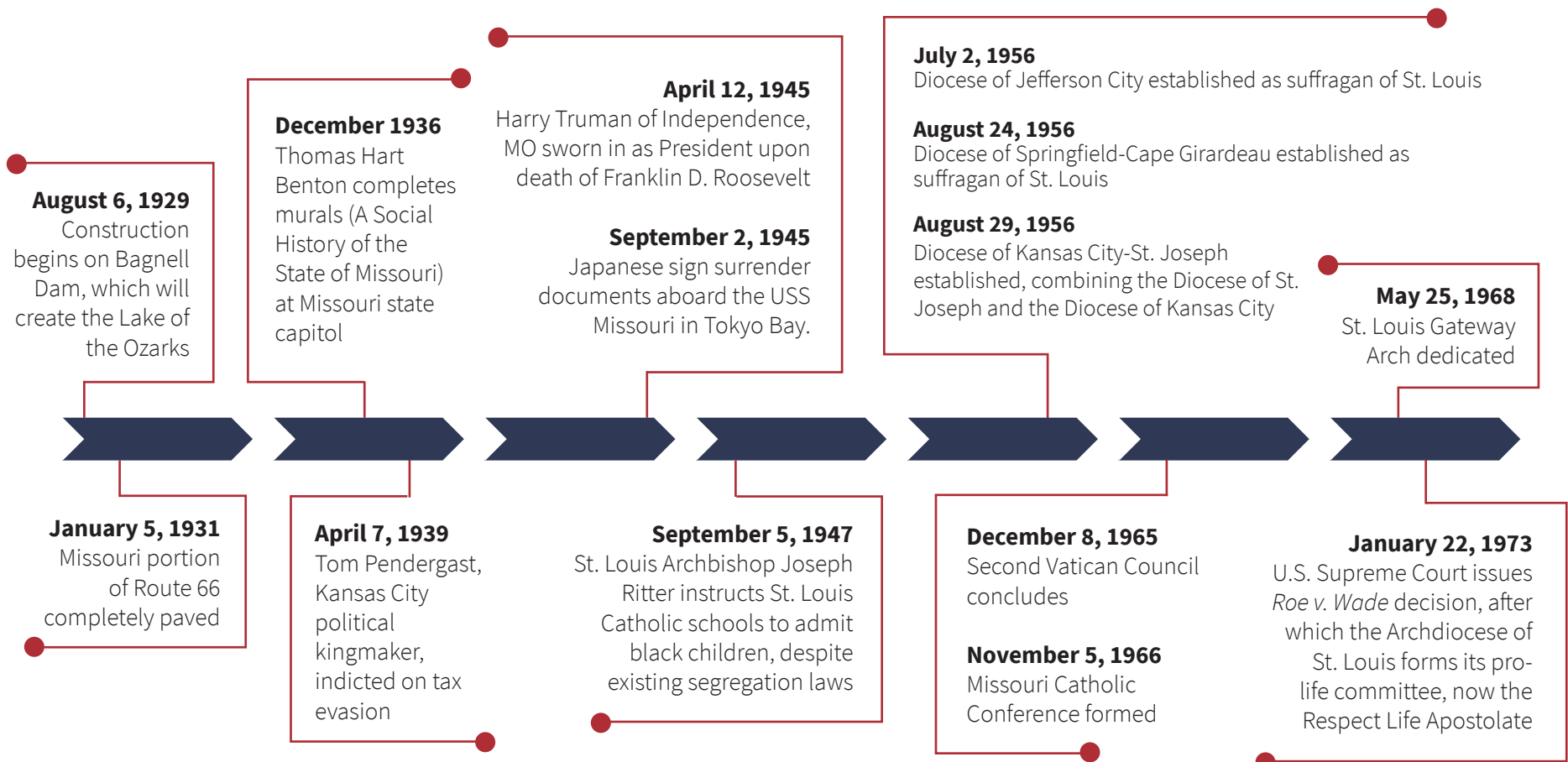
Second Capitol building in Jefferson City destroyed by fire

October 6, 1924

Current Missouri Capitol building officially dedicated

May 20, 1927

Charles Lindbergh departs New York in Spirit of St. Louis on first solo flight across the Atlantic



The Church in the Modern World

During Vatican II, the Church Council reminded the faithful of our duty as Catholic Christians to carry the light of the Gospel to the world and into the public square. In 1967, the Missouri bishops formed the Missouri Catholic Conference to do just that. In the early years, the Conference focused on helping Catholic schools to access newly established federal education programs designed for students with developmental delays. After the U.S. Supreme Court recognized a right to abortion in 1973, the Conference's work expanded to protecting human life. Today, the MCC works on these and other issues, including defending religious liberty, reforming the criminal justice system, protecting social programs for the poor, upholding and strengthening marriage and the family, welcoming immigrants and refugees, and promoting civility in political discourse.

