February 5, 1911

*This Date in Missouri Senate History*

On *This Date in Missouri Senate History*, the date was Feb. 5, 1911.

At 6:15 that evening — during a thunderstorm — lighting struck the dome of the Capitol, creating sparks and engulfing the structure in flames, which were visible for several miles.

Firefighters rushed from across Missouri to put out the flames, but due to a break in the main water system, they were rendered helpless and left to watch the Capitol burn. This resulted in the complete destruction of the second Capitol building in Jefferson City by fire in a matter of hours. The original Capitol burned in 1837.

Talks of moving the Capitol to a new location began. St. Louis was quickly becoming the first choice for the new location, while cities such as Washington and Pilot Knob offered land and finances matching the constitutional requirements that the State Capitol sit high above the Missouri River and be centrally located in the state.

The Missouri Senate reconvened in the Supreme Court building while local business leaders began to defend why Jefferson City should remain the state capital.

On Aug. 1, 1911, a majority of Missourians voted to build the new Capitol at the site of the previously destroyed Capitol Building. A $3.5 million bond issue was set with this vote in order to reconstruct the Capitol.

Construction began in May 1914 on Missouri’s new, and current, Capitol — with limestone from Carthage and stones from Greene County. The new Capitol was completed three years later.

February 5, 1911, the date marking the destruction of Missouri’s State Capitol, on *This Date in Missouri Senate History*.

(Sources: *www.*sos.mo.gov; and *A Look Back – Fire destroys Missouri Capitol, sparking effort to build new one in St. Louis,* by Tim O’Neil [St. Louis Post Dispatch])