Jan. 30, 1863

*This Date in Missouri Senate History*

On *This Date in Missouri Senate History*, the date was Jan. 30, 1863, the day the Legislature incorporated Mission Free School of St. Louis.

It was common for lawmakers to grant charter to, or incorporate, colleges and universities in the early years of our state. Mission Free School had one difference most others didn’t: it was considered a “charity school,” and the land on which it sat was exempt from taxation. Its “mission,” hence the name, was to educate orphaned children at no cost.

For several years, this was not an issue for anyone.

That is, until 1893.

The city collector of St. Louis tried to collect taxes on the lot that housed Mission Free School. A lawsuit resulted, and it went to the Missouri Supreme Court at the turn of the century.

Based on the bill that incorporated the school, and the updated state constitution of 1875, it was determined property could be assessed above the original $50,000 threshold.

But, it all started on Jan. 30, 1863, the date marking legislative incorporation of Mission Free School of St. Louis, on *This Date in Missouri Senate History*.

(Sources: *Missouri Senate Journal* and *State ex. rel. Ziegenhein, Collector, v. Mission Free School et al*, Supreme Court of Missouri, Division No. 2, May 7, 1901)