Aug. 8, 1854

*This Date in Missouri Senate History*

On *This Date in Missouri Senate History*, the date was Aug. 8, 1854, the second day of riots in St. Louis relating to an election.

Former U.S. Sen. Thomas Hart Benton, who had been appointed by the Missouri Senate to serve as our state’s first U.S. senator, was running for the United States House of Representatives. A little history first: Prior to the 16th Amendment, state senates were in charge of picking each state’s two U.S. senators. This was a key point in state’s rights, again, before the 16th Amendment was adopted.

In any event, while Benton was strong with Irish immigrants in St. Louis, a former mayor was doing well with the group referred to as Nativists. In other words, those who were in the Gateway City “first” preferred a familiar name.

The previous day was Election Day; however, the riots did not stop with the closing of the polls. All accounts are the riots continued through the 8th and into a third day, before they ran out of steam.

Incidentally, the Missouri General Assembly was called back to Jefferson City a year later. At the time, the Legislature only met every other year, and had held its regular session prior to August of 1854. There was no legislation relating to the riot — or any election matters, in this case — during the adjourned session, now known as extra sessions. Railroads were the cause of the adjourned session. There would also be no key legislation from the riot during the 1856 regular session, either. It is common for major events to spark legislation soon after.

August 8, 1854, the date marking day 2 of election day-related riots in St. Louis, on *This Date in Missouri Senate History*.

(Sources: Media accounts and historical sources)