

## February 9

**1837** John Ball changed the name of the town he had laid out from "Ballshow" to "Ballwin." Legend says he changed it because of a rivalry with Manchester. Ball was confident his town on the new state road to Jefferson City would "win" over his neighbor to the east. Ballwin was not incorporated until 1950.

**1839** The Missouri Legislature passed the Geyer Act, establishing the state public school system. St. Louis County lawyer and territorial assemblyman Henry S. Geyer drafted the measure. In 1815, he fought had a duel on "Bloody Island" with George Kennerly. Both men have roads named after them in South St. Louis County.

**1844** The governor of Missouri, Thomas Reynolds, killed himself with a rifle in the executive mansion in Jefferson City. He had been in poor health, and left a note complaining that he had been slandered and abused by his enemies.

**1876** The city of St. Louis no longer had two mayors. The city council declared Henry Overstolz the winner of the May 1875 special election following the death of Mayor Barret. Election officials had declared James Britton the winner. Britton had already served nine months of his term. The council said Overstolz won by 77 votes and that there was evidence of "frauds of gross and outrageous character."

**1876** Newspapers in river towns were endorsing the nomination of Captain James B. Eads for president, launched by the *Scientific American* Magazine. Eads supporters noted he was about to open the Mississippi to the commerce of the world, with a system of jetties he was building at New Orleans.

**1902** In the third worst loss of life in a fire to that date in St. Louis, Eleven people died in a fire at a bachelor apartment house at 27-hundred Olive. Over 50 died in the Pacific Hotel fire, and 21 died when the Southern Hotel burned in 1877. 33 people would be killed in the fire at the Missouri Athletic Club in March 1914.

**1903** The *Globe-Democrat* reported that the Westlake Construction Company had been awarded the contract for a 12-story-tall, 400-room hotel at the Northwest corner of 12th and Locust. World's fair officials and public-spirited citizens promoted the \$1.2 million Jefferson Hotel.

**1932** Mayor Victor Miller signed an ordinance providing three-point-seven- million-dollars for the erection of one building of the Municipal Auditorium Complex. The facility would take up almost the entire block south of Market, between 14th and 15th streets.

**1942** St. Louis went on "War Time." The clocks were set ahead to provide an extra hour of daylight for the war production plants. The city had fought against Daylight Savings Time for many years.

**1942** An Alton man was critically injured while enjoying his first airplane ride with his girlfriend. Their small plane strayed into restricted air space over Alton. Nervous guards at the Western Cartridge plant sprayed the plane with bullets.

**1951** The St. Louis Browns signed the great Satchel Paige to pitch for the coming season. At the time, he was 46 years old. Paige relaxed in his own personal rocking chair on the sidelines when he was not on the mound. In 1951, he would win 12 games, and become the oldest player ever named to the All-Star team. He also threw a 12-inning complete game.

**1961** The contract for the second phase of construction on the Arch complex was awarded to McDonald Construction of St. Louis. The \$3,796,105 contract covered excavating for the complex and construction of a three lane highway on the western age of the memorial.

**1966** Demolition work began on a St. Louis landmark. The fire that destroyed most of the Forest Park Highlands Amusement Park next to the Arena in 1963 had spared the "Comet" roller coaster. It was torn down to make room for Forest Park Community College.

**1966** St. Louis was shocked to learn the National Hockey League was offering the city a franchise. The fifth expansion franchise had been expected to go to Baltimore. But the league said St. Louis already had a suitable building in place and offered a central location. The city had until April 5th to claim the franchise, or Baltimore would get it. Three groups were said to be preparing bids.

**1971** Former Negro League pitcher Satchel Paige was nominated for induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame. He was formally named to the hall on June 10th. He pitched for the Browns from 1951 to 1953. Paige was 47 in 1952, when he shut out Detroit in a 12-inning game. He became the oldest major league player to pitch a complete game shutout.

**1988** The National Hockey League All-Star Game was played at the Arena. Mario Lemieux scored three goals as the Wales Conference defeated the Campbell Conference, 6-5.

**1990** Former Mayor John Poelker died. A former FBI special agent, he served as one of the finest comptrollers in city history. Elected as the 40<sup>th</sup> Mayor of St. Louis in 1973, he served until 1977. He defeated Alfonso Cervantes in the Democratic primary after speaking out against Cervantes' plan for a new airport near Waterloo, Illinois. Poelker left the city with a \$6.5 million budget surplus.

**1999** Crews began tearing down a symbol of the failed good intentions of the 1950's. The headache ball smashed into the high rise Darst-Webbe Housing Project on the Near South Side. The complex was to be replaced by apartments.