

## June 16

**1844** The great flood inundated Illinoistown, as East St. Louis was known at the time. Crowds flocked to the St. Louis riverfront to watch as the Mississippi carried away houses and great trees. The river rose to ten to 20 feet deep over the streets on the east side. Steamboats were tying up in Cahokia.

**1896** The Republican National Convention opened at an auditorium erected just for the occasion on Washington near the city hall. "The Wigwam" had a seating capacity of 40,000. The convention nominated William McKinley for president and Garrett A. Hobart as his running mate.

**1903** Helen Traubel was born in St. Louis. She became the leading Wagnerian soprano; in an era Europeans dominated opera. She made her debut with the St. Louis Symphony in 1924 and made her first appearance with the New York Metropolitan in 1953. She appeared in several movies, including *Deep in My Heart* in 1954 and *The Ladies Man* in 1961.

**1908** The rising Mississippi had reached into the first floors of the buildings along the riverfront between Pine and Franklin. The first caisson on the Missouri side for the construction of the McKinley Bridge was swept away. A tugboat managed to round it up.

**1911** The city of Wood River, Illinois was incorporated. Construction of the Standard Oil refinery in 1906 and 1907 had touched off explosive growth in the area. By 1920, Wood River laid claim to the title of "fastest growing city in the United States."

**1919** The Muny Opera opened its first season with a production of *Robin Hood*. The Muny dates its origins to the lavish "Pageant and Masque" staged in Forest Park in 1914 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of St. Louis. The success of the pageant inspired the building of the Muny.

**1920** The city of St. Louis reached an agreement with postal authorities for an airfield at Forest Park. The field was to be used by the Aerial Mail Service. Flights were discontinued in 1921. To this day, the area is known as "Aviation Field." The mounted police stables are the old hangar.

**1927** A holiday atmosphere prevailed in St. Louis, as the city awaited the arrival of Charles Lindbergh and the "Spirit of St. Louis." Lindy's mother, Evangeline Land Lindbergh, arrived here. Over 100,000 people were taking advantage of special rates and arriving by rail. Hotels were turning thousands of people away.

**1949** Mayor Darst called on the Municipal Airport Commission for a long-range program establishing a second major airport on the East Side for passenger traffic only. Darst said Lambert Field would best serve as an airport for military flights and freight only.

**1954** The Missouri Highway Department authorized construction of a new four lane bridge over the Missouri River at St. Charles. The old bridge carrying US 40 had been built in 1904, and was hopelessly overburdened. More than 16,000 cars each day were using the old bridge.

**1964** Lou Brock stole his first base in a Cardinal uniform. It came in a game at Houston; one day after he came from the Cubs in one of the greatest Redbird trades ever. When Lou joined the team, the Cardinals were in eighth place. Brock would bat .348 for the rest of the 1964 season and hit over .300 in the World Series.

**1965** As the Arch continued to rise higher over downtown St. Louis, the Federal Aviation Administration issued a stern warning for would-be daredevil pilots. Any pilot who tried to fly through the legs of the Arch would be dealt with severely. At least ten pilots have done it. Most of them got away with it.

**1978** The motion picture *Grease* opened at the Northwest, Esquire, Sunset Hills and Woods Mill theatres. The romanticized version of 50's life was a box office smash, but the sound track would be even bigger.

**1989** The Blues signed free-agent goalie Curtis Joseph.

**1995** The Cardinals traded Todd Zeile to the Cubs for pitcher Mike Morgan. Less than 12 hours later, General Manager Walt Jocketty fired manager Joe Torre. Mike Jorgenson took over as interim skipper. The Yankees hired Torre as manager in 1996, and he led them to the World Series. Tony LaRussa took over as Cards manager in 1996.

**1997** The Boatmen's Bank signs began coming down, as the merger with NationsBank took effect.

**1997** Another chapter was closed in the saga of Times Beach. The last of the dioxin-contaminated soil from Times Beach and 26 other sites in Eastern Missouri was burned in the controversial incinerator. Today, the site is being reborn as Route 66 State Park.

**1999** St. Louis Rams linebacker Leonard Little was sentenced to 90 days in jail for a deadly drunk driving accident. Little was drunk on the night in October 1998 when his vehicle slammed into a car driven by Susan Gutweiler of Oakville.