

March 6

1811 The Court of Quarter Sessions appointed commissioners to lay out a road from St. Louis to Fort Bellefontaine. Among the commissioners who laid out Bellefontaine Road was Alexander McNair, who would later become the first governor of Missouri.

1815 Residents of the Dardenne area gathered at the home of Etienne Bernard to establish a new Catholic congregation. The first St. Peter's church was built of logs and was later wiped out by the rampaging Dardenne Creek. The settlement that sprang up around the church also took the name St. Peters.

1820 The president signed the first Missouri Compromise. The bill authorized a state constitution and the formation of the state government. It called for Missouri to be admitted as a slave state and Maine as a free state. A second compromise was necessary before northern lawmakers would allow passage of the statehood bill in August, 1821.

1836 A band of 186 volunteers died as Mexican troops took the Alamo in San Antonio. Several Missourians were among the dead. George Washington Cottle was a member of one of the pioneer families of Lincoln County. Private William Cloud had been a successful lawyer in St. Louis. John Smith, formerly of Hannibal, was the last man to leave the mission alive. He carried a message pleading for help.

1857 The U.S. Supreme Court made a landmark decision that polarized the nation. Dredd Scott's owner had taken him from the slave state of Missouri to the free state of Illinois and later to the Wisconsin Territory. Scott sued upon being returned to St. Louis, claiming he had resided in a free state. The Supreme Court ruled that slaves were not citizens, and thus could not sue. Scott's ownership was transferred to abolitionist Taylor Blow, who freed him. He lived out his days as a porter at Barnum's Hotel.

1862 Missouri Militia combined with rebels under General McCullough and 1,000 Indians from the Oklahoma Territory clashed in day one of the Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas. Their defeat by Federal General Samuel Curtis in the three-day battle assured control of Missouri for the Union and saved St. Louis from invasion, for a while. It also sealed the doom of Missouri's pro-Confederate governor, Claiborne Jackson.

1866 William F. Cody married Louisa Frederici in St. Louis. Frederic was assigned to the military headquarters here at the time. In 1867, Cody left St. Louis to begin hunting buffalo to feed the construction crews of the Kansas Pacific Railroad. Cody claimed to have killed 4,280 buffalo in 17 months. He became known as "Buffalo Bill."

1901 Friction between the president of the school and the head of the "boarding house department" at St. Charles College led to a decision to close the school. The president was upset when he discovered that some boarders were engaging in gambling and dancing.

1903 The *Globe-Democrat* reported that noted western sculptor Frederic Remington had signed a contract for a huge statue to mark the entrance to the concession area at the fair. The work would depict cowboys in the act of shooting up a town. It would be called "Comin' thru the Rye."

1907 The Western Brewery in Belleville announced the winner of a contest to find a name for its newest brew. Seventeen-year-old George Wuller won \$25 for suggesting the name "Stag." The name lived on even after the brewery closed for the last time in 1988.

1923 The Cardinals announced that players would wear uniform numbers for the first time. They would be numbered according to the players spot in the batting order.

1926 Two thousand customers got the first dial phones in St. Louis. For the first time, they could make a call without hearing the familiar "number please" from the operator. The change was made possible when Southwestern Bell bought out the Kinloch Phone Company. Bell said it planned to expand the system citywide soon.

1948 One of the largest manhunts in city history was under way. Every detective was on duty, searching for the bandits who had held up the Bussman payroll truck the day before. They made off with \$31,000. Police were rounding up survivors of the old Egan Gang from the 20's.

1950 The children's show, *The Wrangler's Club*, premiered on KSD-TV. Harry Gibbs starred as the beloved "Texas Bruce." He would entertain kids and show cartoons until 1963. When the show went off the air, there was a three-year long waiting list for kids hoping to see the show live. *Corky The Clown* took over the time slot. Weatherman Cliff St. James played Corky until 1979.

1962 St. Louis voters passed a \$6 million bond issue for public improvements in the proposed stadium area. Civic Center Development, backed entirely by private money, planned to build the stadium as part of an \$83 million civic improvement plan. Anheuser-Busch put up \$5 million.

1970 R. Marlin Perkins announced he would retire as director of the St. Louis Zoo on March 28th at the age of 65. Perkins said he would remain at the Zoo as director emeritus. William Hoff was named as the new director.

1972 Leo Sauget died at the age of 83. Sauget was a farmer who led the drive to incorporate the town of Monsanto, Illinois in 1926. He served as the first mayor until 1969. The town was renamed Sauget in his honor in 1967.

1973 John Poelker upset incumbent Mayor AJ Cervantes in the Democratic primary. The defeat ended a 25-year-political career and eight controversial years as mayor for Cervantes. His term was marked by the battle over a second airport, and the ill-fated Santa Maria and Spanish Pavilion. *Life Magazine* once charged he had ties to the underworld.

1982 City officials kicked off a massive clean-up program. The three-year "Operation Brightside" program called for an army of 100,000 volunteers. The program's most visible legacy is the daffodils that spring up every year along Highway 40.

1996 Wayne Gretzky played his first game at Kiel Center in a Blues uniform. The largest home crowd in Blues history, 20,725, saw the Blues beat the Florida Panthers, 2-0. "The Great One" didn't spend much time here. He signed a free agent contract with the New York Rangers at the end of the season.

1998 Ground was broken for the Metro-Link extension from East St. Louis to Belleville Area College.