

## March 11

**1811** Wilson Price Hunt left St. Louis on the first expedition to the Pacific since Lewis and Clark's journey. Hunt scouted trading post sites for John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company. His men were the first to navigate the Snake River and parts of the future Oregon Trail. He returned to St. Louis in 1817 and married Ann Lucas in 1836. The Lucas family estate was known as Normandy, where Lucas and Hunt Road is today.

**1848** One of the first big steamboat fires on the St. Louis riverfront destroyed the steamboats *Avalanche*, *Hibernium*, *John J. Hardin*, and *Laclede* were destroyed. A little more than a year later, a fire aboard the steamboat *White Cloud* would race from boat to boat along the riverfront and spark the Great Fire.

**1876** The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad was completed from St. Louis to Pueblo, Colorado. At the time, it was hailed as a very important milestone for St. Louis. The railroad would open the mining trade in Colorado to St. Louis.

**1903** The Mexican Government made bribery an extraditable offense. The move cut off the escape of several St. Louis city officials. They had fled to Mexico to escape prosecution in the "boodle" scandals over the awarding of city streetcar franchises. Crusading City Circuit Attorney Joseph Folk had gone to Washington D.C. to get the U.S. Government to pressure Mexico.

**1908** The Ferguson City Council was urging construction of "the ideal automobile roadway" from St. Louis to Florissant through Ferguson. Officials said there were "no good roads in the neighborhood." The council urged others municipalities along the route to support the project.

**1924** The head of the Missouri State Beverage Department resigned. Charles Prather was in charge of enforcing prohibition. But he was now accused of selling protection to the Griesedieck Brewery in St. Louis. The brewery had been making beer of pre-Volstead Act strength and selling it to saloons.

**1926** St. Louis Comptroller Louis Nolte opposed the proposed purchase of the Bridgeton flying field developed by Albert Bond Lambert. He said it was too far away to be of any practical use. Nolte noted that the city had spent \$12,500 to develop an air field in Forest Park that was used by air mail pilots only for a few months. (The Mounted Police Stables are the old hangar building)

**1942** Blues great Bob Plager was born. Bob and his brother Barclay were two of the most popular players ever to wear the Bluenote. Number Five was especially feared for his checking. He has been with the organization longer than any one else, currently serving as a scout.

**1946** The Municipal Airport Commission selected the Columbia Bottoms area as the location of a second airport. The city bought up 1,800 acres near the confluence of the

Missouri and the Mississippi. The plan was abandoned in 1949, and the site is now a wildlife preserve.

**1956** The Army announced plans to shut down the St. Louis ordinance plant on Goodfellow by January 1957. The plant employed 2,100 people. It was to be placed on reserve stand by status and manned by a skeleton crew in case reactivation was necessary in a national emergency.

**1960** A federal judge sentenced Chuck Berry to five years in prison for transporting a 14-year-old girl across state lines for immoral purposes. The verdict was overturned in October 1960 because the judge made racist remarks. Berry was convicted in a second trial, and sentenced to three years in prison in April 1961.

**1965** The National Hockey League announced it was expanding from six to 13 teams. St. Louis was mentioned as one of the possible sites for a new franchise. However, most observers were predicting the final franchise would go to Baltimore.

**1971** The Federal Aviation Agency urged support of the proposed airport at Columbia-Waterloo, Illinois. They said it would be cheaper to build and was 19 miles closer to downtown than proposed sites in Missouri. The Missouri Congressional delegation and St. Louis County leaders vowed to fight the plan.

**1978** A jeering crowd prevented a Nazi rally in South St. Louis. A group of 42 brown shirted Nazi's attempted to ride down Cherokee Street in a flat bed truck. The crowd pelted them with snowballs and tomatoes. The crowd then chased the Nazis from their new headquarters. Six people were arrested when riot equipped police clashed with the anti-Nazi demonstrators.

**1980** The landmark riverfront McDonald's opened. The restaurant was built on a 702-ton, 185-foot long riverboat on top of a barge moored on the levee. The restaurant could seat 350 people. It closed in November 2000 due to financial reasons.

**1984** TWA announced that its landmark hangar at Lambert Field would be demolished to make way for new passenger gates. The massive hangar along Interstate 70 was one of the airport's most visible features when it opened in 1957.

**1987** Amid much fanfare, the refurbished Admiral riverboat opened as a complex of bars, restaurants and a ballroom. A combination of high costs and low attendance forced it to close in November of 1988, millions of dollars in debt.