

## **March 14**

**1782** Thomas Hart Benton was born at Hart's Mill, North Carolina. Benton was one of the two original Missouri Senators. He served five terms, from 1820 to 1851 and played a crucial role in the development of the West. Benton once took a shot at Andrew Jackson, who later became his political ally. He also killed Charles Lucas in a duel on "Bloody Island" in St. Louis. Benton's portrait appeared on the \$100 gold certificate from the 1880's to the 1920's. There are counties in six states named after Benton.

**1859** The Missouri State Legislature approved the establishment of the Missouri Botanical Garden. Henry Shaw established the garden at his country estate, Tower Grove. He enlisted the help of leading botanists, including Doctor George Engelmann of St. Louis. The garden quickly became one of the top cultural attractions in St. Louis. Shaw also donated 276 acres around the garden for Tower Grove Park.

**1899** Creditors bought the bankrupt Browns for \$33,000 at a sheriff's auction. The team was then sold to Mathew Stanley Robison and Frank de Haas Robison, owners of the Cleveland Spiders. The Robisons sent the Cleveland players to St. Louis and sent the hapless Browns players to Cleveland. They changed the name to the Perfectos and put the players in red hats and stockings. A sportswriter overheard a fan commenting that the hats were "a lovely shade of Cardinal," and a new nickname was coined.

**1902** City Circuit Attorney Joseph Folk indicted city "boss" Ed Butler for attempting to bribe two members of the Board of Health to vote for a sanitation contract for his firm. The Butler indictment was one of the sensational "boodle" cases that gained national attention for Folk's crusade to clean up St. Louis city government. Butler was convicted. But the Missouri Supreme Court overturned the conviction.

**1921** A force of 20 special federal prohibition agents were rushed here following a report to Washington by the Anti-Saloon League. The league charged that St. Louis was openly defiant of Prohibition. One agent said it was "the wettest city in the country."

**1946** Mayor Kaufmann and auxiliary Bishop George Donnelly met the plane carrying the body of Archbishop John Glennon. Glennon had died in his native Ireland while on his way back home from Rome. Thousands were waiting at his residence on Lindell to file past the casket.

**1953** Mayor Joseph Darst filed suit to block the proposed move of the St. Louis Browns to Baltimore. Two days later, it looked as if he had won. The league rejected the move, hoping to force owner Bill Veeck out. Veeck sold his stock to a syndicate led by the Mayor of Baltimore. At the end of 1953, the league approved the move.

**1957** The counsel for the Senate committee investigating labor racketeering announced the committee planned to hold hearings soon in St. Louis. Robert Kennedy said the committee wanted to know more about "matters of interest" uncovered in connection with Teamsters activities here.

**1962** MacDonald Construction Company was formally awarded an \$11,442,418 contract for the construction of the Arch and the visitor center shell. In ceremonies at the Old Courthouse, the city turned over its \$2.5 million share of the construction costs.

**1975** Fire destroyed a landmark building at 3917 Lindell that had housed the Automobile club of Missouri since 1938. The imposing building had been built in 1893. Early motorists were routed past the headquarters, so the early alignments of Routes 66, 40 and 50 all used Lindell Boulevard.

**1977** Shoving lines of denim-clad rock fans swarmed the front entrance of the Arena as tickets went on sale for the Led Zeppelin concert on April 15th. All 18,000 tickets sold out in minutes. The crowd shattered a large glass door and the mounted police were called out to restore order.

**1979** City school teachers returned to their jobs, ending a nine-week-strike. Students would have to attend classes until July 20th to make up for the lost time.

**2000** A new era began on the old Arena site. Ground was broken for a five-story office building where the “Old Barn” once stood. It was to be the first unit of the Highlands at Forest Park office complex. The complex was named after the amusement park that once stood next to the Arena.