

## March 16

**1843** William L. Ewing was born in St. Louis. The great-grandson of Pierre Chouteau served as the 29<sup>th</sup> Mayor of St. Louis, from 1881-1885. During his administration, wooden pavement on streets west of 18<sup>th</sup> street were replaced with granite blocks. Property owners were required to pay for it. Construction also began on a cable car system.

**1864** A miracle may have occurred in St. Joseph's Parish. Ignatius Strecker was struck in the chest by an iron object. The wound developed into tuberculosis and doctors gave him just weeks to live. Strecker kissed a relic of the Blessed Peter Claver and recovered quickly. Rome declared it an authentic miracle in 1887, one of the two required for the canonization of Claver. Strecker lived until 1880 and died of an unrelated ailment.

**1866** Russell Gardner was born. He made a fortune manufacturing wagons and cars. He also opened the first Chevrolet dealership here in 1915 at 9 Rutger Street. Gardner was so fond of W.C. Handy's "Jogo Blues," that he sent \$20 bills to the bandstand every time Handy played it. In honor of his friend, Handy dedicated one of his new compositions as "The St. Louis Blues."

**1870** James B. Eads was petitioning the city to widen the streets leading to his bridge, "commensurate with the magnitude and importance of the structure itself." Eads pointed out that the bridge was being built without any state, city, or county money.

**1881** Politician and saloon owner Chris von Der Ahe announced he had leased the old Grand Avenue Ballpark. He would buy the Browns for \$6,500. He was not a baseball man, but realized the return of professional baseball would be good for business at his saloon. Von Der Ahe is one of the most colorful characters in St. Louis baseball history. He ran an amusement park at the stadium, paraded his players through the streets before games and fined them for poor play.

**1923** The Crateagus Mollis, or Hawthorne, was named the Missouri state flower by the legislature. It was chosen over the daisy because its hard wood proved to be so useful to the pioneers.

**1924** The owner of the Coronado Hotel at Lindell and Spring announced that the former haven for bachelors would soon be open to "all worthy patrons." It had been open for just four months. The owner said, "bachelors do a lot of talking about how they hate women and how sweet a home would be without them, but they don't mean what they say."

**1939** Father Joseph Dunne died. Over 20,000 people would file by his bier over the next three days to pay their respects. Dunne founded his home for newsboys in 1906. In 1948, his life story came to the big screen in the film *Fighting Father Dunne*. His newsboy's home still provides a place for under privileged boys today.

**1953** The American League turned down Bill Veeck's request to move the Browns to Baltimore, a move calculated to drive him out of the league. Veeck promptly started selling his stock to a Baltimore syndicate. By the end of the season, the Browns were history.

**1955** The St. Louis Housing Authority announced that the new Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project would be opened on a non-segregated basis. It would be the first of the five housing projects in the city to be open to eligible families, regardless of race.

**1957** The St. Louis Hawks clinched first place in the NBA Western Division with a 114-111 overtime win over the Minnesota Lakers. It marked the first title for owner Ben Kerner.

**1958** The call letters of KWK, Channel Four, were changed to KMOX TV. CBS had taken over in February 1957 in a four-million-dollar deal. CBS gave up the rights to Channel Eleven, for which it had been granted a construction permit.

**1964** Walt Disney unveiled plans for an entertainment complex on the St. Louis riverfront. He emphasized it was not an amusement park. The plans fell through when St. Louis interests insisted that Walt allow beer to be sold. He refused and Gussie Busch blasted him. A miffed Disney soon began plans for a complex near Orlando.

**1972** The first building was blown up at the notorious Pruitt-Igoe housing project. The demolition of the 11-story building at 2207 O'Fallon Street was a test to see if the entire 35-building complex could be demolished using dynamite. Pruitt-Igoe stood as a monument to the well-intentioned but failed social programs of the 1950's and 60's.

**1981** The Streckfuss Line said no potential buyers for the *Admiral* had come forward and the boat would probably be cut up and sold for scrap. The St. Louis Board of Aldermen had rejected a plan to allow the Port Authority to issue bonds for the purchase of the boat.

**1991** The Blues retired Bernie Federko's number 24 in ceremonies at the Arena.

**1994** Archbishop Justin Rigali assumed leadership of the St. Louis Diocese. Archbishop Rigali was the seventh archbishop of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. In 1999 Rigali hosted the Pastoral Visit of Pope John Paul II. The trip to St. Louis is the only such visit to a single diocese in the U.S. during John Paul's pontificate. In July 2003, Rigali was named as the new Archbishop of Philadelphia.