

March 17

1804 Legendary mountain man Jim Bridger was born in Virginia. As an 18-year-old in St. Louis, Bridger signed on with William Ashley for his 1822 expedition that established the fur trade in the northwest. Bridger would discover the Great Salt Lake and brought back tales that brought the Yellowstone area to national attention. In 1843, he established Fort Bridger, an important stop on the Oregon Trail.

1820 The first recorded St. Patrick's Day parade in St. Louis. At that time, there were about 100 Irish out of a total population of 7,000. A wave of immigrants arrived after the potato famine of 1845-47. By 1851, they made up 1/7 of the population. Prominent Irish in St. Louis history include John Mullanphy, the city's first millionaire. Jeremiah Connor was the first St. Louis Sheriff, and donated the land for Washington Avenue. O'Fallon, Missouri and Illinois are named after Colonel John O'Fallon. His estate is now O'Fallon Park. Firefighter Phelim O'Toole became a folk hero for saving at least a dozen lives during the Southern Hotel Fire in 1877. The Irish first settled in the notorious Kerry Patch slum around 18th and O'Fallon. Many moved to the area we know as Dogtown to work the clay mines in the 1900's.

1850 Theodore C. Link was born in Germany. He is best known as the designer of Union Station. He designed many buildings here, including the monumental entrances to Portland and Westmoreland Places, the original Barnes Hospital and Washington University Medical School Buildings. Link also designed the Mississippi State Capitol.

1851 The steamboat *Lexington* arrived in St. Louis carrying "The Swedish Nightingale," Jenny Lind. The boat was purposely delayed until 5:30 a.m. to avoid the crowds that had been arriving here for weeks to hear Lind sing. A huge crowd thronged her carriage anyway.

1885 The *Post-Dispatch* reported a controversy surrounding Mark Twain's new book. A library in Concord had banned *Huckleberry Finn*, dismissing it as the "veriest trash." Twain called the controversy a "tip top puff" and said it would sell 25,000 copies for sure.

1886 The first issue of *The Sporting News* hit the stands. Alfred Henry Spink, a former writer for the *Post-Dispatch* established the paper. A single copy cost five cents and a year's subscription \$2.50. Within months Spink asked his brother Charles to join the struggling operation as business manager. Under Charles' management, the *Sporting News* soon turned a profit.

1901 The question of where the world's fair would be held here was a subject of much debate. The city council was considering a bill to allow the world's fair company to use O'Fallon Park, Carondelet Park, or part of Forest Park.

1917 The Women's National Bowling Congress held the first women's bowling tournament in the country right here in St. Louis. About 100 women took part. The team

title went to the Progress Team of St. Louis. Mrs. AJ Koester, also of St. Louis, won the all-event title.

1927 Federal Prohibition Agents continuing their war on still on islands in the Missouri and Mississippi made their biggest haul yet. On Pelican Island, they found a still capable of producing 300 gallons of hooch per day. It cost about 40-thousand-dollars to build. The agents dynamited it.

1953 Demolition work began on the 71-year-old home of the "King of Kerry Patch." James Cullinane led parades and provided benevolent services in the Irish slum, including posting bail and writing wills free of charge. He died in 1891. The home at 2433 Dickson was being torn down to make room for the Wendell Pruitt Homes housing project.

1963 For the first time in 138 years, general merchandise was sold legally on a Sunday in Missouri. Following a legal battle between St. Louis County and the GEM discount store chain, the State Supreme Court threw out the "blue laws." Governor Dalton and the St. Louis Board of Aldermen were urging lawmakers to immediately pass a new law banning Sunday sales.

1969 The Cardinals traded the hero of the 1967 season, Orlando Cepeda, to the Braves for Joe Torre. Torre would go on to become the National League MVP in 1971. He became manager of the Cardinals in 1990. After he was fired in 1995, Torre was named manager of the Yankees.

1978 The Board of Aldermen approved three bills clearing the way for a proposed shopping mall downtown. The developers were now waiting for word on federal money. The plan called for the \$150 million to link Stix and Famous. Developers expected to break ground by the fall of 1978.

1988 Brian Sutter of the Blues scored his 300th career goal. It came in a 2-2 tie against the Minnesota North Stars in St. Louis. Following the 1988 season, Sutter would retire as a player. He would become coach the next season and went on to become the most successful coach in Blues' history.

1996 A controversial incinerator set up at the former site of the town of Times Beach went into operation. Dioxin contaminated soil from Times Beach and 26 other sites in Eastern Missouri was burned there.

1997 Security guard Richard Heflin of Belleville was gunned down in a robbery at the Lindell Bank and Trust. Billie Allen would be sentenced to death for spraying the lobby with gunfire. His accomplice, Norris Holder, was also sentenced to death. The pair was captured after their van caught fire in Forest Park.

1998 Workers took down the landmark McDonnell-Douglas sign at Lambert Field. It was replaced by three-story-tall neon "Boeing" sign. McDonnell Aircraft was founded in

1939 and merged with Douglas in 1967. Boeing swallowed up the St. Louis institution in 1997.

2005 Former Card's slugger Mark McGwire hurt his image as he testified before a congressional hearing on steroids in baseball. McGwire repeatedly said "I'm not here to talk about the past," refusing to say whether he had used steroids. McGwire refused to deny that he used steroids and also hedged on whether he considered such use to be cheating.