

## **March 24**

**1826** The commander of the Western Department, General Edmond, and his Field Commander, Colonel Henry Atkinson, were ordered to select a position within 20 miles of the mouth of the Missouri for a new fort. The post would become Jefferson Barracks. Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, Ulysses Grant, William T. Sherman, George Custer, John J. Pershing and Dwight Eisenhower are among those who served there.

**1849** One of the earliest recorded major robberies in St. Louis took place. Five robbers managed to chisel through wood, brick and sheet iron to get into the vault of William Nesbitt and Company at Main and Olive. They made off with \$15,000. Two of the five were quickly caught, and most of the loot was recovered.

**1856** Classes began in the first building west of the Mississippi to be used exclusively for a high school. Central High School was located at 15th and Olive. The first high school classes in St. Louis had started on February 4, 1853 in a portion of the old Wayman School at Sixth and Locust.

**1875** Officials planning the development of Forest Park proposed a zoo, a botanical garden and a casino. One speaker said "50 years from now, when the national capitol shall be at St. Louis and a population of five million shall stretch from the Mississippi to the Missouri, the most attractive portion of the great city shall be Forest Park."

**1881** The first concert of the St. Louis Choral Society, a performance of Handel's "Dettigem Te Deum," was presented at the Mercantile Library Hall. The choral society eventually absorbed a local orchestral group. It changed its name to the St. Louis Choral-Symphony Society, the forerunner of today's St. Louis Symphony.

**1893** George Sisler was born in Ohio. Ty Cobb once called the Browns first baseman "the nearest thing to a perfect ballplayer." He was certainly the greatest Brownie of them all. Sisler hit over .400 twice, and his 257 hits in 1920 is still the record. Sisler ended his career with a lifetime average of .341. Not bad for someone who began his career as a pitcher. In 1939, Sisler became one of the 12 original members of the Hall of Fame.

**1904** The World's Fair Restaurant Concessionaires Association agreed that the price of a beer on the pike would be ten cents. Several members protested it would be holding up the public to charge that much. But a majority wanted the higher price, because "they could get it."

**1911** A few weeks after the state capitol was hit by lightning and gutted by fire, Missouri Governor Herbert Hadley approved plans for a new capitol building. The present building was completed in October 1918.

**1911** Mathew Robison, the president of the Cardinals, died suddenly. He left the club to Mrs. Hathaway Britton. "Lady Bee" became the first female owner in the major leagues. Interested in women's rights, she took a very active role in running the club and attended

league meetings. That didn't go over well with the rest of the owners. She sold the team to Branch Rickey in 1917.

**1920** The Million Population Club civic group held a conference on greater St. Louis in Mayor Kiel's office. A judge spoke for the county following a proposal that the city and county be re-united. He said, "The people of St. Louis County will defeat any move in that direction. We have beaten you before and we will defeat you again."

**1923** Members of the warring Egan and Hogan Gangs fired away with shotguns from speeding automobiles at Grand and St. Louis Avenue. A 12-year-old schoolboy was run over by one of the cars and seriously injured. An auto dealer on the corner painted a mural on his showroom window to protest the continuing violence in the gang war.

**1924** A federal grand jury was beginning its investigation into the disappearance of 893 barrels of pre-prohibition whiskey stored under government orders at the Jack Daniels distillery here. It turned out that several prominent St. Louis politicians were involved.

**1929** The *Globe-Democrat* reported that Kingdom City was the newest and fastest growing city in the state. In August of 1928, the site had been covered with timber. But as soon as two paved state highways opened, gas stations, garages, hotels and restaurants sprang up. (Today the site is the intersection of I-70 and U-S 54, home of Gaspar's truck stop and the "McStop")

**1938** Larry Wilson was born in Rigby, Idaho. The defensive back for the Big Red owns the franchise career records for interceptions (52), interception yardage (800), and for single-game interception yardage.(115) Wilson also set another record with a 96-yard interception return for a touchdown against Cleveland on Dec. 19, 1965. The Cardinals retired his Number 8, one of only four players so honored and he won election to the Hall of Fame on the first ballot in 1978.

**1947** A group of 100 civic and business leaders were meeting here to study proposals to hold a Worlds Fair here to mark the 150th anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase. The plan died when a suitable site could not be found.

**1970** Washington University was in turmoil. Students were continuing protests against the operation of an ROTC center on campus. Hundreds of students marched on the home of Chancellor Thomas Eliot. Police kept them back, but more rallies were planned.

**1971** The head of the Terminal Railroad Association said he believed the new national passenger railroad corporation planned to abandon Union Station for a smaller terminal. At the time, just 11 passenger trains each day were using Union Station. Plans called for the number to be reduced to just four by May 1971.

**1981** Barclay Plager's number eight became the second number retired by the Blues. (Bob Gassoff's number three was the first) Plager died of a brain tumor in 1988 at the age of 46.

**1994** Archbishop John May died of cancer at the age of 71. He had served as archbishop since 1980, when he replaced the retiring John Cardinal Carberry.

**2003** Marine Corporal Evan James of Glen Carbon became the first St. Louis area casualty of the war in Iraq. He drowned in the Saddam Canal in southeast Iraq, five days after the start of the war. Another marine also drowned while setting up a defensive position.