

### May 3

**1789** John Berry Meachum was born into slavery in Virginia. After purchasing his freedom, Meachum came to St. Louis. He established the city's first African-American Protestant Church in 1825. When the Missouri Legislature outlawed education for black children, Meachum opened a "Freedom School" on a boat anchored on the federally controlled Mississippi River.

**1809** Hiram Leffingwell was born in Massachusetts. Leffingwell and Richard Elliott developed a planned suburb in 1850 for people seeking to escape the city. In 1853, the town would be named Kirkwood. Also in 1850, they laid out Grand Avenue on a ridge west of the city. In 1870, Leffingwell proposed a huge park near the area where he just so happened to own big tracts of land. The Legislature approved the creation of Forest Park in 1874.

**1900** Cannons, whistles and a huge crowd greeted the hero of the Spanish American War upon his arrival in St. Louis. Admiral George Dewey arrived on a special train. The city threw a huge parade and a special banquet.

**1907** Health officials in Cleveland banned the spitball there after watching Browns pitcher Harry Howell's spitter "working in all its slimy effectiveness." The Chief Health officer said a player should not have to face "a batted ball covered with microbes coming at him like a shot out of a gun."

**1909** The city of Wellston was incorporated. The town was named for the country estate of Erastus Wells. Wells built the first successful transit system in St. Louis and launched the narrow gauge railway that ran from St. Louis to Florissant.

**1913** William Inge was born in Kansas. He came here to be the drama critic for the *Star-Times*. Encouraged by St. Louisan Tennessee Williams, Inge penned his first play in 1947 while teaching at Washington University. He wrote *Bus Stop*, the Pulitzer Prize winning *Picnic* and the Academy Award winning *Splendor in the Grass*. Inge committed suicide on June 10, 1973.

**1918** An ordinance was introduced in the Board of Alderman to change the name of Berlin Street to Pershing. It was the first of several ordinances purging the city of German street names. Von Versing was changed to Enright to honor one of the area's first war dead. Kaiser was changed to Gresham, Brunswick to January, Wiesenhan to Bonita, Helvetia to Stole and Hasburger to Cecil Place.

**1927** Captain Hawthorne Gray set a new world altitude record over Scott airfield. He rose to 41,000 feet in a balloon. That was thought to be the limit of human endurance in the rarified atmosphere.

**1930** St. Louis' first licensed female transport pilot, Laura Ingalls, set the women's world record with 344 loops in succession. She broke the record in a Dehavilland Gypsy Moth over Lambert Field.

**1933** The Shady Oak theatre building in Clayton opened. The name comes from the fact that the Shady Oak was originally an "Airdome," an outdoor theatre shaded by a big oak tree.

**1946** The city planning commission approved plans for the Express Highway (now Highway 40) and inauguration of a slum clearance program. The plan called for clearing the area bounded by 20th, Grand, Olive and the Mill Creek Valley.

**1948** The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the landmark case of *Shelley vs. Kraemer*. Many St. Louis neighborhoods had remained segregated and blacks faced a critical housing shortage, because property owners would enter into agreements forbidding the sale of homes to non-Caucasians. The Shelleys bought a home at 4600 Labadie, and the neighbors sued. The High Court ruled that people of any race should live where they please.

**1954** The United States Senate authorized \$5 million in federal funds for the construction of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. The money was to be used to remove the elevated tracks along the riverfront and for landscaping and restoration of the Old Courthouse.

**1968** Ron Shock assured himself a place in Blues history. His goal in the second period of sudden death overtime in Game Seven of the semifinals at the Arena put the Blues in the Stanley Cup finals in their very first season. The mighty Montreal Canadiens would sweep the Blues in four games in the finals. But each was a one-goal game.

**1970** Legendary Blues goalie Jacques Plante was knocked out when a shot shattered his mask above his left eye. It happened in the first game of the Stanley Cup finals against Boston. Plante was the first goalie to wear a mask.

**1970** Clayton Mayor Hy Waltuch threw the switch to put KRCH on the air at 98-point-one F-M. (Later KSLQ, now Y-98) The station broadcast from studios at 111 South Bemiston.

**1973** New Mayor John Poelker kept a campaign promise that helped get him elected. He fired off a letter to federal officials, going on record against the effort to build a new airport at Columbia-Waterloo, Illinois. Former Mayor Cervantes had led the fight for the new airport.

**1979** A few weeks before the start of its 39th season, the Coast Guard discovered that the hull of the *Admiral* had been weakened. The summer season would be cancelled for the first time since World War Two. When it turned out the repairs would cost much more than expected, it appeared as if the *Admiral* would never return.

**1986** A KATY freight train made the final run over the St. Louis Division, between St. Charles and Rocheport. The line was abandoned, and later became the KATY Trail.

**1989** The body of six-week-old Heather Sims was found dumped in a trash can in St. Charles County. Her mother, Paula, told police Heather had been kidnapped from their Brighton home on April 29th. In 1986, she had claimed her 13-day-old daughter Lorelei had disappeared under similar circumstances.

**2002** St. Louis firefighters Derek Martin and Robert Morrison were killed in a fire at the Gravois Refrigeration Company, 2239 Gravois. They had gone into the burning building to rescue a trapped colleague. It was the first time a firefighter had died in the line of duty in the city since 1977.