



DAKOTA DATEBOOK

Usher L. Burdick

BY CAROLE BUTCHER

January 6 -- Usher L. Burdick was born in Owatonna, Minn. in 1879. His family moved to Dakota Territory in 1882. He graduated from the ND State Normal School in Mayville, then worked as deputy superintendent of schools for Benson County before entering the University of Minnesota Law School. He graduated in 1904 and was admitted to the North Dakota state bar. He opened a practice in Munich.

Burdick became involved in politics, serving in the state House of Representatives from 1907 to 1911. He moved to Williston in 1907 where he continued to practice law.

From 1911 to 1913, he was lieutenant governor. After that, he was state's attorney for Williams County and then assistant US district attorney for North Dakota. He became well-known throughout the state. In 1916 the *Fargo Forum* proclaimed him "the man of the hour." The newspaper promoted him as an independent candidate for governor, saying Burdick was "a leader by nature, by temperament, and by a God-given ability to sympathize with and understand the wants and needs of his fellow man." In spite of such enthusiastic support, Burdick never was elected governor.

Politics were not Burdick's only interest. He had a ranch and engaged in livestock breeding. He was also a historian and author. He wrote several books, including one about Sitting Bull and one about the Marquis de Morès.

He took a break from politics when he was elected secretary of the Farmers Union. The organization was a strong advocate for farmers and outspoken against farm foreclosures. On this date in 1930, Burdick ended speculation when he announced he was not a candidate for governor. He said he did not consider it appropriate to mix politics with union activities.

Burdick's break from politics did not last long. In 1932 he was an unsuccessful candidate for the Republican nomination to Congress when he supported Franklin D. Roosevelt for president and advocated the repeal of Prohibition. But in 1934 he was elected to Congress, serving until 1945. He was not reelected in 1944, but did serve again from 1949 to 1959. He supported Roosevelt's New Deal programs and was an advocate for Native Americans.

Usher Burdick died on Aug. 19, 1960, 11 days after his son Quentin was sworn in as US senator for North Dakota. He was buried on his ranch in Williston.

Thomas Moodie

BY JAYME L. JOB

January 7 -- Thomas Moodie, the 19th governor of North Dakota, took office on this date in 1935. Moodie is best known as the state's shortest-serving governor, serving only five weeks before being removed from office by the ND Supreme Court.

Born in Winona, Minn. in 1878, Moodie left school at the age of 16 and moved west to Wadena. There, he began work in the printing department of the *Wadena Pioneer* and also as a brakeman for the Northern Pacific Railroad. Eventually Moodie took his newspaper career to North Dakota, working as a reporter for the *Bismarck Tribune*. After working for several newspapers, including the *Minneapolis Tribune*, Moodie served as editor of two of his own weekly North Dakota papers.

In 1933 President Franklin Roosevelt appointed the newsman to a committee overseeing the distribution of government grants to public buildings. The following year, Moodie secured the Democratic nomination in the race for North Dakota's governorship. He ran against Republican Lydia Langer, wife of Governor William Langer, who had been removed from office only months before on charges of defrauding the government. Moodie won the election, but his victory was short-lived.

Soon after his inauguration on Jan. 7, 1935, rumors began to circulate that the governor had not met the residency requirements. By North Dakota law, a candidate for governor must reside in the state for at least five consecutive years prior to election. Finally, evidence came forward proving that Moodie had indeed cast a vote in a 1932 city election

in Minnesota, proving that he had been a resident there only two years prior to running for governor in North Dakota.

Lieutenant Governor Walter Welford took over for Moodie on February 2 until a decision could be made regarding Moodie's eligibility. The State Supreme Court eventually determined that Moodie was ineligible to serve, and on Feb. 16, 1935, he was officially removed from office, becoming the third North Dakota governor to be removed from office in only 14 years. This is a significant number considering that only 14 US governors have been removed from office in US history.

Moodie went on to serve as an administrator for the ND Federal Housing Administration and the State War Finance Committee in Montana. Later he moved to Spokane, Wash. and served as financial editor of the *Spokane Chronicle* until his death in 1948.

Snowbirds

BY JAYME L. JOB

January 8 -- The winter of 1928 proved to be one of the worst on record for North Dakota in terms of snowfall and blizzard-like conditions. Many people around the state, notably doctors and mail carriers, found it impossible to drive their automobiles, or even horses, through the large snowdrifts that blocked the rural roads.

To solve this problem, North Dakotans devised a new way of traveling through drifts and ice. Removing the front wheels and fender from their automobiles and replacing these with skis, and then reattaching these front tires right in front of the back ones, and wrapping a caterpillar-like track around the sets of tires, these innovators created what came to be known as a "snowbird." The snowbird was capable of breaking through drifts up to five feet. And although strange to look at, they reached speeds up to 30 miles per hour.

O. H. Woodridge, rural mail carrier for southwest Fargo, reported to the *Fargo Forum* that his snowbird allowed him to complete his 29-mile mail route in "little more than two hours." He claimed that on many days he would not even have been able to complete the route with traditional means of transportation.

Woodridge was the first of Fargo's mail carriers to employ a snowbird, and he built the vehicle himself using his old Ford automobile. The mail carrier spent a total of \$165 on the alteration, purchasing an additional axle for the adjustment of the front tires, the two front skis and the wheel track around the four back tires. Woodridge reported that the snowbird was "the best outfit he [had] ever seen for 'bucking' snow."

It is ironic that the vehicle created to help rural North Dakota make it through the tough winter of 1928 was named the snowbird, considering that today the word is used to describe residents of the northern Midwest and Canada who choose to flee south before the first flakes of winter even begin to fall!

Strange Stories

BY SARAH WALKER

January 9 -- It's the fantastic

that sells. In 1907 and 1908, Ward County newspapers reported on a mess of such tales -- some tall, some so strange they must have happened.

In one story, as the *Kenmare News* reported on this day in 1908, a buffalo that had wandered down from Canada apparently had an identity crisis. The buffalo joined Kenmare man J. A. Englund's cattle herd and managed to go home with the herd.

Once there, after he was discovered, the buffalo picked a fight with Englund's Red Poland bull. Englund and his foreman, Sanders, used pitchforks to try and separate the two animals, and finally they succeeded after the buffalo almost gored the bull to death.

The buffalo then began to attack one of Englund's mares and ripped up the barn. He was forced to shoot the buffalo. Under normal circumstances this would incur a penalty. This was not normal.

This wasn't the only odd happening in that region. The *Bismarck Tribune* proclaimed its curiosity: "Strange things are coming out of the northern part of the state," the paper stated, citing the case of the buffalo, as well as a "lad" who was attacked by "catamounts or mountain lions, or wild cats or roaring hippopotami or some other unusual animals."

This had been gruesomely reported earlier; young Walter Johnson, of McKinney, had gone to shoot a lynx. Instead the lynx attacked the boy, disfigured him and killed him. The funeral was set . . . unbeknownst to Walter, the grieving family and even the city of McKinney. The report wasn't true.

The *Tribune* also reported that Ole Olson, from Blaisdell, walked into a pack of wolves after mistaking them at first for dogs. He escaped not by brandishing a penknife at them and yelling for help as he did at first, but, as the report went, by playing his horn, which he apparently just happened to have with him. The *Tribune* stated of the instrument, "We forget whether a trumpet or a trombone."

Whichever the case, the music did the trick -- the wolves apparently had a taste for the finer arts. Finally, some people living nearby came and rescued Olson. He had been playing for a long time -- so long, in fact, that he was exhausted and out of breath, and he needed help just climbing into the wagon. This story appeared under the headline "Weird." It certainly was.

As the *Tribune* said, "The typewriters of the voracious correspondents are clicking overtime with horrifying recitals."

Mix Medora Wedding

BY JAYME L. JOB

January 10 -- Tom Mix, the legendary cowboy of the silver screen, married Olive Stokes in Medora, ND on this date in 1909. Stokes, the daughter of a wealthy Oklahoma rancher, became Mix's third wife.

Olive and Tom met in 1904 when they were introduced by Will Rogers at the St. Louis World's Fair. Rogers and Tom were performing together in the Mulhall Wild West Show and 14-year-old Olive was there to receive an award for a painting she had submitted. Mix volunteered to show her around the fairgrounds. The mysterious cowhand told Olive that they would meet again. Olive had no idea what Tom had meant by this, and returned to complete school in Nashville, Tenn.

Four years later, during the

winter of 1908, she traveled to Medora to purchase horses for the ranch. Soon after her arrival, Tom showed up. Mix informed her that he had been to her ranch, and her family had told him where he could find her. The two spent a few weeks looking over stock, making purchases and attending holiday parties. Finally, on the evening of January 9, Olive was to attend one final ball at the Cowboy Hotel before her return home.

Dancing until the early hours of the morning, Olive realized there was no sign of Mix and asked a friend to take her back to the house where she was staying. When she arrived, she was ushered into the kitchen. Lanterns were hung, food was set out and friends were gathered around. Before she knew it, the wedding march was being played and she found herself in the midst of a surprise wedding.

Thinking the setup was some kind of game, Olive quickly said "I do" when asked to be Tom's wife. She soon discovered that the friendly neighbor playing the role of the pastor was in fact an ordained minister

and that the ceremony was legitimate, although Olive did not mind. The newlyweds boarded a train to Miles City the following morning to begin their honeymoon.

The couple had a daughter, Ruth, in 1912, and Tom went on to star in nearly 400 silent films and become one of the most successful movie cowboys of all time. They divorced in 1917 after eight years of marriage.

Evolution Ag Summit is Feb. 18

ND Farmers Union is set to host the third annual Evolution Ag Summit on February 18 in Jamestown. "Fuels of the Future" is the focus of this year's summit. The event will focus on new developments in the renewable fuels markets and the opportunities they create for North Dakota farmers.

"Farmers have a lot of questions about how consumer demand and public policy are driving growth in the renewable fuels market," said ND Farmers Union President Mark Watne. "Our objective with the Evolution Ag Summit

In 1957 Olive penned a memoir of Tom entitled "*The Fabulous Tom Mix*."

"*Dakota Datebook*" is a radio series from Prairie Public in partnership with the State Historical Society of ND and with funding from the ND Humanities Council. See all the *Dakota Datebooks* at prairiepublic.org, subscribe to the "Dakota Datebook" podcast, or buy the *Dakota Datebook* book at shopprairiepublic.org.

to answer those questions. We will connect farmers with industry experts, so farmers better understand how this will impact them and their bottom line."

Speakers at the one-day event include representatives from ADM, Gevo, NDSU and National Farmers Union. Peterson Farm Brothers will keynote the summit.

The event is from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Farmers Union state office in Jamestown. There is a fee to attend. Lunch will be provided. To register, go to ndfu.org/evolutionag.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

TO PERFORM CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING DEC 26, 2024

FOR PROJECTS:

BRJ-0032(018), PCN23717

Structure Replacement and Removal

Structure Removals

Original Structure No. 32-103-29.0

Structure No. 32-116-34.0 Removal

Structure Replacement

New Structure No. 32-103-29.1

Proposals must be delivered to:

Nelson County Auditor, Nathan Parks, 210 B Ave W, Suite 201, Lakota, ND 58344

By January 20, 2025

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TO PERFORM CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR NELSON COUNTY

BRJ-0032(018)

PCN23717

Nelson County will engage the services of a prequalified engineering firm to perform Construction Engineering on the following project in Nelson County scheduled to be completed in 2025.

BRJ-0032(018), PCN 23717; Nelson County Bridge Structure and Replacement Removal. The proposed project would replace North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) Structure No. 32-103-29.0 along 98th Avenue Northeast and remove NDDOT Structure No. 32-116-34.0 along 112th Avenue Northeast.

Removal of Bridge No. 32-116-34.0 & Replacement of Bridge No. 32-103-29.0 Bridge Removal is located South of McVile, ND 3 Miles on 112th Ave NE Bridge Replacement is Located South of Tolna, ND 3.5 miles and west 2 miles on 98th Ave NE.

Work to be performed by consultant includes:

Construction Services: Perform Project Management, Project Administration, Construction Observation, Surveying, and Material Testing. Additional services, if required, may be negotiated and supplemental agreements issued based on the consultant's performance, the consultant's proposal and available funding.

Firms are invited to submit a proposal for the project listed above. The Proposals shall provide the following information:

- Past performance
- Ability of professional personnel
- Willingness to meet time and budget requirements
- Location
- Recent, current, and projected workloads of the persons and/or firms
- Related experience on similar projects
- Recent and current work for the County
- Project understanding, issues & approach

The proposal pages shall be numbered and must be limited to 5 pages in length. Proposals that exceed the 5-page length requirement will not be considered. The cover letter will not be counted as one of the 5 pages. The proposal should list the personnel who will be assigned to work on the project, including titles, education, and work experience. Nelson County will only consider proposals received prior to **1 p.m. CT on January 20, 2025**. Late proposals will be deemed unresponsive.

The consultant's proposal may include an appendix. Resumés, references, a statement of qualifications and other materials outlining experience may be included in an appendix. The appendix will not be considered as part of the 5-page proposal. Each proposal will be evaluated by a selection committee.

Nelson County will conduct interviews. The County plans to interview up to three (3) of the most qualified engineering firms based on whose proposals most clearly meet the RFP requirements.

Interviews are anticipated to take place within two weeks of the proposal due date. Firms not selected to be interviewed will be notified in writing.

Fees shall be negotiated with the successful firm. If the fee cannot be agreed upon, the County reserves the right to terminate negotiations, and then negotiate with the second and third ranked firms in order, if necessary, until a satisfactory contract has been negotiated.

All costs associated with the proposal shall be borne by the proposer. The County reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals and to not award contracts for any and/or all projects.

Engineering firms interested in performing the work shall submit seven (7) hard bound copies and an electronic .PDF file of their proposal to:

Nelson County Auditor
210 B Ave W, Suite 201
Lakota, ND 58344
BRJ-0032(018), PCN 23717
701-247-2463
naparks@nd.gov

Title VI assures that no person or group of persons may, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any and all programs or activities administered by the Department. For information regarding the Title VI Program see the NDDOT website at: <https://www.dot.nd.gov/about-nddot/civil-rights/title-vinondiscrimination-and-ada>



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